

**A WAR STORY FROM IST ABOUT THOSE NEVER FORGOTTEN  
ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS**

# The Last Journey

For the start



You might hear about it from those who remember. You might read about it. You might even tell this story to someone who did not know or just forgot about. You might tell this story to some other people, far away from here, as much as you knew about. For some readers or listeners this story might sound very similar to some other war stories that they heard already, but for us, who are directly related and who are feeling it in our hearts every time when we listen someone talking about or we tell it to someone else sounds so fresh like it happened yesterday. Although many of us were not even born when it happened seems like we are in that story and going through all the suffering that our loved ones went through many years ago. Some people like to say that usually all bad things are happening on Fridays. Some people like to say that number 13 is not a lucky number. Some people like to say that Friday 13<sup>th</sup> is a very unlucky day. It was Friday, but not 13<sup>th</sup>. 1 and 3 exchanged their places. It was 31<sup>st</sup>, the last day of A.D. 1943.



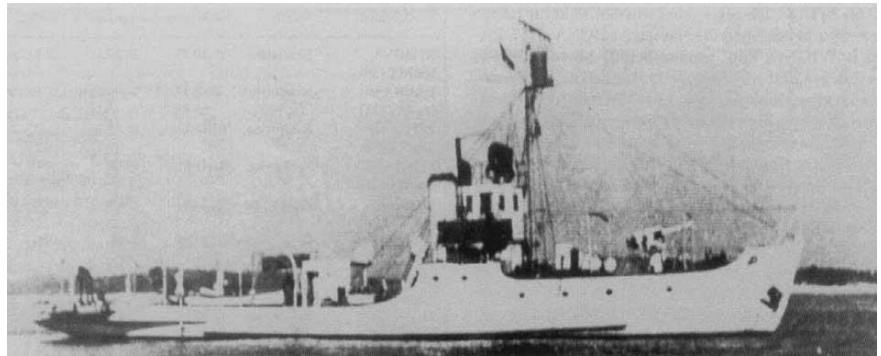
**IST, an island at the half seaway from town of Zadar to island of Lošinj where 14 46 00 Longitude and 44 16 00 Latitude are crossing each other exact in a minute.**

## The Shipwreck



It was St. Silvestre's Day. Those people who still remember are saying that this north-east wind called "bura" had hurricane power around Ist that day. It was cloudy and very cold. Those ones who know what a cloudy bura means will say that nobody should sail out from a harbor safety under those weather conditions. The wind was just hauling over the island, but everybody in Ist were safe. The islanders and some rare visitors who happened to be on this small island at the half seaway from town of Zadar to more famous and larger island of Lošinj were already finalized all their bills from outgoing year and were hoping that the new year will bring something better along the "new", maybe the end of the war. Although the year was not over yet, nobody, but really nobody had any bad feelings that a shipwreck which supposed to happen in those last hours of the year, unfortunately something so common to this area that people got used to, will this time change their life and mark this island forever. While they were getting ready to modestly celebrate the end of another war year and beginning of the new year a small German military steam vessel "Mosor" aka "Pasman" under Italian domination was navigating on a very rough sea caused by bura north of the island. And then the accident happened.

**The small German military steam vessel naval minelayer which Italians overtook 1941, and Germans from them 1943, run aground and sink down at the north side of Ist in a small bay called "Pukozji" just below the church at the top of the hill "Straža".**



**The German military steam vessel "Mosor" aka "Pasman" under Italian domination, one of "Malinska" naval minelayers series was built and launched to sea in Kraljevica 1931.**

People believe that the ship engineer was from Kali, a village on island of Ugljan not far from Ist, and that he sabotaged the engine. It could be that everybody else was drinking at that time celebrating the end of the year and he saw an opportunity to do something already planned. The steam boiler suddenly lost water, became dry and did not produce the steam for the engine anymore. There is also another version that the ship which was navigating from Šibenik to Rijeka supposed to stop in Zadar to get the water, but Zadar was bombed by Allied forces and ship continued on low water. The question is would they risk navigating under those weather condition without refilling water? Nevertheless, without power it was impossible to maneuver the ship and they were left in the mercy of bura and "white collar" waves which were steaming above the sea and slamming against the land with high power. The wind and sea finished the job very quickly. The vessel run aground the sharp rocks in a small bay "Pukozji". The bay is just below the testimonial church dedicated to our Lady of Health built on top of the hill "Straža". Some people from Ist made a vow to build that church after they survived a similar storm on the sea long time ago. "Mosor" became a pile of steel and wood that cold winter day under the waves and bura gusts. Not even the larger vessels could withstand such a force much longer.

