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Pecanac, Kosta

By [Dmitar Tasić](#)

Pecanac, *Kosta* Milovanovic

Chetnik leader

Born 1879 in Decani, Kosovo region, Ottoman Empire

Died 24 May 1944 in Sokobanja, Serbia

Kosta Pecanac was a prominent *chetnik* leader before the Great War and one of the leaders of the Toplica uprising against the Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian occupation of Serbia in 1917. Between the First and Second World Wars Pecanac led the paramilitary *chetnik* veteran society. During World War Two his movement closely cooperated with General Milan Nedic's Serbian *quisling* regime and with the German occupation regime. He was assassinated in 1944.

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1. Early Life

Kosta Milovanovic Pecanac (1879-1944) was born in 1879 in Decani near the town of Pec in the Kosovo region of the [Ottoman Empire](#). When he was four years old, his parents were killed during an attack by Albanian brigands on the monastery Visoki Decani. In 1892 he immigrated to [Serbia](#), where he served in the army and earned the rank of reserve officer. After the service he joined the border troops and was discharged for reasons unknown in 1904. He then left for Ottoman Macedonia, where he joined the Serbian *chetniks* (a Serbian [paramilitary unit](#) used by the Serbian

army) and became one of the most famous *voivods* (military leader). By 1912 he had fought in numerous conflicts with rival [Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization](#) (IMRO) and Ottoman regulars and Albanian irregulars.

2. Balkan Wars and the Great War

Together with some 2,000 *chetniks* Kosta Pecanac fought within the ranks of the Serbian army in both the [Balkan Wars \(1912-1913\)](#) and the Great War. He withdrew to [Greece](#) in 1916 with remnants of the Serbian army. There he was chosen to return to Serbia to try to organize a massive uprising. In September 1916 he was infiltrated by a French airplane to Toplica in southern Serbia. There he encountered other experienced *chetniks* already preparing to rise against the Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian [occupation](#). Despite precise instructions to prepare and organize a massive uprising which would help Allied advancement after an expected breakthrough on the Macedonian front, other *chetnik* leaders insisted on immediate action. Uprising broke out in region of Toplica with most intensive activities from 21 February until 25 March 1917. However, despite the insurgents' initial successes, the Bulgarians and Austro-Hungarians managed to quell the rebellion. Pecanac and his detachment successfully avoided all posses and continued to carry out guerrilla actions. After breaking through the Macedonian front in September 1918 he initiated full-scale guerrilla warfare, capturing hundreds of [prisoners of war](#) and large quantities of war material.

3. After WWI

Pecanac led the organization of *chetnik* veterans between the two world wars. He participated in several paramilitary actions against anti-[Yugoslav](#) organizations such as the IMRO and the Croatian *Ustashe*. Being anti-Communist, he and his *chetnik* organization fully collaborated with the German occupation regime and General [Milan D. Nedić's \(1877-1946\)](#) Serbian *quisling* regime in WWII. He was assassinated in 1944 by the rival *chetnik* faction of General [Draža Mihailović \(1893-1946\)](#).

Dmitar Tasic, Institute for Strategic Research, Belgrade

Section Editor: [Tamara Scheer](#)

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