

LEGENDA
THEMATIC AREAS

- 1° Theme area 1° hill 121, Pietrarossa hill, learning area
- 2° Theme area 2° saddle of hill 85 – “trincerone”
- 3° Theme area 3° Joffre trench – Virgin cave
- Monumental area of hill 85, E. Toti hill

STARTING POINT OF ITINERARY:

- 1 1 Mount Debeli itinerary
- 2 2 Zochet, Gradiscata, Forcate
- 3 3 Rock itinerary
- 4 4 Hill 85 and 121
- 5 5 Pietrarossa lake, hill 77 and Sablici

ACESSES:

- A Underpass of via del Carso
- B Underpass of Salita Mocenigo
- C Underpass of Salita alla Rocca
- D Access square to the Pietrarossa Visitor Centre

TRAILS:

- Main visit trails
- Other visit trails

INFORMATION:

- i Informative plates
- P Parking places
- Italian trench line before August 12, 1916
- Austro-Hungarian trench line before August 12, 1916



ON THE CARSO OF THE GREAT WAR
notes for the hikers

Best time of the year to hike on the Carso highland

Hiking trips on the old battlefields should be taken during fall season or even in the winter time because the poor vegetation allows an easier viability of the area and facilitates the spotting of artifacts and remains, often placed out of marked trails.

Suggested clothing

Mountain hiking clothes are advisable and it is important to pay particular attention to the shoes. They must be solid and capable of protecting the ankles. Although the Carso highland is not dangerous, it is an uneven, rocky soil, therefore it is important to walk carefully, especially while visiting historical military remains.

Maps (sold in the best bookshops)

- Carso triestino e isontino foglio 047, Ed. Tabacco, Udine (1:25.000)

Equipment

A small backpack to keep the windbreaker and some warm extra clothes is enough. Do not forget the camera.

Lay-out: Municipality of Monfalcone

Design and texts: Marco Mantini, Michele Piteo, Silvo Stok

Translation: Chiara Valdesolo

Photo: Marco Mantini, Silvo Stok, Gruppo Speleologico del Fante.

Warning

As a general rule you should never hike on your own. Moreover it is recommended not to explore the several caves if not helped by speleologists or people who know the area very well and are equipped with a light. In the summer time or when it is hot, try to avoid areas where the sun shines directly on it: it is a viper's favourite place. Last but not least, in case you found Great War artillery shells, avoid touching them and, in case they were found in a place with many people around, call the police.

CAI (Italian Alpine Club) trailmarks

81 (Selz – Lisert)

Duration of the trip: 1.30 hour. Restore areas in Selz and in the Visitor Centre of Pietrarossa Lake.

Starting from state road 305 towards Selz, follow the direction leading to the lakes (Laghi) and meeting first the Northern side of Pietrarossa lake, then the Eastern sides of hill 121, in order to reach the railway bridge of Lisert (Arches).

82 (Monfalcone – Doberdò Lake)

Duration of the trip: 1.30 hour. Restore areas in Monfalcone, Doberdò Lake and Gradina Visitor Centre (Doberdò del Lago)

From Monfalcone climb the steep way up to the Rock until crossing trail 84, turn left to go down to trail 81, then go up again to the saddle between Mount Cosich and Debeli to finally descent to Doberdò lake.

83 (Monfalcone – Lisert)

Duration of the trip: 1 hour. Restore areas in Monfalcone.

From Monfalcone climb up Salita Mocenigo and follow the dirt road below the sides of hill 85 (Toti hill) to the crossroad of Sablici, from where we descent to the railway bridge of Lisert (Arches).

84 (Selz – Monfalcone)

Duration of the trip: 2.00 hours. Restore areas in Selz and in Monfalcone. Starting from state road 305 towards Selz, reach the trail following the remains of the trenches, where there are no more households. Reach the Rock and then, go back to Monfalcone while meeting trails 99, 111, 121 and finally the underpass of via del Carso.

IN CASE OF WOOD FIRE:



To make a complete visit to the three theme areas it takes about 3 to 3.5 hours. We recommend carefulness during your visit, the hiking trip is at your own risk.

Lay-out: Municipality of Monfalcone
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Photo: Marco Mantini, Silvo Stok, Gruppo Speleologico del Fante.



How to reach the park

Main entrance:

Via del Carso, coming from Trieste:

Start from via Colombo, follow via Romana until Tommaseo square (parking). Walk up via del Carso following the indications to the park

Via del Carso coming from the freeway A4 (Venice-Trieste):

Coming from either direction, take the Monfalcone est exit and reach via Colombo, follow via Romana until Tommaseo square (parking). Walk up via del Carso following the indications to the park

Salita Mocenigo coming from downtown:

From Piazza della Repubblica (main square) go down Corso del Popolo and reach Salita Mocenigo on the left following the indications to the park

Informative material is available at:

IAT Monfalcone

via Duca d'Aosta (Galleria Gran Pavese)

opening hours

Mon. – Sat.

9.30 – 13.00

Fri. 16.00 – 19.00

Phone n. 0481/410304

IAT Fogliano Redipuglia

Via III Armata 54

opening hours

Mon. – Sat.