**The testimonial church dedicated to “Our Lady of Health” below which in the bay “Pukozji” on Ist northern side the shipwreck happened. There is a holly mass twice a year, August 5<sup>th</sup> “Our Lady of Snow” celebration aka Ist Fiesta and November 21<sup>st</sup> “Our Lady of Health”.**



**At the hill (Struaza – 174 m) in front of the church before the holly mass on “Our Lady of Snow” day.**

There were 26 German soldiers and 3 Ustashi navigating on the small vessel. When they realized that nothing can be done to save the vessel and that they will not be able to continue their mission they did not have a choice but to land on the sharp rocks on a part of the island with no houses or roads. After they silently watched the sea swallowing their small vessel and the last oily patch disappeared they went through the bush over the hill to the only village on island with about 400-500 people. When they arrived the first thing they were interested in are there any partisans stationed on island, so they were asking people that came out wondering what is going on and who came to visit under those weather conditions. Not waiting to confirm about partisan’s presence they came to the school building in the middle of the village and decided to barricade themselves inside to avoid any open attack. On each window they posted a soldier with machine gun. There was a small group of 5 partisans located at the secret location outside the village, but “nobody knew” where exactly. Their commander with a code name Marko went to the post office employee Aurelija and ordered her to disable the telegraph, so that the German soldiers could not get in touch with their main command base, describe the situation and ask for help. Did they have a chance to contact their base before the vessel sunk down is unknown. Aurelija immediately disabled the telegraph as it was ordered to her. In meantime Marko got in touch with his base stationed on the neighboring island of Molat to explain what they are dealing with. Not even two hours later the two fishing vessels modified for war activities sailing in the calm waters along the southern coast of Molat arrived in Ist full of partisan fighters. One of these two vessels was PČ 1 (Patrolni Čamac 1 – Coast Guard 1) “Jadran”, and the other could be PČ 2 “Macola” which were very active in the area. They were very look alike and each one had a permanent crew of about 10 people.

**“Jadran” or PČ 1 was one of two fishing vessels modified for war activities which came to Ist full of partisans to fight Germans who barricaded themselves in the school building. The other one could be “Macola” ili PČ 2. They both were part of the II Navy Coast Sector of Jugoslawien military forces.**



PČ (Patrolni Čamac – Coast Guard) 1 “Jadran” had 11 people crew.

They quickly landed, went to the school building and surrounded it from all sides. Then they called the German soldiers ordering them to come out without any weapons and surrender, otherwise they would not come out alive. The Germans did not fire a single bullet and surrendered peacefully. Just moments later they were boarding up the fishing vessels and leaving the island as the prisoners of war. It is not known what happened with them later, but it is known that they were taken to the village of Luka on Long Island, then to island of Hvar. Most possibly they ended up on island of Vis in a POW camp where at that time was also the Tito and the main command base of partisans and Yugoslavian’s military. It is interesting to mention that not even a year later Ist became the main command post of II Navy Coast Sector of Yugoslavian’s military forces with many soldiers stationed in until the end of war.

## German “D” Day in Ist



The new year was only a couple of days old, the “Three Kings” religious holiday passed, and already 8 days since the islanders were witnessing how partisans took with them the German soldiers and Ustashi from Ist. But that Saturday evening January 8<sup>th</sup> 1944 Ist experienced its own “D” Day before the real one happened in Normandy later that same year. The daylight is very short in winter time, it gets dark very soon, the evening comes and shortly after the time to go to bed. But the islanders always enjoy a nice walk through the village, from one bay with the main peer (Mul) to another quieter fishing bay Kusiraca, before they call off for the night. That evening Tiho Segarić went to catch some fresh air and for a nice long walk before going to bed. Everything was as usual like in the past until he got to the point where he could see a part of Kusiraca bay. He was expecting to find the bay in a deep dark, but instead it was highly illuminated like the city, we say. He could not even imagine what he was about to see. He got a scary surprised of his life. He was slowly walking forward to see what the source of the light was and then he saw the two large ships side by side lowering down their anchors in the bay. He knew immediately that these could be the German’s military ships and that it does not mean anything good. He did not wait another second but turned around and went back straight to the mayor of Ist house. The mayor was Faustin Smoljan and also the president of the most popular Croatian Peasant Party in Ist, who was already in bed. Tiho woke him up, asked him to open the door and told him what he just saw in Kusiraca bay. He asked the mayor and himself: “What are we going to do?” Faustin told him calmly to

go home. “There is nothing that we can do or run away and hide. If we do that we just ask for more troubles. We did not do anything bad to anybody and we do not need to be afraid. Lets’ wait at home and see what they want.” said Faustin before Tiho went home. The German soldiers started landing around 10 PM. They got the order to go to the village and completely surround it. The worst day ever for Ist and its inhabitants had started unfolding. It was the worst case scenario of a “D” Day, where defending side did not expect anything similar and was totally unprepared for it. The attacking side on the opposite had one of the easiest tasks knowing that this time they will be no resistance.



