

## Croatian World War I Memorials Abroad

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Due to complex historical circumstances, the monumental heritage of the World War I abroad had not been researched at all until ten years ago. There were both subjective and objective reasons for this: firstly, there was a lack of interest for approaching this very complex issue due to the dynamic events of the twentieth century and due to the political positions in the emerging countries after the end of World War I. Secondly, there was a lack of primary sources in Croatia, especially those of German provenance. Thanks to the passing of time, the arrival of the digital age and the opening of previously difficult-to-access archives, it is finally easier to find certain data, especially after the change of climate regarding this issue in the countries of their origin. Marking the 100th anniversary of the World War I, during the past fifteen years, Croatian scientists and volunteers began the painstaking work of researching and marking individual resting places of Croatian soldiers who took part in the very dynamic events of the twentieth century - the “century of extremes”. This contribution will concentrate on the explored localities as well as potential ones that need to be explored in the future, especially those localities where Croatian forces had great losses, which is why there is a possibility that there are still certain remains of military cemeteries there.

**Keywords:** Croatian military history, World War I, war memorials abroad.

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## 1. Introduction

Today we reverently remember the victims of World War I. Tens of millions of dead and wounded did not lead to lasting peace after its end, but the opposite: due to numerous unresolved problems, a far more brutal World War ensued. After about a hundred years, we remember the bloody battles of that war and evoke the suffering of our ancestors who were forgotten due to very complex historical circumstances. So far, sites of exceptional importance for Croatian military history have been explored and some restored in Ukraine (Hlybivka, Dobrynivtsi, Uzhok Pass, Odessa and Railiv near Stry), the Czech Republic (Olomouc) and Poland (Ujście Jezuickie). Some places on the rivers Soča and Piave in South Tyrol and near Verdun in France were visited and explored. The international scientific roundtable *Commemorative Heritage and Culture of Remembrance of the World War I* was held on September 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 in Zagreb, organized by the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences as an integral part of the Croatian Science Foundation – CSF project *The World War I in the Culture of Remembrance. Forgotten heritage* (IP-2019-04-5897), and included a presentation by one of the co-authors dedicated to the monumental heritage abroad.

In order to research the memorials of Croats who took part in World War I, it is necessary to primarily identify the war paths of individual Croatian units, the locations of their significant military activities, and especially their losses. In the past fifteen years, much has been researched, which is a solid foundation for continuing further research. Unfortunately, there is currently a lack of military archival material for this, which is mainly located outside the country. It should be collected and investigated through state institutions, especially the lists of losses of Croatian units, which show the burial locations of the fallen soldiers. So far, the best researched war history of the Imperial and Royal (Imp. and R.) 79<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment from Otočac and Dalmatian regiments is after the publication of Tado Oršolić's book *Dalmatian infantry regiment "Count Lacy" no. 22 in the World War I*.<sup>31</sup> The histories of other units were processed in a fragmentary manner. In order to understand the entire issue, it is necessary to give a weighted overview of Croatian forces by battlefield.

3 ORŠOLIĆ, *Dalmatinska pješačka pukovnija "Grof Lacy" br. 22 u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Institute of Historical Sciences in Zadar, Zadar, 2019.

## 2. Battles against Serbia in 1914

In the battles against Serbia, the majority of regiments from the territory of Croatia as part of the Austro-Hungarian forces mainly participated in the composition of the XIII corps from Zagreb, and the Dalmatian regiments are part of the XVI corps from Gruž (Dubrovnik), while the Bosnian-Herzegovinian regiments were part of the XV corps from Sarajevo. All of them participated in the First Campaign (Der Augustfeldzug): August 12<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>, 1914, where heavy and bloody battles were fought with great losses in the valley of the Jadar River and in the surrounding areas (Battle of Cer). The Zagreb 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division with the main Croatian forces had large losses in the Jadar River valley, primarily around the dominant buildings on the edges of the Loznica field (the villages of Obrež, Preljevska crkva, Gornji Dobrić and others). In the continuation of the fighting, significant losses were reported around the Lipnica hill - Preljevska crkva (elevation 183) – Grnčara (elevation 209), and especially near the villages of Bezjak, Tekeriš, Jarebice, Jarebička Crkva, Lipnica, Gradine, and particularly large losses in the village of Zavlake. Many of the wounded after these battles died in the military hospital in Šabac.<sup>4</sup> Dalmatians from Imp. and R. 22<sup>nd</sup> infantry regiment during August 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> in battles east of Rude had 10 killed and 77 wounded.<sup>5</sup>

After the first phase of operations in late August and early September 1914, the Karlovac Imp. and R. 96<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment and some other forces went to the Eastern Front.

In the Second Expedition to Serbia (Der Herbstfeldzug) September 6<sup>th</sup> - December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1914 Croatian soldiers also participated in the Battle of the Drina (September 6<sup>th</sup> - October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1914), in extremely difficult battles and significant losses near the villages of Trnjaci, Međaši, Konatice and the Batar bridgehead. There was particularly heavy fighting also on the Gučevo ridge, south of the settlements of Koviljača and Loznica, especially around Crni vrh (elevation 769), Igrište, Kulište (elevation 708), Kozluk and Veliko brdo. Dalmatians from the Imp. and R. 22<sup>nd</sup> infantry regiment had 51 dead and 187 wounded on Sokolska planina, Rožanj and Milenkov kamen.<sup>6</sup>

4 TOMINAC, *Hrvatske postrojbe u pohodu na Srbiju.*; Matične knjige umrlih 53. pješačke pukovnije (HR-HDA-1448. Collection of microfilms of registers).

5 ORŠOLIĆ, *Dalmatinska pješačka pukovnija "Grof Lacy" br. 22 u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, 44.

6 *The same*, 65-66.

In the battle of Kolubara and Ljig (November 16<sup>th</sup> - December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1914) Croatian soldiers again fought hard battles at Gučevo, Jagodnja and Crni vrh, the Baćinovac location (elevation 700 on Ravna Gora), the village of Konatice, Vrače brdo (elevation 159) and Čovka (elevation 243) on Kolubara, the villages of Županjac, Čelije, and especially near Bukva. Dalmatians from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Home Guard (Landwehr) infantry regiment had 66 dead and 169 wounded in the battles on Zajčica.<sup>7</sup>

In the battle of Arandelovac (Serbian counterattack) December 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, due to the lack of combat equipment and the chaos during the retreat of the Austro-Hungarian forces, there were significant losses of soldiers in all directions of retreat. Part of the pontoon bridges on the Sava were destroyed, so the soldiers tried to cross to the opposite coast through shallow parts of the river and over improvised crossings, during which many drowned.<sup>8</sup>

Since these battles have not been or have been little researched until now, we still have a lack of information about the burial places, as well as the locations of military cemeteries, and in the coming time, in cooperation with Serbian historians and the materials of their province, the memorials of these bloody battlefields should be processed.

### 3. Eastern battlefield, battles against Russia

#### 3.1. Winter battles for the Carpathians

After the battles with Serbia, the main Croatian forces from the Zagreb XIII corps were transferred by the end of January 1915 to the Carpathians and Galicia. Two divisions of this corps: Imp. and R. 36<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment and 42<sup>nd</sup> home defense infantry divisions were part of Army Group (AGr) Pflanzer-Baltin, with the fact that the Imp. and R. 79<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment Ban Jelačić (known as “Jelačićevci”) from Otočac, which operated as part of the German Southern Army (Gruppe Szurmay) was located near the Uzhok pass in the Carpathians, while the Karlovačka Imp. and R. 96<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment in General Borojević’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Army was also in the Carpathians near the village of Nagybukóca. It arrived in this area in late August and early September 1914 as part of the arrival of the

<sup>7</sup> *The same*, 70.

<sup>8</sup> About battles against Serbia, detailed in: TOMINAC, *Hrvatske postrojbe u pohodu na Srbiju* i TOMINAC, TOPIĆ *Dugoselski kraj u Prvom svjetskom ratu.*; ORŠOLIĆ, *Dalmatinska pješaka pukovnija “Grof Lacy” br. 22 u Prvom svjetskom ratu.*

2<sup>nd</sup> Army from the Balkan battlefield. They had the most intense activities in the Carpathians, namely in the wider area of the Dukla pass and the Laborac River valley, where they suffered extremely large losses especially during the winter due to low temperatures and the lack of quality logistical support.

