



# THE FIRST WORLD WAR OUTDOOR MUSEUMS & *The Isonzo Front, 1915 - 1917*

2007-2013

cooperazione territoriale europea  
programma per la cooperazione  
transfrontaliera  
**Italia-Slovenia**  
evropske teritorialno sodelovanje  
program transmejske sodelovanja  
**Slovenija-Italija**



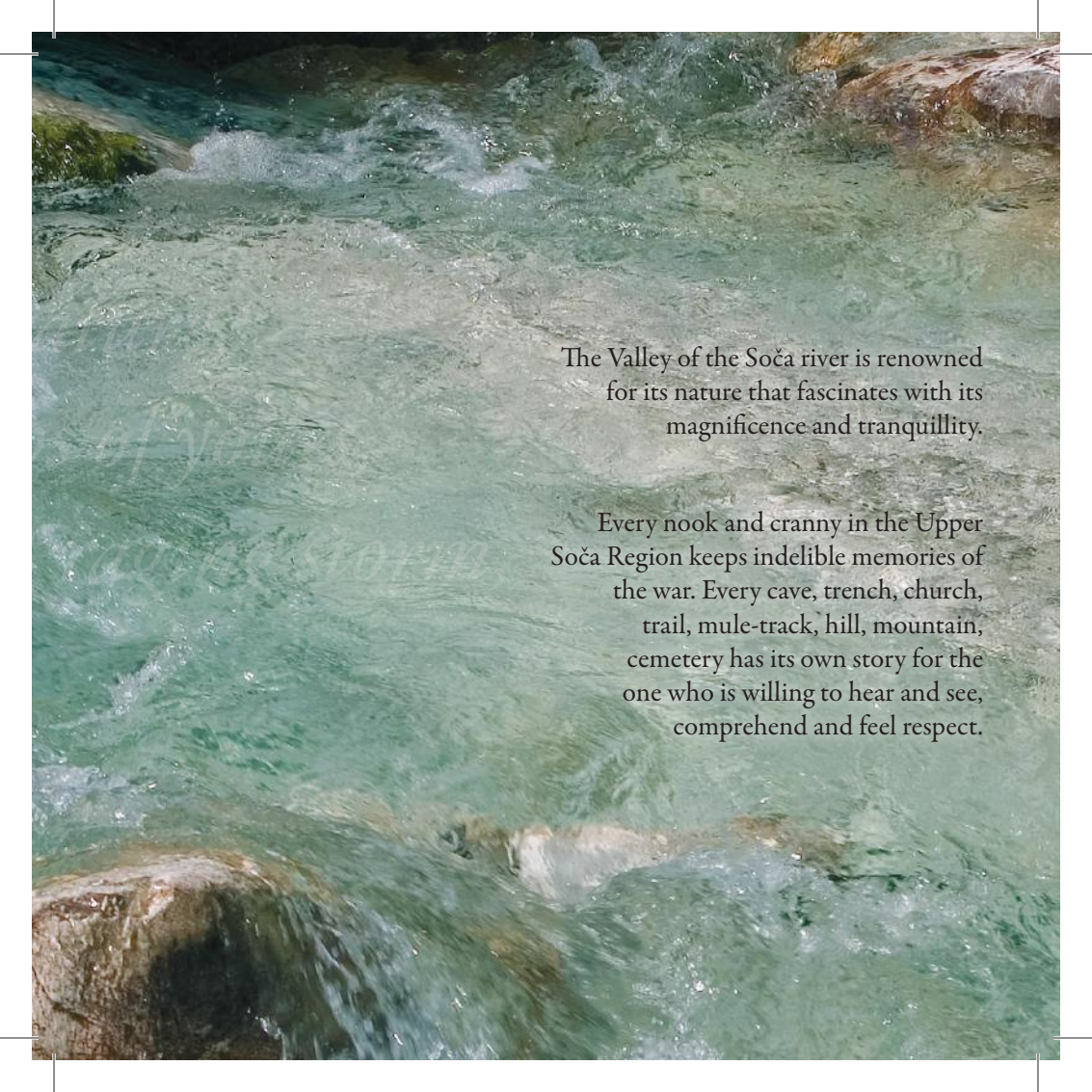
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sviluppo regionale  
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za regionalni razvoj

You are magnificent  
 bright daughter of  
 Grace & Love  
 When the world is dark  
 Are not distant  
 So close to me  
 So close to me  
 So close to me





The Valley of the Soča river is renowned  
for its nature that fascinates with its  
magnificence and tranquillity.

Every nook and cranny in the Upper  
Soča Region keeps indelible memories of  
the war. Every cave, trench, church,  
trail, mule-track, hill, mountain,  
cemetery has its own story for the  
one who is willing to hear and see,  
comprehend and feel respect.




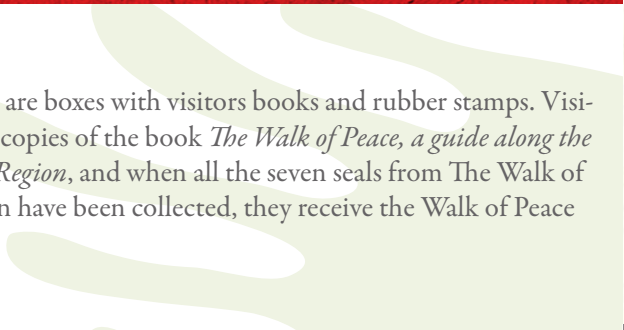
POT MIRU

The Soča Valley area was part of the Isonzo Front during the First World War. Along the Soča, youths and men of many nations fought, suffered and met their death. Preserved from this time have been numerous remains which constitute the cultural and historical heritage of national and international interest.

The Walk of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation is in charge of the protection, preservation and presentation of this heritage. In collaboration with some historical and tourist societies in the Upper Soča Region, six outdoor museums have been arranged. They are situated in those sections of the front line where the density of remains is the greatest and the access relatively easy.

