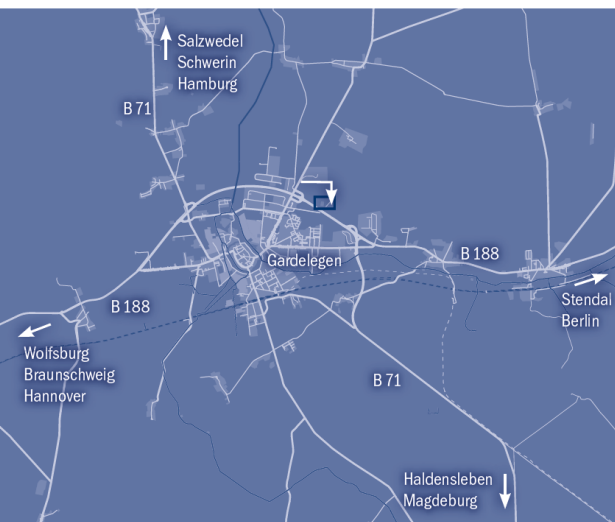


Memorial grounds | 1 Access road | 2 Bus stop: local bus by request (connection to Gardelegen) | 3 Parking facilities | 4 Entrance | 5 Former information hall | 6 Monument "Stones of the Nations" | 7 Bronze sculpture | 8 Commemorative wall, built in 1953 | 9 Bowls of flames | 10 US-American plaque, erected in 1945 (faithful replica of the original) | 11 Cemetery of honour | 12 Commemorative stone, erected in 1946 | 13 Site of the future visitor and documentation centre



Getting here | **by car** | B 71 Salzwedel-Magdeburg | B 188 Wolfsburg-Stendal | signposted from Gardelegen | **by train** | from Hannover/Braunschweig: via Wolfsburg | from Berlin/Magdeburg: via Stendal | **by public bus** | "Altmark-Heide-Express" Magdeburg-Salzwedel (line 100) | from Gardelegen Station, local bus by request (line 2)



View of the cemetery of honour at the memorial (Stiftung Gedenkstätten Sachsen-Anhalt)



Isenschnibbe Barn Memorial Gardelegen

English

Memorial

An der Gedenkstätte 1 | 39638 Gardelegen | Germany

Contact

Gedenkstätte Feldscheune Isenschnibbe Gardelegen
Stiftung Gedenkstätten Sachsen-Anhalt
c/o Hansestadt Gardelegen
Rudolf-Breitscheid-Str. 3 | 39638 Gardelegen | Germany
Tel: +49 (0)3907- 716 176 7 Fax: +49 (0)3907- 716 111
Mail: info-isenschnibbe@stgs.sachsen-anhalt.de
Web: www.stgs.sachsen-anhalt.de
[f](https://www.facebook.com/IsenschnibbeBarnMemorialGardelegen) /Isenschnibbe Barn Memorial Gardelegen
[@gfi_gardelegen](https://www.instagram.com/gfi_gardelegen)

Opening hours

The memorial grounds are open to visitors during daytime hours.
Guided tours are available by previous arrangement.

Donations

Stiftung Gedenkstätten Sachsen-Anhalt
IBAN: DE74 8100 0000 0081 0015 16 | BIC: MARK DE F1810 | Deutsche Bundesbank
Reference: "Spende Isenschnibbe Gardelegen"

Publication notice

Published by: Stiftung Gedenkstätten Sachsen-Anhalt (Saxony-Anhalt Memorials Foundation), 1st ed., 2015
Design: behnelux gestaltung, Halle (Saale)
Graphic sketch: behnelux gestaltung, Halle (Saale), www.openstreetmap.org



**STIFTUNG GEDENKSTÄTTEN
SACHSEN-ANHALT**



After the massacre, 22 April 1945: By order of the US-American troops, civilians from Gardelegen carry the victims' corpses from the barn to the burial ground. (Philip R. Mark, National Archives Washington)



Allied plaque next to the cemetery of honour, erected in April 1945, faithful replica of the original (Andreas Froese-Karow, Stiftung Gedenkstätten Sachsen-Anhalt)



School classes from Gardelegen during a one-day memorial project (Andreas Froese-Karow, Stiftung Gedenkstätten Sachsen-Anhalt)

The Isenschnibbe Barn Memorial Gardelegen commemorates the massacre of 13 April 1945 in which 1,016 concentration camp inmates were murdered in a barn a few weeks before the end of the war.

The massacre

At the beginning of April 1945, as American troops were advancing, the SS cleared the Hannover-Stöcken concentration camp – a subcamp of the Neuengamme concentration camp in the Harz Mountains. Rail transports carried thousands of inmates from those sites to the region around Gardelegen. In the villages of Mieste and Letzlingen, the trains came to an unexpected halt and were not able to resume their journeys. The SS forced the concentration camp inmates to continue the journey towards Gardelegen on foot in death marches. Along the way, many died of exhaustion and sickness, others of the violent abuse to which the guards subjected them, including outright murder.

Initially the death marches were destined for the Remonteschule, an old military casern in Gardelegen. The guards drove the inmates there on 12 and 13 April 1945 and lodged them in the horse stable and the riding hall. On the evening of 13 April 1945, the prisoners were ordered to set out on foot from the casern to a nearby barn belonging to the Isenschnibbe Estate on the town periphery. There, aided by members of the Wehrmacht, the Reich Labour Service, the Volkssturm and other Nazi organ-

izations, the guards drove the inmates into the barn, bolted the doors from the outside, and set fire to the straw-covered floor in the building's interior, which had been doused with petrol. Inmates who attempted to flee from the burning barn were shot to death. Only a few persons managed to escape this deliberately planned mass murder, which continued far into the night.

American troops arrived in Gardelegen the following day. They discovered the scene of the crime and prevented the attempts of the participating perpetrator groups, the municipal fire brigade and the technical emergency service to remove evidence of the mass murder. These groups had already begun digging trenches in which to bury the victims' corpses without identification.

General Frank A. Keating, the commander of the 102nd Infantry Division, ordered the exhumation and dignified burial of the murdered inmates by the town's male population. He had a cemetery laid out near the barn with individual graves and white wooden crosses for the victims. The burial work lasted several days. Only 305 of the 1,016 corpses were identifiable. The others were buried with the inscription "Unbekannt" ("Unknown"). A plaque officially declared the graveyard a military cemetery of honour. It placed the town population under obligation to preserve and maintain the graves and the memory of the victims for all time. The Allied military administration prohibited the defilement of the resting place under threat of punishment.

The memorial

In the early fifties, after the founding the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Socialist Unity Party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED) had a commemorative wall erected from the structural remains of the barn in the immediate vicinity of its original location. In the following years, a municipal memorial was established entirely in keeping with the antifascist remembrance culture of the GDR. Two bowls of flames, a speaker's platform, flagpoles and the "Stones of the Nations" fundamentally changed the site's character. The grounds now served as an arena for mass rallies. The state-imposed commemoration of the massacre victims stylized all of the murdered concentration camp inmates as members of the Communist resistance. Until the end of the GDR, the official conception of history honoured exclusively this inmate group.

After the German reunification, the memorial remained under the administration of the Hanseatic City of Gardelegen. Since 1 May 2015 it has belonged to the Saxony-Anhalt Memorials Foundation, an affiliation which offers it new opportunities for development. Over the coming years, the hitherto open-air facilities will be transformed into a modern memorial and remembrance site with its own visitor and documentation centre, a permanent exhibition, and educational offers for school pupils and adults. The city of Gardelegen will continue to maintain the cemetery.