All Croatian regiments on the Eastern Front participated in the military operations during the three offensives from the Winter Battles in the Carpathians, the goal of which were the unblocking of the besieged fortress of Przemyśl on the San River, and Proboj near Tarnow and Görlitz. In the First Carpathian Offensive (January 23<sup>rd</sup> - February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1915) very difficult battles were fought, in which Croats suffered exceptionally great losses, primarily due to very low temperatures, from which many of home guards from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Home Guard Infantry Division perished. In the first phase, the Croatian regiments operated around the villages of Magura and Harada, and in February 1915 they launched an offensive towards the cities of Kolomyia (Kolomyia) and Nadvirna (Nadworni) and occupied the areas around the village of Bogorodčana (Bohorodzany), the towns of Ivano-Frankivsk (Ukrainian: Івано-Франківськ; Russian: Ивано-Франковск, until 1962 German: Stanislaw (Станислав, *Stanislaw*, Ukrainian: Станиславів, Polish: *Stanisławów*) and Chernivtsi (German: Czernowitz/Tschernowitz, Ukrainian: Чернівці, Romanian: Cernăuți, Russian: Черновцы). In these battles, the Zagreb Imp. and R. 53<sup>rd</sup> infantry regiments suffered heavy losses near the villages of Tysmienica, Sloboda and smaller ones near the village of Uzin.<sup>9</sup>

During the Second Carpathian Offensive (February 27<sup>th</sup> - March 31<sup>st</sup>) complex military operations were again conducted under very difficult meteorological conditions, heavy snowstorms and fog. At the end of February, Home Guards were fighting on the Lomnica stream near the village of Krasne, south of the town of Kalush. In the continuation of the fighting, by March 4<sup>th</sup> 1915, the Russians managed to regain a significant part of the territory lost until then, except for the town of Chernivtsi. In the battles between March 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>, the Croatian regiments suffered very heavy losses, which made the Home Guard retreat towards the Bystryca Solotwinska stream, south of the village of Bogorodčana (Bohorodchany). At the same time, the 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division was in the wider area of the city of Ivano-Frankivsk (Stanislaw), that is around the villages of Tysmienica and Tarnowice Polne.

9 HR-HDA-1448. „Matična knjiga umrlih 53. pješačke pukovnije“; TOMINAC, TOPIĆ, *Dugoselski kraj u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, 32.

During the Third Carpathian Offensive and the Easter Battle (April 1915) there was again no significant shift in the battlefield, but the losses of both warring parties were enormous.<sup>10</sup>

And on the Uzhok pass Imp. and R. 79<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment suffered extremely large losses from January 28<sup>th</sup> to February 4<sup>th</sup>, especially because of low temperatures and during the attack along the road communication towards Turka near the settlements of Dydiowe, Srczawinke, Javorova and Butelke Vysna. According to the lists of losses (Verlustlisten), the total losses of the regiment amount to 892 members, of which: 66 dead, 355 wounded, 26 captured, and the largest number are the missing soldiers: 445. Many deaths were recorded in the nearby military hospital in Ungvár. In the battles for the Carpathian heights between March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, in the area of communications from the Uzhok pass towards the village of Turka and further towards the very important traffic junction of Stary Samborte in the wider area of the village of Turka near the settlements of Beniowa, Dydiowa, Smolnika, Ostry and Szczavinka, the Croatian regiment suffered extremely heavy losses. Most of the victims were near the strategic elevation along the Sokolivka road itself. According to the lists of losses (Verlustlisten) they had 161 dead, 469 wounded, 12 captured and 288 missing, a total of 930 soldiers.

In the continuation of the fighting during April 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, in the attack of the Russians towards Ceremcha, the Jelačićevci continued to have extremely large losses, namely around the towns of Bukowiec, Tarnow Vyzna, Sianki and the hill Kitzera Sokilska. They suffered most of their losses on 8 April, when they had 11 dead, 38 wounded, 39 captured and 814 missing.<sup>11</sup>

### **3.2. Breakthrough at Tarnow and Görlitz and fighting until the end of 1915**

In order to repel the Russians from the Carpathians and to improve the very difficult situation after the Winter Battles for the Carpathians, the Austro-Hungarian and German High

Command planned initiated in early May 1915, a powerful breakthrough

10 More on this: TOMINAC, *Hrvati u Zimskim bitkama za Karpate i probouju kod Gorlica i Tarnówa 1915. godine*; TOMINAC, *Ličani u 'Velikom ratu'. Zimska bitka za Karpate, siječanj – travanj 1915.*, 489-524.

11 TOMINAC, *Ličani u 'Velikom ratu'. Zimska bitka za Karpate, siječanj – travanj 1915.*, 510, 515, 516 and 518.

in today's southern Poland between the towns of Tarnow and Görlitz, and thus flanked the Russian forces in the Carpathians. Thanks to the grouping of strong forces in the direction of the main line of attack and the five-fold superiority in artillery, the Austro-German forces managed to break through the Russian defense from May 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>. The activities of the Croatian soldiers on the approaches to the Dniester River, which the Russians had built as a suitable defensive support, were particularly difficult. Bloody battles took place there, including members of the Imp. and R. 79<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment from Otočac and in the wider area around the town of Drohobych. Between May 19<sup>th</sup> and May 31<sup>st</sup> the 79<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment had 145 dead, 377 wounded, 17 captured and 192 missing, or a total of 731 soldiers out of commission. The fiercest fighting with the Russians took place around the Neuhof farm, near the village of Wróblowice (Wreblowice), at elevation 303 northeast of Drohobych. Heavy fighting was also recorded near the localities of Neuhof-Bryczniki and Neuhof-Lipovica. And in the continuation of the fighting from June 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>, the greatest losses were reported near the town of Kryvula (on the Stryi-Lviv railway, west of the villages of Ostriv and Derzhiv) in Zhydachiv district, and slightly less near the villages of Pišečná (Piaseczna), Medeniči, Rudniki, Gošince and Siedeilska. In particular, there were bloody battles near Kryvula during June 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>: 35 dead, 72 wounded, 195 captured and 1,337 missing soldiers.<sup>12</sup> In the Battle on the Hnyla Lypa River on July 5<sup>th</sup>, the "Jelačićevci" took part in the battles near the town of Rekliniec, in which they had a total loss of 42 soldiers. Between July 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, fighting took place near Matka Boska, Horodlowice and Zdzary, where 19 soldiers were killed, 118 wounded and 54 missing.<sup>13</sup>

In the battles between August 27<sup>th</sup> and September 19<sup>th</sup>, the "Jelačićevci" were near the settlements of Korablszec, Porik, Ivanowka, Moskowscyzna, Pritvitna and Bokima (Ivanicyz Bokujma) and they had 41 dead, 169 wounded and 1,540 missing, or a total of 1,750 soldiers thrown out of battle.<sup>14</sup>

In the zone of responsibility of the 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division on the southern flank of the battlefield at dawn on June 4<sup>th</sup>, its forces suffered heavy losses, especially its Zagreb Imp. and R. 53<sup>rd</sup> infantry regiment near the village of

12 ÖeStA-KA-NFA, Verlustliste IR 79.

13 TOMINAC, *Hrvati u Zimskim bitkama za Karpate i proboju kod Gorlica i Tarnówa 1915. godine*, 292.

14 *The same*, 298.

Lanczyna on the Pruth River, and in the continuation of the battle at Lanczyna, Tlumacz, Kurysk, Olesza, and to a lesser extent at Sadzawka, Okniany and Kolomyia and Folv. Kamienne (elevation 337).<sup>15</sup>

Between July 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, the 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division fought hard along the east bank of the Seret River, south of the village of Duninow. In addition to the people from Bjelovar, the Banja Luka Imperial and Royal (Imp. and R.) 2<sup>nd</sup> Bosnian and Herzegovinian regiment also operated there. The soldiers from Bjelovar and Banja Luka continued to fight near Kamiena Gora (elevation 325) Duninow and in the wider area of the very important Grodek hill, where the forces from Bjelovar had 164 dead, 274 wounded and 330 missing soldiers.<sup>16</sup> During August 29<sup>th</sup>, the division conquered the heights southeast of the village of Monasterzyske and continued the attack on the Russian positions on the Strypa River. Heavy fighting took place for the Russian bridgehead on the stretch from Buchach settlement to Perevoloka, in order to enable the transfer of forces across that river. In the bloody battles, the Zagreb XIII corps lost 4,400 men in three days.<sup>17</sup>

In the battles on the Serét River (September 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>), the 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division had to retreat towards the village of Kosiv to the Strypa River. In the battles near Kosiv and Perevoloka, the Croatian regiments - the 53<sup>rd</sup> Zagreb and the 16<sup>th</sup> Bjelovar - were literally destroyed, and the XIII corps lost about 17,000 men. In the subsequent battles around the villages of Skoromohi (Skoromosz), Budaniv and Medvidovci (Medvedowci), the soldiers from Bjelovar had about 270 dead, and the Zagreb 53<sup>rd</sup> infantry regiment suffered extremely heavy losses near Perevoloka and slightly less near the villages of Zadariv and Ustja-Zelena. In the Russian counterattack during September 14<sup>th</sup> towards the Strypa River and the very important bridgehead Buchach near the village of Burkaniv (Burkanow), between September 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, the 16<sup>th</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> infantry regiments suffered heavy losses at elevation 380, the village of Osivci (Osoveci) and Czarne Lasi. The Bjelovar forces had 70 dead, 164 wounded and 340 captured. Those who died were buried at the cemetery in the village of Osivci.<sup>18</sup> In the battles from October 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> near the village

15 HR-HDA-1448. Collection of microfilms of registers, Matična knjiga umrlih 53. pješačke pukovnije.

16 TOMINAC, *Hrvati u Zimskim bitkama za Karpate i proboj kod Gorlica i Tarnówa 1915. godine*, 291.

17 *The same*, 295.

