

The Lika General Martin Vrkljan von Pilar (1860 – 1937)

Summary

Croats have a rich and distinguished military history and tradition, yet many aspects of it remain insufficiently explored. One of the best examples of this legacy is the group of Croatian generals and admirals who brought fame to Croatian soldiers on battlefields across Europe. Among them was Martin Vrkljan von Pilar, an Austro-Hungarian Army lieutenant field marshal, originally from Pilar near St. Roch (Sv. Rok). Like other generals from the Lika region, he earned his ranks on the battlefield, particularly during World War I, for which he was awarded two high decorations for bravery and leadership in combat. These honors also secured him a noble title. He demonstrated his loyalty to his birthplace by choosing the noble predicate „von Pilar“, derived from his native village. His Croatian patriotism was further expressed through his active membership in the society „Brethren of the Croatian Dragon“, for which he received a dragon emblem and the honorary name „Dragon of Pilar.“

Key words: Lika, Martin Vrkljan von Pilar, Croatian general, Austro-Hungarian Army