

# THE PARK OF MILITARY HISTORY

museum and tourist centre



Willkommen  
Welcome  
Bienvenue  
Benvenuti  
Szervetettel  
üdvözzöljük  
Dobrodošli  
**Slovenija**

**PARK OF  
MILITARY  
HISTORY**  
PIVKA



The Park of Military History is a museum tourist centre located in the old Pivka barracks complex. The barracks were built by the Kingdom of Italy around 1930 in order to defend the Rapallo border, and from 1945 to 1991, they were home to the Yugoslav People's Army. Since 2004, the Park of Military History has been developing within the complex becoming the largest museum complex in the Republic of Slovenia as well as one of the largest military history complexes in this part of Europe.

Visitors of the Park can enjoy several important exhibitions and collections. The key exhibition displays the establishment of the Slovenian state and its independence war of 1991, while special interest is also evoked by the collection of tanks, artillery and aircraft, and the submarine as one of the largest and, according to many visitors, the most fascinating exhibit in the Park of Military History.







## EXHIBITIONS AND COLLECTIONS



## The Komanda building

In front of the entrance of the Komanda building stands a monument dedicated to the event that made the Pivka barracks a part of national military history. On 26 June 1991, the so-called »Day Before«, the first tanks of the Yugoslav People's Army took to the road from here and thus started the aggression against the newly independent Republic of Slovenia.

### Did you know?

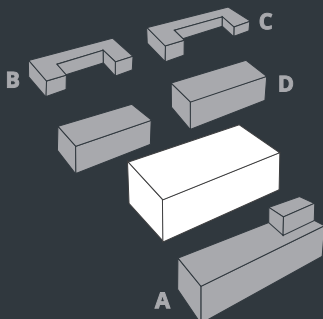
After the departure of the Yugoslav People's Army in 1991, the complex of the old Pivka barracks was completely abandoned and desolated.







# Komanda



Komanda is the former command facility of the barracks; today, the information centre of the Park of Military History, the museum shop and the museum restaurant Kantina are situated on the ground floor.







The staircase walls are decorated with an exhibition of topographic maps of the Slovenian territory in the 20th century, while the upper rooms host the exhibition on transport during the First World War on Slovenian territory as well as the unique exhibition on the development of archery through history. The permanent exhibitions are rounded off by »To Hell and Back«, which

presents the story of the Allied aircraft and airmen that were downed over Slovenian territory during the Second World War and the rescue efforts of the locals and partisans. Komanda also houses temporary and visiting exhibitions.

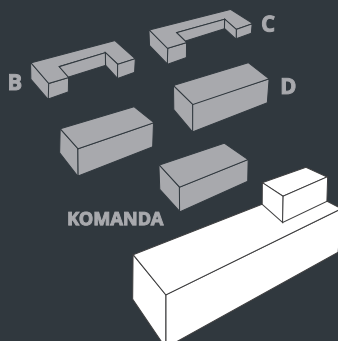
### Did you know?

The first military museum in the Pivka barracks was established as early as April 1941. It was led by Diego de Henriquez from Trieste, an Italian soldier who later became a world-famous collector.





# Paviljon A



## The Road to Independence

The exhibition entitled »The Road to Independence« presents the process of gaining independence in the Republic of Slovenia with an emphasis on the independence war of 1991.

The exhibition outlines the Second Yugoslavia, also referred to as Socialist or Tito's Yugoslavia, as a federal state, a part of which was also the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, which encompassed the majority of the Slovenian national territory. Apart from Tito, the main bond of the Yugoslav federation was the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA), which had an enormous influence on the development of the state and its regulation. Especially in the 1980s, its primary task – defence against external enemies – changed into defence against internal enemies. The restriction of national development and rough violation of human rights resulted in Slovenians experiencing Yugoslavia as an increasingly unbearable restraint.