18 *The same*, 295.



of Wisniovczyke (Wisniowczyke) 16<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment had 57 killed and 90 wounded.<sup>19</sup>

At the end of 1915 and the beginning of 1916, the bloody New Year's Battle took place (December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1915 - January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1916). Near the village of Ridkiwzi (*Rarancza*, Ukrainian: *Ridkivci*) the 42<sup>nd</sup> Home Guard Infantry Division, especially its 25<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Infantry Regiment, and the 16<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment suffered heavy losses. In those battles, the Bjelovar forces had 186 dead, 626 wounded, 367 missing and 162 sick. During January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1916 only remnants of the Home Guard Infantry Regiments remained. The fifth company of the Karlovac 26<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Infantry Regiment had only 60-70 soldiers at its disposal. Thus, Ridkiwzi became one of the largest cemeteries of Croatian soldiers.<sup>20</sup>

### 3.3. The Brusilov offensive

During 1916, there were very intense battles. At the request of the Entente, and in order to prevent the Italian defeat in the South Tyrol offensive during the first half of 1916, the Russian general Aleksei Brusilov, the commander of the Southwestern Front, received the order to launch a massive attack on the Eastern Front in order to relieve the Italians by attracting part of the forces of the Central Powers from the Southwestern (Italian) battlefield to the east. Thus, on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1916, the expeditionary battalion of the Dalmatian Imp. and R. 22<sup>nd</sup> infantry regiment arrived on the Eastern Front, that became part of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Zagreb and 16<sup>th</sup> Bjelovar infantry regiments. They operated near the village of Bednovawka (Kolomyia). They remained there until the spring of 1918, when they were returned to their home regiment on the Piave River.<sup>21</sup>

General Brusilov made a breakthrough in several separate directions. More than 40,000 soldiers and considerable quantities of very valuable military equipment were captured on the offensive line to the strategic city of Luck. Members of the Imp. and R. 79<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment "Jelačićevci" were killed there and by June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1916 it had 4,160 people out of commission! The largest part of them was considered missing: 4,136 members, which speaks the best to the

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19 *The same*, 296.

20 TOMINAC, *Hrvati u Brusilovljevoj ofenzivi u ljeto 1916. (II. dio): Proboj kraj sela Okne u Bukovini*, 422.

21 ORŠOLIĆ, *Dalmatinska pješačka pukovnija "Grof Lacy" br. 22 u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, 159.

ferocity of the Russian attack and the disintegration that occurred among the Austro-Hungarian troops afterwards.<sup>22</sup>

One of the most tragic encounters of Croatian soldiers in World War I took place on the southern side of the village of Okna, where the majority of Croatian forces were located. In three months of bloody fighting, the Croatian regiments suffered heavy casualties, especially during the retreat to the wider area of Ivano-Frankivsk. The places of greatest losses were around the villages of Okna, Dobrinovac, Pohorlivka, elevations 272 Czarny Potok, Mitkiva, Onuta, Buchach, Kulačkovica, Kolomyia, Velesniv, Dubenka, Molodylowa, streams Bistrica Solotvinska and Narajivka.<sup>23</sup>

### **3.4. The Kerensky offensive in 1917, Battle of Ivano-Frankivsk and Kałusz (July 6-16, 1917)**

In 1917, the illusion of a short-term war disintegrated. The third phase of World War I began with two events whose consequences would prove fateful for world history. The revolution in Russia in February 1917 brought victory to the Central Powers in the East. In mid-March, Czar Nicholas II Romanov abdicated, and the controversial Eser politician Alexander Kerensky (1881-1970) took over the provisional government and promised the western allies to continue the war on the Eastern Front, regardless of the very difficult economic and revolutionary situation in the country. Kerensky fulfilled that promise.

The main thrust of Kerensky offensive between 6<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> July 1917 hit the hardest Army Group Böhm-Ermolli in the wider area around Kałusz. This military group also includes Imp. and R. 3<sup>rd</sup> army of Zagreb XIII corps in which most of the Croatian regiments are from the 42nd Home Guard Infantry Division and Imp. and R. 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division. The greatest casualties of Croatian soldiers were recorded at the Jutrena Gora hill, on the Bystrzyca Solotvinska River, and near the villages of Lachowce, Jamnice, Nowica, Landestreu, Ldziany, Mosciski, Rybna on the Pawelcze stream, the hill between the villages of Posieczka and Huciska, west of the village Bogorodczana.<sup>24</sup>

22 TOMINAC, *Hrvati u Brusilovljevoj ofenzivi u ljeto 1916. (I. dio): Proboj kraj grada Lucka u Volinju*, 261-295.

23 TOMINAC, *Hrvati u Brusilovljevoj ofenzivi u ljeto 1916. (II. dio): Proboj kraj sela Okne u Bukovini*, 419-452.

24 TOMINAC, *Hrvati u borbama tijekom 1917. na Istočnome bojištu i završne ratne borbe na Jugozapadnome bojištu iz 1918. godine*.

### **3.5. Occupation of Ukraine, February 28<sup>th</sup> - mid-March 1918**

After the collapse of the Russian army in Eastern Galicia, there was no danger on the battlefield between the Dniester River and Pripyat. In February 1918, the Croatian 42<sup>nd</sup> Home Guard Infantry Division was transferred to the Italian battlefield with several other divisions, while the 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division temporarily remained on the Eastern Battlefield as part of the Kosak Group and participated in the initial operations of the occupation of Ukraine. In the initial offensive operations, the 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division broke through to the village of Lipkany on the Prut River and stopped there, while the rest of the forces moved on to the very important city of Odessa on the Black Sea, which they occupied in mid-March.

In March 1918, a huge movement of forces started on the Southwestern battlefield to fight against Italy, and among these forces was the Imp. and R. 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division which arrived there in May 1918.

## **4. The southwestern battlefield**

### **4.1. Croats on the Soča battlefield**

Here we will mention the forgotten places in the South-West, especially the Soča battlefield, where Croatian soldiers took part in very brutal battles against Italian forces. The initial defense of the Austrian lands during 1915 was taken over by the home guard defence force (Landsturm) and volunteer forces. However, the eighty kilometers of strategic defense line along the Soča River from the Krna massif in the north to the sea in the south, with the focus of defense on the two important Soča bridgeheads near Tolmin and near Gorica - where the main focus of the Italian attack was at the same time - had to be defended with stronger and better prepared forces. In the beginning, six divisions from the Balkans and part of the forces from the Eastern Front were sent to that most threatened part, a significant segment of which was made up of Slavic soldiers, among them Croats. Towards the end of May 1915, the XV Sarajevo and XVI Dubrovnik corps arrived. All the Dalmatian regiments also arrived: Imp. and R. 22<sup>nd</sup> (Sinj) joint army regiment Count Lacy, 23<sup>rd</sup> Šibenik and 37<sup>th</sup> Dubrovnik Home Guard Infantry Regiments (Austrian land defense - Landwehr), and Dalmatian horsemen. The fourth battalion Imp. and R. 53<sup>rd</sup> also arrived there,

as well as the Zagreb infantry regiment, Karlovačka Imp. and R. 96<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment, the third battalion of the Herzegovinian Imp. and R. 4<sup>th</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina regiment, two squadrons of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ulan cavalry regiment, two battalions of the 6<sup>th</sup> Croatian Home Guard Artillery Regiment, two battalions of the 7<sup>th</sup> Howitzer regiment and one company of the Zagreb 13<sup>th</sup> Opkopar battalion. Subsequently, after the end of Brusilov offensive from the summer of 1916 on the Eastern Front, during the summer and autumn of 1916, members of Imp. and R. 79<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment from Otočac arrived on the Soča battlefield.