**There was no a pier to accept large ships at that time. Germans lowered down the small life boats, landed on Ist and took back the hostages the same way. Before a pier was built it looked like this when the passenger ship from Zadar could not dock in the bay Siroka on southern side of the island because of strong south wind called Jugo.**

## Calvary

As soon as they surrounded the village their commander asked to see the mayor and priest. Don Toma Segarić was the village priest at that time. When they arrived they were told that the reason for this late night surprise visit is the retaliation for the German soldiers recently taken away from Ist. They were also told that the two men between the age of 17 and 60 in a good condition able to work will be taken from Ist for each German soldier. Shortly after they started the night raids going from house to house waking up everybody and taking men with them. They wanted that all taken men have their personal identifications with them. During the raids they were also asking if there are any partisans in the village, but most likely they knew the situation in Ist before they left for the mission. When the raids were over they lined up all the men in front of the village west chapel in Kusiraca bay. Among the men Germans took two women, Romana Segarić wife of Mate and their daughter Katica. Don Toma, who was Mate’s brother asked Germans to free those women what they did. Then they were checking the documents and selected 52 men including the mayor and priest. It is interesting to mention that they let go all men who had a little hawk stamp in their seaman identification cards. That was a German stamp allowing free sailing in the seas “under German control”. They put 48 people on board of war steam ship “Pag” aka “Scarpanto” under Italians, and 4 were on board of steam war ship “Topola” aka “Vida” under Italians. “Scarpanto” was overtaken by Germans from Italians on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1943. “Topola” was a Yougoslawien passenger ship sailing from Rijeka to Opatija before the war and was also overtaken by Germans from Italians for their own use. The Germans left the island with hostages and sailed off to Pula. As soon as they arrived in Pula Don Toma started a plea to free the hostages and let them go home because they did not have any guilt. The Germans allowed him to visit their command base stationed in

Rijeka. He managed to get their freedom, but before he came back to Pula, the Allied forces started bombing the German military installations in town and the hostages were transported to Trieste. Unfortunately Trieste was also bombed shortly after and Germans put the hostages on board of a train going to infamous concentration camps Dachau, Flossenbug, Buchenwald, Mathausen, Natzweiler, Litomerice and Auschwitz. There is a general opinion among the people that the village would be burned down if Germans did not find that night the men in their houses. It is significant to mention at this point that those few partisans stationed in Ist took the opportunity of mess with night raids and ran away through the bushes over the hill and further to the neighboring island of Molat saving themselves to care les for Ist and the people from Ist.

**Out of 52 hostages taken by Germans and transported to concentration camp Dachau, and later on even to worse death camps only 24 survived and returned back home to Ist. The two of them, Mate Kozulić and Šime Smoljan are still alive.**



**S/S “Topola” aka “Scarpanto” under Italians is one of two ships used by Germans sailed to Ist to take the hostages.**

## The Death Camps



The hostages from Ist arrived at Dachau on holly Sunday, January 16th, just 8 days after being snatched from their homes in Ist. First their hair was cut, and then they got the camp uniforms while their clothes were taken from them along all their belongings. They all got a small aluminum identification plates. The plates had different coloring on one side. The red colored plates would identify the political prisoners, black the saboteurs and green the criminals. All the hostages from Ist were considered as political prisoners. On each plate there was a unique identification number and a single letter identifying the country to which the prisoners belong to (e.g.: J – Jugoslavia, P – Poland).

This table below is the copy of just a part of a long inventory list of the Dachau entrance and registration process. The people who searched through the camp’s archive and found the lists written by hand were translating the lists and typing it over. Later on all lists were copied to electronic format for computer use. In this sample you can see the two hostages from Ist and their basic information. It looks like their

nationality was omitted. They were part of a list with a couple of thousands other prisoners from all over Europe. It means that the hostages from Ist were not all together on the same list. After the war Americans shipped the containers full of prisoner's belongings, all packed and sorted as it was taken from them, but the US commissions in charge for that matter decided that it does not make much sense trying to reach families or survivors and match them with their belongings.