In 2007, the Isonzo Front outdoor museums and its remains and memorials of greater significance as well as natural beauties were interconnected into the Walk of Peace in the Upper Soča Region. It runs past six outdoor museums: Ravelnik, Čelo, Zaprikraj, Kolovrat, Mrzli vrh and Mengore. Along the Walk, visitors can have a look at military cemeteries and chapels, Kluže Fortification, the gorges of the Soča, the Koritnica and the Tolmika, idyllic mountain pastures in the area of the Triglav National Park, the Kozjak fall, two charnel houses (at Kobarid and Tolmin), a memorial church of the Holy Spirit on the Javorca plateau, etc. The Walk of Peace has spread from the Upper Soča Region across the entire area of the former Isonzo Front, all to the Adriatic. Thus, the “Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic” has been established, being about 230 kilometres long. Its purpose is to present to visitors the cultural-historical heritage, natural beauties and ethnological features. A major part of these attractions can be experienced as pleasing hiking or biking tours, which provides an active recreation in the tranquil and unspoiled nature.

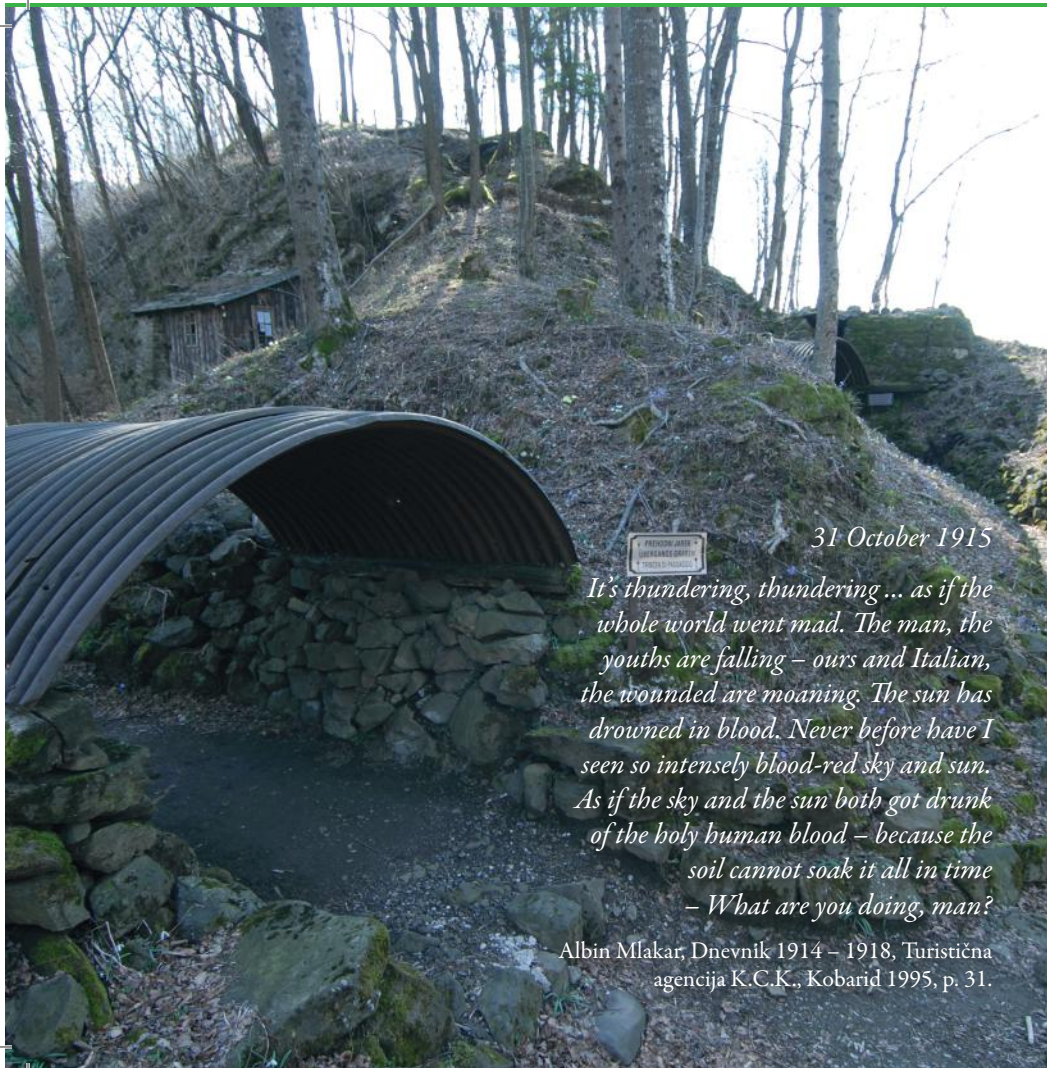
**The Walk of Peace is dedicated to the memory  
of the great number of casualties of the First World War.**

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- ▲ Mountaineering equipment is recommended for the tour and the use of flashlight is compulsory, since caves are parts of all outdoor museums. If you do the tour without a guide, it is at your risk.
  - ▲ Some of the six outdoor museums are located within the borders of the Triglav National Park or they are classified as cultural monuments. The areas of Mt. Rombon, the Krn range and Mengore are declared historical areas in which stricter protection regimen applies.
  - ▲ The visitors are expected to respect the natural and cultural heritage. They must not take any remains of the First World War as their souvenirs.

In the outdoor museums, there are boxes with visitors books and rubber stamps. Visitors can collect stamps in their copies of the book *The Walk of Peace, a guide along the Isonzo Front in the Upper Soča Region*, and when all the seven seals from The Walk of Peace in the Upper Soča Region have been collected, they receive the Walk of Peace badge.







31 October 1915

*It's thundering, thundering ... as if the whole world went mad. The man, the youths are falling – ours and Italian, the wounded are moaning. The sun has drowned in blood. Never before have I seen so intensely blood-red sky and sun. As if the sky and the sun both got drunk of the holy human blood – because the soil cannot soak it all in time – What are you doing, man?*

Albin Mlakar, Dnevnik 1914 – 1918, Turistična agencija K.C.K., Kobarid 1995, p. 31.



# RAVELNIK

m

## AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE IN THE BOVEC AREA

After the Italian occupation of Bovec in August 1915, the Austro-Hungarian Army further reinforced its first line of defence at the eastern rim of the Bovec basin, especially across two hills: Ravelnik (519 m) and Stržišče (486 m). The two elevations form a natural blockade which was changed by the Austro-Hungarian soldiers by means of fortified positions, caves and trenches to the pillar of their defence.