The fighting was very brutal, especially around the locations Sveti Mihael, Kras, Sveti Marko and Panovečka forest (soldiers from Karlovac); Sveti Gabriel, Sabotin, Oslavija, Pevma, Podgora, Vodice, elevation 383, Paljevo, Zagora (Dalmatians); Mengore, Mrzli vrh, Cvetje, Batognica (soldiers from Zagreb); Vršič and Rombon (Bosniaks); Fajtjihrib, Vodice, Sveta Gora and Kostanjevica (soldiers from Lika). Most of these forces took part in all twelve Soča battles until the fall of 1917, that is, until the breakthrough at Kobarida, when they broke out onto the Piave River and into South Tyrol and would remain there until the end of the war.<sup>25</sup> It is estimated that around Gorica alone around 6,000 soldiers from Dalmatian units died, mostly from Sinj Imp. and R. 22<sup>nd</sup> infantry regiment and Zadar 23<sup>rd</sup> Home Guard and Gruž 37<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Infantry Regiments. The main part of these units was later transferred slightly north of Sveta Gora, around the village of Zagora, where the Italians persistently tried to expand their bridgehead on the left bank of the Soča River.<sup>26</sup>

Before the Twelfth Battle of the Soča, Croatian troops participated in other battlefields, such as the battles of the 22<sup>nd</sup> infantry regiment in South Tyrol from April-August 1916, in the area of Val Sugana, Mt. Salubia (elevation 1887) and Cima di Cece (elevation 2755).<sup>27</sup> From that time, we also find the Karlovac 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment on the heights of Marcai and Consentin, which suffered significant losses there. They also had their cemetery there, and its central plaque was transferred to the military museum of Roanna near Asiago. During the winter and spring of 1917, we have recorded battles of the I and IV battalions

25 O borbama Hrvata na rijeci Soči, more details in: HERMAN-KAURIĆ, TOMINAC, *Hrvatske postrojbe u borbama na Soči*; GALIĆ, *Cvetje – Mengore v viharju vojne 1915-1917.*; GALIĆ, MARUŠIĆ, *Tolminsko mostišče*, sv. 1.; ČUTURA, GALIĆ, *Veliki rat: Pregled ratnih operacija*, 13–60.

26 BLAŽINA, HAMERŠAK, *Hrvatskim tragovima po Sočanskom bojištu*.

27 ORŠOLIĆ, *Dalmatinska pješačka pukovnija "Grof Lacy" br. 22 u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, 120.

of the Imp. and R. 22<sup>nd</sup> infantry regiment in the area of the Seven Municipalities (German: Sieben Gemeinde, Italian: Sette Comuni) near Campomulo. In the Austro-Hungarian offensive from December 1917, Dalmatians from the 22<sup>nd</sup> infantry regiment took part in the conquest of Mt. Melette and Col del Rosso with extremely heavy losses.

After the collapse of the Russian Empire during the winter and summer of 1918, the majority of Croatian troops arrived in the wider area of Asiago (South Tyrol) from the Eastern Front, which were deployed in the wider area of Asiago, or better known as the Seven Municipalities (German: Sieben Gemeinde, Italian: Sette Comuni). These forces consisted of the 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division and the 42<sup>nd</sup> Home Guard Infantry Division. In the battles at the Tonale, the Austro-Hungarian 10<sup>th</sup> army suffered a failure, and the Zagreb 31<sup>st</sup> and Bosnian and Herzegovinian 3<sup>rd</sup> fighter battalions were active in these operations.

Between June 16<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 1918, bloody battles and significant losses of the Zagreb Imp. and R. 53<sup>rd</sup> infantry regiment near the heights of Mt. di Val Bella and Col del Rosso were recorded. During the night of June 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> the Bjelovarska Imp. and R. 16<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment led fierce battles on Cornon, the rocky peaks south of Sasso Rosso (area of Mt. di Val Bella, elevation 1312).

At the beginning of July, very brutal fighting took place at the important elevation of Mt. Pertice (elevation 1549) for the Tasson hill when the commander Imp. and R. 79<sup>th</sup> colonel Carl Zoller of the infantry regiment stormed enemy positions seven times without success. Zoller will be seriously wounded in the last assault and will soon die from the wounds.<sup>28</sup>

A little later, from June 24<sup>th</sup> to July 5<sup>th</sup>, soldiers from Karlovac fought bloody battles at the confluence of the Piave River with the sea. Namely, in order to strategically protect the city of Venice, the Italians intended to conquer a large river island at the mouth of the Piave River into the sea near the town of Passarelle, southeast of the small town of San Dona di Piave. In these battles, Karlovac Imp. and R. 96<sup>th</sup> the infantry regiment was pushed back with very heavy losses, which were one of the biggest in its history. Because of this, it was withdrawn to the reserve.<sup>29</sup> Between June 15<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1918, Imp. and R. 22<sup>nd</sup> infantry regiment also suffered heavy losses in the attack at San Dona di Piave

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28 TOMINAC, *Hrvati u borbama tijekom 1917. na Istočnome bojištu i završne ratne borbe na Jugozapadnome bojištu iz 1918. godine*, 30.

29 TOMINAC, *Hrvati u borbama tijekom 1917. na Istočnome bojištu i završne ratne borbe na Jugozapadnome bojištu iz 1918. godine*, 28.

with losses of up to 671 soldiers. During July, they had 98 dead and missing, and most of them died from malaria and hunger.<sup>30</sup>

## **4.2. Departure of part of the forces to the Western battlefield**

Heavy fighting on the Western Front during August and September 1918 caused great losses for German forces. Thus, the German High Command was forced to ask its allies to send additional reinforcements to this main battlefield. In his message of August 29<sup>th</sup> from the German headquarters in Baden, Field Marshal Hindenburg noted that the German losses in the west were very large and that it was in the common interest for the Austrians to leave enough forces in Italy that would be able to maintain only defensive positions, and send part of the forces to the west. Thus, the transport of Austro-Hungarian forces and labor companies, among which there were 15,000 captured Russians, headed west. These forces were united in the XVIII corps, and consisted of Imp. and R. 1<sup>st</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> infantry divisions, which were deployed east and northeast of the bloody battlefield near Verdun and the salient near St. Michael. In the composition of the 1<sup>st</sup> division were the Croatian units of Imp. and R. 31<sup>st</sup> fighter battalion Zagreb and two squadrons of the 10<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Hussar Regiment from Varaždin. These forces fought against French and American divisions. They were mainly deployed on the heights around the villages of Damvillers, Moirey and Flabas, which are located directly next to today's Verdun memorial complex.

During October 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, the 1<sup>st</sup> infantry division was attacked by French and American forces, a total of four infantry divisions. Despite all the difficulties and significant losses, it managed to keep its positions. Unfortunately, the fate of these forces after the signing of the armistice and the way of their return to their homeland is unknown. We have to investigate the details of the activities of Croat forces on this battlefield.

Unfortunately, there is no detailed operational data on activities and losses on this battlefield.

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30 ORŠOLIĆ, *Dalmatinska pješačka pukovnija "Grof Lacy" br. 22 u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, 211, 221.

## 5. Croatian Places of Suffering in World War I

**GLYBIVKA** (Hlebowka, Ukr. Глибівка) is located in the Bogorodčana district of the Ivano-Frankivsk region, along the upper course of the Sadžavka River. After the bloody battles of the Brusilov offensive in 1916, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Home Guard Infantry Division, after several months of retreat from the village of Oknekod Černivac, stopped in August 1916 about 30 kilometers southwest of the regional center of Ivano-Frankivsk. The regimental headquarters of the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Infantry Regiments was located there, as well as an arranged military cemetery right next to the Greek-Catholic church where about 40 soldiers were buried. Affiliation: 37 soldiers - 25<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Regiment and 5 soldiers - 26<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Regiment. These forces died between the months of August 1916 and March 1917. There is a rectangular vertical monument in the center of the cemetery, on top of which is a circular relief depicting a laurel wreath. It was erected on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1917, built from stone and concrete. On the front part of the monument is the inscription: *“In honor of the heroes, members of the 25<sup>th</sup> Zagreb and 26<sup>th</sup> Karlovac infantry regiments.” God and Croats. For king and country, 1916-1917.* At the entrance to the cemetery, a wooden oak portal with the same inscription was made, which was later moved to another location in the same cemetery.<sup>31</sup>

This event was recorded in the newspapers of the time:

“In memory of their fallen heroes, the Zagreb 25<sup>th</sup> and Karlovac 26<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Regiments arranged a beautiful cemetery on the northern battlefield, where the brave Croatian Home Guards died and rest on the field of glory. Recently, a beautiful monument for the fallen heroes was unveiled, in the presence

