

BOHINJ 1941-1945

World War II

On 6 April 1941, the Axis powers attacked Yugoslavia. Bohinj was situated in the German occupation area.

In December 1941, the partisan movement organised an uprising at the Gorenjska region. On the night of 15 December, the Prešeren battalion moved towards Nomenj, but then fled after the conflict with the police. After the uprising, the Germans arrested about a hundred Bohinj inhabitants, shot 22 of them as hostages or killed them in concentration camps.

During the war, about 300 Bohinj inhabitants were imprisoned by the occupiers, mostly in the gestapo prison in Begunje. More than 20 of them were interned to concentration camps. About 240 Bohinj inhabitants who were relatives of the partisan movement members, were exiled from their homes, mostly to Germany. As a reprisal for partisan attacks, the Germans shot prisoners from the gestapo prison in Begunje. They shot also 16 Bohinj inhabitants, 11 of them were captured partisans.

In 1943, the mobilization of Bohinj inhabitants in partisan units began. Close to 1000 Bohinj inhabitants joined the partisans. In 1944, the majority of Bohinj partisans are in the Gorenjska Detachment, on the field and in the Prešeren Brigade, the Jesenice-Bohinj Detachment. Many of them were sent to the Primorska region, in Vojsko Unit, Gradnik Unit and other units. In Bohinj, there were the message relay points G-27 at Ventije, G-2 at Bitenjska mountain pasture and G-4 at Gorjuše. Jesenice-Bohinj detachment maintained the radio connections, and set also the telephone network in Bohinj. After the third battalion of the Prešeren Brigade had been attacked at Goreljek, E clinic was set in the vicinity of Podjelje, and later on also a rest home at the Jelovica side. In 1944/45, also Bled Commandment operated in Bohinj.

1943 saw the beginning of political organisations of the partisan movement. The Communist Party, Young Communist League, Slovenian Antifascist Women League, Young Communist League of Slovenia and economic committees. In September 1944, there were 80 of them with almost 800 members, 500 of them being youth and women.

The partisan movement was led by the Communist Party who did not want only to resist the occupying forces but also to carry out the Bolshevik revolution. The communists took over all the leading positions in the army, the political police and political world. By May 1945, more than 300 Bohinj inhabitants entered the Communist Party, most of them joined military units. In 1943, the Germans mobilised men from Gorenjska born from 1916 to 1926. In Bohinj, more than 260 boys and men (out of 499 recorded) were drafted. 320 of them joined the partisans, 213 joined the German Army, 114 deserted the German Army for partisans. In Bohinj, there was no anti-communist resistance and civil war. But there was a violent outburst of revolutionary terror, when the local partisans settled their scores with the locals. Partisans, mostly the political police, murdered more than 65 people in Bohinj. No legal proceedings were undertaken for any of them.



Anton Žnidar (1922-1948, Bohinjska Bistrica), member of the German Army since February 1943, deserted to partisans in December 1943, a commander of the 1st Battalion of the Jesenice-Bohinj Detachment.

Franc Selan - Brinca (1919-1964, Bohinjska Bistrica), a partisan since April 1943, a commander of the 2nd Battalion of the Jesenice-Bohinj Detachment.

Franc Cesar (1920-2010, Stara Fužina) joined the partisans in 1943. He was caught on 3 July at Lipanca and beaten badly in gestapo prisons in Begunje. On 9 November 1943, he was sent to the Natzweiler-Struthof branch of the Dachau Concentration Camp, and later transferred to Dachau. He returned home in July 1945.

Slavko Ogrin (1920-1992, Bohinjska Bistrica) was mobilised to the German Army on 29 March 1943. He joined the infantry in Züllichgau in Germany. In July 1943, he was sent to the eastern front and came almost as far as Kharkov in Ukraine. On 23 December 1943, he surrendered to the Soviets at Vysoky near Zhytomyr. He returned home in March 1946.

Srečko Huth (1907, Ljubljana) was a priest. Since the Germans exiled Slovenian priests from Gorenjska, he was entering the German occupation area from the Italian area illegally. When he drove to Koprivnik with a carriage on 18 October 1943, probably to offer the First Communion to children, partisans arrested him, tortured him cruelly and murdered him. Whereabouts of his body are unknown.



BOHINJ

1914-1918
1941-1945



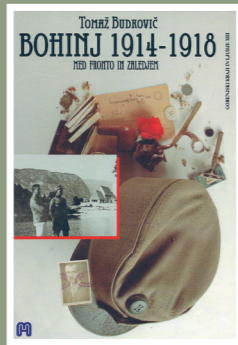
Jožef Hribar awarded with a golden bravery medal during World War I.



Tomaž Godec (1905, Bohinjska Bistrica) was the first partisan in Bohinj. He was the leader of the December uprising after which he went underground. He was caught on 13 March 1942 in Voje, and on 19 April 1942 sent to the concentration camp Mauthausen together with a group of 50 hostages. The following day, they were killed there.

