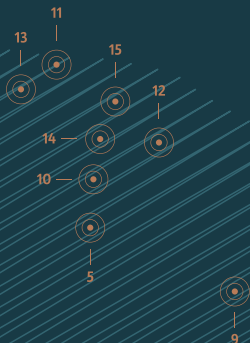


V U K

O V A

R *Nocturne*





*It is a story of love and courage, strength and pain,  
human dignity, and victory of life.*

*Vukovar*

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**VUKOVAR ONCE...** it used to be a city on a human scale, with everything a city needs, the requisite infrastructure, its rivers, and the Baroque city centre, pulsing with life...

# *Vukovar once...*







*Love.*  
*Sorrow!*  
*Pride.*



*And then, in 1991, images of the city's destruction made headlines worldwide. Nothing was spared. The birds fell silent...*

**...AND NOTHING WAS EVER THE SAME AGAIN.**

After peaceful reintegration was finished on 15 January 1998, the people of Vukovar gradually started to return to their city, destroyed to the point of unrecognizability.

The city slowly rose from the ashes and started to rebuild, each inhabitant weaving a memory or two into its tapestry to make it resemble as closely as possible to the Vukovar they remembered. Or, as Siniša Glavašević put it: *"You are the City."* Everything can be rebuilt, but we can never bring back the people we lost. What we can do is love them, and treasure their memory...



Vukovar Nocturne is a story of a nation's tragedy, of victims and heroes, of defiance and pride, told through the city's monuments. It is a mosaic of memories, a tapestry of threads woven together to tell the heart-breaking, gut-wrenching, never-forgotten truth about Vukovar.

It is a cry of love, sorrow and pride... A plea to never forget what happened, and to never let it happen again.

As you walk its streets today, it is hard to imagine that Vukovar was obliterated in the 1990s.

It is impossible to choose one site as the most memorable and most moving. Only after you have seen them all will the full reality of 1991 hit you, leaving you heavy with sorrow and overwhelmed by the intensity of emotions, and rendering you speechless for a while, until you have had the time to process it all.



On the sunny morning of 2 May 1991, nothing hinted at the bloody turn the day would take.

The ambush and brutal murder of twelve Croatian policemen in Borovo Selo marked the beginning of the war in Croatia. Before the Memorial was unveiled in the centre of Borovo Selo in 2002, people came to pay their respects to the fallen heroes at the village entrance, where twelve cypress trees were planted in their honour.

It is as if these verses are talking about them:

*My land, I'm giving you my heart, and  
I'll be there for you for better or worse.  
Nothing will drag me away, for here  
I'll stay, with you.*

(Zrinko Tutić, Z. Stipišić Gibonni, Nikša Bratoš)

And indeed they stayed, finding their final resting place here. Twelve young men, in the prime of their lives, all their dreams about the future brutally cut short in an instant.



# *The Borovo Selo Memorial*

STIPAN MOŠNJAK  
LUKA CRNEVIC  
JOSIP ČUHLIĆ  
MLADEN ČATIĆ  
JANKO ČOVIĆ  
ZORAN GRASIC

ANTUN GRBAVAC  
ZELJKO HRALA  
ZDENKO PERICA  
MARINKO PETRUŠIĆ  
MLADEN ŠABIĆ  
IVICA VIČIĆ

MINISTARSTVO OBRANE I POLICAJA REPUBLIKE HRVATSKE



U NAČELOU SE 11 GODINE U 3. MESECU  
SRPNIJ TEBE. ISTI SE POSR JELO IZ ZAROK U DNEVIMA MARČAKA.  
BATOJE ŽI. ŽEN NAD KANJ ŽEN I ZAROK. ŽEN PRIPADNICIMA  
SRPNI. ŽENE POLICAJE R.

U SPOMEN NA N. ŽIVU ŽETVO PLO U POSR  
I ATNI PRIPADNICI I POLICAJE POLICAJA REPUBLIKE HRVATSKE



# Trpinjska cesta

– *The Tank Graveyard*



The Battle of Vukovar was the biggest and bloodiest battle of the Croatian war of independence (commonly referred to in Croatia as “the Homeland War”). The Yugoslav National Army, aided by Serbian paramilitary troops, besieged the Croatian city of Vukovar for 87 days between August and November 1991.

The so-called Tank Graveyard is one of the first associations for Vukovar and Trpinjska cesta (“Trpinje Road”). This is where the armoured forces of the Yugoslav National Army were stopped, and dozens of tanks and armed personnel carriers destroyed. “Desert Rats”, “Yellow Ants” and “Turbo Platoon”, the forces under the command of the legendary Blago Zadro, managed to fight off the enemy’s armoured forces, becoming legends.