Env #	Nationality	Number	Last Name	First Name	Birth Date	Item Description
660		9984	Smoglian	Faustine	11-Sep-05	1 wrist watch
1419		9058	Smoglian	Viko	16-Nov-13	1 wedding ring

After completing the registration procedure and being humiliated they were divided in working groups and were dedicated to the German families around the camp to work as slaves. Some of them ended up in better families or were "lucky" to have some better or easier jobs, but some poor hostages were not so lucky, and after a while would get sick. They would let them die just like that or move them to the even worse death camps how they all called them. The mayor of Ist Faustin Smoljan was one of them who supposedly were transported to Auschwitz but it could not be confirmed. Germans used to organize the prisoners marshes from one camp to another and many people would die along the way. It is possible that Faustin Smoljan and Gabrijel Počina died or were killed while were passing through Sinnersdorf as some sources recorded their place of death. Some of them remained in Dachau and died or got killed there. The majority were transported from Dachau to different camps where they died or got killed as shown in the next table.

The table on the following page is a list of the hostages taken from Ist in an alphabetical order:

- on the grey background are those ones who never returned home
- beside the number of child where "p." is, describes the wife or girlfriend being pregnant
- wnm describes "was not married"

No.	Last Name	First Name	Of (Father's)	Age	Wife (child)	Place of death
1	Babajko	Ante	Ivanov	32	Dobriła (2)	Flossenburg
2	Babajko	Ante	Šimin	31	Milena	
3	Babajko	Faustin	Šimin	41	Marija (4)	Mathausen
4	Babajko	Kazimir	Kazimira	30	Marija (2)	
5	Babajko	Stanko	Vicka	34	Marija (4)	
6	Bosnačić	Šime	Dinkov	35	Nedjeljka (2)	Mathausen
7	Brok	Ante	Matin	40	Ljubica (3)	
8	Crvelin	Božo	Grgin	42	Salomija (2)	Flossenburg
9	Fazinić	Mladen	Dinkov	42	Marica (3)	Flossenburg
10	Gojdanić	Krsto	Martinov	44	Paulina (5)	Flossenburg
11	Gojdanić	Miro	Šimin	39	Marija (4)	
12	Haglić	Arturo	Ivana	17	wnm	
13	Komać	Branko	Matijin	27	wnm	Flossenburg
14	Komać	Mate	Nikole	29	Anka (1)	
15	Kozulić	Ante	Šimin	21	wnm	Mathausen
16	Kozulić	Ante	Ivanov	28	Ljubica	Flossenburg
17	Kozulić	Filomen	Grgin	48	Julija (4)	
18	Kozulić	Ivan	Ivanov	58	Milica (2)	Natzweiler
19	Kozulić	Josip	Antin	33	Tekla (2)	Flossenburg
20	Kozulić	Mate	Šimin	24	wnm	
21	Kozulić	Miloš	Jakova	36	Marija (1)	
22	Kozulić	Slavijan	Marijana	30	Judita (1)	
23	Kozulić	Zakarija	Antin	35	Marija (2)	Dachau
24	Kozulić	Zamarija	Grgin	46	Henrika (4)	
25	Levačić	Ante	Šimin	18	wnm	Dachau
26	Levačić	Ante	Zakarijin	22	wnm	Dachau
27	Levačić	Nikola	Mihovila	34	wnm	
28	Levačić	Sime	Josipov	46	Marija (4)	
29	Levačić	Zakarija	Stjepanov	50	Marija (1)	Dachau
30	Mazarović	Ivo	Celestinov	23	wnm	Litomerice
31	Mazarović	Josip	Rudolfa	36	Paulina (3, p.)	
32	Mazarović	Marko	Celestinov	21	wnm	
33	Mikuličić	Rafael	Josipov	37	Slava (2)	
34	Počina	Ante	Ivanov	22	Girlfriend (p.)	Mathausen
35	Počina	Gabrijel	Adamov	35	Pole (3)	Sinnersdorf
36	Počina	Petar	Gabrijelov	21	wnm	Litomerice
37	Segarić	Adam	Nikolin	40	Artemija (3)	Flossenburg
38	Segarić	Ante	Stjepanov	20	wnm	Flossenburg
39	Segarić	Filomen	Marijanov	49	Stošė (4)	Dachau
40	Segarić	Toma	Tome	55	Priest	
41	Segarić	Mate	Tome	48	Romana (8)	
42	Segarić	Veljko	Dinkov	17	wnm	Flossenburg
43	Smoljan	Ante	Ivanin	18	wnm	Flossenburg
44	Smoljan	Faustin	Antin	37	Celestina (5)	Sinnersdorf
45	Smoljan	Josip	Nikolin	47	Nada (5)	Mathausen
46	Smoljan	Šime	Šimin	20	Bogoslov	
47	Smoljan	Vicko	Vicka	31	Pavica (2)	
48	Vlasanović	Dinko	Rokov	23	wnm	Dachau