10.00 - 12.30 , 16.00 - 19.00

www.prolocofoglianoredipuglia.it

Phone n. 0481/489139

HISTORICAL NOTES

The first world war bursted on the front between Austria and Italy on May 24th 1915. The town of Monfalcone has been involved in the fighting since June the 9th, when the first Italian troops entered the town in order to occupy the positions on the highlands that had been abandoned by Austro-Hungarian soldiers looking for better defenses.

Monfalcone was then turned into a backline, welcoming shelters, field hospitals, headquarters and cemeteries, while a network of front line trenches started to carve deeply in the highland.

The beginning operations allowed the Italian troops to settle on the heights of the Gradiscata, of the Rock and of Hill 98 in order to place their outposts before the "Tamburo" (drum) area and quote 93, towards h. 121 and 85. These two have been harshly contended, conquered and lost for a whole year, forcing the thousands of soldiers involved to face a great sacrifice.

The fall of Gorizia (August 8/9th 1916) allowed the reshaping of the Italian line, which could then incorporate h. 121 di Pietrarossa and h. 85, which would have been renamed quota Enrico Toti only after the war. The last enemy outpost of h. 77 by Sablici could be overcome only in May 1917, during the tenth Isonzo battle.

In late autumn 1917 the Austro-Hungarian breakthrough in Plezzo and Tolmino forced the Italians to withdraw from the Carso. On October 27th 1917 all military operations near Monfalcone were ended.

THEMATIC AREAS

Thematic area 1: Hill 121

Of all Monfalcone heights, hill 121 is the highest, towering above the town and on the surrounding territory, stretching towards the Slovenian Carso and the sea. It used to be an Austrian stronghold and, together with hill 85, proved to be the hardest obstacle for the Italian troops for over one year (1915-1916). The complicated trench system, enriched with machinegun pits and caves, was built by the Italians in different phases, starting on the pre-existing Austrian lines. From August 1916 it functioned as the Italian front line, facing the Austrian's hill 77 (Sablici) and the lines of Pietrarossa lake. The several war graffiti left by the soldiers in this area are extremely interesting.



Thematic area 2: saddle - Hill 85

Its main feature is the trench dug deeply into the Carso rocks and reinforced by concrete structures built by the Italians in the August of 1916 on previous Austrian digging. It can be reached by hill 85 ("Enrico Toti hill"), where the monumental area, enriched by several decorative and memorial stones, honors not only the memory of the above mentioned infantryman, but many other fallen soldiers and divisions that fought there during the Great War.



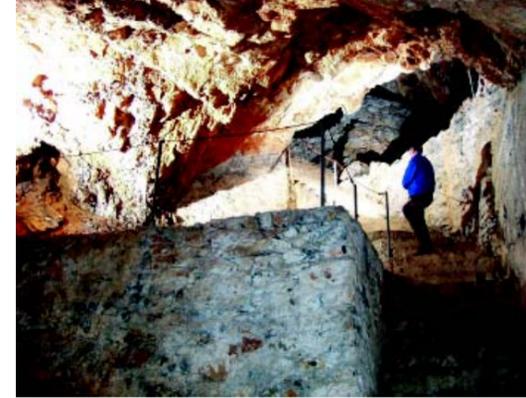
Thematic area 3: "Virgin" cave

After the initial operations carried out in the summer of 1915, this network became a back line trenched system. Its main purpose was to allow the access to the higher line

and to hill 98. The position of the trench was also used against possible enemy incursions, in case the lines were taken by the Austrians, especially the line between the "Tamburo" and hill 104, that went all the way down to hill 93 and to the cave.

The craftwork was reinforced several times and nowadays it is still well kept. Its main feature is that it is linked to two natural caves, that were eventually turned to military use. The "Virgin Cave" especially represents a typical example of a natural cavity exploited for military use during the Great War. This is a very common feature on the Carso.

The "Virgin Cave" is now accessible to tourists thanks to the work of the "Amici del Fante" Monfalcone Speleological Group. Inside the cave the space was organised into terraces linked by stairs and two more openings were dug in correspondence of the trench.



"T.Col. Cuzzi" Trench

This tract of the trench, restored by the Monfalcone A.N.A. (National Alpine Association), is a part of the main Italian line that followed the town's heights towards east and to hill 104 of the "Tamburo". This was also one of the strongholds in the Italian defensive system: there still is a

small canyon on the north side that allowed an easy access to the advanced lines and another canyon, on the south side (Maple canyon), that acted as a sheltered corridor to allow a direct passage from the railway to the lines. This canyon also hosted an authentic "war village". The trench is also linked to the defensive back line that cuts through hill 98 and runs down to the railway station: the Joffre Trench.



War inscriptions

The archive



It is a collection (or census) of particular remains like writings, inscriptions, drawings, graffiti, left by soldiers on trenches or cave walls. The idea of collecting and filing such graffiti was born in 1993, but it is

thanks to a group dedicated to the research and study of the great war (Gruppo Ricerche e Studi Grande Guerra) if we now have a complete and coherent archive in order to know more about our past history thanks to such an unusual source.

Knowledge also means respect and protection of our historical heritage. This message is addressed to those who make a despicable trade of such artifacts, while stealing the voices of our common past.

Up to today the archive has filed over 1300 inscriptions between Italy, Austria and Slovenia.

