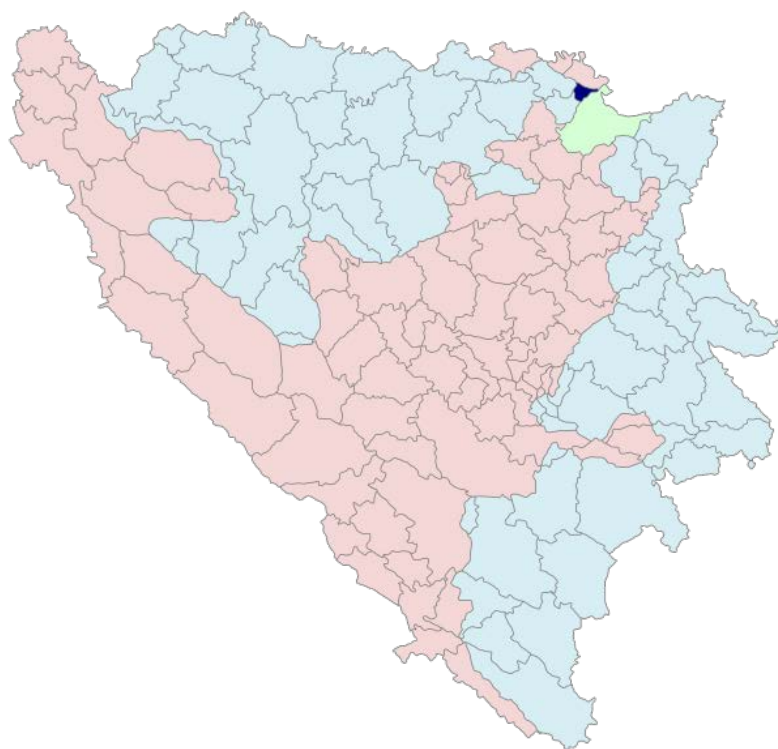


MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS TO THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION WAR
ON THE TERRITORY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – THEIR
CURRENT STATUS AND CONDITION

DONJI ŽABAR MUNICIPALITY



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Preface

During the period of NR/SR Bosnia & Herzegovina (1945-1992) thousands of monuments commemorating the People's Liberation War, Struggle and Movement (commonly referred to in abbreviated form as NOR, NOB and NOP - henceforth collectively referred to as NOB) were created and unveiled on its territory. In recent decades, these monuments to the NOB have often become forgotten, ignored, or exposed to unquantifiable damage. The reasons for this 'unquantifiability' stem, in part, from the lack of a comprehensive recording system¹ among and between stakeholders² during the period of SRBiH, and the destruction of archives of stakeholders during the 1992-95 war and its immediate aftermath, but have been inarguably exacerbated by the administrative system in Bosnia & Herzegovina in the present day.

This paper aims to give a brief overview of the current situation of monuments to the People's Liberation War, Struggle and Movement on the territory of the present-day Donji Žabar municipality, situated in the Republika Srpska entity.

¹ Incomplete stock-taking was made prior to 1962, when a list of Protected Monuments was drawn up, and once again from summer 1966 to late 1973, when a more comprehensive inventory was made, a summary of which was published in 1981 (Tihić, 1981), stating that 809 memorial plaques, 207 busts, 104 fountains and similar, 453 artistic monuments, 300 identified individual graves and mass graves and 176 graveyards for partisans and victims of fascist terror (2,049 immovable properties in total) had been identified.

² Largely local and national organizations for Antifascists and Veterans of the NOR

Background and Summary

The present-day municipality of Donji Žabar was separated from the pre-1992 municipality of Orašje as a result of the 1995 Dayton Accords. It is one of the smaller municipalities in the state, occupying an area of roughly 49.3 km² in total.

Between 1966 and 1973, the most comprehensive nationwide survey of immovable monuments to the NOB to date was carried out under the auspices of the Republic Institute for the Protection of Monuments. However, it was not until 1981 that a summary of this survey list was published (Tihčić, 1981). In total, 2,049 immovable properties were recorded on the territory of SR Bosnia & Herzegovina, with just 1 being recorded upon the territory of the then-Orašje municipality in a survey conducted on 2 July 1970, which was categorized as a collective grave or memorial ossuary.³

Although the construction of memorials and monuments continued long after this period (with a wave of monuments being created in the wake of the death of Josip Broz Tito, and continuing throughout the 1980s), no further Republic-level survey of monuments was undertaken before the secession of Bosnia and Herzegovina from Yugoslavia in 1992. Furthermore, no evidence of a similar survey specifically dedicated to the pre-1992 Orašje municipality could be found during the course of research.