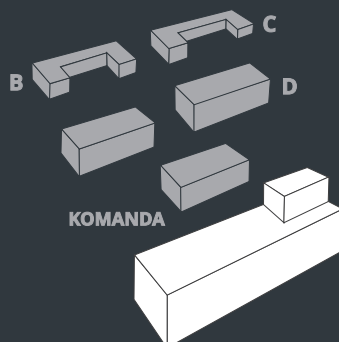


With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the democratic changes in Eastern Europe, an unstoppable desire for democracy and greater independence emerged in Slovenia as well, which led to a plebiscite on the independence of the Republic of Slovenia, held on 23 December 1990, after the democratic opposition had won the first free elections in April 1990. As many as 88.5 % of all eligible voters were in favour of a sovereign and independent Republic of Slovenia. Six months later, the Slovenian parliament declared independence in compliance with the will of the referendum; however, this was followed by a brutal military intervention of the Yugoslav Army, which was quelled by a strong resistance from the Slovenian armed forces of the Territorial Defence and the Police Force. The defeated Yugoslav Army retreated to the barracks and at the end of October 1991, four months after the beginning of the war, finally left the territory of the Republic of Slovenia, which could then begin to enjoy its sovereignty to the fullest.

The exhibition enables the visitor to relive the war events through direct contact with some important exhibits from that time. The exhibition displaying the advance of a Yugoslav unit thus includes the MiG-21 aircraft, the M-84 tank, and the BVP and BTR armoured vehicles. Two important »relics« of the 1991 war are the Gazelle helicopter with the marking »TO-001 Velenje«, which was the first aircraft to escape from the Yugoslav Military Air Force, and the T-55 tank, which was part of the tank unit that spearheaded the aggression of the Yugoslav Army from the Pivka barracks. The collection of fascinating armoured vehicles also includes a series of BOV vehicles, which were manufactured in the Maribor factory TAM and participated in several battles, the PT-76 tank and the MT-LBu command vehicle. The BOV M-86 symbolically represents the important role of the Police Force (»Milica«) as it was used by its Special Unit, the operational vehicle of the firefighters from Mokronog represents Slovenian firefighters, while the Mercedes-Benz 230 BINZ ambulance stands as a tribute to the rescue service.



# Paviljon A



## The submarine service of Yugoslavia and the P-913 Zeta submarine

The 19-metre long and 76-tonne P-913 Zeta submarine belongs to the category of the so-called pocket or commando submarines of the Una-class. In the 1980s, the Navy of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) came to the conclusion that larger submarines were not suitable for performing a number of tasks in the specific conditions of the Adriatic Sea; at the same time, they were searching for a more economical way of enlarging the submarine fleet. By 1989, six such submarines were constructed in Split and were named after rivers from each of the SFRY republics. The submarine on display is named after the Montenegrin river Zeta, and at the time of its launching, its godmother was the Montenegrin Municipality of Nikšić.

Its basic crew consisted of four members; however, it could also transport up to six submarine commandos. The P-913 submarine is an extraordinary example of military technical heritage. Slovenian experts and the country's industry greatly







contributed to its construction as well. Apart from being a technical monument, the P-913 Zeta submarine is also a monument to generations of Slovenian submariners who represented a substantial share of the Yugoslav Navy. The submarine came to the Park of Military History in 2011 as a gift from the Republic of Montenegro as a result of the great efforts of the members of the Podmorničar Society, consisting of former Slovenian submariners.

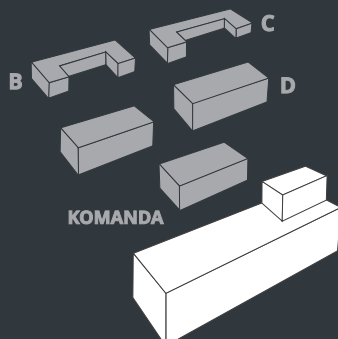
The life and work of submariners is presented by a special exhibition which surrounds the submarine. With its interesting exhibits, photos, and stories of the submariners it presents the history of submarine service on the eastern Adriatic coast and gives visitors an inside look into the details of submarine life, unknown to most people. The exhibition was prepared by the Sergej Mašera Maritime Museum from Piran.

