

None of them, it seems, drowned, or choked in the water and after a short time we were able to hear all their voices again.

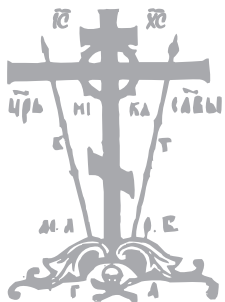
Then I threw in a grenade. It exploded and everything was quiet. But not for long.

We decided to wait a little to check whether they had perished. After a short while we heard talking and a barely audible groan. I threw another grenade.

And what do you think - from beneath the ground we heard singing! I was seized with horror. They were singing the prayer: 'Lord, save your people!'

We had no more grenades, yet it was impossible to leave the deed unfinished. We decided to fill the shaft with dry brushwood and set it alight. Their hymns still rose up through the thick smoke for some time yet.

When the last signs of life beneath the earth had ceased, we posted some of our people by the mine and returned to Alapaevsk by first light and immediately sounded the alarm in the cathedral bell tower. Almost the whole town came running. We told everyone that the grand dukes had been taken away by unknown persons!



Shrine of the Royal Martyr Elizabeth.

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# Martyr and Duchess Elizabeth

## *The Royal Martyr*

A "martyr" is a person that sacrifices their life, and fearlessly confesses Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of the world. Such was the love for Jesus Christ of the Holy Royal Martyr Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and her faithful cell-attendant St. Barbara, and those who were martyred with them.



When the Russian Royal family were killed at the time of the Revolution in Russia, Grand Duchess Elizabeth, sister-in-law of the Tsar, was murdered as well. Elizabeth was an Orthodox nun, a convert from Protestantism. Here is the story of her death, from the words of her murderer, Ryabov.

\* \* \*

We knew that the fate of the Tsar and his family in Ekaterinburg, and of the other members of the Imperial family in Alapaevsk, had already been decided in Moscow, and were only waiting for the order



to carry out the sentence.

We had already been searching for a suitable place. We quickly found such a place, some twelve *verst*s from the town, where the bodies would not be found immediately. We chose an abandoned half-flooded mine. Upon receiving the news of the execution of the Tsar and all his family from Ekaterinburg, we immediately put our plan into action, without losing a moment's time.

It was night of the 17th to 18th July, 1918. When we were sure the whole town was asleep, we quietly stole through the window into the school building. Nobody there noticed our presence; they were already all asleep. We entered through the unlocked door into the building where the women were sleeping, and woke them up, telling them quietly to get dressed at once, as they were

to be taken to a safe place because of the possibility of an armed attack.

They obeyed without a murmur. We tied their hands behind their backs there and then, blindfolded them, and led them out to the cart, which was already waiting by the school, sat them in it and sent them off to their destination.

After that, we went into the room occupied by the men. We told them the same thing, as we had to the women. The young grand dukes Konstantinovich (KR's sons) and Prince Paley (Vladimir) also obeyed meekly. We took them out into the corridor, blindfolded them, bound their hands behind their backs and put them in another cart. We had decided earlier that the carts should not go together. The only one who tried to oppose us was the Grand Duke Sergei Mikhailovich.

Physically he was stronger than the rest. We had to grapple with him. He told us categorically that he was not going anywhere, as he knew they were all going to be killed! He barricaded himself behind the cupboard and our efforts to get him out were in vain. We only lost precious time. I finally lost my patience and shot at the grand duke.

I only fired with the intention of wounding him slightly and frightening him into submission. I wounded him in the arm. He did not resist further. I bound his wound and covered his eyes. We put him in the last cart and set off. We were in a great hurry: the dawn already heralded the morning.

Along the way, Grand Duke Sergei Mikhailovich again repeated he knew they were all going to be killed.

'Tell me why' he asked me. 'I have never been involved in politics. I loved sport, played billiards...was interested in numismatics.'

I reassured him as best I could, although I was myself very agitated by everything I had been through that night.

Despite his wounded arms and the pain, the Grand Duke did not complain.

At last we arrived at the mine. The shaft was not very deep and, as it turned out, had a ledge on one side that was not covered by water.

First we led Grand Duchess Elizabeth up to the mine. After throwing her down the shaft, we heard her struggling in the water for some time. We pushed the nun lay-sister Barbara down after her. We again heard the splashing of water and then the two women's voices. It became clear that, having dragged herself out of the water, the Grand Duchess had also pulled her lay-sister out. But, having no other alternative, we had to throw in all the men also.