However, in August 2014, the municipal assembly of Donji Žabar adopted a *Conclusion on the acceptance of information concerning the status and maintenance of memorials in the Municipality of Donji Žabar* (Sl. Glasnik XXI/10, 137), which lists four monuments and memorials. While three of these relate to the 1992-95 war, one monument, commemorating the formation of the First Posavina Company in 1941, relates to the People's Liberation War. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the only such memorial to have existed on the territory of the present-day Donji Žabar municipality.

³ It is worth noting here that the lowest numbers of monuments recorded by municipality across the entirety of Bosnia & Herzegovina were in Orašje and the central Bosnian municipality of Kreševo, with a single monument or memorial each.

Monuments and Memorials in Donji Žabar municipality

1. Monument to the formation of the First Posavina Company, Donji Žabar



Figure 1a: Monument in June 2020



Figure 1b: Inscription on the plaque, June 2020

This monument lies in the centre of the settlement of Donji Žabar, outside a residential property with the address Svetog Save 87, at a crossroads situated a few hundred metres south of the local elementary school. The monument was unveiled in 1973, although its author is unknown.

The monument consists of a stela constructed of rough-hewn limestone blocks, set into a base which appears to consist of a single course of similar limestone blocks sandwiched between two layers of concrete. The stela is capped by a smooth layer of concrete. A dedicatory plaque is set into the upper portion of the stela on its front (i.e. road-facing) side. This is made of a black stone, most likely a granite or gabbro. The plaque is inscribed (in the Cyrillic script) as follows:

DANA 18. DECEMBRA 1941. GODINE
 U DONJEM ŽABARU
 NE DALEKO ODAVDE FORMIRANA JE
 PRVA POSAVSKA PARTIZANSKA ČETA
 U ZNAK SJEĆANJA NA TAJ DAN
 SPOMEN PLOČU PODIŽE
 OPŠTINSKI ODBOR
 SUBNOR-A ORAŠJE
 D. ŽABAR.
 27. JULA 1973.⁴

⁴ Translation: On the day of 18 December 1941, in Donji Žabar, not far from this location, was formed the First Posavina Partisan Company. As a sign of memory of that day, [this] memorial plaque is erected [by] the municipal committee of SUBNOR Orašje. D. Žabar, 27 July 1973.

A five-pointed star is situated in the upper centre of the plaque, interrupting the first line of text.

Overall, the monument is in good condition. The condition of the cement between the limestone blocks suggests that it has been re-pointed at some time in the past. However, it must also be noted that it is possible that this is not the plaque's original location: four holes drilled into the corners of the plaque suggest that it was originally intended to be affixed to a stela or wall using screws or bolts. These holes do not bear any evidence of wear or rust stains, as is commonly the case when iron fixtures have been placed in them for an extended period of time. It may be the case that these holes were created by the mason responsible for preparing the plaque, and were simply deemed superfluous to requirements when the plaque was installed.