### Did you know?

Each of the 6 Yugoslav commando submarines was named after a river of each of the former SFRY republics. These were Una, Tisa, Zeta, Soča, Kupa (Kolpa) and Vardar.



# Paviljon A



## The vehicle collection

The third exhibition in the Pavilion A is a collection of different types of military vehicles; the only thing they have in common is that they were all used by the Yugoslav People's Army. Military vehicles always combined the biggest technical achievements of the time and, therefore, always evoked both interest and awe. Two aircraft are included in the collection, American fighter-bombers Thunderjet and Sabre, which were brought to Yugoslavia as part of the American military aid in the 1950s.

The collection also includes two tanks – the Soviet T-72 and its Yugoslav variant M-84, which presents the greatest success of the Yugoslav military industry.



### Did you know?

More than 1200 Yugoslav companies participated in the construction of the M-84 tank, including several Slovenian ones; a particularly important role belonged to the companies Iskra Elektrooptika (today's Fotona) and Železarna Ravne.



The Soviet 2S1 Gvozdika (Carnation) self-propelled howitzer is one of the most successful examples of self-propelled artillery from the Cold War period. The self-propelled anti-aircraft artillery is presented by the Soviet ZSU-57 57 mm and by the Czechoslovak Praga M53/59 30 mm, more commonly known as »Ješterka« (Lizard). The BVP M-80A infantry fighting vehicle is still in use in practically all countries of the former Yugoslavia; it is also used by the Slovenian Armed Forces, but on a limited scale.

The vehicles in the collection that most certainly stand out are the Soviet BTM-3 trench-digging machine and the tank simulator on the basis of the T-55, which enables visitors to take a look at the interior of the tank and the work space of the crew.

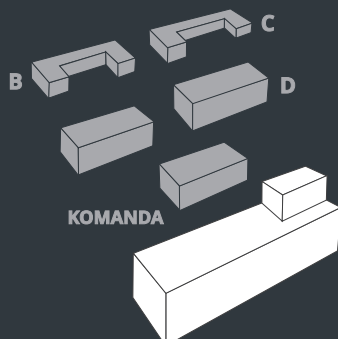
### Did you know?

Yugoslavia was one of the few countries which used both modern American and Soviet armament during the Cold War. Thus, the Soviet MiG-21s and American Sabres as well as Soviet T-55 and American M47 tanks were being used at the same time.





# Paviljon A



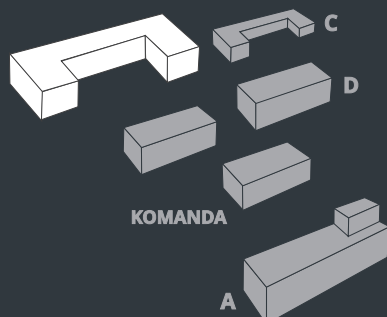
## MiG-21 flight simulator

The MiG-21 is one of the most widespread fighter-interceptor military aircraft. More than 15,000 units in 15 variants were manufactured. The airplane's development began in the 1950s and the first prototype took flight in 1955. Apart from the Soviet Union, MiG-21s were used by more than 30 countries, including Yugoslavia. A total of 261 MiG-21 aircraft in 10 variants were part of the Yugoslav Air Force.

Visitors of the Park of Military History can try out the MiG-21 simulator, which was developed by AFormX. The user sits in an original seat and operates authentic MiG-21bis instruments. The simulator uses virtual reality technology which provides the user with a 360-deegree view of the cockpit and the surroundings.



# Paviljon B



## The exhibition of Partisan Tank Units

Pavilion B mostly houses tanks and other armoured vehicles and weapons that originate from the Second World War. The first hall displays the Stuart tanks, both the older M3A1 and the slightly younger M3A3. Both of them are a valuable memory of the First Partisan Tank Brigade, trained and equipped by the Western Allies, which also used, among other vehicles, the British Bren Carrier.