31 The dead members of the 25th and 26th home defense infantry regiments were identified at the cemetery: BADNJUN BLAŽ – 1890, Križevac; 2. BUBANKO STJEPAN – 1895, Stubica Donja; BUKOVAC MARKO – 1898, Križevac; BUNTAK MARTIN – 1886, Kašina, Sv. Ivan Zelina; BURIĆ FRANJO – 1897, Pregrada; DRAGOSAVLJEVIĆ JURO – 1880, Gudovec; FRKETIĆ JOSIP – 1891, Karlovac; GAČEZ TOMO – 1897, Ludbreg; GERENDJER MIJO – 1886, Grubišno Polje; GREDELJ VJEKOSLAV – 1896, Zlatar; GUDIĆ ANDRO – 1872, Novi Marof; JOVANOVIĆ IVAN - ?, Senj; JUREC ANDRO – 1874, Zlatar; KAHLINA FRANJO – 1896, Klanjec; KALANJ STJEPAN – 1873, Brinje; KELIN IVAN – 1886, Dugo Selo; KIŠUR FRANJO – 1885, Klanjec; KOŠKI NIKOLA – 1894, Ivanec; KOVAČIĆ STJEPAN – 1894, Ludbreg; KRANJČEC FRANJO – 1890, Pregrada; LIKTAR IVAN – 1879, Samobor; LJUBANOVIĆ PETAR – 1896, Jaska; MESAR MIO – 1897, ?; MILEK JAKOB – 1895, Stubica; PERIĆ STJEPAN – 1876, Zlatar; POŽGAJ ANDRO – 1887, Zlatar; RADOČAJ JOSIP – 1898, Slunj; RADOŠIĆ ANDRO – 1896, Varaždin; ROŽMAN ANDRO – 1895, Križevac; RUKAVINA GJURO – 1897, Perušić; STIPČIĆ MIJO – 1897, Klanjec; SUDEC ŠIMUN – 1879, Ludbreg; ŠAFRAN JURAJ – 1890, Novi Marof; ŠARGAČ IZIDOR - ?, Ludbreg; ŠKRTIĆ TOMO – 1879, Ogulin; ŠTIH IVAN – 1896, Zagreb; ŠTOK JURAJ – 1895, Desinić; TANBER ALOJZ – 1881, Sisak; TURČIĆ VID – 1896, Sesvete, Zagreb; VEČERIĆ STJEPAN – 1896, Sv. Klara, Zagreb; ZIMAK

of the commander, all officers and teams of the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> regiments. The monument and portal of the cemetery bear the following inscription; “Glory to the heroes of Zagreb 25<sup>th</sup> and Karlovac 26<sup>th</sup> infantry regiments. God and Croats! For the king and the country! Under that lofty motto the Croats rest in a foreign land forever! The ceremony of unveiling the monument was carried out in a magnificent manner.”<sup>32</sup>

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1917, on the start of the Kerensky offensive, the memorial day of the Karlovac 26<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Infantry Regiment was marked there to commemorate the bloody battles at Toporivac and Ridkiwzi that took place from December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1915 to January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1916.<sup>33</sup>

The monument was restored during the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the World War I in the presence of Croatian veterans, representatives of the City of Zagreb and local authorities and citizens, as well as the Croatian ambassador to Ukraine, Tomislav Vidošević.<sup>34</sup>

In the future, possible military cemeteries should be investigated around the neighboring village of Sadžava, which borders with Glybivka, where members of the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Infantry Regiments resided, as well as Kalusza for members of the 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division.

**KULAČKIVCI MILITARY CEMETERY**, is located northwest of Kolomyia (German: *Kolomea*, Ukrainian: Коломия, Romanian: *Kolomyja*, Polish: *Kołomyja*). According to data, there used to be a rectangular monument in the center of the military cemetery with columns on the corners and a lying lion on the top plate. On the frontal side, on the upper part, there was a text; GOD AND CROATS KINGDOM OF HUNGARIA ZAGREB GLORY TO THEM 1915-1916. In the lower field, below the text, the Croatian coat of arms in the form of a shield.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, this data has not been verified in the field.

**DOBRYNIVCI MILITARY CEMETERY.** *The village of Dobrynivci* (German: *Dobronoutz*, Ukrainian: Добринівці, Romanian: *Dobronăuți*) is located northeast of the town of Chernivtsi, Bukovina in the Zastavniski District, of the Chernivtsi Region. In the wider area, the Croatian units as part of the Austro-Hungarians fought the bloodiest battles on the Eastern Front, especially

32 Ilustrovani list no. 20, Zagreb, May 19, 1917, 424.

33 GRALJUK, „Bojišnice i grobišta hrvatskih vojnika na karpatskom ratištu u Prvom svjetskom ratu”, 26.

34 <https://www.glasgacke.hr/?ispis=detalji&novost=14251&kat=71>, access: March 27, 2022.

35 GRALJUK, „Bojišnice i grobišta hrvatskih vojnika na karpatskom ratištu u Prvom svjetskom ratu”, 26.



during the New Year's Battle in 1915/16, and especially during the Brusilov offensive in the summer of 1916.

In honor of the memory of fallen war comrades from 1915 and the beginning of 1916, especially the New Year's Battle, soldiers and officers of the 25<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Infantry Regiment erected a monument and a chapel at the military cemetery there, which was later destroyed. The monument was in the form of a box with columns on the sides and a reclining lion on the top plate. It is built of stone and concrete. The activities were completed on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1916, before the Brusilov offensive in the summer of the same year. The monument with Croatian features was preserved, while the remains of most of the deceased were transferred to the Zvenjačyn military cemetery.

About the opening of the monument, "Ilustrovani list" writes: "The Zagreb Croatian 25<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Regiment was stationed east of Dobra noć (Dobrivci, Dobronoutz) for ten months and, guarding the border, preserved Bukovina. The cemetery of the heroes of our regiment is located in Dobra noć. The cemetery was beautifully arranged with great passion by the sergeant of the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion, Vinko Curiš. These comrades will never forget our heroes who fell there, fighting for king and country, but their visible and permanent memory should be preserved for the people of Bukovina. The main initiator of the construction of the monument was the commander of the 25<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Infantry Regiment, lieutenant colonel Stjepan pl. Delić, and the implementers were the trench sergeant, sculptor Vatroslav Drenski, with the help of the trench corporal, stonemason Dušan Kalafatić, who created a beautiful monument: a lion, which seems to have hidden itself, but watches furiously with its eyes: it guards the heroes. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, at half past seven in the evening, the monument was unveiled by lieutenant colonel Stjepan pl. Delić in the presence of several officers, teams and people from Dobra Noć. First, he thanked Drenski and his helpers on behalf of the regiment for the creation of that artistically perfect monument, and then he addressed everyone, saying something like this; "We met to say goodbye to our comrades, heroes, or we'll meet again! They gave their best - their lives for the glory of the regiment and their fellow Croats. They are an eternal memory for our regiment and I hope that the family will keep them in eternal memory. This beautiful stone means an eternal memory, just as a stone is eternal. Glory to them!"<sup>36</sup>

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36 Ilustrovani list, no. 23, Zagreb, 3 June 1916, 534.; *Prvi svjetski rat. Vodič kroz fondove i zbirke Hrvatskog državnog arhiva*, 303.

As a part of the commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War I, representatives of veteran organizations and the Committee for the Commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of World War I of the City of Zagreb initiated activities to restore this memorial, which was unveiled in 2017. The Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Croatian Veterans and Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs also took part in these activities.<sup>37</sup>

**ZVENJAČYN MILITARY CEMETERY** The largest military cemetery in Bukovina is located not far from the village of Zvenjačyn, Zastavniski District of Chernivtsi Region on the way to Zališchyky, which is located in the neighboring Ternopil Region. The cemetery was created in 1914-1918, and was expanded in 1937 with the support of the German government. A stone fence was erected around the cemetery, while a monument with stone slabs was placed in the central part. According to the inscription on two plaques, Romanian and German, 11,830 soldiers and officers of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian armies were buried here. The names of the 514 dead are written on the other plaques. On the inner side of the wall there are 56 plaques with the names of 146 soldiers, subsequently transferred from the cemeteries of neighboring villages, from a total of 12 locations. Inside this cemetery, 50 stone crosses and four stone tablets were placed with the names of 48 settlements in the Ukrainian Bukovina, from where the remains were transferred.

According to the testimony of Ukrainian researchers, there is information that there were plaques with the names of Croats on the original wooden crosses. There is a possibility that the lists of buried soldiers have been preserved somewhere, most likely at the Austrian Red Cross.<sup>38</sup>

**VALIA KUZMYNA MILITARY CEMETERY** (Ukrainian: Валя Кузьмина; Romanian: *Valea Cosminului*) is located in the valley of the Neviljnycija River, in the Volokivska municipality, Glybocky district, Chernivtsi region. There is a large memorial renovated military cemetery with preserved gravestone inscriptions. The cemetery was created after the transfer of numerous remains from a wider area of eight nearby villages. According to available data, 3,785 Austro-Hungarian, German and Russian soldiers were buried. The cemetery has a rectangular shape with a central monument with four stone slabs marking common graves. On the two plaques are the names of the cemeteries

37 <https://vojnepovijest.vecernji.hr/vojna-povijest/prvi-svjetski-rat-dobrinovci-glibivka-ujscie-jezuicke-drohobucz-1174850>, access: March 27, 2022.

