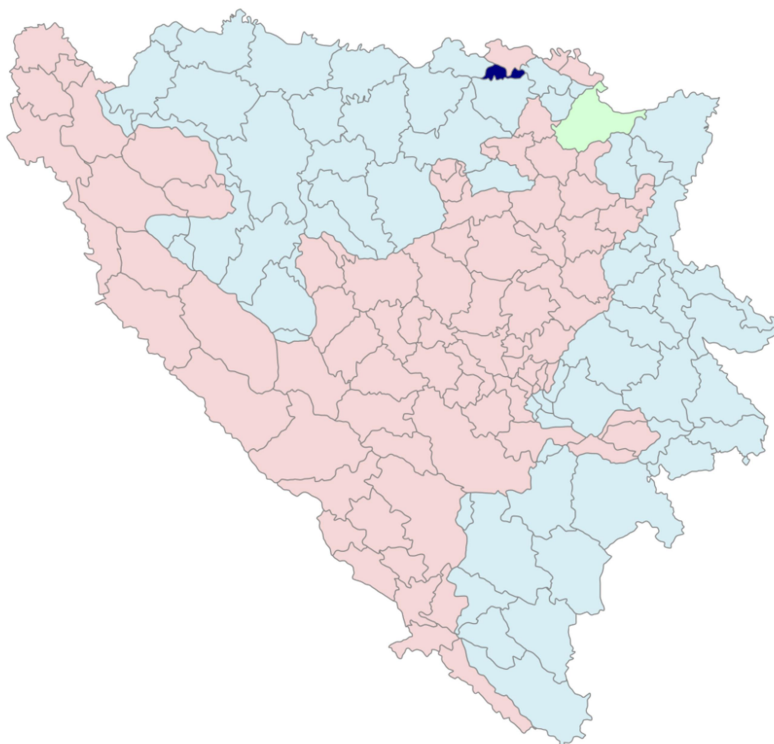


MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS TO THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION WAR
ON THE TERRITORY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – THEIR
CURRENT STATUS AND CONDITION

VUKOSAVLJE MUNICIPALITY



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January 2025

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Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance in compiling this report:

Marko Ružičić, local historian and resident of Gnionica, for providing additional information about the history of the plaque in Gnionica

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 Vukosavlje municipality (RS).

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 (Tihic, 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

Vukosavlje municipality was created as a result of the Dayton Peace Agreement, and is largely composed of territory previously belonging to Odžak municipality, with small areas of Modriča also having been ceded to form the municipality.

During the course of research, only one monument or memorial was found to exist on the territory of the municipality; a memorial plaque to commemorate fallen fighters on the village elementary school (Aleksa Šantić elementary school) in Gnionica. This plaque has previously been profiled in the book *Knjiga drugova: otrgnuti od zaborava* (Tadić & Borojević, 2008, p.161), although this solely presents a transcription of the plaque's text, and says nothing about its history.

The enumeration of the 1966-73 survey undertaken by the Republic Institute for the Protection of Monuments of Culture presented by Tihčić (1981) is, as a result of territorial rearrangement in the wake of the 1992-95 war, unfortunately of little help in determining whether other memorials may lie on the territory of the municipality. Without the original reports for Modriča (created from a survey undertaken from 4 to 6 November 1971) and Odžak (created from a survey undertaken from 16 to 18 September 1971), it is impossible to extract information specifically relating to present-day Vukosavlje.

While the book *Spomenici NOR-a (1941-1945): područje Opštine Modriča* (Nijemčević, 2017 p.14) states that, by 1983, the (then-)municipality of Modriča had a total of 55 monuments and memorials (a significant increase on the results of the 1971 survey, where just 10 were recorded) upon its territory, unfortunately it limits itself to the profiling of just 32 monuments and memorials on the territory of the present-day municipality, thus omitting those that potentially existed on the territory of Vukosavlje.

In addition to these books focusing on memorialization of the NOB, one monograph, *Jakeš kroz vrijeme* (Zahirović, 2012), covers the history of Jakeš; the largest settlement (by population) in the present-day Vukosavlje municipality. However, this makes no mention of any memorials to the NOB.

Vukosavlje's 2013-2033 Spatial Plan (Opština Vukosavlje, 2016), in its section on monuments of culture (pp.117-120) makes no mention of any monuments or memorials to the NOB on the territory of the municipality. Furthermore, it would appear that no 'list of monuments and memorials of great importance for the unit of local self-government' has to date been created in line with the Republika Srpska's 2012 Law on Monuments and Memorials to the Liberation Wars of the Republika Srpska (Sl. glasnik Republike Srpske 28/12). Such a list could provide additional (although by no means definitive³) information on the (potential) presence of other monuments or memorials.

As a result of this limited information, this report is relatively short, detailing just the one memorial that is known to exist today.

³ See Lawler (2020) for a fuller explanation of the reasons behind this.

Monuments and Memorials in Vukosavlje municipality

1. Plaque to commemorate fallen fighters, Gnionica



Figure 1a: Location of the plaque on the elementary school, June 2024



Figure 1b: Condition of plaque and inscription, June 2024

This plaque is situated on the building of the local elementary school, a district school of Aleksa Šantić elementary school, based in Jakeš. It commemorates 13 fallen fighters from Gnionica and the surrounding area.