The defenders committed countless individual acts of heroism during this time. Their courage is awe-inspiring, their love for their country unquestionable, and their resistance nothing short of miraculous.

The tactics and strategy of the *Battle of Vukovar* are taught at a number of military academies today.



The Memorial Home of Croatian War Veterans on the Trpinjska cesta road in Borovo Naselje, the work of sculptor Miljenko Romić, is one of Vukovar Nocturne's key locations. The command of this section of the city was stationed here in 1991.

The centrepiece of the Memorial House is the hollow containing the turret of a destroyed Yugoslav National Army tank, surrounded by the names of all members of the 204th Vukovar Brigade who were killed in the war. The space is surrounded by video screens showing wartime photos and videos of events from the war, along with authentic wartime reports.

The Memorial Home has the shape of a firmly clenched fist, a symbol of the strength and fearlessness of Vukovar's defence, with a tank and a bust of Major General Blago Zadro out front. The tank is a homage to the brave defenders of Trpinjska cesta and their leader, the legendary commander Blago Zadro, a truly great man who was special in so many ways.

He never liked to draw attention to himself or to stand out among his fellow-fighters who were under his command, and that was what made him great. And that was how he died too, refusing to wear the vest that might have saved his life...

He had a vision and was a man of the people, who had their trust. Blago Zadro was a brave man, a true leader, and a genius. He was the epitome of integrity, decency, faith, courage and love for his country.

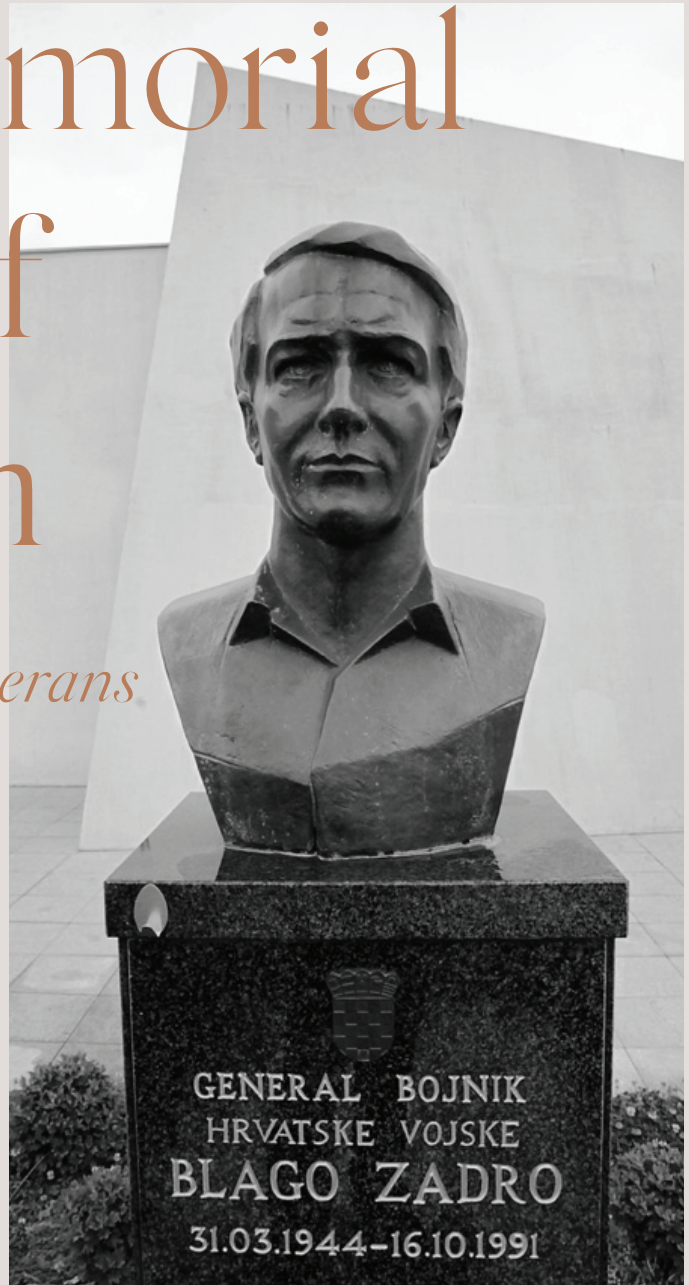


# The Memorial Home of Croatian

## *War Veterans*

He dreamed of a free and independent Croatia and wanted it so much, but he never lived to see it. His son Robert lived to receive the government's decoration, but he too was killed before he had a chance to return to his city. Their courage was a genetic trait.

And this is our heroes for you in a nutshell: simple, modest family men, but also daring, courageous and unrelenting.



