

Man and the mountain

The clashes of 1848



During the first War of Independence (1848), the eastern slope of Mount Baldo was involved in war operations which were related to the strategic importance that the Cerbiolo, Campione and Corona passes had for the Piedmontese army. Taking possession of these territories meant controlling Novezza Valley and the Adige River Valley along which the Austrian imperial troops moved.

In 1848, on the high grounds of Basiana and Pravazzar, the Piedmontese - with a contingent of 700 men (an infantry battalion and volunteer riflemen *bersaglieri* made up mostly of students) - managed to repel a nighttime attack, led by over 2000 Austrians coming from Our Lady of the Snows, in a battle that lasted nearly three hours. The conflict cost the Piedmontese three lives (volunteer riflemen Antonio Longoni, Sebastiano Roggiapane and Giovanni Battista Roggiapane Sacchieri) and about fifteen wounded, and the Austrians thirty lives, several wounded and about fifteen prisoners.

On July 22nd, a Piedmontese unit staved off at length an attack of about 6-7000 Austrians on the Sdruzzenà-Preagne Fort line, thanks to the works of defense (including a small canon) located in the Fort, that are still visible today. After four hours of fighting, the order was given to retreat to Rivoli. A strenuous defense held the Austrians at bay long enough for the Piedmontese, that were stationed at Rivoli, to receive reinforcements and achieve victory (thwarted by the defeat of Custoza on July 25th). Some of those that died in the clash, both Piedmontese and Austrians, were buried in the village “*Buse dei Morti*” (Pits of the Dead), where you can still see a mound with a large cross where some of their names are inscribed.