An outdoor museum is arranged on the slope of Mt. Ravelnik in the area of the onetime Austro-Hungarian first line of defence. A circular path connects the cleansed and restored



trenches and connection tunnels, pill-boxes, caves, machine-gun emplacements and reconstructed cabins. There are a lot of remains in this relatively small area.

## ACCESS

About 1.5 km from Bovec, in the direction of Predel and the Trenta valley, there is a First World War military cemetery. From the cemetery you continue in the direction of Trenta another few hundreds of meters, where a trail branches to the right from the main road. After some minutes of walk you reach the information board, at which the circular path starts through the outdoor museum.

## ALTITUDE ABOVE SEA LEVEL

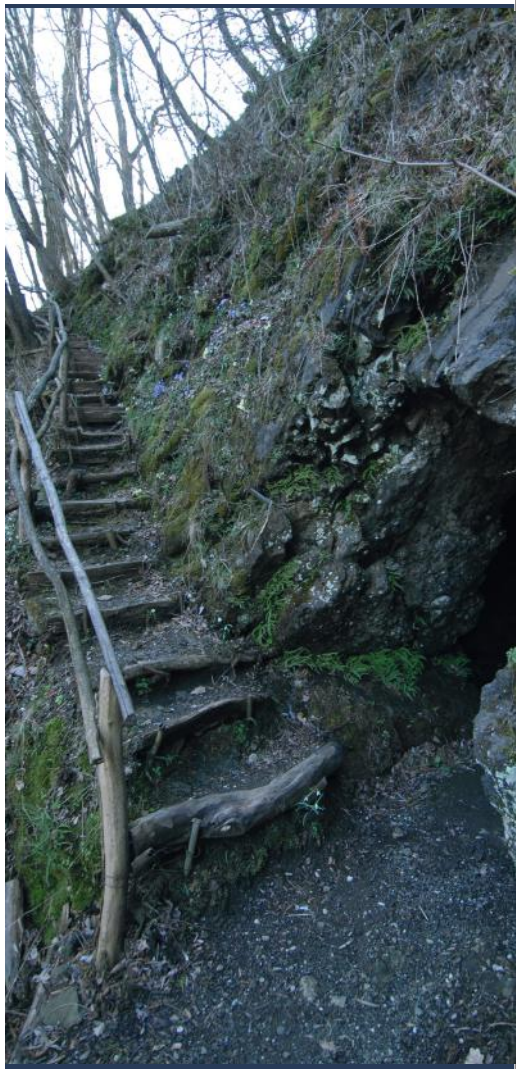
Start: Bovec 460 m

Museum: 519 m



**TOUR DURATION:** 1 hour

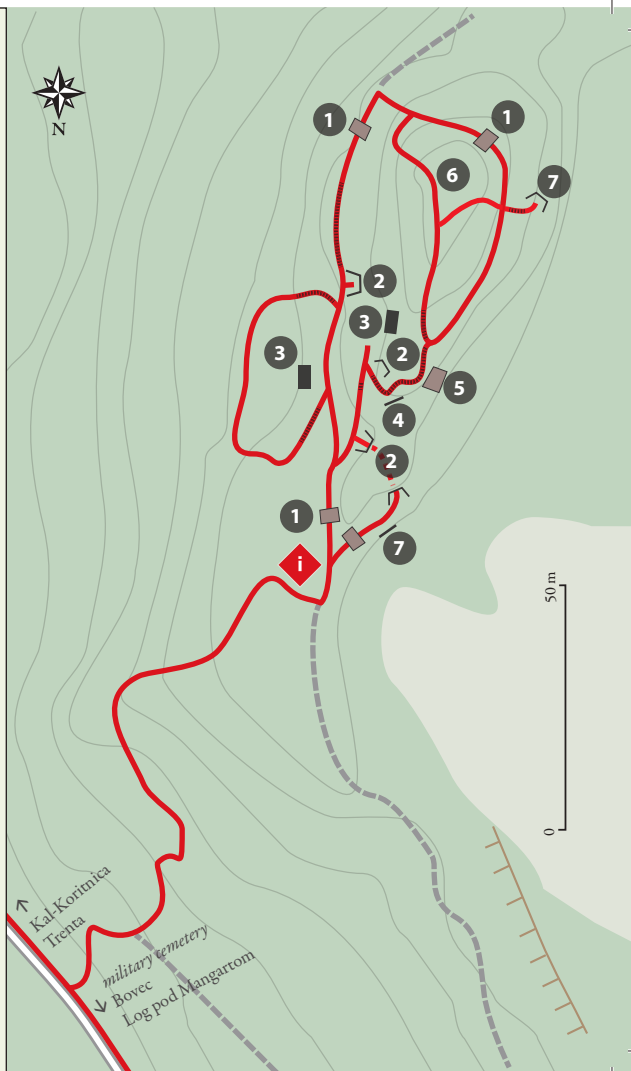
**DIFFICULTY:** Undemanding

**GPS:** 46.339725, 13.571506



## MAP OUTDOOR MUSEUM RAVELNIK

- 1 Passage trench
- 2 Cave
- 3 Cabin
- 4 Shooting shield
- 5 Observation post
- 6 Shell hit
- 7 Fortification with a loophole
-  Info board
-  The Walk of Peace

