

A Brief Historical Overview

Berlin after World War II: A divided city that endured a blockade, then a wall separating the free from the imprisoned. Here at the Norton AFB Museum Veteran's Memorial, this section of the Berlin Wall is a standing tribute to those whose freedom it was meant to suppress from its construction in 1961 to its demolition in 1989.

The reunification of Berlin and Germany hastened the end of what was known as the Cold War that began in April 1947. It was in Berlin that President Ronald Reagan made his historic call to the General Secretary of the Soviet Union in 1987 saying, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" On Nov. 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall was breached and fell for good.

But in 1945, Berlin was isolated, surrounded, 100 miles deep into what was then the sector under control of the Soviet Union. It was divided into East (Soviet) and

West (Allied) Sections. In 1948, the Soviet Union began blockaded roads, railroad and waterways leading into Berlin. Recognizing the city could not survive, the Allies began the Berlin Airlift (June 1948 - May 1949). For 11 months, flying 270,000 flights into Berlin, the Allies moved over 2.3 million tons of supplies (food to coal, milk to machinery, as well as other needed supplies). From 80 tons delivered on first day, the Allies demonstrated their surge capabilities by flying 1,398 sorties and bringing about 13,000 tons of supplies in 24 hours. It was formidable record given the smaller vintage aircraft, which demonstrated the need for better and larger transports, of which the C-141 would be one. The Berlin Airlift showed most anything can be delivered by air almost anywhere in the world, a lesson Norton aircrews took to heart.

The Berlin airlift crews were young, brave and up to the challenge before them. It is to them this Wall is dedicated. More than a few transitioned to the early days of the 63rd Troop Carrier Wing, which became the 63rd Military Airlift Wing at Norton AFB. This will serve their memory well.

It is to these Airmen this symbol of freedom, the broken section of the Berlin Wall is dedicated reflecting their resolve that is unmatched in the Spirit of the American Military Serviceman.

From the divided streets of Berlin Germany, August 13th 1961 to the Norton AFB Museum's Veterans Memorial July 20, 2014, this broken section of the "Berlin Wall of tyranny" is now a standing tribute to freedom it tried to suppress from 1961 - 1989.

It is reflective of the many Airmen whose resolve played a major part in the downfall of the Wall, and limiting the continued spread of communism. It

The Cold War was also a propaganda war of epic proportions, which ended in October 1990.