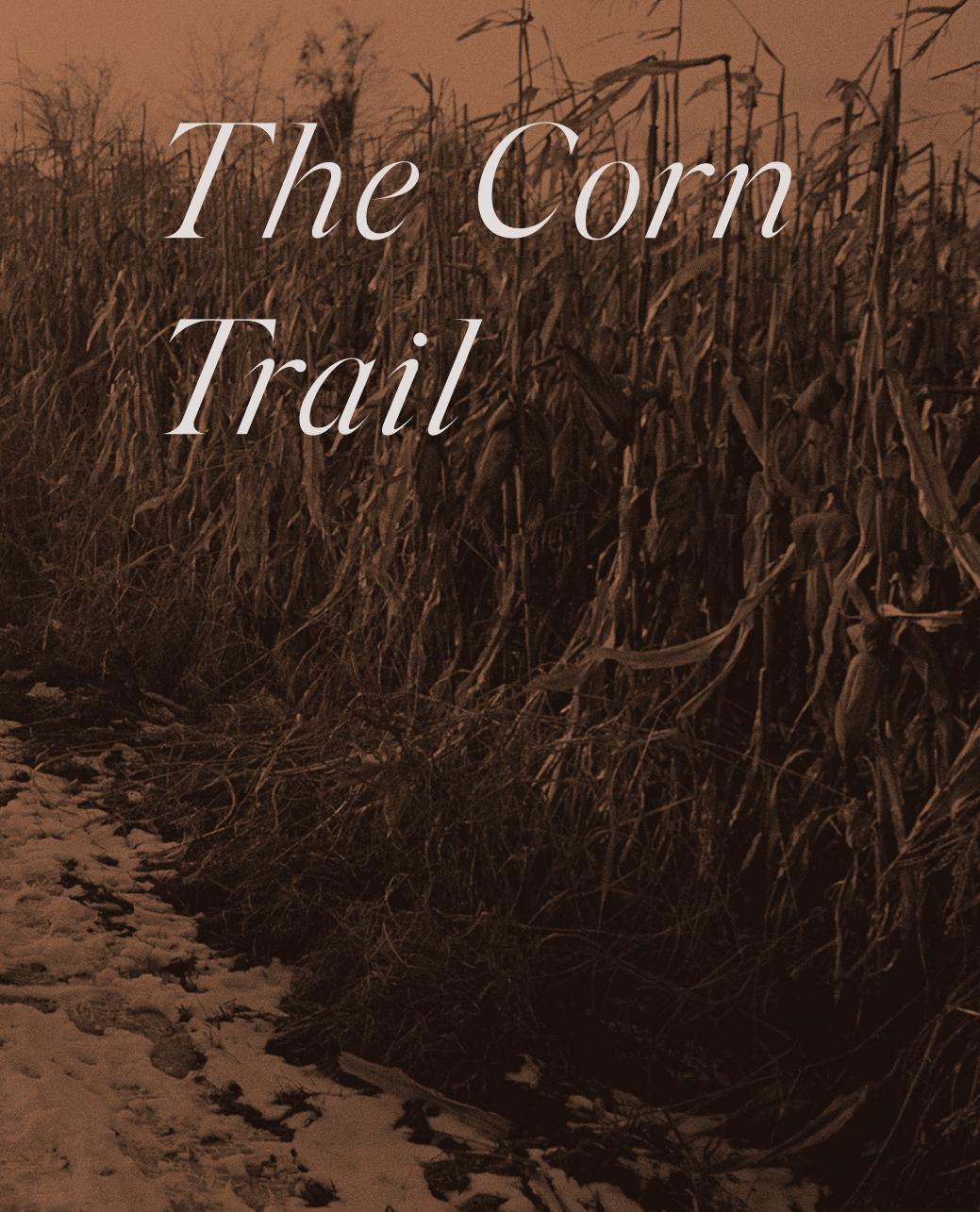
If you head out from Vukovar to the west, via the municipality of Bogdanovci, you will come across a small, desolate chapel in the village of Lužac. A dirt road weaving through the fields begins here.

The votive chapel marks the start of the Corn Trail (*the Path of Salvation*). At the time of the Homeland War, it indeed led to salvation. It saved many lives, but not everyone was so fortunate. In late summer and early autumn of 1991, when Vukovar was already surrounded, this path through the cornfields was the occupied city's only connection with the rest of Croatia.

Nature was the brave fighters' only ally, the tall corn stalks shielding them from the enemy's eyes. Corn Trail convoys were attacked fruitlessly until 19 October 1991, when the village of Marinovci was occupied, and Bogdanovci were cut off from the rest of Croatia. This meant Vukovar was cut off as well.