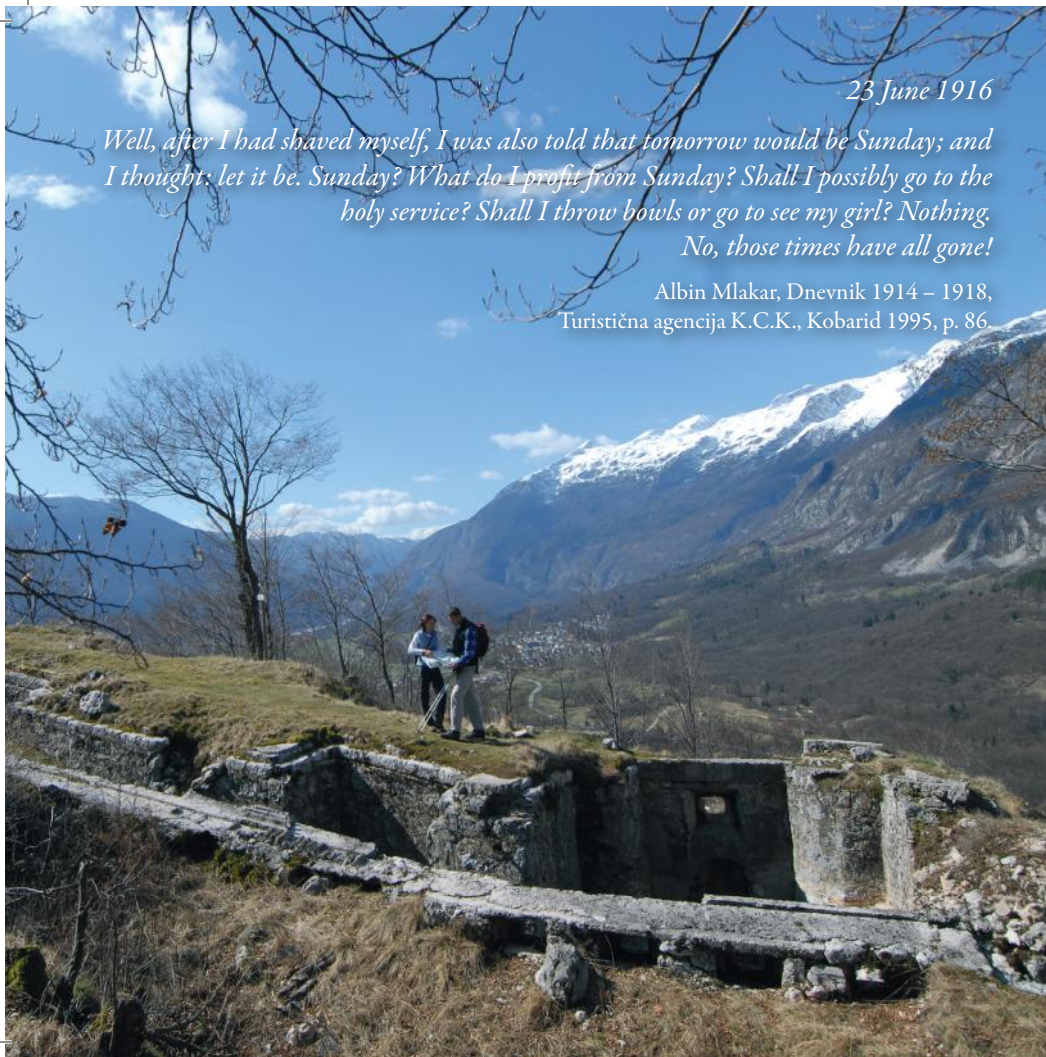




23 June 1916

*Well, after I had shaved myself, I was also told that tomorrow would be Sunday; and I thought: let it be. Sunday? What do I profit from Sunday? Shall I possibly go to the holy service? Shall I throw bowls or go to see my girl? Nothing. No, those times have all gone!*

Albin Mlakar, Dnevnik 1914 – 1918,  
Turistična agencija K.C.K., Kobarid 1995, p. 86.



## AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN GUN POSITIONS

The outdoor museum Čelo represents gun fortification which was built by the Austro-Hungarian Army on the slope of Mt. Svinjak with an excellent view in the spring of 1915, just before the Italian–Austro-Hungarian encounter. The fortification was part of the Bovec blockade system (Sperre Flitsch) that played an important role in the defence of the valley part of the front line in the Bovec area.

The main part of the fortification consists of 200-metre long trench with masoned walls which connects two gun positions with a kitchen, an observation post,



two dormitories for 40 men, and a shelter for 20 soldiers. The trench had 150 crenels for riflemen. A beautiful view is offered on Čelo over the Bovec basin, Mt. Rombon and the other surrounding mountains.

## ACCESS

From the village Kal-Koritnica, which lies at 3-km distance from Bovec in the direction of the Trenta valley, the access is possible from two directions, and throughout the tour you follow the marked path to Mt. Svinjak.