38 PAŠČENKO, *Hrvatski grobovi 1914-1918. Karpati, Galicija, Bukovina*, 68.

from where the remains of previous burials were transferred: Bojany-1004, Ridkiwzi-956, Magala-950, Kodru-Kozminuluj-280, Buda-26, Magala-105, Rokytna-242 and Tarašany-222. There is a high probability that numerous Croats who took part in the bloody battles around these places, especially from the New Year's Battle, are also buried in this cemetery.<sup>39</sup>

### THE WIDER AREA AROUND THE TOWN OF CHERNIVTSI

At the beginning of war operations in the wider area of Chernivtsi, the capital of Bukovina, especially during the Battle of Ridkiwzi-Magal, soldiers were buried at the Old Cemetery in Chernivtsi. By the end of the war, 14,950 soldiers of all warring sides were buried there on a total of 1.5 ha. It is called the Christian Cemetery, and there is also the Hero's Cemetery in Zelena Street. 1,050 unknown soldiers from surrounding smaller cemeteries were also transferred to that cemetery. The Soviet authorities destroyed this military cemetery and after that they only allowed civil burials. The renovation of the cemetery began in 1994 thanks to the Red Cross of Bukovina, and mostly younger historians and volunteers. The graves of Slavko Postružnik, Pero Pančević and Bogdan Rajlov (Osijek)<sup>40</sup> have been preserved. The preserved photographs record the burials of members of the 25<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Infantry Regiment in the village of Sadhora from 1916.<sup>41</sup>

**RIDKIWZI VILLAGE.** Ridkiwzi village (*Ridkiwzi*, German: *Rarancze*, Ukrainian: *Ridkivci*; Russian: *Redkovcy*, Romanian: *Rarancea*) is located east of Sadhora (*Sadhora*, Ukrainian: *Sadgora*, German: *Sadagora*, Romanian: *Sadagura*), northeast of Chernivtsi. There are remains of a military cemetery and a monument to those killed in World War I and a monument to those killed in the Russo-Turkish War from 1739. It is certain that many Croats were buried there because they took part in the bloody battles in the surrounding area, especially during the New Year's Battle. In the newspapers of that time, it was recorded that after the return of Croatian forces to the area after the campaign in Eastern Galicia and Bukovina from July 21<sup>st</sup> to August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1917, a solemn mass was held on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918 at the military cemetery in Ridkiwzi in memory of the fallen members of the Bjelovar 16<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment from the battles at the beginning of 1916.<sup>42</sup> In the future, this should be investigated in detail.

39 PAŠČENKO, *Hrvatski grobovi 1914-1918.*, 70.

40 The same, 75.

41 The same, 165.

42 Ilustrovani list, no. 23, Zagreb, June 3, 1916, 534; PAŠČENKO, *Hrvatski grobovi 1914-*

**PRYKARPATTIA.** Prykarpattia is a province of Prykarpattian Galicia, and its center is the city of Ivano-Frankivsk. In that area, Croatian soldiers encountered severe battles with heavy losses. There were numerous military cemeteries in this area. So far, Austria, Hungary and Poland have taken the brunt of the initiative in researching military cemeteries. Croatian institutions and individuals are just getting started. In a number of villages in the municipality of Nadvirna, there are cemeteries and the remains of military fortifications and trenches. There were significant battles in the district center of Kolomyia, but no military cemeteries have been preserved, although there are photographs of those cemeteries in the Croatian State Archives, especially the chapel of St. Antun at the military cemetery of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Home Guard infantry Division.<sup>43</sup> In the surroundings of the village of Galyč, located about 30 km east of Ivano-Frankivsk, there were also bloody battles, and from all this, one cemetery with 314 graves in a neglected state was preserved. The partial restoration of the monument was carried out by the Hungarians, restoring some names of Hungarian origin.

The town of Kałusz, which is often mentioned in military reports on war photographs, was also at the center of numerous bloody battles, especially during the Kerensky offensive of 1917. 358 graves were found there, among which no Croatian soldiers were identified.<sup>44</sup>

**ODESSA.** By the decision of the Russian emperor of January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1916, the Serbian government, that is, the Yugoslav Committee in Petrograd, was authorized to recruit prisoners of war from the composition of the “South Slavic peoples” and send them to the Thessaloniki front. These forces were supposed to join the “Serbian volunteer division”, stationed in the Black Sea port of Odessa. Croatian officers and non-commissioned officers demanded that their units be sent to the battlefield under the Croatian or Yugoslav insignia, and not Serbian, which was the reason for a rather sharp conflict. At the end of October 1916, uprisings of Croatian prisoners broke out in the camp on Kurlikovo polje, culminating in bloody Serbian retaliation at the “Kanatno zavod”, a ship’s rope factory that was turned into a prison camp. The exact number of victims will never be determined.

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1918. *Karpati, Galicija, Bukovina*, 67, 75.

43 *Prvi svjetski rat. Vodič kroz fondove i zbirke Hrvatskog državnog arhiva*, 304-305.; *Odjeci s bojišnice, Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, photograph from HR/HDA 1426/1969.;

44 PAŠČENKO, *Hrvatski grobovi 1914-1918*, 65.

After returning home, the surviving returnees made statements to Croatian parliamentarians. Their poignant testimonies were combined in the “Report of Croatian returnees from Ukrainian Odessa” from July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1918.<sup>45</sup>

In memory of those events, a memorial will be placed in Odessa aided by the efforts of Croatian war veterans and the Government of the Republic of Croatia.<sup>46</sup>

**USZOK PASS IN THE CARPATHIANS.** Uszok (Hungarian: *Uszok*) pass stretches west from Transcarpathia towards Galicia on the eastern side and is located near the Ukrainian border with Poland and Slovakia in today’s Zakarpattia region. Its height is 889 meters above sea level. Strategically important communications, rail and road, connecting Lviv and Uzhhorod with Hungary run through the pass. The name comes from the Uz River, which originates in that area. It is one of the places of fierce fighting, where the Russian army tried to penetrate to the Pannonian plain during 1914 and at the beginning of 1915. There were particularly heavy battles during the Winter Battles for the Carpathians in which Imp. and R. 79<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment from Otočac took part. They buried the dead in a hurry, and directed the wounded and sick towards Uzhhorod. The dead soldiers were buried in a common military cemetery, which was arranged in 1924 and a monument was erected there. There are individual smaller military cemeteries in the villages of Uszok, Volosjanka, Lubnja, Zagorb, Žornava, Kremnjanci and Stavne. The most famous cemeteries are Uszok I and Uszok II. 363 soldiers, mainly from the Austro-Hungarian army, were buried directly at the Uszok pass. In Uszok II, 115 soldiers were buried in the village cemetery. According to reports from the archives of the former Czechoslovakia, there are about thirty military cemeteries in the wider area where 3,605 military personnel of various nationalities were buried. At the aforementioned Uszok II cemetery, a plaque was placed in memory of the fallen soldiers of Austria-Hungary and Russia, and the text is in Ukrainian, Russian, German and Hungarian language. Representatives of the Croatian Association of Special Police installed a supplementary plaque in memory of the fallen Croatian soldiers.<sup>47</sup>

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45 KNEZ, *Odessa-san ili stvarnost izgubljenih Hrvata*, 175-179.

46 <https://www.nacionalno.hr/obilježavanje-hrvatskih-grobista-u-ukrajini/>, access: March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

47 PAŠČENKO, *Hrvatski grobovi 1914-1918*, 58-60.; GRALJUK, „*Bojišnice i grobišta hrvatskih vojnika na karpatskom ratištu u Prvom svjetskom ratu*”, 20.

**RAJLIV MILITARY CEMETERY NEAR STRYJ (REPUBLIC OF UKRAINE).** There are numerous military cemeteries in the Stryjsky District, especially in the area along the Dniester River and along the Stryi-Drogobyč road from the village of Zavadovo to the village of Railiv. Some have just been restored. Important for us is the restored military cemetery near the village of Railiv, not far from Stryi, where the Croatian side has erected a memorial plaque for the killed Croats in the wider area. Here, the combat activities from 1915 of Imp. and R. 79<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment from Otočac are investigated in details, especially the locations of casualties in the wider area around Drogobyč. According to the information of the Ukrainian historian Oleg Bagan, there are several cemeteries of the Austro-Hungarian army in the area of Drogobyč municipality and in the city itself, where soldiers of Croatian units, primarily staffed by soldiers from Lika,<sup>48</sup> were buried. At the military cemetery near Railiv, the Republic of Croatia installed a memorial plaque to the Croats who died in World War I.

