

FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL

30th anniversary

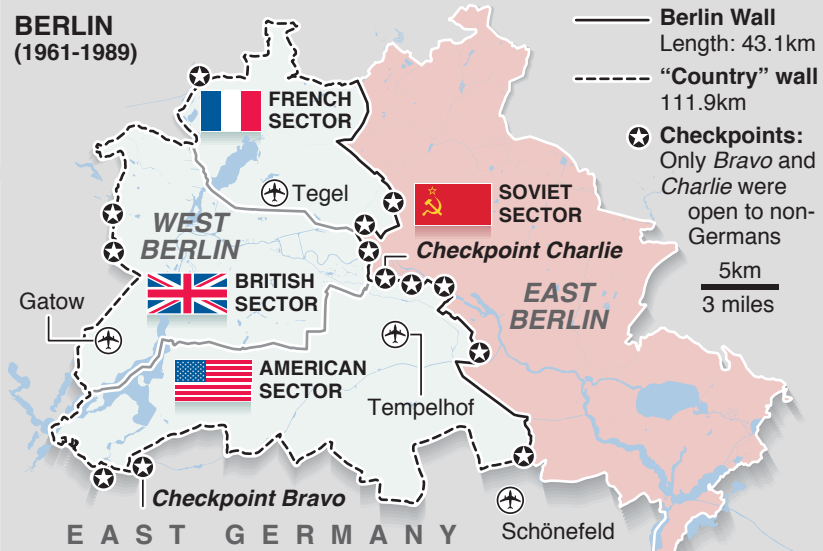
On November 9, 1989, the wall that symbolized the Iron Curtain between the communist east and the capitalist west during the Cold War was torn down. Erected in 1961 on the orders of East Germany's former leader, **Walter Ulbricht**, to stop people leaving for West Germany, the fall of the Wall nearly three decades later paved the way for Germany's reunification in 1990

KEY EVENTS – 1945-89

- **May 1945:** World War II ends. Berlin divided into Soviet sector in east, and U.S., British and French sectors in west
- **1948-1949:** Soviet forces blockade West Berlin, an island in communist-controlled East Germany. Allies airlift in supplies for 15 months
- **1949:** Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) founded May 23. German Democratic Republic (East Germany) founded Oct 7
- **1953:** Uprising against working conditions by East Berlin building workers suppressed by Red Army
- **Aug 13, 1961:** Border between East and West Berlin closed. Soldiers begin constructing wall



- **1963:** U.S. President **John F. Kennedy** visits wall, declaring himself a Berliner and vowing to protect people of West Berlin
- **1973:** East and West Germany establish formal diplomatic ties
- **1987:** President **Ronald Reagan** visits Berlin and urges Soviet leader **Mikhail Gorbachev** to tear down wall



ANATOMY OF THE WALL

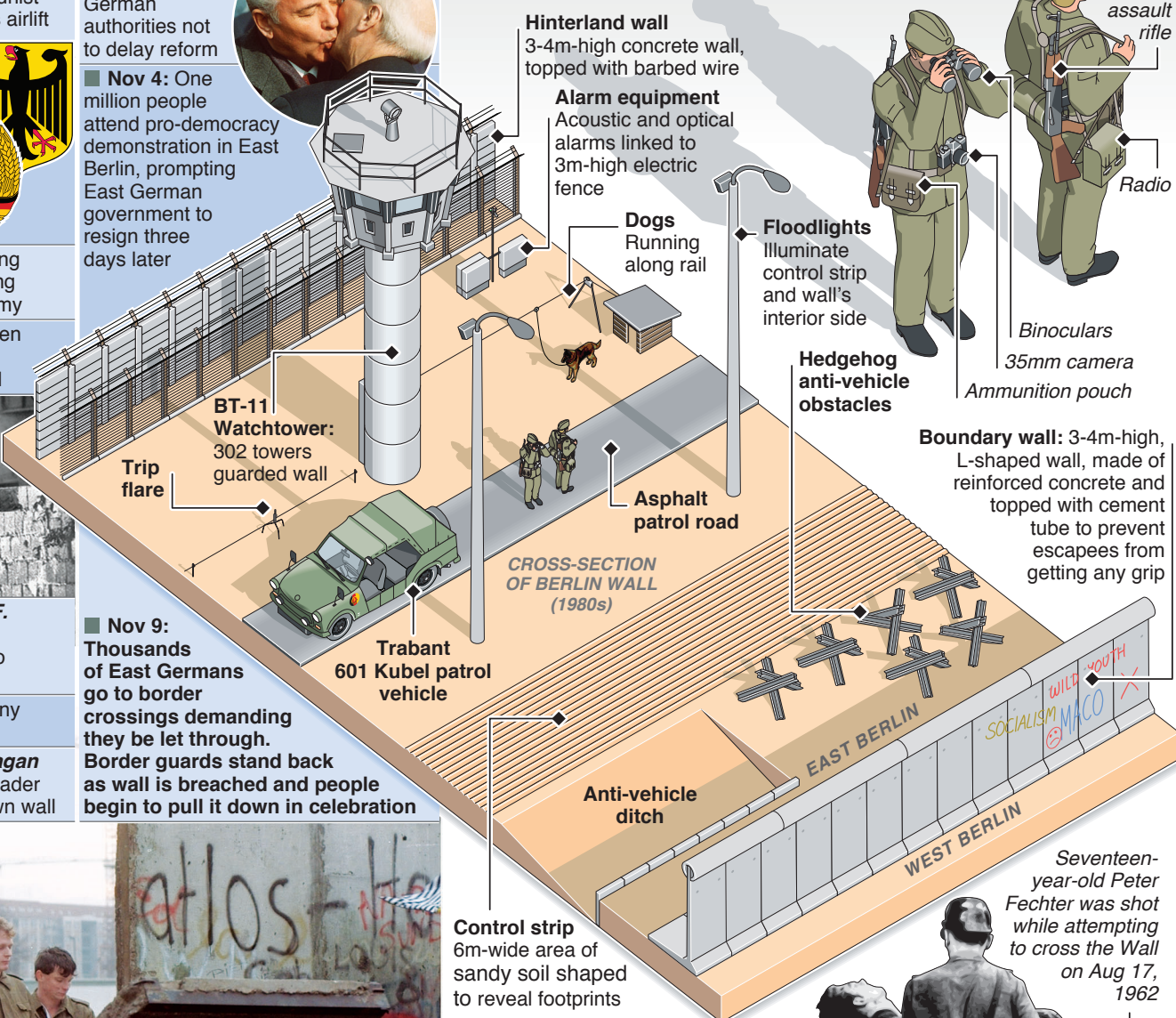
Started as barbed wire and light fencing. Built up over years into complex series of walls, heavily guarded fortified fences, and watchtowers

PATROLLING
Grenztruppen: Up to 50,000 border guards were given full authority to fire on fleeing individuals if order to halt was ignored

■ **Sep 1989:** Hungary opens its border with Austria – thousands of East Germans flee to West

■ **Oct:** Gorbachev visits East Berlin and warns East German authorities not to delay reform

■ **Nov 4:** One million people attend pro-democracy demonstration in East Berlin, prompting East German government to resign three days later



HUMAN TOLL

During the Wall's existence, about 5,000 people are estimated to have successfully escaped to West Berlin. Somewhere between 100 and 200 East Germans died attempting to cross the Wall

Seventeen-year-old Peter Fechter was shot while attempting to cross the Wall on Aug 17, 1962