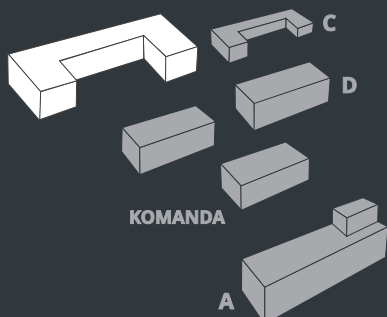
Towards the end of the war, the partisans also used the American self-propelled M7 Priest howitzer and the legendary American Harley-Davidson WLA motorcycle. The T-34/85 Soviet tank is the best-known tank of the Eastern Front and the one on display symbolises the Second Tank Brigade, which, unlike the First, was equipped and trained in the Soviet Union.

### Did you know?

The American M3A1 Stuart light tank is the oldest armoured vehicle in Slovenia today. It was constructed in 1942.



# Paviljon B



## The Armour of Freedom

The exhibition entitled »The Armour of Freedom« combines armoured vehicles as well as weapons and artillery that came to Yugoslavia from the United States of America in the 1950s as military aid after the Tito-Stalin dispute, which brought the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the bloc of communist countries bound to the Soviet Union. The exhibition thus combines some of the most valuable Second World War-era armoured vehicles displayed in the Park of Military History, such as the M4A3 Sherman tank, the M36 Jackson self-propelled gun, the M3 Scout Car and the M8 Greyhound armoured vehicles, as well as the post-war American M47 Patton tank, the heaviest tank in the collection of the Park of Military History.

### Did you know?

The M47 Patton is not only the heaviest tank in the tank and artillery collection, it is also a record holder in fuel consumption. On average, it consumes as much as 700 litres of high-octane fuel per 100 km.





## Supermarine Spitfire flight simulator

The Spitfire is one of the most recognisable, beautiful and famous aircraft of all time. It went down in history as the winner of the Battle of Britain.

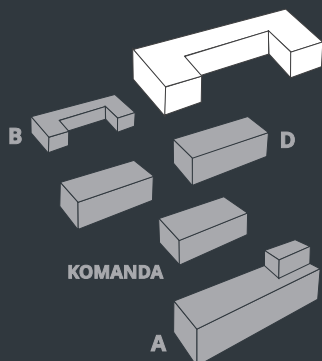
The Supermarine Spitfire F IX fighter aircraft with the serial number MJ116, whose Merlin engine and wreckage are displayed in the Park of Military History was part of the 73rd Squadron of the Royal Air Force.

On 18 September 1944, a group from this squadron carried out an attack on German military infrastructure near Ljubljana where the Spitfire was hit by the Germans and crashed into the Ljubljana Marshes near a local road (Ižanska cesta). It was piloted by Peter J. Clark who was able to successfully parachute from the damaged aircraft. The excavation of the wreckage, which took place between 19 August and 27 August 2019, was carried out by a team of the Archaeological Research Consortium for Ljubljana. More than 150 pieces of the aircraft were documented in total.

With the new simulator, developed by AFormX, the user enters a replica of the cockpit and grabs the controls. The simulator uses virtual reality technology and provides the user with a 360-degree view of the cockpit and the surroundings. The pilot can look through the windows on both sides and the image on the VR goggles will follow the movement of the head. The pilot is able to check the movement of the controls in the cockpit, lean closer to the instruments in order to read the dials and numbers, look over his or her shoulder to see if the wings are still where they need to be, or simply look at the surroundings during the flight.



# Paviljon C



Pavilion C is dedicated to the artillery, the queen of the battlefield, as it was once called. The collection includes some extremely interesting artillery weapons. In the first hall, we encounter two Bofors 40 mm guns, namely the British and American licensed versions from the Second World War.

