

A Civil War machine-gun nest

— The Fernán-Núñez pantheon

4b

What were they like?

Other traces of war in the castle



Stationed in the ruins

The ruins of the castle were also used as a makeshift fortress during the war. For this purpose, shooting holes were cut into the still-standing walls.



A refuge under the castle

A tunnel was dug through the moat fillings and under the castle, likely serving as a shelter during bombing raids and possibly as an ammunition store.

What are we looking at?

The machine gun nest



What was it like?

Reinforced concrete protection

A dominant position

The 'nest' (or casemate) is half-buried to minimise its exposure to shell fire, thereby protecting sharpshooters who would use its single aperture to fire a large-calibre machine gun at close range. It faces east, strategically positioned on the slope of the Rejas stream (like the castle), from which an enemy attack could be anticipated.



From war to peace: subsequent occupation of the nest

Excavations of the 'nest' have revealed that, incredibly, the casemate was reused as a dwelling after the war. A staircase and a small storeroom were installed at the entrance.

What do we know?

The Civil War in La Alameda The defence of Madrid



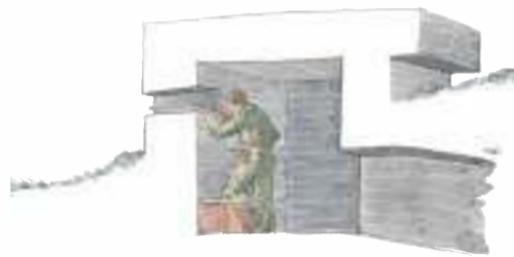
Excavations have revealed remnants of the ammunition used by the troops stationed in the castle

From the outset, capturing Madrid was a fundamental objective for the Nationalist troops. After a rapid advance from the west in November 1936, the offensive was halted on the banks of the Manzanares River. Consequently, General Franco decided to open a new front from the southeast, aiming to cut off the roads to Barcelona and Valencia, along which supplies reached Madrid. The defenders established several divisions in the area. General Miaja set up his command post in the Capricho Palace and built an underground shelter

(bunker) in the gardens, which is still preserved. Around it, he placed several observation points, such as the castle and the machine-gun nest.

The Battle of Jarama

The offensive was finally launched in February 1937, further south, at the confluence of the Manzanares and Jarama rivers. It was a bloody battle, made even harsher by the severe winter. It is estimated that more than 15,000 soldiers died. After a month of intense fighting, the Republican troops managed to repel the Nationalists. Madrid did not fall to Franco's army until 28 March 1939



Entrance to General Miaja's bunker



What do we know?

The Fernán-Núñez Family, Heirs to the Zapata Family

The title of Count of Barajas passed to the Count of Fernán-Núñez in 1785, a cousin of the Countess, when she died without descendants. The estate and the castle also passed to him, although the latter was already abandoned.



The coat of arms of the Dukes of Fernán-Núñez can be seen on the façade of the pantheon

The construction of the pantheon

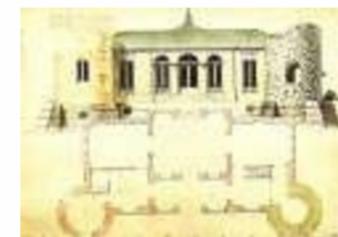
In 1898, the Duchess of Fernán-Núñez decided to build a family pantheon next to the castle, which is still owned by the family today, well maintained and in use. It is a small chapel in the neo-Gothic style, a popular trend at the end of the 19th century within the historicist movement. The duchess commissioned the chapel from a renowned architect from Madrid, the Marquess of Cubas.



The Marquess of Cubas also built other significant neo-Gothic religious buildings in Madrid at the end of the 19th century, such as the Church of Santa Cruz (pictured) in 1888

A renovation of the castle that never happened

A few decades earlier, in 1856, the duchess planned to restore the castle as a country residence. A drawing of the project still exists, but it was never implemented. Undoubtedly, had she not changed her mind, the castle would look very different today.



What are we looking at?

The pantheon

