

# A new Basque Police Museum of Euskadi

**A** new Basque Police Museum has recently been opened at the Arkaute Academy. On display is an important collection of historical items related to the 1936 Ertzaña and the modern-day Ertzaintza as well as the local and provincial police forces which were the predecessors of the current Basque police. The facilities add a new venue to any tour of institutional centres.

The new centre is located in the Basque Police Academy, in Arkaute, and occupies two storeys with a total surface area of 1,200 sq. m. The museum is open to the public and reservations can be made by contacting the Academy in Arkaute. It will be open in the morning and afternoon.

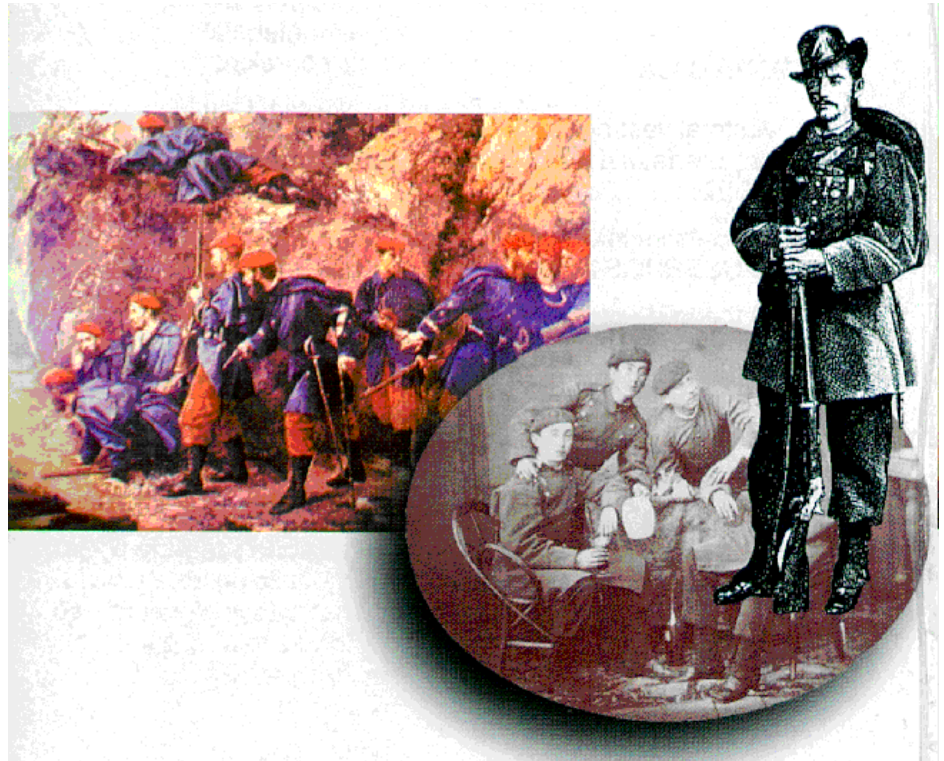
The ground floor is divided into two sections given over to the Provincial Armed Forces and the 1936 Ertzaña respectively. The Provincial Forces – set up on a territorial basis in the eighteenth century – were the forerunners of today's Ertzaintza. They consisted of the Miñones in Alava, the Forales in Biscay and the Mikeletes in Gipuzkoa. The museum contains a wide range of uniforms, weapons and equipment from these forces, as well as documents relating to organisation, structure, rules, etc. Among the items on display in this section are a number of uniforms of the period –carefully reconstructed on the

basis of research in various archives since the original uniforms have long since disappeared.

## THE 1936 ERTZAÑA

The second section is devoted to the Ertzaña, created in 1936. This was the first unified police force to operate throughout the whole of the Basque Country and it survived until the coming of the Franco dictatorship. The display contains numerous items from the time, including an actual motorbike used by the 1936 Ertzañas, presented to the

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museum by one of the original police officers, who had carefully preserved it over the years. There is also a list of all the Ertzañas who served in the force.

The upper floor contains material relating to the present-day Ertzaintza and local police forces. There are computer displays showing some of the tools used by the modern force, including graphics programmes for making photo-fit portraits of suspects, used by the Ertzaintza's Identification Unit. This area also contains one of the first bomb-disposal robots used by the Ertzaintza.

There is a small shop on the ground floor of the museum, where visitors can purchase publications from the Department of the Interior, and others relating to the historical periods represented in the museum. The shop also sells souvenirs and other items related to the museum, the Ertzaintza, and to the Basque Country in general. ■