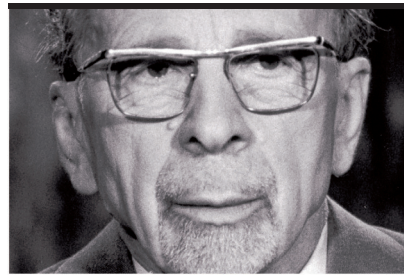


# Remembering the Berlin Wall



The Berlin Wall was erected in the dead of night on August 13, 1961, on the orders of East German leader **Walter Ulbricht** (above), and for 28 years prevented people from fleeing to the West. The wall symbolized the Iron Curtain between the communist east and capitalist west during the Cold War – until its fall on that momentous night of November 9, 1989

## 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



**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



- Nov 9:** Thousands of East Germans go to border crossings demanding they be let through. Border guards stand back as wall is breached and people begin to pull it down in celebration
- 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



**BERLIN (1961-1989)**

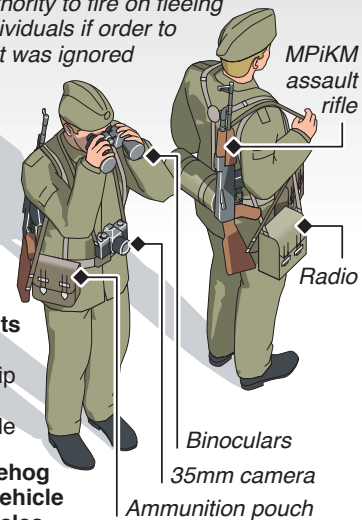


## ANATOMY OF THE WALL

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



**Hinterland wall**  
3-4m-high concrete wall, topped with barbed wire

**Alarm equipment**  
Acoustic and optical alarms linked to 3m-high electric fence

**Dogs**  
Running along rail

**Floodlights**  
Illuminate control strip and wall's interior side

**Hedgehog anti-vehicle obstacles**

**Boundary wall:** 3-4m-high, L-shaped wall, made of reinforced concrete and topped with cement tube to prevent escapees from getting any grip

**BT-11 Watchtower:** 302 towers guarded wall

**Trip flare**

**Asphalt patrol road**

**CROSS-SECTION OF BERLIN WALL (1980s)**

**Trabant**  
601 Kubel patrol vehicle

**Anti-vehicle ditch**

**Control strip**  
6m-wide area of sandy soil shaped to reveal footprints

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

## 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

Source: The Berlin Wall and the Intra-German Border 1961-89

By Gordon L. Rottman, Chris Taylor

Pictures: Getty Images, Associated Press © GRAPHIC NEWS