This below is the list of all people who were not from Ist but happened to be there and taken away as hostages with islanders:

No.	Last Name	First Name	Of (Father's)	Wife	Miscellaneous
1	Politika	Paško			Dubrovnik, ctrl. (Toma's house)
2	Perlotti	Giuseppe	Fedelov		Italy
3	Šupičić	Nikša			Silba
4	?	?		Rezika	Russia, finance. (Bacvara's house)

## Coming back



Those ones who endured all suffering which bring the war and concentration death camps and who were still alive at the end of the war, had to go on a long journey back home by any possible means. They were coming back one by one or in small groups. They were mostly walking or sometimes hitch hiking the horse carriages. The largest group of freed hostages came back to Ist on Thursday, July 5<sup>th</sup> AD 1945. Some English soldiers helped them to reach the sea and then in Rijeka they boarded the small steam passenger ship going to Zadar. On the way to Zadar the ship was making a regular stop by island of Vir. Some of the hostages noticed a fishing vessel from Ist in that same port and they all anxiously embarked the small vessel going straight home. They could hardly wait to see Ist, their families and their homes again. Shortly after that group the two more freed hostages showed up in Ist, Arturo Haglič and Slavijan Kozulić. After that they were showing up one by one. Out of 47 hostages from Ist (Don Toma was not taken all the way) and 4 other people who were that night in Ist and became the hostages, 28 never came back home. No one knows where did they die or got killed and where their bones were laid down.

This picture below was taken in Losinj before these 6 ex hostages reach their homes in Ist. From left to right: Filomen Kozulić, Mate Komać (Mačo), Milos Kozulić, a man and a kid from Lošinj, Rafael Mikuličić (Rafić), Zamarija Kozulić (Čizot) i Šime Levačić (Krena):



## The Remembrance



In the memory of those loved ones who never made back home the people from Ist built, erected and uncovered a cenotaph on Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup> 1974. The cenotaph is an art piece of academic sculptor Ratko Petric from Zadar. When a request for the cenotaph was sent to the Republican commission for monuments they complained about the location to be too close to the Catholic chapel, also about the fact that the art piece did not have a red star, that those people do not deserve a monument, etc. Thanks to the persistence of people in Ist and the mayor of Zadar Sime Patrk, the cenotaph was erected as originally conceived and the widows of lost men received some social help and symbolic monetary help.

**The cenotaph to the victims of fascist's terror and to the fallen soldier was erected and uncovered by the village west chapel on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1974 without a red star despite complaints from the Republican monument commission. After the night raids through the village Germans lined up the men at that same spot checking their identities before selecting 52 hostages.**



**The cenotaph in Ist is an art piece of academic sculptor Ratko Petric from Zadar. It symbolizes the hands sticking out of the walls with barbed wire representing the hostages inside a Nazi's concentration camp.**

## The Anniversary



There is a memorial service of this sad date in otherwise very rich history of people and island of Ist. It usually starts with a holly mass for souls in the village's main church dedicated to St. Nicolas, a saint protector of mariners, seamen, fishermen and all others in one or another way related to sea activities. As a customary event some current region politicians and other public figures from Zadar come to Ist to pay respect together with islanders. After the holly mass they form a procession with a cross up front and the priest is leading them through the village towards the cenotaph. They all pray for the souls and sing catholic religious songs along the way. A wreath of fresh flowers is laid down upon arrival to the cenotaph.

It is important to mention that it became a customary to lay a wreath of fresh flowers at the cenotaph during famous island's basketball tournament in Ist. All the participants and visitors form a similar procession from the basketball court Braskindvor in front of village's school and walk peacefully to the cenotaph. The cenotaph opening memorial service and the basketball tournament are both related to July 27<sup>th</sup> marked as the Day of Unrest of Croatian people against fascist's aggression.

**The current village priest is leading the people from Ist and their guests through the village to the cenotaph where the final part of memorial service is hold for the victims of fascist's terror and fallen soldier.**



Dec. Don Anđeo Kolić at the memorial service by the cenotaph in Ist – January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

Réquiem ætérnam dona eis Dómine;  
et lux perpétua líceat eis.  
Requiescant in pace. Amen.

Eternal rest, grant unto them, O Lord,  
And let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May they rest in peace. Amen.

And the cenotaph reads...



This story was written by Danilo Kozulić, Faustin Smoljan's grandson, thanks to all who helped with pictures or details. The story was original written in local dialect and can be found at: [www.maratonist.com](http://www.maratonist.com) thanks to Mladen Levačić.