Can you picture yourself in such a situation, from your present perspective, and understand the true meaning of this trail? It was Vukovar's lifeline, and for many defenders and civilians, the difference between life and death. Now it is a living monument.





*The Corn Trail*

# *Velepromet*



After the city was occupied on 18 November 1991, many people were taken to a storehouse belonging to the Vukovar-based company Velepromet.

A concentration camp was set up on the property, made up of six tin hangars and several brick buildings, even before the fall of Vukovar, in late September 1991.

Horrendous torture went on there, and so many innocent people were murdered. The memories of the survivors are blood-curdling. Most people who were taken for questioning never came back, swallowed up by the night.

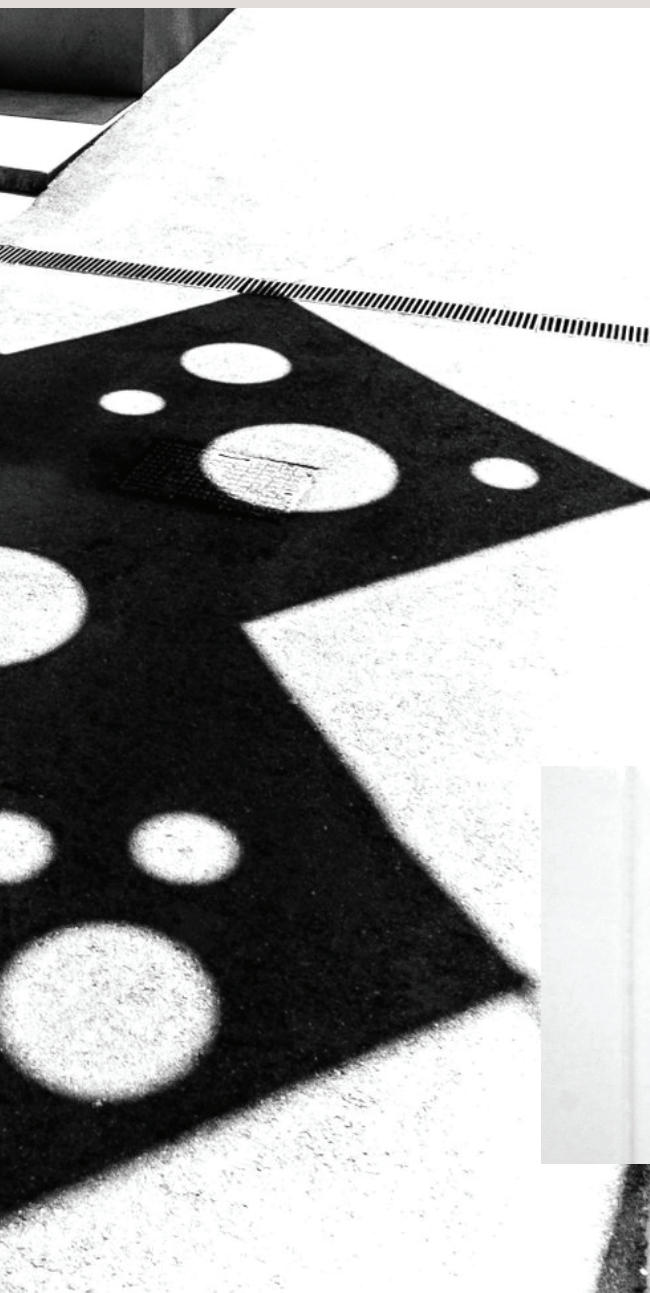




# Memorial site

*Vukovar Hospital*

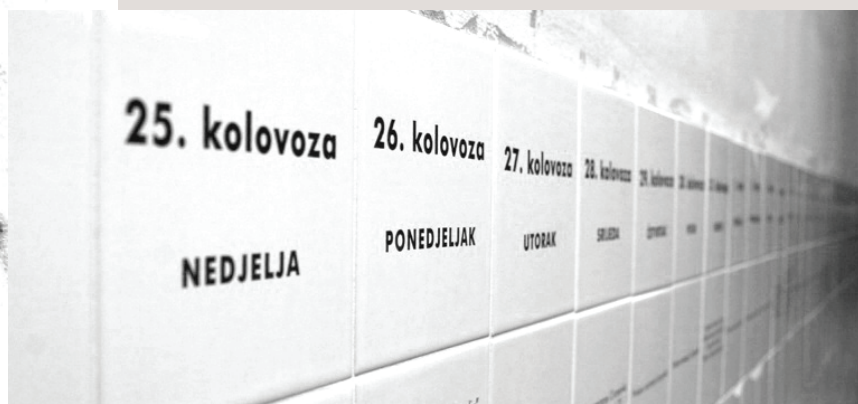
1991.



