



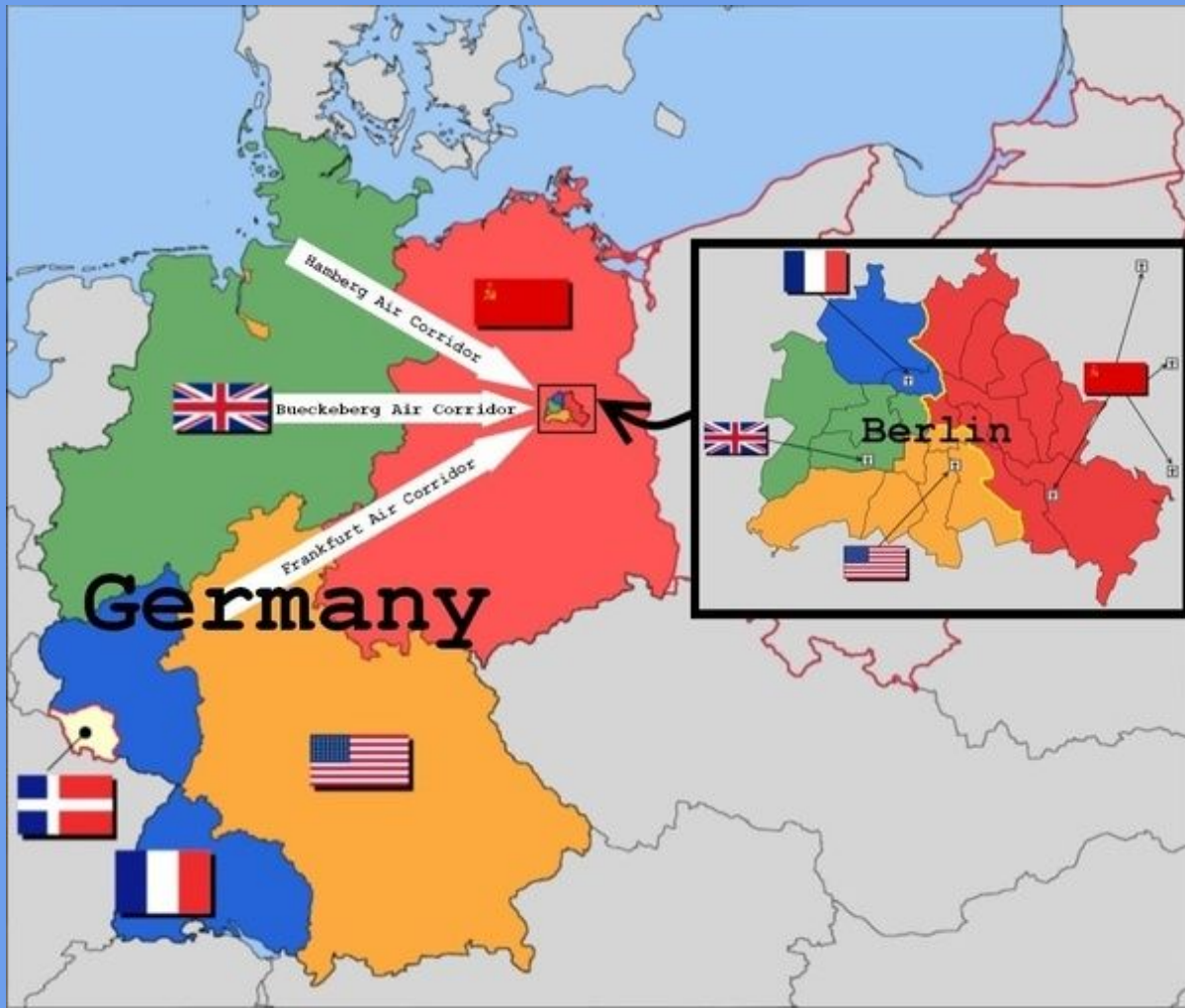
BERLIN CRISIS!