## ALTITUDE ABOVE SEA LEVEL

Start: Kal-Koritnica 460 m

Museum: 650 m

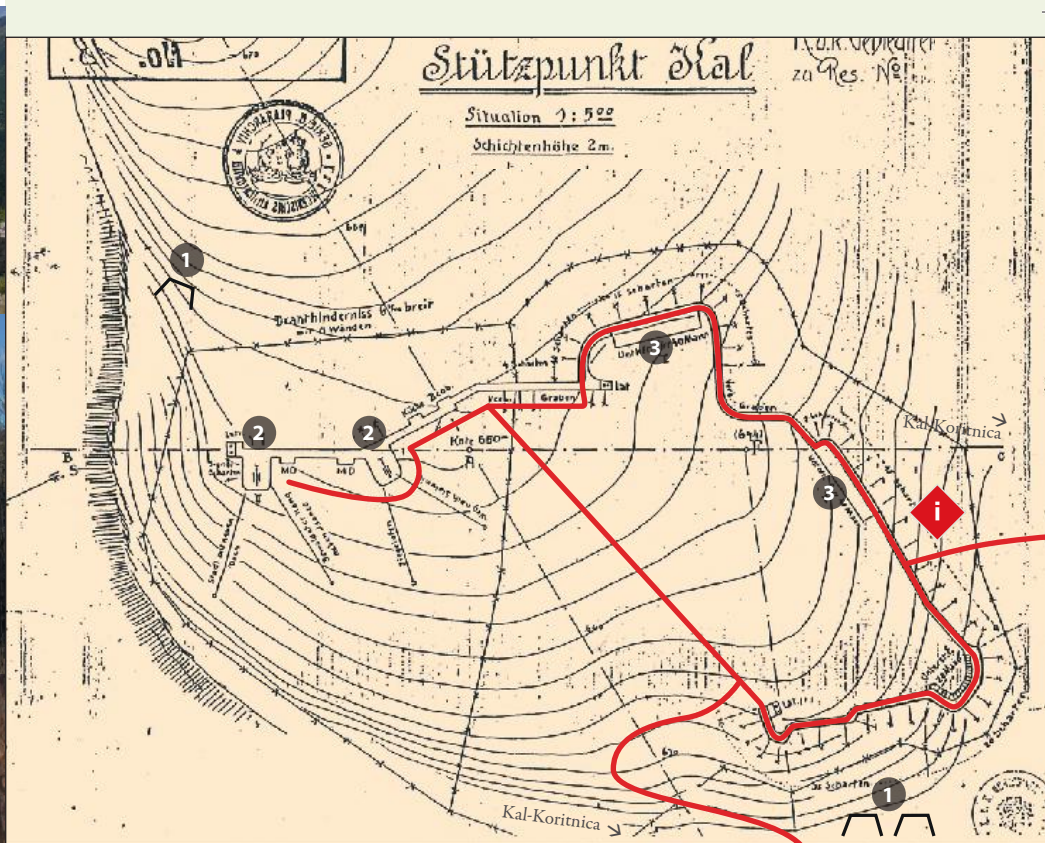
**TOUR DURATION:** 2 hours

**DIFFICULTY:** Undemanding

**GPS:** 46.341275, 13.584616



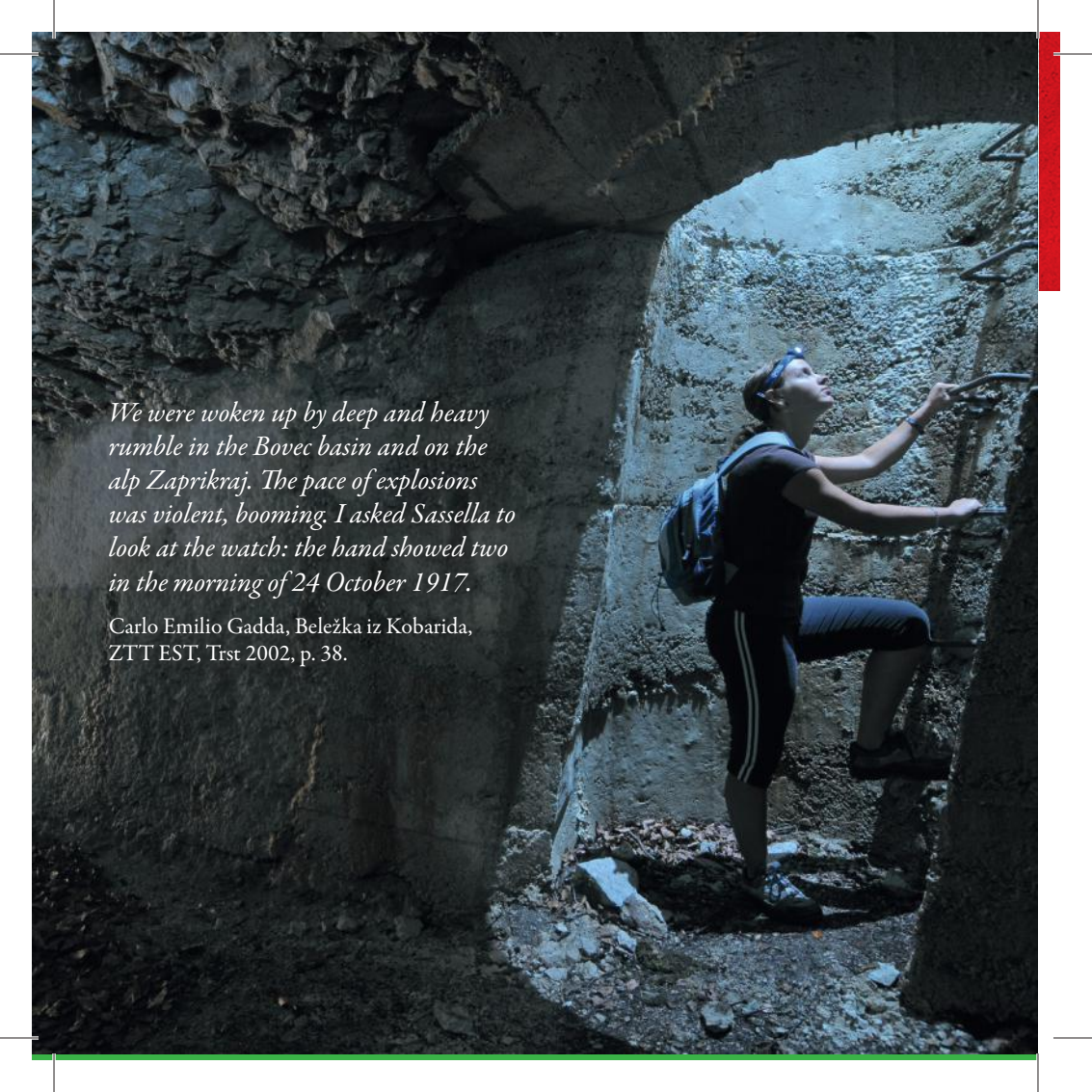




MAP  
OUTDOOR MUSEUM  
ČELO

- 1 Cave
- 2 Gun position
- 3 Dwelling place

- i Info board
- The Walk of Peace

A photograph of a person with a backpack and a headlamp, climbing a stone archway in a cave. The person is wearing a dark shirt and shorts with white stripes. They are looking up and reaching for a ledge. The cave walls are rough and rocky. The lighting is dim, with a bright light source visible through the archway.

*We were woken up by deep and heavy  
rumble in the Bovec basin and on the  
alp Zapikraj. The pace of explosions  
was violent, booming. I asked Sassella to  
look at the watch: the hand showed two  
in the morning of 24 October 1917.*

Carlo Emilio Gadda, Beležka iz Kobarida,  
ZTT EST, Trst 2002, p. 38.

# ZAPRIKRAJ

m

## THE ITALIAN FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE

The outdoor museum Zaprikraj lies by the path between the alps Zaprikraj and Predolina above Drežnica. It represents the well fortified Italian first line of defence in the Krn range which blocked the passage along the valley between Mt. Krasji vrh and Mt. Vršič. The heaviest battles between the two adversary armies in the Krn range were fought in the autumn of 1915.

The museum's circular path runs through the trenches, caves, gun- and mortar positions, past the remains of cabins, a pillbox and the restored memorial plaque dedicated to the killed Italian lieutenant.



Visit to the museum Zaprikraj is a whole-day tour which, in addition to revealing the history of the First World War, offers many pleasures of hiking in the unspoiled nature, where the alps are still active.



## ACCESS

At Kobarid you turn towards the village Drežnica (5 km) and continue to Drežniške Ravne (2 km). Further on, follow the way-signs for the alp Zaprikraj. At the trough, where the asphalt road ends, the macadam track starts. This is the starting point for the hiking tour to the outdoor museum Zaprikraj.