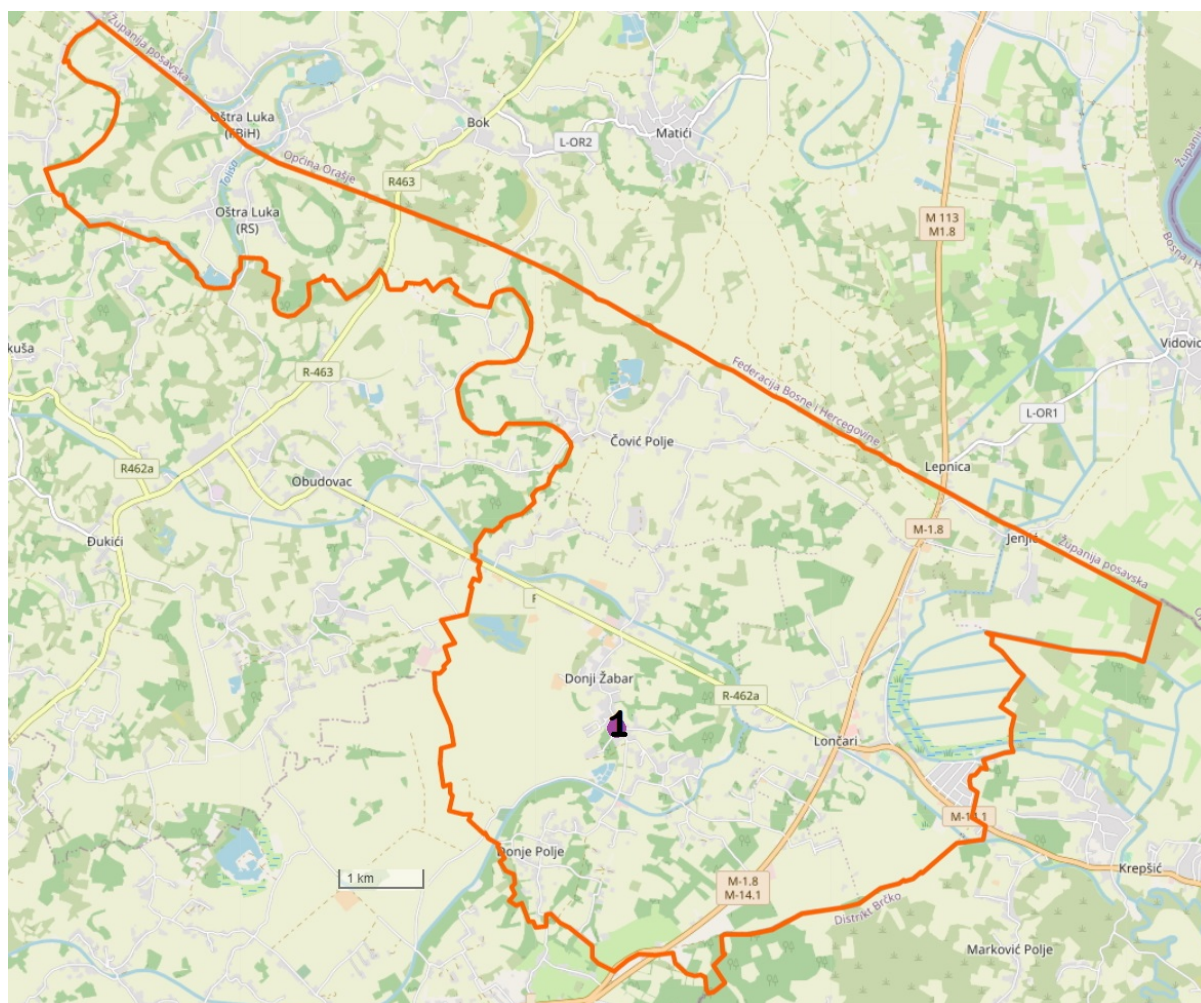
The patina that has developed on the limestone blocks, combined with extensive growth of mosses and lichens, suggest that even if the plaque was not originally affixed to the stela, this has been its positioning for a significant amount of time. Nevertheless, further research is needed to ascertain whether or not this was, in fact, the plaque's original location.

Current Situation - Summary

The following can be said of the single monument to the NOB identified as existing (or having existed) on the territory of the present-day Donji Žabar municipality:

- The **monument to the formation of the First Posavina Company in Donji Žabar** is in good condition. Although no evidence of maintenance is evident, the monument lies within the grounds of a private residential property, and the area surrounding it is well maintained. Further research is required, however, in order to determine whether the current memorial stela is the original location of the plaque, as holes drilled into it suggest that it was originally intended that it be affixed to a structure using screws or bolts, rather than set into a stela using mortar.

Municipality Map



KEY

1 – Monument to the formation of the First Posavina Company, Donji Žabar

Accurate coordinates of individual monuments are available from the authors.

List of Figures

Cover image: 'Donji Žabar municipality.svg', created by Wikipedia user 'Andrein'. Available: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Donji_%C5%BDabar_municipality.svg. Accessed 22 June 2019.

Figure 1a: Marko Matolić, June 2020

Figure 1b: Marko Matolić, June 2020

Municipality map: Created by Andrew Lawler using data originally created by OpenStreetMap contributors (<https://www.openstreetmap.org/relation/2528189>) [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)]

Literature

Municipal Assembly of Donji Žabar (25 August 2014). *Закључак о прихватању Информације о стању уређења и одржавања спомен обиљежја на подручју Општине Доњи Жабар* [*Conclusion on the acceptance of information concerning the status and maintenance of memorials in the Municipality of Donji Žabar*]. Službeni glasnik XXI/10, Law 137, pp.18-19.

Tihić, Smail (1981) *Dovršena akcija na poslovima terenske evidencije i analizi spomen obilježja NOR-a i revolucije* in *Naše Starine XIV-XV* (1981) pp.253-256.