# RECAP:

- After WWII, Germany was divided into 4 zones
- The capital, Berlin, was also divided into 4 zones
- The Soviet leader at the time, Stalin, tried to starve West Berlin with a blockade in 1948
- The United States and its allies responded with the Berlin Airlift
  - Stalin lifted the blockade







- Since WWII West Berlin had been located completely within East German territory
- The Soviet Union and East Germany built a wall in August 1961
  - Concerned about the number and quality of people escaping the east for asylum in West Berlin
  - Construction of the wall took place entirely in East German territory
    - This was to avoid encroaching upon West Berlin
    - At first a barbed wire fence served as the barrier
      - Later a concrete wall was constructed
    - Many families were divided by the wall
    - Many East Berliners who worked in the western sector lost their jobs
    - East Germany government bricked up the windows of buildings that made up sections of the barrier between east and west

## DIVIDED BERLIN—1949–90



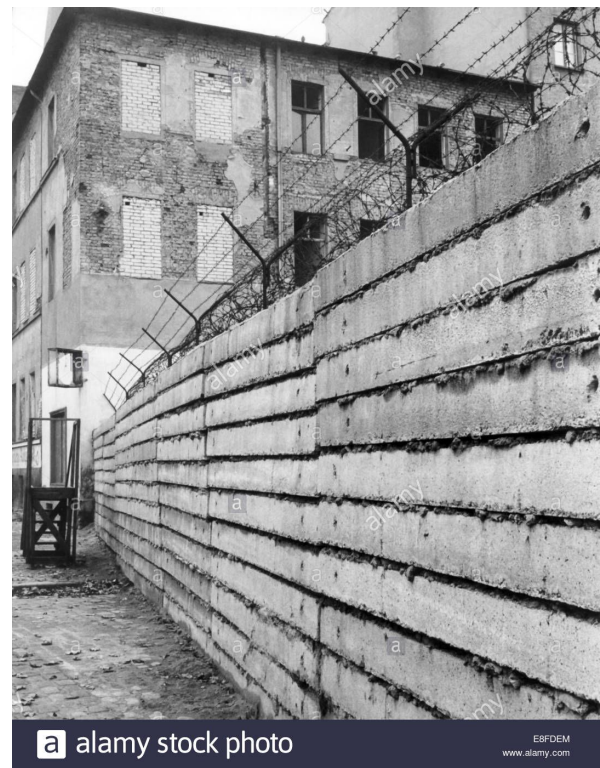
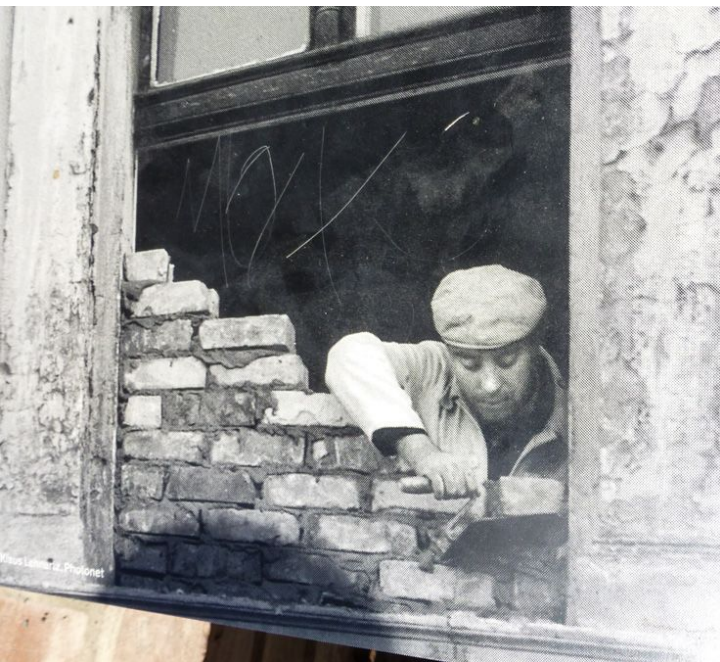
### AREA