**LVIV, REPUBLIC OF UKRAINE.** At the beginning of the war, the Lviv region often passed from one side to the other, which was marked by numerous cemeteries that remain as monuments to battles and deaths. Thus, in Lviv itself, at the Lačakiv Cemetery (Marsovo Polje), there was a large Austro-Hungarian cemetery, where prisoners and deceased Austro-Hungarian soldiers from military hospitals in 1914-1915 were buried, with 10,000 soldiers of different nationalities buried there in all. The cemetery was destroyed during the Soviet period and is gradually being restored today. During 2018, on the centenary of the war, a Croatian monument was erected as a memorial to all the Croats who died on the Eastern Front. During official visits, wreaths are laid there and tributes are paid to the fallen.<sup>49</sup>

It should be noted that there are numerous cemeteries in the wider area of Lviv. Thus, in the village of Glynsk (Zhovkva district) there is a renovated Austro-Hungarian cemetery where soldiers were killed in the battles for Lviv on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1915, in which members of Imp. and R. 79<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment from Otočac also participated, were buried. The monument, the chapel and some tombstones with the names of mainly Austrians and Hungarians have been preserved.<sup>50</sup>

48 PAŠČENKO, *Hrvatski grobovi 1914-1918*, 63-65.

49 <https://www.nacionalno.hr/sredisnja-komemoracija-povodom-obiljezavanja-100-godisnjice-zavrsetka-prvog-svjetskog-rata-na-istocnoj-bojiscnici>, access: March 27, 2022.

50 PAŠČENKO, *Hrvatski grobovi 1914-1918. Karpati, Galicija, Bukovina*, 63.

**UJŚCIE JEZUICKIE MILITARY CEMETERY (REPUBLIC OF POLAND).** In the southern Polish village of Ujście Jezuickie, east of Krakow, there is a preserved military cemetery number 251, where 352 dead soldiers were buried, 130 of them members of the Zagreb 31<sup>st</sup> fighter battalion. Soldiers died during the breakthrough near Tarnow and Görlitz from May 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, 1915. Of the total number of buried soldiers, 275 are Austro-Hungarian and 77 are Russian. There are 257 identified and 95 unidentified soldiers. The designers of the mentioned cemetery are Emil Ladewig and Hans Watzal, and the cemetery was built in 1917.<sup>51</sup>

**OLOMOUC MAUSOLEUM (CZECH REPUBLIC)** is a very valuable monument to those who died in World War I, whose crypt contains the remains of 1,187 soldiers from South Slavic countries who died during World War I due to wounds, disease or epidemics, in various camps, sanatoriums or hospitals in Moravia and Silesia. It was created by the work of the the Olomouc board of the Czechoslovak-Yugoslav League immediately after World War I. It was built in the style of ancient classicism, and it was designed and built by Olomouc architect Hubert Aust and builder Jan Valihrach.

During the war, the remains of dead Yugoslav soldiers were, except in military cemeteries (in Moravia, e.g. Olomouc, Hranice), buried mainly in public (civilian) cemeteries that were taken care of by local authorities. The first results of the list of dead Yugoslav soldiers were published in 1921, from which a total of 348 cemeteries with 14,746 buried soldiers were visible, of which 6,406 were in the Czech Republic, 790 in Moravia and 7,550 in Slovakia. Among them, the majority were Serbian prisoners, and a significantly smaller number were soldiers from the South Slavic regions of the former Habsburg Monarchy. This work was continued until 1925 and to a lesser extent even after that.

The Yugoslav mausoleum in Olomouc is not the only one of its kind in the territory of the former Czechoslovakia. It started in the mid-1920s, when the idea of erecting common graves for dead soldiers, originating from the lands of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, matured according to the French model. Thus, a facility was built for Moravia and Silesia in Olomouc (opened

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51 DROGOMIR, *Polegli w Galiciji zachodniej 1914-14*, book 1., 449-451; *Jutarnji list*, no. 1166, from June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1915, 3; STEINER, *Heldenwerk 1914-1918*, 227, 248,293; BOSCH, *Die Haltung der südslawischen Soldaten des österreichungarischen Heeres im ersten Weltkrieg.*, 128.; Verlustlisten no. 196 from June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1915; TOMINAC, *Hrvati u Zimskim bitkama za Karpate i proboju kod Gorlica i Tarnówa 1915. godine*, 279.

in 1926), in Slovakia's Trenčín (1928) and Veliky Meder (joint cemetery), and in the Czech Republic in Jindřichovice near Karlovyh Var (1932).

The idea of erecting a monument in Olomouc apparently gathered pace quickly. Collective exhumations of Yugoslav war graves and placement of their remains in a common grave began in 1926 in Jindřichovice near Karlovyh Var (2,300), where the remains of soldiers from Broumov were transported in 1927 (3,000), and in 1929 from 26 other places in the Czech Republic (1,221). In Moravia and Silesia, where there were fewer Yugoslav war graves, the action was focused on a shorter period - during October 1928 in the cemeteries of 49 towns and municipalities. The largest number of them were in Brno (259 exhumed), Olomouc (173), Opava and Kroměříž (109 each), while only one grave was exhumed in fifteen cities.<sup>52</sup>

The problem of maintaining the building during its existence is particularly highlighted. However, Czech authorities have recently managed to restore the mausoleum and it looks very presentable today.

**MILITARY CEMETERY IN SOLKAN NEAR NOVA GORICA (REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA).** There is an Austro-Hungarian cemetery near the settlement of Solkan, at the western foot of Mount Sveta Gora, on the left bank of the Soča River. It was not completely preserved because it was damaged during the bombing of a nearby bridge in World War II. The headstones were corroded by moisture, and most of the name plates were damaged to the point of illegibility. On some of them we can still read Croatian surnames. In the center of the cemetery, there is a specially arranged mass grave of Austro-Hungarian soldiers with a pyramidal monument with the inscription "Ich hatt' einen Kameraden" (I had a comrade), probably according to the first verse of Ludwig Uhland's mournful soldier's song. There are 16 rows of 85 tombstones in the cemetery, and a total of around 1,360 soldiers, mostly of Hungarian nationality, were buried. Many Dalmatians are buried there.

**MEMORIAL OSSUARY SLAVIA (REPUBLIC OF ITALY).** About two km west of Solkan is Oslavia, a district of Gorica. There, the monumental Italian ossuary was completed in 1938 with a total of 20,000 listed by name and another 37,000 unknown soldiers, including a small number of Austro-Hungarian ones, and among them there are certainly many Dalmatians who served in the surrounding area. On the eve of each day, tribute is paid by ringing the bell,

52 SKOUPY, *Žrtve Velikog rata u olomouckom mauzoleju Jugoslavena*, 73-89



and the occupation of Gorica is commemorated on August 8<sup>th</sup> every year.<sup>53</sup>

**MILITARY CEMETERY IN ČRNIČ (REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA).** In the village of Črnič, which is located about 10 km east of Ajdovščina, on the Gojače-Šempas-Ajševica road, there is a military cemetery where 466 soldiers were buried, who died during 1916-1917 on the hill of Sveti Marko near Gorica and in nearby military hospitals. These were mainly members of Karlovac Imp. and R. 96<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment. According to word of mouth, two other cemeteries are located there, along with a civilian cemetery near the local church, where the soldiers from Karlovac were also buried.

**MONUMENT NEAR SELO NA KRASU (REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA).** The monument is located approx. 3 km southeast of the village of Kostanjevica and is dedicated to the fallen soldiers from Karlovac of the Imp. and R. 96<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment who died in the Seventh Battle of Soča on the Kras in September 1916. The cemetery was abandoned and only the inscription board on the central monument remained. More detailed information about the original cemetery does not exist. It is assumed that the remains were moved to the Gorjansko military cemetery.

**GORJANSKO MILITARY CEMETERY (REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA).** Gorjansko military cemetery is located northwest of the village of Gorjansko on the Kras. Austro-Hungarian soldiers who died during 1915-1917 on the battlefield around Kostanjevica and beyond, as well as those who died in a nearby military hospital, were buried in the cemetery. The cemetery monument had already been completed during the war, in July 1916. The cemetery has retained its original appearance, but the three-part stone crosses and marble plaques with names are no longer on the mass graves. According to the Italian authorities, who led the excavations of the smaller military cemeteries around Kras during the 1930s, 6,015 soldiers were transferred here, so that in addition to those buried earlier, over 10,000 soldiers lie here. Most of the Croatian soldiers should be members of Imp. and R. 79<sup>th</sup> Otočac and 96<sup>th</sup> Karlovac infantry regiments, which suffered very heavy losses on the battlefields.