When you come into the Vukovar Hospital's museum exhibition, the reality of all this hits you. The story about the Vukovar Hospital is a heart-rending truth about the battle of good and evil, but also about humanity and care for all the wounded... A moment stopped in time.

The long basement hallway, with the names of those who were taken away, to Ovčara, as it later turned out, written in black ink on white tile – the names of the wounded, and the names of babies born during the Homeland War – are a chronicle no one can remain indifferent to.

Its authors Željko Kovačić and Ivica Propadalo built an underground city, a faithful reconstruction of the life of several hundred wounded and the hospital staff during the months of the city's occupation.





# *The Ovcara*

Memorial Site



*Ovčara* is a farm like thousands of others, perfectly ordinary, some ten kilometres southeast of Vukovar. Along with the Grabovo and Jakobovac farms, it once attested to the wealth and power of the Counts of Eltz. Now it belongs to the Vukovar-based company Vupik. And the world would have never heard about it, had there not been for the events in 1991, when it was the scene of a heinous act of hatred, inhumanity, and the basest of human passions. Had it never happened, Ovčara would have continued to exist happily in anonymity, known only to a handful of people.

*Ovčara...* The Memorial Hall, designed by Miljenko Romić, was opened on 20 November 2006 in the hangar where the victims of Ovčara spent their last days in 1991, leaving behind the dreams that would never come true. As their sincere, surprised, innocent eyes stare down at you from the walls, you cannot help but wonder how they felt on that freezing day in late autumn of 1991, and had they known that they would never be coming back from this journey. Who were their last thoughts about? Whose names died on their lips? We will never know.

Stars strewn across the ceiling, each representing one name, one memory. Personal effects in the straw, the floor littered with casings, and a well... More names inside, where water should be... 261 victims, 61 of whom are still listed as missing.

*Ovčara*, a mass grave shrouded in silence... A holy site where the wounded and the medical staff from the Vukovar Hospital were tortured in the hangars and brutally murdered. 200 of them. They left this place for the stars, and now a star burns here for each and every one of them, keeping the memory of their sacrifice alive. A monument by Slavomir Drinković, which has been erected at all mass grave sites in Croatia, stands at a small distance, the headless wounded dove symbolising a life and a youth cut short.



The Memorial Cemetery of Homeland War Victims is a place of boundless sorrow, a reminder of the generations of Vukovar that were lost, and of everyone who came from elsewhere to defend the city.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Each white cross stands for one victim... And there are 938. The monument by Đurđa Ostoja, with its hollow centre in the shape of a cross, and an eternal flame burning in its middle, silently stands guard.

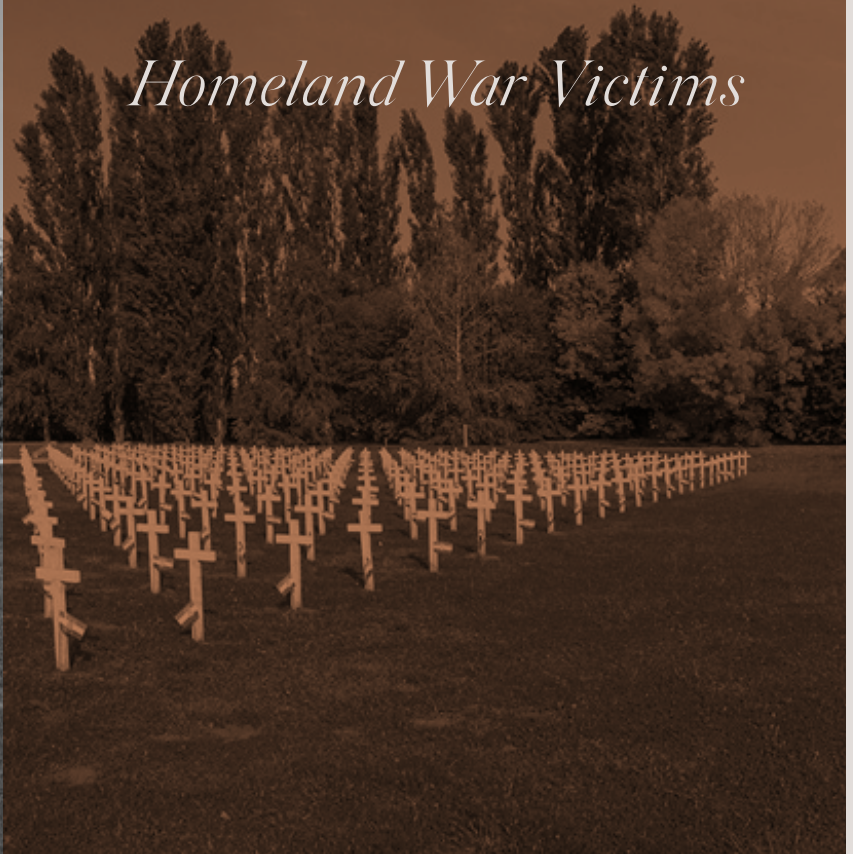
Standing there, all you want to do is imprint this image on your mind, and never forget it. Out here, you are helpless. Words have no meaning. There is nothing to do but bow your head, and pay your respects and thanks. The youngest victim was only six months old.