Additionally, anti-aircraft guns are represented by three variants of the Yugoslav M55 20/3 20 mm and the German Flak 30 and Flak 38 guns. Without a doubt, the most famous piece in this category is the legendary German Flak 37 88 mm, one of the best artillery weapons of the Second World War.

## Did you know?

The American M1 »Long Tom« howitzer weighs as much as 14 tonnes, and its crew consisted of 16 people. Its maximum range was more than 23 km.





The Soviet SU-100 is a valuable example of a tank destroyer, while the heavy artillery is represented by the American M1 »Long Tom« 155 mm howitzer. Two American gun-towing vehicles are also on display, namely the M5/ M5A1 half-track and the M5 HST towing tractor.

The Soviet artillery from the Second World War is represented by the ML-20 152 mm howitzer and the famous ZiS-3 76.2 mm, while the Yugoslav artillery is represented by the M-48B1 76.2 mm mountain gun and the M-63 »Plamen« 128 mm multiple rocket launcher. Pavilion C is rounded off with the Yugoslav Soko 522 and UTV Aero 3 trainer aircraft.

### Did you know?

The Soko 522 aircraft is very important for Slovenian history as a group of engineers and aircraft experts who designed it worked under the guidance of Slovenian engineer Ivo Šoštarič.







## OTHER



## Trekking

### The Alpine Wall Fort on Primož Hill and the Circular Trail of Military History

The Park of Military History also features the Alpine Wall Fort on Primož Hill. The Alpine Wall was a system of fortifications built by the Italian army along the entire land border in the period between the First and the Second World War. A well-maintained thematic education trail leads to the fort. It connects the Park of Military History, the former military training range on Hill 110 (613 m), and Primož Hill (718 m). During the First World War, a system of trenches and a cavern were dug on Hill 110 with the intention of training units for combat on the Soča Front.





The mighty underground artillery fort on Primož Hill was the command post for a group of fortifications around Pivka. Along the path, there are five big and another five small information boards, which inform visitors about the natural, cultural and historical sights of the Pivka Basin. You can also explore the interior of the fort with a guide and visit 500 metres of its underground tunnels.

The Circular Trail of Military History connects the Park of Military History, the Italian underground fort on Primož Hill, the village Šilentabor above Zagorje, where the greatest fortification system in Slovenia was built at the end of the Middle Ages, and the tourist village of Narin. The whole trail takes about 4 hours of walking, but you can adjust it to your own capabilities and time.







## Museum shop Magazin

The museum shop, located in the Komanda building at the entrance of the museum centre, is well-stocked and caters to many different tastes. Apart from souvenirs and local products, there is also a wide selection of books on offer, while military items and memorabilia, written-off military equipment, and various military vehicle models represent the most interest-catching items in stock.







## Motorhome stopover site

In the Park of Military History, all visitors can use the motorhome parking lot with all the infrastructure located in a pleasant environment, which invites visitors to hike and explore the Green Karst.

## Electric vehicle charging station

There is a charging station for electric vehicles located within the complex of the Park of Military History, where users can charge their vehicles for free.





## EVENTS

# The Festival of Military History

The Park of Military History organises its annual Festival of Military History in the third week of September. It is the Park's main event of the year, the main tourist event in the Municipality of Pivka and the biggest military history and illustrative national event. The annual success and turnout of the Festival of Military History confirm that it is a recognised event, which attracts visitors from all around the country and beyond to Pivka with its theme and numerous events.











## Other traditional events in the Park

Various traditional events in the Park of Military History including the Festival of Military History, which is the main annual event, are complemented by annual themed weekends. In April, the park hosts the Submariners Weekend, which features former submariners who share the secrets of living and working on a submarine with visitors. At the start of May, visitors can join the organised hike along the Circular Trail of Military History, which takes them along the path of rich military history heritage. The series of themed weekends finishes at the end of May with the Tank Weekend, where visitors can witness the power and mobility of military armoured vehicles.












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