The plaque is made of a white stone, with the text being infilled with a darker-coloured (presumably originally dark green) paint or dye. Unfortunately, neither the date of unveiling nor the author of the memorial plaque could be determined during the course of research. Furthermore, no comparable examples are known from either Odžak or Modriča municipalities that could provide an approximate date range from a typological comparison. However, from the inconsistencies in dialect, as well as certain spelling errors, it is assumed that this plaque pre-dates 1970, and most likely dates to the period 1950-1965. In further support of this is information provided by local historian Marko Ružičić, who claims that the plaque was placed on the old (i.e. former) school building in Gnionica in around 1963, and was relocated to the present building after the 1992-95 war.

The text is in the Latin script, and reads as follows:

*SPOMEN PLOČA SE PODIŽE U ČAST
REVOLUCIJE NARODA JUGOSLAVIJE*

*NA VAŠIM SVETLIM PRIMJERIMA BORACA
NAŠE REVOLUCIJE VASPITAVA ĆE SE MLADA
POKOLENJA PALI BORCI NOB-E*

*KRSTIĆ SLAVKO MILOŠEVIĆ RADOVAN
KRSTIĆ ZORKA VASILJEVIĆ TODA
ŠLJIVIĆ BOŽO STANOJEVIĆ MIKAJLO
JEVDJENIĆ RADE BROĆILOVIĆ MILORAD
JEVDJENIĆ TEŠO RADOVANOVIĆ⁴ ILIJA
BAŠIĆ VIŠNJA JOŠAVAC SVETOZAR
I NIKOLIĆ RADOVAN*

*VAMA VJEČNA SLAVA I HVALA
NAMA OSTAJE DRAGA USPOMENA I PRIMJER
KAKO SE VOLI I BRANI SVOJA DOMOVINA*

*NARODNA OMLADINA OPŠTINE ODŽAK I
GRAĐANI GNIONICE⁵*

While the plaque itself is in excellent condition, the inscription is slightly faded, although not to the point of illegibility.

⁴ [sic]

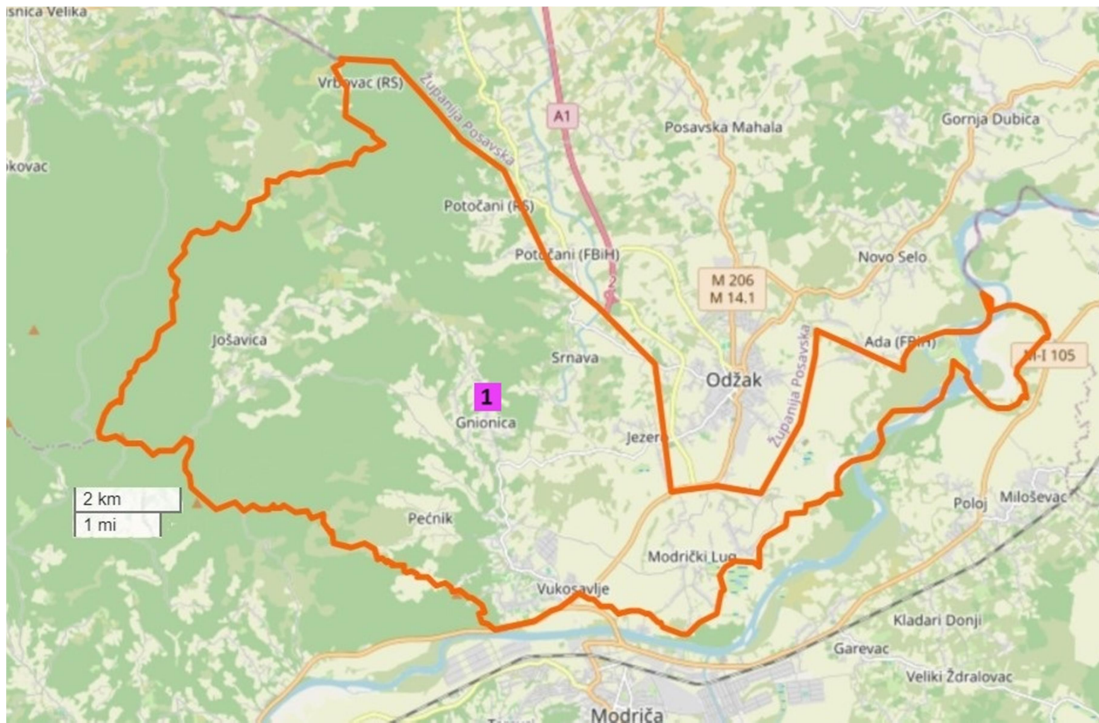
⁵ Translation: *This plaque is erected in honour of the Revolution of the Peoples of Yugoslavia. Through your shining example, fighters of our revolution, we will educate the young descendants about fallen fighters of the NOB. [13 names] May you be eternally celebrated and thanked. Among us remains a dear memory and example of how to love and defend your homeland. People's Youth of Odžak municipality and citizens of Gnionica.*

Current Situation – Summary

Only one memorial is known upon the territory of the municipality; a plaque to commemorate fallen fighters on the elementary school in Gnionica. This plaque is in good condition, although the text may benefit from being re-painted to improve readability.

However, this does not exclude the possibility of other monuments and memorials existing (or having existed) on the territory of the municipality. It is recommended that further research be undertaken to confirm this.

Municipality Map



Key

Number	Description
1	Plaque to commemorate fallen fighters, Gñionica

List of Figures

Cover image: 'Vukosavlje municipality.svg' created by Wikimedia Commons user 'Andrein'. Available: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vukosavlje_municipality.svg

Figure 1a: Marko Matolić, June 2024

Figure 1b: Marko Matolić, June 2024

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

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