**MENGORE I CVETJE (REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA).** In the wider area around the town of Tolmin, there was a famous bridgehead, which, unlike Gorica, never fell. On the Mengore hill (453 meters above sea level), northwest of the village Modrejce, there are significant buildings created by members of

53 BLAŽINA, HAMERŠAK, *Hrvatskim tragovima po Sočanskom bojištu*,

the 4th battalion of Zagreb Imp. and R. 53<sup>rd</sup> infantry regiment. An open-air museum with partially restored remains of Austro-Hungarian trenches, caverns, a memorial plaque and similar objects is arranged on its slopes. There are many preserved buildings of soldiers from Zagreb, and above one of the caverns is carved a short inscription »*Cave of our brave heroes*« with the signature of the 22<sup>nd</sup> company of the mentioned Zagreb battalion, and in another place there is a longer vow: "*Treasure, life, all for the emperor, all for the king and for the home. For the defense of the beloved homeland, God willing and heroic luck*", along with the signature of captain Pavelić.<sup>54</sup>

**MILITARY CEMETERY NEAR THE VILLAGE OF MODREJCE AND THE KITCHEN MONUMENT OF THE 53<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT (REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA).** South-east of the Most na Soči is the village of Bača pri Modrej, in which opposite the village of Postaja is a larger monument dedicated to Sarajevo 15<sup>th</sup> corps. Along the road on the west side from Most na Soči towards Modrejce, there is a monument to the kitchen Imp. and R. 53<sup>rd</sup> infantry regiment, which indicates the presence of our soldiers on that battlefield.

The village of Modrejce is between Most na Soči and Tolmin, where there is a very nicely maintained Austro-Hungarian military cemetery. According to the newer inscription on the monument, about 3,000 soldiers who died in the defense of the Tolmin bridgehead were buried there. Individual graves are marked with stones, but without name plates. Above the entrance to the cemetery is the sign »*Ruhestätte der Helden von St. Luzia*« (Rest of the heroes of St. Lucia). The deceased members of the Imp. and R. Fourth Battalion of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Zagreb infantry regiment were moved here from their war cemetery near Selo pri Volčah near the hydroelectric power plant Doblar at the foot of Cvetje where they had their combat positions.

**CHURCH ON JAVORC (REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA).** In the hills north-east of Tolmin, on the western slopes of the valley of the Tolminka River, there is an exceptional Art Nouveau Church of Holy Spirit in Javorc (571 m), in honor of the fallen Austro-Hungarian soldiers, which was completed in 1916. In addition to the ornamentation and colors, the wooden panels made from ammunition boxes attract the most attention in its interior on which the names of

54 GALIĆ, *Cvetje-Mengore v viharju vojne 1915-1917.*; GALIĆ, PIRIH, *Od Krna do Rombona*; ČUTURA, GALIĆ, *Veliki rat: Pregled ratnih operacija*, 13-60; GALIĆ, MARUŠIĆ, *Tolminsko mostišče*, vol. 1. and 2.;

2,808 dead have been inscribed, including many Croats, especially members of the Zagreb IV battalion Imp. and R. 53<sup>rd</sup> infantry regiment of the Joint Army.<sup>55</sup>

**MILITARY CEMETERY LOG POD MANGARTOM (REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA).** North of Kobarid is Log pod Mangartom, an idyllic village at the foot of Rombon (2,208 m), where members of the Imp. and R. 4<sup>th</sup> Bosnian-Herzegovinian infantry regiment from Mostar died. The cemetery with about 800 graves of Austro-Hungarian soldiers is well preserved. Among the particularly numerous members of Mostar 4<sup>th</sup> Bosnian-Herzegovinian regiment, we also find a lot of Croatian names. The graves of soldiers of the Islamic faith, for whom a mosque was built nearby in 1917, were marked with niches, and those of other faiths with metal crosses; almost all of them have names. Even during the war, an impressive figural monument was erected in the cemetery, the work of the Czech sculptor Ladislav Kofránek, next to which the highest state honors were recently joined by a separate symbol of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>56</sup>

**OTHER MONUMENTS.** During the battles in South Tyrol in 1916, members of the Karlovac Imp. and R. 96<sup>th</sup> infantry regiments took part. In bloody fighting during May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1916 on the plateau of Sette Comuni Marcai-ridge (elevation 1506) the soldiers were supposed to break through to the south to enable the lateral movement of forces. The soldiers from Karlovac penetrated the back of Costesin ridge and forced the Italians to retreat to the third defensive line, and in these battles they suffered heavy losses. After these battles, the road to Asiago was opened for the Austro-Hungarian army, a strategic starting point before the penetration to the Venetian plain. As a memorial to this battle, the Karlovac central monument was preserved in the Italian military museum of Roanna (Sette Comuni), which was brought from their cemetery at the foot of the Marcai ridge where they buried dead soldiers from these battles.

There is also a memorial ossuary - *Sacrario militare di Asiago* - in the South Tyrolean town of Asiago in the province of Vicenza in the Veneto region in northeast Italy, where 54,286 soldiers who died in the wider area of the Seven Municipalities (Sette Comuni) are buried. Of these soldiers, about 20,000 are Austro-Hungarian, among whom are also buried Croatian soldiers from units that operated in a wider area. The remains of identified soldiers are located

55 BLAŽINA, HAMERŠAK, *Hrvatskim tragovima po Sočanskom bojištu*,

56 BLAŽINA, HAMERŠAK, *Hrvatskim tragovima po Sočanskom bojištu*,

along the walls of the gallery in alphabetical order within the large block of the sanctuary, while those who could not be identified, apart from belonging to the units, are buried in two common graves next to the crypt. The complex was designed by the architect Orfeo Rosato, made of domestic white marble, also the work of the sculptors Montini and Zanetti, and was inaugurated on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1938. It has a square base of 80 meters with a terrace above which is accessed via two front staircases, on the parapet of which arrows are attached that mark the peaks and places that were the scene of the bloodiest battles in the surrounding area. Another staircase provides access to the upper part of the magnificent four-faced triumphal arch with a votive space in the middle. The sanctuary houses the bodies of 33,086 fallen Italians (of which 12,795 are known and placed in individual niches and 20,291 unknown soldiers buried in collective graves). The remains of 18,505 dead Austro-Hungarian soldiers were collected and buried, of which 12,355 are unidentified.

It should be noted that there was a military cemetery of the 25<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Infantry Regiment near the village of Campo Mullo whose remains were probably moved to the Asiago memorial ossuary.<sup>57</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

Marking the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War I, and over the past fifteen years, Croatian scientists and volunteers have begun the painstaking work of researching and marking certain places where Croatian soldiers fell in battle abroad, which were somewhat forgotten. The aim was to create memorials and places of gathering of allied countries and their peoples, and in the end, with the help of Croatian diplomacy, this initiative partially succeeded, especially in Poland, Ukraine and Slovenia. In this appendix, some investigated localities are discussed, and some potential ones that need to be investigated in the future are also pointed out. Researches in localities where Croatian troops suffered heavy losses are particularly important.

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<sup>57</sup> *Prvi svjetski rat. Vodič kroz fondove i zbirke Hrvatskog državnog arhiva*, 256, 312.

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## Hrvatska mjesta pijeteta Prvoga svjetskog rata u inozemstvu

### Sažetak

Usljed složenih povijesnih okolnosti do unatrag desetak godina spomenička baština Prvoga svjetskog rata u inozemstvu nije bila uopće istraživana. Za takav pristup postojali su subjektivni i objektivni razlozi. Od prvih treba istaknuti nedostatak interesa da se uslijed dinamičnih događanja dvadesetog stoljeća pristupi toj vrlo složenoj aktivnosti zbog političkih stajališta u novonastalim zemljama nakon završetka Prvoga svjetskog rata. Od drugih je nedostatak primarnih izvora u Hrvatskoj osobito njemačke provenijencije. Zahvaljujući proteku vremena, dolasku digitalnoga doba i otvaranju dosad teško dostupnih arhiva napokon je lakše doći do određenih podataka, osobito nakon promjene klime prema ovoj problematici u zemljama njihova nastanka. Obilježavajući 100 godina Prvoga svjetskog rata tijekom proteklih petnaestak godina hrvatski znanstvenici i volonteri započeli su mukotrpan posao na istraživanjima i obilježavanjima pojedinih mjesta stradanja hrvatskih vojnika koji su sudjelovali u vrlo dinamičnim događanjima dvadesetog stoljeća – „stoljeća ekstrema“. Ovaj prilog koncentrirat će se na istražene lokalitete kao i na potencijalna koja je potrebno istražiti u narednom vremenu. Osobito ona istraživanja na lokalitetima gdje su hrvatske snage imale velike gubitke zbog čega postoji mogućnost da tamo još uvijek postoje određeni ostaci vojnih groblja.

**Ključne riječi:** hrvatska vojna povijest, Prvi svjetski rat, mjesta pijeteta u inozemstvu.