They say this is one of the most beautiful cemeteries in Croatia. These victims have deserved it. If only we never had to build it.



# Memorial Cemetery of

*Homeland War Victims*



# Homeland War

*Memorial Centre Vukovar*



UNOĆI  
NA 22.XI  
KIŠA JE  
LIJEVALA  
KAO IZ  
KABLA

20. studenoga 1991.  
stijeda (89)

U noći s 22. na 23. studenoga 1991. godine, neprijatelj je iz zrakoplova i s tlovođenih artiljerijskih baterija izljevao na Vukovar veliku količinu kiselih kiša. Kiša je bila toliko gusta da je bila vidljiva kao iz zračnog kabela. Kiša je bila toliko gusta da je bila vidljiva kao iz zračnog kabela. Kiša je bila toliko gusta da je bila vidljiva kao iz zračnog kabela.



The Homeland War Memorial Centre, occupying the former barracks of the 204th Vukovar Brigade, keeps the memory of the Homeland War alive, maintains the memorial locations, and teaches students about the historical importance of the war's events. This is the central point where all the stories about the heroic defence of Vukovar, all the locations and all the facts about the Homeland War and the Vukovar tragedy come together.

Several interior and open-air exhibitions are open to visitors:

- ◉ The exhibition *"Memory of the Homeland War – Battle for Vukovar"*
- ◉ The illustration of the Serbian concentration camps *Stajičevo and Begejci*
- ◉ The exhibition of infantry weapons used in the Homeland War
- ◉ Open-air exhibitions
- ◉ The illustration of a minefield
- ◉ Battlefield simulation *"Reinforced Brigade in Defence"*
- ◉ Virtual reality project *"Independent platoon"*

This is where the chronology of all events from the war, documentary films, wartime photos and reports, and memories of every defender who was killed are kept.

*Stone Cross  
at the Vuka's  
confluence  
with the  
Danube*





# *„Die Honourably, Live Forever“*

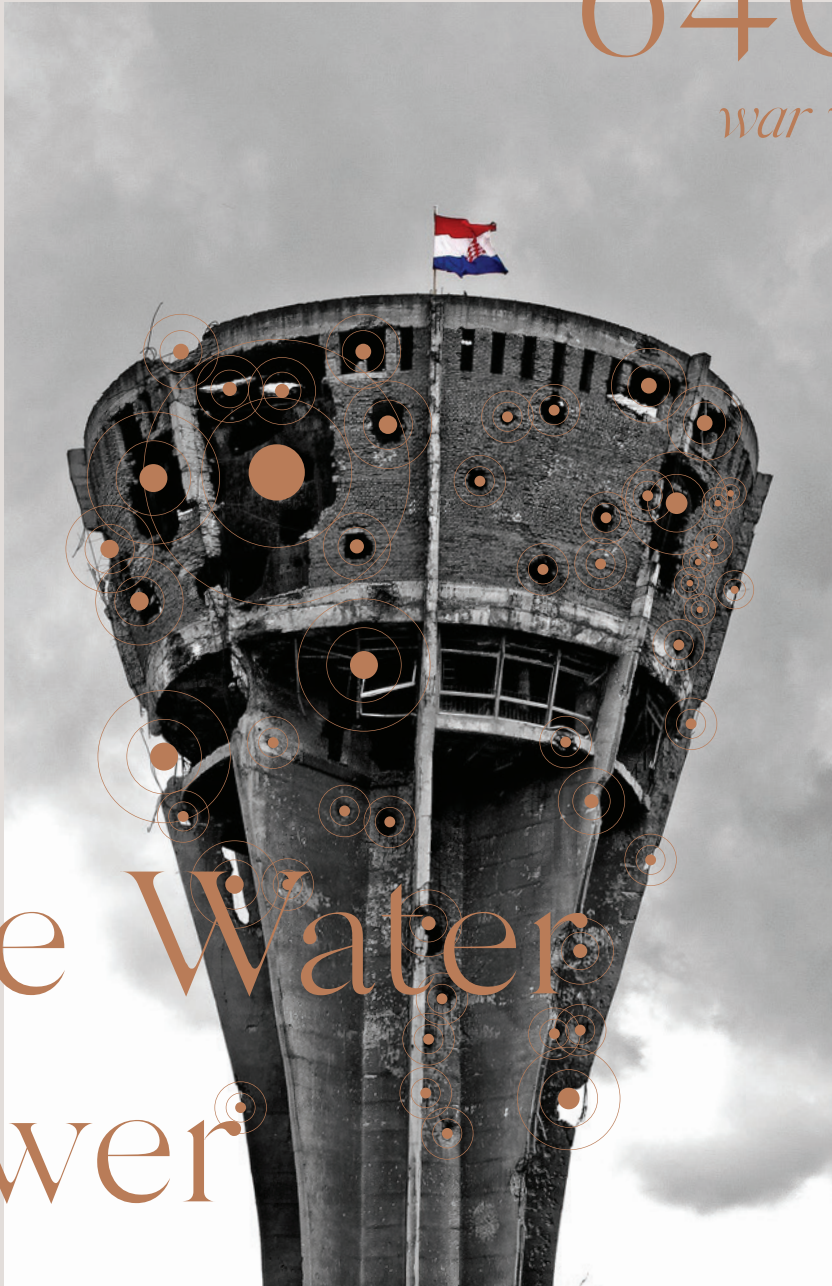
A monument to everyone who gave their lives fighting for free and independent Croatia was erected in downtown Vukovar, at the Vuka's confluence with the Danube.