## ALTITUDE ABOVE SEA LEVEL

Start: Drežniške Ravne 575 m  
Museum: 1259 m

**TOUR DURATION:** 5–6 hours

**DIFFICULTY:** Medium demanding

**GPS:** 46.293371, 13.613884



# MAP OUTDOOR MUSEUM ZAPRIKRAJ

1 Mortar position/  
observation post

2 Cave

3 Pillbox

4 Shell hit

5 Dwelling places

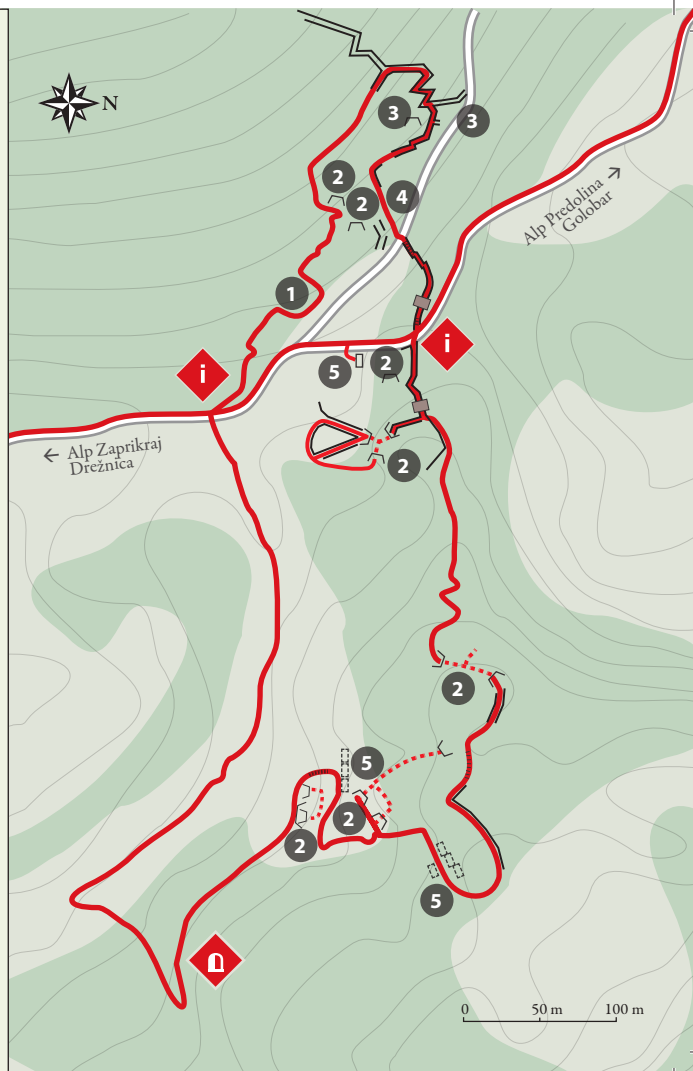
i Info board

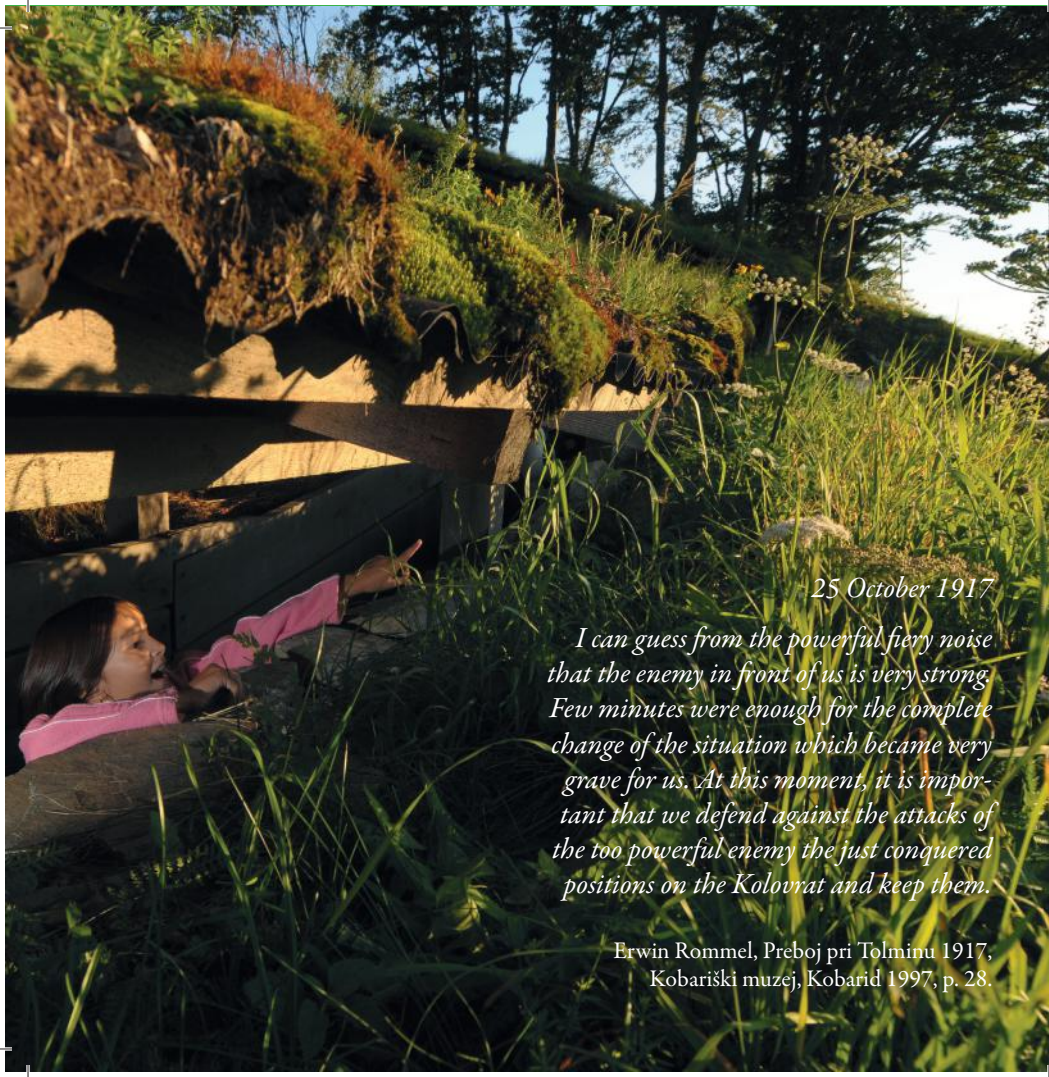
Monument

The Walk of Peace

Trenches

Remains of  
military structures





25 October 1917

*I can guess from the powerful fiery noise that the enemy in front of us is very strong. Few minutes were enough for the complete change of the situation which became very grave for us. At this moment, it is important that we defend against the attacks of the too powerful enemy the just conquered positions on the Kolovrat and keep them.*

Erwin Rommel, Preboj pri Tolminu 1917,  
Kobariški muzej, Kobarid 1997, p. 28.



