



Dear traveller and visitor to Slovenia!

The members of the Association of Friendship between Slovenia and Azerbaijan warmly welcome you. We are very glad that you decided to visit our small but wonderful country! You traveled great distances, you are far from home but feel sincerely welcome! When you'll drive from our capital Ljubljana towards Nova Gorica, the beautiful Vipava Valley will open in front of you. This pleasant



region is home Mediterranean vegetation, vines, fruit of all kinds, olive and fig trees, excellent wine and a landscape of huddled villages and old churches. This region is also home of the burja or Bora – a strong fresh wind because of which the

tiles on the roofs are weighted with stones and the houses are protected by characteristic shutters. Para gliders and skydivers from all over the world love to spread their wings above the green Vipava Valley, especially in the vicinity of Nova Gorica, thanks to a unique combination of terrain (edges of Trnovo plateau) and climate, with plenty of wind to provide lift. Dear visitor, enjoy the beauties of our little country and be welcome.



Although our homelands are so distant and different, we also share some things in common and these bonds were woven during World War II. Then, in the troops of Slovenian partisans fought the members of different other nations. Especially numerous were the fighters from the former Soviet Union. They joined Slovenian partisans after they had fled from captivity and military units, which were formed by the Germans with the intention to help the German troops in the fight against the partisan movement in Friuli. From these Soviet fighters, who joined the Slovenian partisans was formed in the 9th Corps the so called "Russian battalion." It counted about 800 men who have distinguished themselves with exceptional courage. In the warfare against the German occupiers died 160 fighters, mostly in combats for Trieste in April and May 1945. They are buried in different places, everywhere there have been heavy fighting. To remember and to honor them 135 names of the killed combatants of the "Russian battalion" were engraved on the partisan monument in Trnovo near Nova Gorica.

On the monument in Trnovo there is carved also the name of **Mehdi Husejnzade – Mihajlo** his partisan nickname. He was captured by the Germans during the battles for Stalingrad. The Germans sent him in a special military unit trained for fighting against partisans and formed from captured Soviet fighters. The unit was transferred to Friuli in autumn 1943 and there Mihajlo came in contact with Slovene partisans. In February 1944 he organized a successful escape of 150 comrades from the German troops over to the partisans. In 9th Corps his task was intelligence service and commando actions of the Gradnik brigade.

He was very brave and daring, his actions have caused many losses to the enemy, much harm and fear among the occupying German troops. The most daring, successful and famous commando-type operations were as follows: 2nd April 1944 he undermined the cinema hall in Opčine near Trieste; on 23rd April 1944 he mined and blasted the officers' quarters in Trieste, in Trieste he undermined six barracks, two power stations, the headquarter of the fascist newspaper "Il Piccolo". He led the



miner's squad which destroyed transport facilities and thus prevented the transportation of German forces to the front in Italy, especially during their offensive on the Gothic Line in the Apennines. The English-American mission to the 9th Corps often expressed their appreciation for his brave actions, among the Slovenian people he was highly respected and admired. He

was killed on the 2nd of November in 1944 in **Vitovlje**, where he stopped for a rest over the night before reaching his unit in Trnovski gozd forest. The Germans that night unexpectedly surrounded the village Vitovlje, Mihajlo unfortunately did not manage to fight through the enemy's ring and was killed on the edge of the village.

The locals buried him in the cemetery in Šempas but Mihajlo's comrades from the "Russian battalion" during the night on 19th November dug up his corpse and brought him to Čepovan, where he was buried with all military honors. Today he lies in the tomb together with thirty one fighters. The inscription on the monument reads: "Sleep, our dear Mehdi, hero of Azerbaijani nation, your venture in the name of freedom will always remain in the hearts of your friends!"



Mihajlo is buried in Čepovan



The monument in Šempas

Mihajlo in one of the letters to his sister wrote: "If it is necessary to die for my country, then I'll die like a hero!" The Presidency of the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin, 11th April 1957, awarded him the title Hero of the Soviet Union. The locals of Vitovlje together with the regional committee of the Association of Combatants of Nova Gorica on 3rd July 1983 erected a monument at the spot where he was killed. In 2007, Azerbaijan and the Municipality of Nova Gorica placed in Šempas in Mihajlo's honor a monument by the sculptor Akif Asgaro and in 2011 a memorial museum was edited. In recent years there are regular visits, organized or spontaneous visits of Azerbaijan people to Mihajlo's tomb in Čepovan, to the monuments in Trnovo, in Vitovlje and Šempas. Hero Mihajlo died for his and for our country, that is why Slovenian people respect him and care for his tomb, monuments and museum.



Welcome to Slovenia!