Author Šime Vidulin chose the shape of the cross. Where the wide, mighty river was once the only view, the white cross now stands as a symbol and a reminder, but also as a warning.

The words “Navik on živi, ki zginе pošteno” (“*Die Honourably, Live Forever*”) are inscribed at its bottom in the oldest Croatian script, the Glagolitic. And indeed, their memory lives on in us, and they are always by our side.

640

*war wounds*



# The Water Tower



*Were they  
brave?*

*Were they  
scared?*



The image of the demolished Water Tower made headlines worldwide in 1991. It was the only building left standing, rising defiantly above the city in a silent scream. More than 900 projectiles were fired at the Water Tower, the highest and most prominent structure in Vukovar, and 640 hit their target, but the Tower, the place where it all begins and ends, stood proud and refused to fall...

Hrvoje and Ivica refused to let it fall. Two perfectly ordinary names for two very unusual men. They are the names of two Vukovar defenders whose courage and immense love for their country have kept their memory alive after they were gone.

From our present perspective, they were superhuman. Every night, they climbed the Tower, driven by ideals. Their names deserve to be among the stars, where they had themselves carved them. Sheer determination and stubbornness kept them scaling the top of the Tower every night in 1991 to fly a new, undamaged Croatian flag, giving the people of Vukovar fresh hope and new strength every morning.

*Were they brave? Were they scared?*

Only an emotionless robot would not be. But they conquered their fear and let love guide them, passing into legend. Braving the weather, the cold, the darkness, and their own fear, they followed their hearts, believing in the victory of the good over the evil. Forever will they reside in our hearts and live on in our memories and your stories, which you will keep telling, making sure they are never forgotten.

A landmark and a monument, the Water Tower stands proud and tall today, guarding the memory of its glorious past and of people's courage, in spite of all its wounds and everything it has suffered.

# *Jean-Michel Nicolier*

*„I must go, but I will  
return.“*

*You know I'm wild grass  
that never goes away.\**

JEAN-MICHEL  
NICOLIER



The bridge in the centre of Vukovar bears the name of **Jean-Michel Nicolier**, a young man born in France who fought for Croatia, and died in Vukovar. He was murdered in Ovčara, and his remains have still not been found. Jean-Michel was only 25 when he came to Vukovar in 1991, his whole life ahead of him. He had no obligation to come here and fight. It was his choice, which makes him one of the most remarkable symbols of Vukovar, and earns him a special place in the heart of its people.

Saying goodbye to his mother, he told her that she had always taught him to follow his ideas, and that he was doing so now, because he could not go against himself and what he believed in. He told her: *"I must go, but I will return. You know I'm wild grass that never goes away."*

In his last interview that he gave to the French television at the Vukovar Hospital, hours before he died, he said that he could have left, but decided to stand by his fellow-fighters to the end.

*"I knew it was going to be difficult, but I never expected it to be so horrible, for civilians especially. I came to Vukovar as a volunteer. It was my choice, for better or for worse."*

And our choice is to keep the memory of this brave fighter alive and never let him be forgotten. A bust of Jean-Michel stands by the bridge bearing his name. From his vantage point in downtown Vukovar, this young man greets every passer-by and traveller, his innocent, boyish smile an inspiration to us all. It turns out that he told his mother the truth: he never did go away.

