

THE BERLIN WALL

The Wall Goes Up—August 13, 1961

Another Brick In The Wall

There were four generations of the Berlin Wall. The fourth and most formidable version was made up of 45,000 slabs of reinforced concrete. Each slab was roughly 12 feet high and 3.9 feet wide. It had a rounded top to make it even more difficult to climb.

Checkpoint Charlie

There were 9 border crossings between East and West Berlin. The most famous one, Checkpoint Charlie, was for Allied personnel and foreigners. (See photo on page 2). It was also the site for spy exchanges between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Length of the Wall

The Wall wrapped all of the way around West Berlin and stretched 96 miles. The portion between West and East Berlin was 27 miles. The rest of the Wall separated West Berlin from East German countryside. West Berlin was like an island within East Germany.



Photo by Doug Peterson

The Day the Wall Went Up

It happened overnight. When Berliners in both the East and West woke up on the morning of August 13, 1961, the border between the two sides had closed. Families were cut off from each other. Some spouses were caught on the opposite side of the border from their wife or husband.

Then the Wall began to go up, brick by brick.

Before the Wall went up, roughly 3-1/2 million people fled from Communist East Germany across the Berlin border into West Berlin. The Wall went up to stop the exodus. The East German people became trapped in the prison of their own country.





Great Escapes

People, desperate for freedom, found creative ways to escape from Communist East Germany:

1. **Hot Air Balloon.** In 1979, two men made a hot air balloon out of old bed sheets and canvas and flew over the Wall.
2. **Runaway Train.** In 1961, Harry Deterling, a train engineer, did not stop his train in East Berlin, as scheduled, but he kept on going, roaring into West Berlin.
3. **Tightrope and Zip-Line.** One man walked a tightrope into West Berlin in 1963, and two friends flew across the border on a zip-line in 1983.
4. **Through a Grave.** There were many tunnels, but one of the most unique tunnels passed underneath the Wall and opened up in an East Berlin cemetery. Escapees, pretending to be mourners, would visit the phony grave, which led into the tunnel.
5. **Other Methods.** Some people hid in secret compartments in cars, one man pole-vaulted the Wall, and one man drove a bulldozer through the Wall.

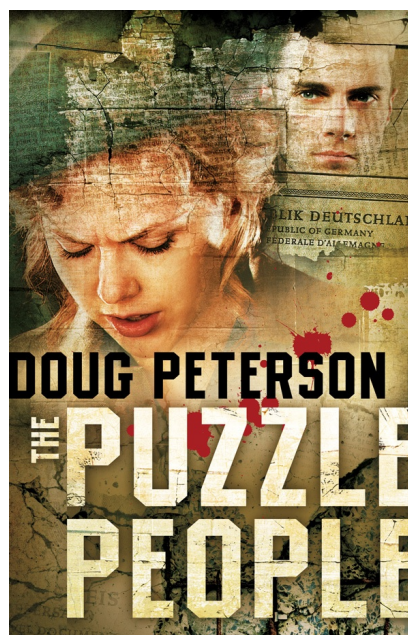
The Death Strip

The Berlin Wall was actually two walls, as you can see in the photo below. There was an outer wall and an inner wall, and in between was the infamous Death Strip.

Inside the Death Strip were all sorts of hazards. People who got by the coils of barbed wire might encounter trip wires, which set off land mines or triggered a spray of bullets. Other obstacles included electrical fencing, tank barriers, guard dogs, and soldiers. Guards posted in the watchtowers had shoot-to-kill orders.



Photo by Doug Peterson



The Puzzle People

The Berlin Wall falls, and a man dies. Doug Peterson's mystery/thriller, *The Puzzle People*, takes readers on a suspenseful journey back in time, from 1961 when the Wall went up to 1989 when the Wall came down. Along the way, Annie O'Shea tries to complete a 600-million-piece puzzle and solve two murders. Find *The Puzzle People* on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.