

Learning Centre and International Meeting Place

Landratsamt
Saalfeld-Rudolstadt

English

**KZ GEDENKSTÄTTE
LAURA MEMORIAL**

The memorial site is an institution of the
District of Saalfeld-Rudolstadt



As an authentic learning centre and international meeting place the Laura Memorial inseminates knowledge about a dark chapter of German history.

The intensive meetings with former inmates of different backgrounds have left a lasting impression. They serve as a reminder of the terrible events in the past. With his last wish to find his final resting place on the premises of the camp, former inmate Herman van Hasselt set a symbolic example of prevailing over inhumanity and barbarism.

Regular workshops with groups of pupils not only foster awareness for history but also hand down the legacy of the survivors to the following generations.

In 2010 the restoration and reshaping of the memorial site began. It was mainly funded by the Thuringian Ministry for Education, Science and Culture.



ADDRESS

KZ-Gedenkstätte Laura · Schmiedebach –
Fröhliches Tal · 07349 Lehesten

OPENING HOURS (APRIL-OCTOBER)

Wednesday–Friday 2pm–5.30pm
Saturday, Sunday and on public holidays 10am–5.30 pm
and by appointment

CONTACT · APPOINTMENTS

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SUPPORTERS

Friends' Association of the Memorial Site Laura
www.kz-laura.de

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**Laura Memorial Site – Subcamp of
Concentration Camp Buchenwald**

Armament for the Total War



V2-ROCKET ENGINE

OERTELSBRUCH SLATE QUARRY

During the second half of WWII the national socialist regime relocated the rocket armament activities away from Peenemünde to underground facilities to protect it from allied air raids. In the Oertelsbruch slate quarry near Schmiedebach the war plant Vorwerk Mitte Lehesten was established.

The slate quarry with its tunnels and a railway siding to Lehesten station offered ideal prerequisites for the testing of the V2 rocket engines.

On 21st September 1943 the satellite camp Laura of the concentration camp Buchenwald was established to provide labour to build up and later to maintain the factory. Within a very short time and under extremely hard conditions the inmates had to build the test stands and an underground oxygen production plant.

Until the end of 1944 4372 rocket engine tests were carried out in the quarry.

Laura – Hell at the Slate Mountain



THE EXHIBITION

Against Oblivion



ORIGINAL WALL DECORATIONS



FORMER MAIN ACCOMMODATION

Initially the detainees were placed into an old quarry shack, later they had to convert the former farm buildings into a concentration camp.

An already existing large barn served as the main accommodation building. Up to 800 men were jammed together with a minimum of space. The former stable was used as detention building, a small barn was converted into the inmates kitchen.

Detainees came from more than ten nations most notably the former Soviet Union, Poland, France, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands. Under inhumane conditions they were forced to hard labour to their complete exhaustion. The rough pit work, mistreatment by the guards, and the daily mustering claimed many victims.

About 2,600 inmates were imprisoned in the camp, at least 550 of them died in Laura.

On the morning of 13th April 1945 the SS evacuated the camp. Almost all inmates were speeded away to the concentration camp Dachau near Munich. Only a few invalids remained in Laura and were liberated by the US Army that same day.

After the war the armament production plant was shortly used by the US military followed by the Russian troops until 1947. The camp facilities were later dismantled and the buildings re-converted for residential and agricultural use.

On 13th April 1956 a memorial stone was erected on the former camp ground to commemorate the victims. In 1979 a memorial site was opened in one part of the large barn that had served as the main accommodation.

Laura is the only satellite camp of Buchenwald, where the building substance is almost completely preserved. Original wall decorations of the camp time remind us of this dark period of history.