# *Monument “Father and Son”*

The monument “Father and Son”, the work of sculptors Josip Cvrtilo und Zvonimir Ostojić, honours Petar Kačić, one of the commanders of Vukovar’s defence in Sajmište, and his son Igor Kačić, the youngest victim of Ovčara, along with all Homeland War victims.

Igor was supposed to start his sophomore year in high school in the autumn of 1991, but the war intervened. Instead of carefree days in school, going out with his friends, and falling in love for the first time, his reality was bomb shelters, sentries, the war, and uncertainty of survival.

He did not live to see the end of the war. Igor Kačić paid the price for his father’s courage and everything he had done for Croatia.





*Igor  
Kacic*

*Petar  
Kacic*



The list of all Vukovar's Homeland War Victims in one place is displayed in the yard of the Franciscan Monastery and the Parish Church of St. Phillip and Jacob, on a hill overlooking the Danube. It took a long time to put together, for fear that someone might be accidentally left out. The names are written there with utmost respect and gratitude. Never must these names be allowed to become statistics: they are history, and a plea for peace, and they will always be remembered lovingly, with prayers for their eternal life and resurrection.

*'You can't leave  
Vukovar'*

*(Pavao Pavličić)*

Had we stopped, had we not forged ahead, it would have meant our defeat and surrender. But we did not stop, and with everything we do, we tell them **THANK YOU.**

Vukovar is a metaphor for life.

Life is never a straight line. Sorrow and joy, tears and laughter, rises and falls weave together all the time. Vukovar is no different. It has gone through its ordeal, but was never broken. It has its Vukovar Nocturne, which stands for sorrow, but also for pride. It also has the Danube and the Vuka, Vučedol and Adica, its celebrities and its sights, the first Croatian Nobel prize laureate, who was born here, its tourist attractions, and its famous food. It has the Vučedol dove, a symbol of peace and the flow of life.

It also has the title of European Destination of Excellence.

The Vukovar-Vučedol-Ilok destination remains an undiscovered jewel of the Croatian Danube region.



*Vukovar is a miraculous city..  
Vukovar is pride..  
Vukovar is defiance..  
It is the tear in your eye,  
The sorrow in your heart..  
And the smile on your lips.  
Vukovar is the past and the present.*

You have to come here to experience  
Vukovar, and feel its soul.

Come and become a part of its story. Be the  
small thread that continues to weave the  
truth about Vukovar – **SO IT IS NEVER FORGOTTEN.**

*past and future*

*In your streets, oh City,  
are the pages of history written,  
and it is always with us,  
like all those who are gone.*

# Contact information of memorial institutions

## **MEMORIAL SITE – VUKOVAR HOSPITAL 1991**

Županijska 35  
32 000 Vukovar  
Mob: 00385 (0)91/4521-222  
E-mail: mjesto-sjecanja@ob-vukovar.hr  
www.ob-vukovar.hr

### **Opening hours:**

Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 3:00 pm  
Saturday/Sunday by appointment (groups)  
Guided tours: by appointment, in Croatian  
and English

### **Admission:**

Students, pensioners: HRK 7  
Adults: HRK 15

## **OVČARA MEMORIAL HALL**

Ovčara bb  
32000 Vukovar  
Tel: 00385 (0)32/512-345  
E-mail: stručni-odjel@mcdrvu.hr  
www.mcdrvu.hr

### **Opening hours:**

Monday – Sunday 09:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Free admission

## **HOMELAND WAR VICTIMS MEMORIAL CEMETERY**

Ul. bana Josipa Jelačića 266  
32000 Vukovar  
Tel: 00385 (0)32/412-980

## **HOMELAND WAR MEMORIAL CENTRE**

Ive Tijardovića 60  
32000 Vukovar  
Tel: 00385 (0)32/638-567: -551  
E-mail: info@mcdrvu.hr  
www.mcdrvu.hr

### **Opening hours:**

Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm  
Saturday/Sunday by appointment  
Free admission

## **CROATIAN VETERANS MONUMENT ON TRPINJSKA CESTA**

Monday – Sunday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Tel: 00385 (0)99/4417-467  
Free admission

## **VUKOVAR WATER TOWER – SYMBOL OF CROATIAN UNITY**

Bana J. Jelačića 3  
32000 Vukovar  
E-mail: info@vukovarskivodotoranj.hr  
www.vukovarskivodotoranj.hr

### **Opening hours:**

Thursday – Sunday: 09:00 am – 09:00 pm

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