# KOLOVRAT

m

## THE ITALIAN THIRD LINE OF DEFENCE

On the right bank of the Soča, between Kobarid and Tolmin, there rises a steep slope of the Kolovrat ridge from which a splendid view opens over the one-time Isonzo Front battlefield, stretching from Mt. Kanin, the Krn range to Mt. Sveta Gora; the view on the other side stretches over the Veneto region and Friuli lowland all to the Adriatic. During the First World War the Italian Army built on the Kolovrat range an extensive system of the third line of defence, called “linea d’armata”, a part of which is now arranged as the outdoor museum. It presents commanders and observation posts, machine-gun and gun positions, caves and networks of trenches. A visit to these positions is of



special interest thanks to various details, such as spiral stairs in one of the caves, and also due to partly original materials which were used in the wartime. The outdoor museum Kolovrat is a trans-border museum which continues on the Italian side, too.

## ACCESS

On the road from Kobarid towards Tolmin, in the settlement Idrsko, turn towards the village Livek (5 km), then turn left towards Livške Ravne (4 km). Continue for the next 3 km along the ridge of Kolovrat to the smaller parking site. Located at the information board is the entry to the outdoor museum. Access is possible also from the village Volče or from the Italian side.

## ALTITUDE ABOVE SEA LEVEL

Start: parking site 1065 m

Museum: the highest point 1115 m

**TOUR DURATION:** 1–2 hours

**DIFFICULTY:** Undemanding

**GPS:** 46.185862, 13.660276





MAP  
OUTDOOR MUSEUM  
KOLOVRAT

1 Restored section of positions

2 A former border guardhouse of the Yugoslav army

i Info board


The Walk of Peace

Trenches

Vantage point

Remains of military structures





*However, man by the Soča got used to bearing everything. Cold, heat, dust, rock camps, water shortage, flies. He overcame fear of shells and air torpedoes, of bombs that fall from the sky, and of blasting mines which turn up ground, of daggers, hand grenades, booming fire. He got used to everything, almost to death. He only couldn't get used to one thing – to Mrzli vrh.*

Alice Schalek, Posočje: marec do julij 1916,  
Karantanija, Ljubljana 2005, p. 261.

# MRZLI VRH

m

## AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN AND ITALIAN FIRST LINES OF DEFENCE

Above the valley of the Soča, on its left bank near Tolmin, the steep slope of Mt. Mrzli vrh (1359 m) rises. In the First World War, it figured as one of the key points in the Austro-Hungarian defence of the Tolmin bridgehead.

The ridge of Mt. Mrzli vrh is densely crisscrossed by numerous trenches and caves of the two belligerent sides. Just below the top of the mountain, in its north-eastern slope, the Austro-Hungarian Army hollowed roomy caves. In one of them a concrete altar was erected by the Hungarian soldiers in 1917.



The remains of the Austro-Hungarian and Italian first lines of defence on Mt. Mrzli vrh are connected with a circular path which runs past two still active alps, Pretovč and Lapoč.

A beautiful view opens from Mt. Mrzli vrh over the onetime battlefield of the Isonzo Front.

Just below the top of Mt. Mrzli vrh there is a restored monument on the onetime Austro-Hungarian military cemetery.



### ACCESS

It is possible to reach the outdoor museum Mrzli vrh from several directions. The easiest access runs from the village Krn, but you can also start from the village Zatolmin. The path from the village Krn gradually ascends to the alp Pretovč (1.5 hrs walk).

At the alp, the arranged circular path through the outdoor museum starts.

### ALTITUDE ABOVE SEA LEVEL

Start: the village Krn 870 m

Zatolmin 258 m

the alp Pretovč 1142 m

Museum: the highest point 1359 m

### TOUR DURATION:

from the village Krn: 5–6 hours;

from the village Zatolmin:

6–7 hours

**DIFFICULTY:** Medium demanding

**GPS:** 46.217555, 13.696775





MAP  
OUTDOOR MUSEUM  
MRZLI VRH



Info board



Military chapel



The Walk of Peace



K.u.K. Inf. Baon IV/53.  
22 Feld Kompanie

Sveta Lucija  
asih hrabro' naka

*Record of the order, found with an  
Italian P.O.W.:*

*"It is difficult to pick up a rose from  
Sveta Lucija, it is easy to be pricked by  
its thorns. But your brides, wives and  
mothers want exactly this rose. Bring it  
to them, at any cost."*

Alice Schalek, Posočje: marec do julij 1916,  
Karantanija, Ljubljana 2005, p. 212.

# MENGORE

m

## AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE AT THE TOLMIN BRIDGEHEAD

Mengore hill, together with the two neighbouring hills, Cvetje and Bučenica, was the core of the Austro-Hungarian defence of the Tolmin bridgehead. The entire area was strongly fortified with numerous trenches and caves. All the time during the 29 months of the war, the Austro-Hungarian positions on Mengore hill were exposed to constant shelling by the Italian artillery from higher elevations on the right bank of the Soča. Neither side attained any bigger success. It was exactly this area that served in the decisive 12th Isonzo Battle as the point of departure for the successful breakthrough of the joint Austro-Hungarian-German Army, which



pushed the Italian troops from the Upper Soča Region all to the river Piave. A circular path through the museum runs past well-preserved and restored remains of the Austro-Hungarian first line of defence.



It runs past trenches, caves, memorial tablets, remains of stone walls of cabins, a water reservoir and the monument of the onetime military cemetery. On the top of Mengore hill stands a church, dedicated to the Holy Virgin's Name.



