



FIRST WORLD WAR COLLECTION OPATJE SELO

ENGLISH

The First World War Collection in Opatje selo presents the highlights from the lives of soldiers during the war and a selection of original items that were used on the Isonzo Front by both armies. The reconstruction of a military barracks from WWI is very interesting, because it clearly presents army life on the front. The collection is also constantly complemented with original photos from the times of battles on the Isonzo Front.

The Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic Sea runs through Opatje selo connecting the heritage of the Isonzo Front and other cultural and natural sights along the former front line.

Items exhibited in the First World War Collection were contributed by Elvis Marvin, Marko Semolič and Julijan Piščanec.



TURISTIČNO DRUŠTVO CERJE

Opatje selo 14, 5291 Miren, Slovenia

Telephone no.: +386 41 820 509,

+386 31 477 412

E-mail: info@tdcerje.si

www.tdcerje.si



Publisher: Turistično društvo Cerje, October 2019

Text: Konrad Marušič • Proofreading: Doris Sodja

Photos: Konrad Marušič, Dominik Bizjak - Dinko

Design / Printed by: A-media d. o. o. • No. of copies: 500





The village of Opatje selo lived its hardest moments in history during the First World War, when major battles between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Italian Kingdom took place on the Isonzo Front.

Local people were struck by the war for the first time in the summer of 1914, on 26 July or St Anna's Day, when they were preparing a Sunday dance and a game of bingo. Austrian gendarmes hung the announcements for general mobilisation of all men able to fight in the war. The cruellest times began on 23 May 1915 when Italy declared war against Austro-Hungary and when the war stormed right to their courtyards. In a few days, they were forced to get together what they needed to survive and by military order and due to

major bombardments they left and took refuge in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, especially Bohemia, around Kralupy near Vltavou and to Vysoke Mito, while some people fled to the Vipava, Carniola and Carinthia regions, Austria and Hungary. Up to the fall of Gorizia in the sixth Isonzo offensive in August 1916, Opatje selo was a part of the Austro-Hungarian hinterland, when the battles took place on the plateau of Doberdob, and after that the front line moved past the village towards the east. The Italian army came to the village on 12 August 1916 and laid siege to the former Austro-Hungarian positions and stayed there until the last withdrawal from the Karst in October 1917, when the Austro-Hungarian and German units made their final breakthrough in the Upper Soča Valley and pushed the Italians far towards the west, i.e. to the Piave River.

The Isonzo Front did not leave fatal marks only on soldiers and local people, who became refugees, but also left deep wounds on the front itself; it turned into a multitude of ruins due to the strikes of thousands of grenades.

In autumn of 1918, the soldiers who survived and refugees slowly returned to the village that was devastated to the ground and was restored after war according to the plans of the famous architect Maks Fabiani, who planned the restoration on the basis of its former condition. He designed modern plans with a wider main road and streets, larger squares and added some urban feeling to the village itself.

When the battles were over, numerous trenches, caverns, army storage houses and barracks, shooting positions and many military cemeteries as well as thousands of unexploded ordnances and other military material that was used by local people to restore their homes was a reminder of the war horrors. Some people collected and sold those materials to survive. Severe accidents often occurred due to handling of unexploded ordnances, as a result of which many local people became disabled or even died.

