

26th April 1937



- Built area until 1937 and then destroyed during the bombing.
- Buildings that were not affected by the bombing.

■ THE BOMBING OF GERNIKA.

On 26 April 1937 the town was attacked from the air by aircraft from the Condor Legion and the Aviazione 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.

Gernika 1937

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 - Tourist 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

The biggest of all was the Andra Mari shelter, on the street of the same name, which measured 146 m² and was capable of holding 450 people. The municipal architect covered the whole of the narrow Calle Andra Mari, which ran between the larger streets of Artekale and Barrenkale, with a structure of stout wooden beams on which sandbags were then laid. The plan was for this roof to be reinforced with five layers of steel, but they did not arrive in time.

+ INFO
GERNIKA
PEACE
MUSEUM



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)

One of the 4 tunnels dug beneath the arches was never finished. This last tunnel can be visited free of charge during the opening hours of the establishment.

3



Astra armaments Factory air-raid shelter

March - October: Monday to Friday: 10:00 - 19:00
 Saturday: 10:00 - 15:00

The Astra air-raid shelter was built in September 1936 to be used by workers at Talleres de Gernika and other factories in the area. This monument to history lay forgotten until the original "Astra, Unceta y Cía" factory building was demolished in 2005. The concrete construction was camouflaged under a false roof so that pilots could not tell from the air that it was an air raid shelter.