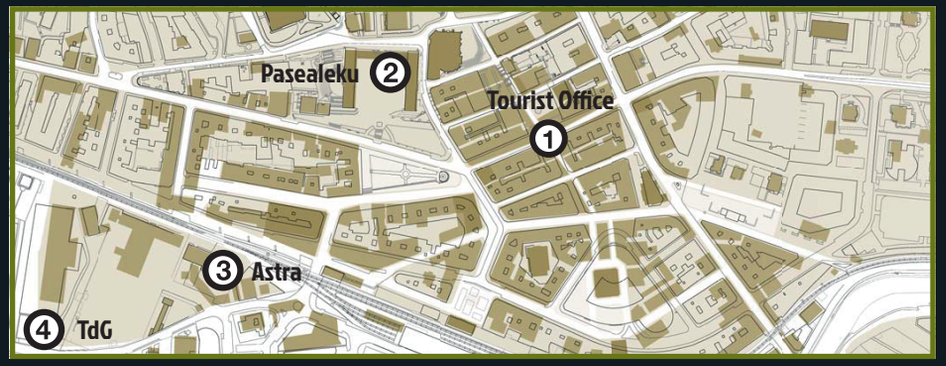
26th April 1937



Buildings in Gernika before the 26th April 1937

THE BOMBING OF GERNIKA.

On 26 April 1937 the town was attacked from the air by aircraft from the Condor Legion and the Avizzione Legionaria in the service of Franco, out of the aerodromes in Vitoria, Burgos and Soria.

Journalist George L. Steer described the attack as taking place in various phases:

1 - Six bombers and a number of fighters came in first to alert the population and force people into the air raid shelters within the limits of the town.

2 - The fighters then circled over the town preventing anyone from getting out. Heinkel He 51 ground – attack planes could carry up to six 10 kg bombs, so in this phase of the attack they were strafing not just with machine-gun fire but also with bombs.

3 - Then the Junkers Ju52 made a carpet bombing run from north to south, dropping a mixture of explosive and incendiary bombs that reduced the town to rubble.

4 - The fighters and ground – attack planes then circled again, machine-gunning and bombing the people to prevent them from getting out of the attack zone, so as to maximise casualties.

In the words of Wolfram von Richthofen, who was in charge of the attack, at least 31 tons of bombs were dropped. However, this figure does not include bombs dropped by fighters or incendiary devices thrown by hand from bombers.

1937-04-26

AIR-RAID SHELTERS ROUTE





The terrible bombing raids suffered by the Basque Country from 22 July 1936 onwards led the Basque government to decree that air raid shelters be built in all towns, regardless of whether they were of any strategic or military value. The Mayor of Gernika instructed municipal architect Castor Uriarte to have at least six shelters built for public use. At the same time, a large number of private shelters were also constructed.

1



Andra Mari street air-raid shelter

The biggest shelter of all was on Calle Andra Mari, where the tourist information office now stands. Measuring 146 m², it extended all along the street and was made of thick wooden beams roofed with sandbags. The plan was to reinforce the roof with steel sheets, but they did not arrive in time. It was hit by one block-buster bomb and totally destroyed. It was built to hold 450 people and was full to capacity at the time of the bombing.

2



Pasealekua air raid shelter old entrance
10:30-13:30 / 15:30-21:30

'The safer shelters were on the west side of the Unión Square. The wall on this side rests against the mountain slope. We just dug four cave-shaped shelters into the mountain slope. They were about 10 metres deep. These four shelters were for the people from the market area and from the Ferial'.
Castor Uriarte, municipal architect (1937)
Two of the four tunnels dug in 1936 were reopened in 2018. The smaller of them, which was never finished, now contains a scale model of the shelter as initially built. In the other you can see an audio-visual presentation with light and sound effects showing what it was like for those who sheltered here during the raid.

3



The Former Astra armaments Factory air raid shelter

The Talleres de Gernika (TdG) factory built two shelters for its workers in September 1936:

- The first is now known as the "Astra" shelter. It takes its name from the renowned Astra 400 "la Puro" handgun, which was manufactured in Gernika in the first half of the 20th century.

- The second shelter is 22 m long and 5 m wide, and built with solid, 1 m thick walls.

These two concrete bunkers were "disguised" under a false roof, and as a result were not identified as air-raid shelters by the aircraft that took part in the bombing raid.

4



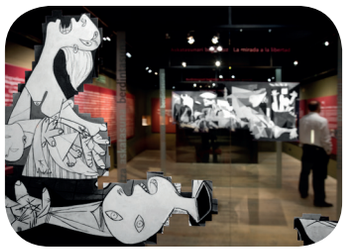
Talleres de Gernika air raid shelter

+ INFO

GERNIKA PEACE MUSEUM

Tour guides
Memori Tour

Reservations
www.museodelapaz.org



Tourist information office

November-March,
Monday to Friday: 10:00-18:00
Saturday and Sunday: 10:00-14:00

April-October,
Monday to Saturday: 10:00-19:00
Sunday: 10:00-14:00
August 10.00-19.00