Exhibition Bohinj 1914-1918 / 1941-1945

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Tomaž Budkovič
Bohinj 1914-1918.
Mohorjeva založba,
Celovec-Ljubljana-Dunaj 1999.



BOHINJ 1914-1918

HOW FRIGHTFUL IS MANKIND, AND HOW DIM-SIGHTED!

France Prešeren
KRST PRI SAVICI
[The Baptism on the Savica]

Bohinj in the rear of the Soča (Isonzo) Front

In his book *Bohinj 1914-1918. Between the Front and the Rear*, Tomaž Budkovič described war conditions in Bohinj and the role of Bohinj during the Soča Front in particular. After Italy declared war on the Austro-Hungarian Empire on 24 May 1915, Bohinj became a direct rear area.

Bohinj was the supplying centre for the front line from Lemež, Šmohor and Peski to Batognica. In the summer of 1915, extensive supply bases were built in the area of Peski, Mount Duplje, Planina near Kraj and Govnjač hill. To transport large quantities of material, first the road from Bohinjska Bistrica to Zlatorog had to be extended. In the beginning, horse carriages were used to transport supplies from the railway station in Bohinjska Bistrica to Zlatorog. There was also a large lorry with a trailer. But this kind of transportation was not sufficient to transport all the supplies, which is why a railway with a horse traction was built along the road. The railway and other tasks in the rear were mostly undertaken by the Russian prisoners of war. There was a whole settlement of military barracks at Zlatorog, including everything from depots to military housing. A motorway was built to reach Savica, and a wide horse track was lined further up to Mount Komna. Two cargo cable railways were set up first to Komna and further up to the foot of Bogatinska vratca. Later, it was extended all the way to Peski.

The 11th Battle of the Soča in August and September 1917 was a severe blow to the Austro-Hungarian defence. Germans had to assist the Austrians to prepare a battle quickly and push the Italians back to the old border before winter. The attack was planned to take place at Tolmin and Bovec. In the second half of September and in October, all the necessary supplies for the Kobarid offensive was being transported. Transportation at the Bohinj railway increased considerably, for the battlefield at Tolmin was also supplied for here partly. Large quantities of military supplies had to be transported to Mount Krn range. For this reason, the horse railway to Ukanc was electrified, which increased its operation substantially. In the middle of October, attack units began arriving to their positions and helped transporting the supplies to high mountains. The German units also moved to the front through Bohinj. A part of the German Alpine Corps stayed in Bohinj for three days.

After the breakthrough at Kobarid in October 1917, the front line moved from the near vicinity of Bohinj. Most soldiers and also Russian prisoners of war left for the new front. Both hospitals also departed. A couple of soldiers stayed to collect the spoils of war in the mountains. Italian prisoners of war also stayed there until January 1918. People disliked them because of constant thefts. The railway and cables were demolished only after the end of war (in 1920). Two war hospitals were founded in Bistrica. The one below Rebro was intended for patients with dangerous contagious diseases, while the wounded patients and other patients with less dangerous diseases were placed in the hospital in Zois castle [Royal Imperial War Hospital 1/15]. Dead soldiers were buried in the cemetery at Rebro.

Little War Museum Collection

was mounted in the Museum of Tomaz Godec in 1989 as the first permanent exhibition on World War I in Slovenia. It consists of more than 600 authentic artefacts, brought from the area of the former Krn battlefield by Janko S. Stušek and Tomaž Budkovič who collected them for a number of years.

In 2014, the Municipality of Bohinj purchased the collection from the Little War Museum Association and handed it over to the Museum of Gorenjska



Photo Helena Rant



Planina near Kraj Ukanc Koprivnik Srednja vas

During World War I dead soldiers of the Soča Front were buried at cemeteries at Planina near Kraj, in Ukanc (253 graves) and at Rebro in Bohinjska Bistrica (296 graves). At least 164 inhabitants of Bohinj or 3,5% of Bohinj population were killed during World War I. War memorials were constructed in Srednja vas and at Koprivnik.

During World War II 189 inhabitants of Bohinj or almost 7,5% of Bohinj population were killed. Numerous war memorials were constructed for the killed partisans and victims of the occupying terror.

Left without a grave and memory, were those who died in fights with the partisan units, anti-communist units' members, prisoners of war, partisan fighters and civilians killed by the partisans during the war or by the communist regime after the war. Conscripts of the German army (and other occupying armies) lost their lives either on the front or in war captivity. Those who were murdered, are buried either in their family graves or were never buried. They lie in unknown scaffolds and graveyards which began to be discovered only after the independence of Slovenia (1991). Almost one half of victims in Slovenia (and 0,3% of victims in Bohinj) were left without a grave and the right to be remembered.



Bohinjska Bistrica Gorjuše Goreljek Koprivnik Nomenj Podjelje