

few good rifles, the rest were hunting weapons. The telephone lines did not work. There was shooting, and most of the young Serbs with children left the village. Seventeen remained behind. They were: Mladen Božanić with his wife Dragica and son Nemanja; Mladen's mother Dobrila; Mladen's cousin Božidar with his wife Dušanka and son Novica. Of the Burdžić family, the brothers Spasoje and Miodrag remained, Miodrag's wife Slavka, and Milutin and his wife Stanojka. Also remaining were Spasoje Banzić, his wife Slavica and mother Desanka; and Sreten Simić with his wife Olga. Of the men, only Novica and Nemanja Božanić were young and healthy.

On the afternoon of Friday 17 July 1998, shooting could be heard in the surroundings of **Opterushë/Opteraša**. All except Milutin, Stanojka, Desanka and Olga took refuge at the Božanić house in the centre of the village. The women hid in the cellar of Mladen's new house and the men, armed with rifles, stood guard. At about 01:00h after midnight [18 July 1998], the KLA opened fire on the Serb houses. Nemanja was wounded by the explosion of a rocket from a hand-held launcher which hit Boško's house. The men continued returning fire until morning, when they decided to surrender. About forty KLA entered the Božanić's yard, among whom Mladen and the others recognised five [their names are known to the HLC]. The soldiers first took the men's weapons and then searched them all. They then took them in Boško's tractor to the Božanić family vineyard above the village. Soon afterwards they also brought up Milutin, Stanojka, Desanka and Olga, who had remained in the village. From there they took them in a tarpaulin-covered lorry to Smetište/Semetište [Suharrekë/Suva Reka municipality] to an Albanian house. They took the women upstairs and locked the men in the cellar. For hours, the women could hear the cries of the men who were being beaten by the soldiers. At 22:00h on Sunday, the soldiers took Dragica, Dobrila, Dušanka, Slavka, Slavica, Desanka, Olga, Stanojka and the elderly Milutin to Zoqishtë/Zočişte. On an unspecified day at the end of July, the men

from Opterushë/Opteraša were taken out of the KLA prison in **Malishevë/Mališevo** [the police station building] together with captured Serbs from Reti/Retimlje [see record below] and other prisoners, and driven towards Prishtinë/Priština. For a long time, their families did not know what had become of the men from Opterushë/Opteraša. After almost eight years, their bodies were exhumed from a mass grave in the village of Vulljakë/Volujak [Klinë/Klina municipality] in April 2005. Following DNA identification, on 13 October 2006 in Merdare, the UNMIK Missing Persons' Office handed over the bodies of Mladen, Nemanja, Božidar, Novica, Sreten, Spasoje Banzić, Spasoje and Miodrag Burdžić to their families. The families buried them next day, 14 October 2006, at the Orlovača cemetery in Belgrade.

Sources: statement of B.K, HLC-29094; statement of C.B, HLC-3896; statement of M.D, HLC-470; statement of V.V, HLC-3898; statement of M.B, HLC-3897; statement of M.K, HLC-18936; statement of R.Đ, HLC-18937; statement of D.B, HLC-18939; HRW, *Po naređenju...*, 38, 78, 84, 359; HLC, *List of bodies...*, HLC-12986; SIA, *Pashtrik...*, 64-66, HLC-16913; FHP, *Haški tribunal, Sudenje Slobodanu Miloševiću*, XVII, 310; *Šta je sa otetima*, *Ilustrovana politika*, 28.11.1998, 7-8, HLC-32281; statement of Ž.K, HLC-29092; statement of L.K, HLC-583; statement of O.B, HLC-3900; statement of V.K, HLC-13527; statement of M.N, HLC-460; statement of K.K, HLC-400; HLC, *Fate of Serbs...*, 2-4, HLC-14277.

Vitomir (Mladen) Kostić a.k.a.

„Vitko“

(born 28/05/1928, Serb from Reti/Retimlje, Rahovec/Orahovac municipality, pensioner, married)

Dimitrije (Dušan) Kostić

(born 24/10/1932, Serb from Reti/Retimlje, Rahovec/Orahovac municipality, farmer, four children)

Vekoslav (Dimitrije) Kostić

(born 20/10/1958, Serb from Reti/Retimlje, Rahovec/Orahovac municipality, worked at PKB *Orvin* Plantation)

Miroljub (Dimitrije) Kostić

(born 28/08/1967, Serb from Reti/Retimlje, Ra-