

# Oradour sur glane

recommended poem to  
read here: "Oradour"  
by Jean Tardieu

## overview

On June 10, 1944, a Nazi SS Panzer Division (on its way to repulse the D-Day landings) surrounded this community, sealed off every exit, and then dragged every man, woman, and child to the village square for an "identity check." Accusing the inhabitants of being members of the French Resistance, they separated the men from the women and children, shooting anyone who resisted. Then they killed the women and children in the church by asphyxiating them with a smoke bomb. Those who did not die quickly enough were shot. In other buildings, they mowed down the men with machine guns. 642 people were killed and then burned. 205 were children.



Just a few months later, France was liberated. When General Charles de Gaulle visited the site he declared that Oradour-sur-Glane should be left exactly as it was to serve as a monument. At the same time, the surviving members of the SS Panzer Division were put on trial by the French for war crimes. However, many of these soldiers were from Alsace, a region of Nazi Germany which was returned to France at the end of the war. In order to integrate Alsace more effectively into France, these soldiers were never sentenced for their crimes.

**Q. Answer this question twice: once BEFORE you have explored the site, then again AFTERWARDS.**

"If 100% represents complete approval of the decision not to sentence the guilty soldiers of Alsace, and 0% represents complete disapproval, how would you rate that decision?"

**Answer 1 [before the visit]:**

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**Answer 2 [after your visit]:**

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**Q. Did your answer change? Why?**

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## independent tasks

You are instructed to remain **SILENT** throughout the time you visit the site. Please respect this rule fully. Answer these questions after your visit.

**Q. What part of the village had the most powerful effect upon you? Explain your choice.**

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**Q. Did remaning silent throughout your visit enhanced your experience of the site, or limited it? Explain.**

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**Q. What was the most important thing you learned by visiting this site?**

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**Q. What questions does this site raise that we could investigate further?**

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