WEST BERLIN  
185 sq mi  
480 sq km

EAST BERLIN  
156 sq mi  
403 sq km







 alamy stock photo

EBFDEM  
www.alamy.com



- Not only did East Germany brick up windows facing west, they also tore up roads leading to the west
- American response was to increase military presence in West Berlin
- East Berliners continued to try to escape to freedom in the west
  - Attempts to scale the wall
  - First successful escape: Sports car plowed through the original barbed wire fence!
  - Some tried tunneling under the wall
  - A group flew over in a hot air balloon!
  - C. 5000 East Germans successfully made it to the west
    - Some estimates count c. 2000 East Germans killed by border guards in their attempt to escape



East German  
border guard  
Conrad  
Schumann leaps  
into the French  
Sector of West  
Berlin over  
barbed wire on  
August 15, 1961





[www.PublicDomainFootage.com](http://www.PublicDomainFootage.com)

# The Berlin Wall

As the Berlin Wall fell 20 years ago it melded two nations that once were separated by more than a common border. The East German authorities began blocking the access to West Berlin in 1961, when tens of thousands had already crossed the border.

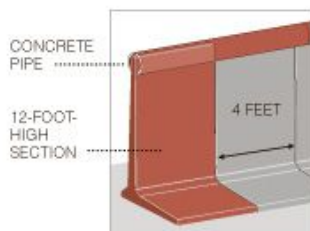


## BORDER CONTROL ZONE

The width of the border zone varied from 20 feet to hundreds of feet in different locations along the border. The wall structures and other installations on the border zone had been constantly updated since 1961. At right are typical features of the border strip in Berlin in the 1980s.

## Outer wall

The concrete wall was capped by a round pipe to make climbing over it more difficult. Some sections were left intentionally weak to allow East German tanks to break through in case of war.

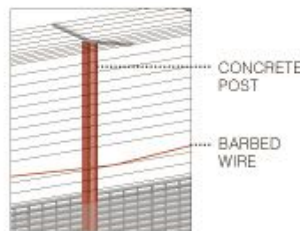


## Death strip

The area between the inner and outer wall was covered with soft sand that would show footprints of escape attempts. Only the most trusted soldiers were allowed access to the area. Guards would shoot anyone trying to cross the border.

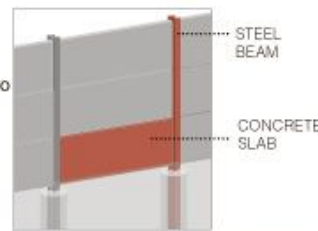
## Signal fence

A signal fence with barbed wire spanned concrete posts. Anyone trying to climb the fence would press wires together, completing a circuit and tripping an alarm in a watchtower.



## Rear wall

The first barrier on the east side barring entry to the border zone was a 10-foot high concrete wall.



## WEST BERLIN

## BORDER ZONE

## EAST BERLIN

The border zone, including the outer wall, was built entirely on East German territory.

# DEATH STRIP

VEHICLE  
TANK TRAPS

## Watchtower

Guard posts were staffed round-the-clock by two to five soldiers who had an uninterrupted view of the border line.

## Guard road

A concrete pathway allowed patrolling soldiers to move swiftly along the border.

Political border

The wall was buffered by a restricted zone hundreds of yards wide. Even the buildings in the area were off limits to most citizens.



- Two years after the construction of the Berlin Wall, President Kennedy went to West Berlin for a state visit
  - He expressed America's solidarity with those living in a divided city
    - Some criticized Kennedy for saying East Berlin was under Soviet influence
      - He should have said the city was jointly occupied by the Allied powers of World War II
  - Kennedy's most famous line from the speech he gave was added at the last minute:





*“Two thousand years ago the proudest boast was ‘Civis Romanus sum’ [I am a Roman citizen]. Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is ‘Ich bin ein Berliner’ [I am a Berliner]...All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore as a free man, I take pride in the words, ‘Ich bin ein Berliner.’”*