### ACCESS

The pass of Poljance, which is the starting point for the visit to the outdoor museum Mengore, lies 2 km from Most na Soči in the direction of Nova Gorica. The parking site is arranged on the pass and the information board is also there.

### ALTITUDE ABOVE SEA LEVEL

Start: the pass of Poljance 253 m  
Museum: the highest point 453 m

**TOUR DURATION:** 2–3 hours

**DIFFICULTY:** Undemanding

**GPS:** 46.166621, 13.721516



## MAP OUTDOOR MUSEUM MENGORE

- 1 Searchlight position
- 2 3 10 Gun position
- 4 Howitzer position
- 5 Pass point
- 6 Water cistern
- 7 The IV/53 Command
- 8 Monument at  
The onetime cemetery
- 9 Observation post
- 11 Abyss
- 12 Troop's cave
- 13 The Kanduč Memorial plaque
- 14 The Pavelić Memorial plaque



Info board



The Church of the  
Holy Virgin's name



The Walk of Peace

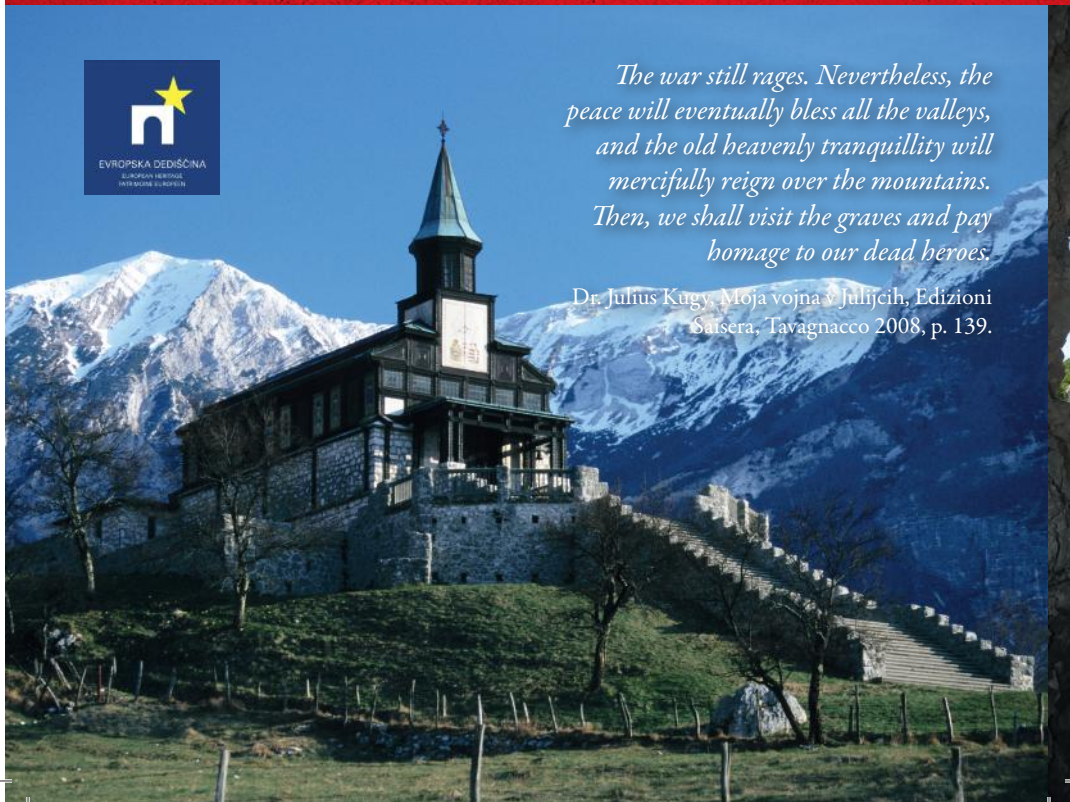


# GUIDED TOURS



*The war still rages. Nevertheless, the  
peace will eventually bless all the valleys,  
and the old heavenly tranquillity will  
mercifully reign over the mountains.  
Then, we shall visit the graves and pay  
homage to our dead heroes.*

Dr. Julius Kugy, *Moja vojna v Julijcih*, Edizioni  
Saisera, Tavagnacco 2008, p. 139.





The “Walk of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation” organizes guided tours along the Walk of Peace, First World War outdoor museums and other natural, cultural and ethnological attractions. Guided tours upon previous appointment are organized throughout the year.



# VISITOR CENTRE THE WALK OF PEACE

GALLERY AND  
CONFERENCE ROOMS



## ... AND INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION



POMME D'OR  
GOLDEN APPLE  
ZLATO JABOLKO



PUBLISHER: Ustanova »Fundacija Poti miru v Posočju« / "The Walk of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation", TRANSLATORS: Miha Obit, Branka Klemenc, EDITOR: Tadej Koren, PHOTOS BY: Tamino Petelinšek, Željko Cimprich, Tomaž Ovčak, Srdjan Živulović – BOBO, GRAPHIC DESIGN AND PRINT PREVIEW: Matic Leban, PRINT: Gorenjski tisk storitve d.o.o., COPIES: 5000, PLACE AND YEAR OF PRINT: Kobarid, 2013

*The present publication was prepared as part of the project The Walk of Peace – Via di Pace, co-funded within the framework of the 'Programme of Cross-Border Cooperation Slovenia-Italy 2007–2013'. It is available on the website [www.potmiru.si](http://www.potmiru.si).*

*The content of the publication does not necessarily reflect the official view of the European Union. This publication with all its contents is the sole responsibility of the "Walk of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation".*



## THE WALK OF PEACE FROM THE ALPS TO THE ADRIATIC



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REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA  
MINISTRSTVO ZA GOSPODARSKI  
RAZVOJ IN TEHNOLOGIJO



MINISTERO  
DELL'ECONOMIA  
E DELLE FINANZE

*Projekt sofinanciran v okviru Programa čezmejnega sodelovanja Slovenija-Italija 2007-2013 iz sredstev Evropskega sklada za regionalni razvoj in nacionalnih sredstev.*

*Progetto finanziato nell'ambito del Programma per la Cooperazione Transfrontaliera Italia-Slovenia, dal Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale e dai fondi nazionali.*