

Berlin Wall (1969-1970)

At the end of World War II, the city of Berlin was partitioned into East and West Berlin. West Berlin was occupied by British, French, and United States forces and supported by the Federal Republic of Germany, usually known as West Germany. After this division, millions of people fled East Germany, many through Berlin, in order to have a higher standard of living.

Beginning in **August of 1961**, East Germany, identified as the German Democratic Republic (GDR), began to block off East Berlin from West Berlin with barbed wire and anti-tank obstacles. Tanks were stationed at crucial places, and subway lines and rail service between the two were interrupted. In the following days the temporary barriers were replaced by a solid wall.

The GDR called the wall protection from military aggression and political interference, but the western allies considered it a violation of Berliners' right to self-determination.

The Berlin Wall became a symbol of the Cold War tensions between the USSR and her communist allies and the western allies, led by the United States. The concrete wall was 12 feet high and 103 miles long. It cut through 192 streets, 97 leading to East Berlin and 92 into the GDR. Before its destruction, as many as 100 people may have been killed at the wall.



—NARA photo

Veterans from Maine were stationed in Germany during this sometimes-tense Cold War standoff:

My brother, Craig F. Handley, served in the Army in Germany, 1969-1970.

Linda French, Smithfield

My identical twin brother, Spec 4 James E. Teves, was serving in the U.S. Army in Germany; while riding on a military vehicle, Jimmy came in contact with a high voltage line and died on July 7, 1975. I miss him.

*John P. Huard (Teves), Albion
Served in Vietnam*



James Teves

*Wives respectfully honor **husbands** who were stationed in Germany during this period:*

I am voting in honor of my husband, Roland F. Spellman, who served in the Army Infantry and patrolled the Fulda Gap section of the East German border during the Cold War.

Ruth-Marie Spellman, Brewer



Roland F. Spellman

My husband, Adrien Coulombe, served in the Army in Germany from 1964 to 1966.

Bernise Coulombe, Biddeford

I vote in honor of my husband, SSG Donald A. Gosselin, who served 11 years in the National Guard and 11 years in the Army Reserves, including duty during the Berlin Crisis.

Jeannine M. Gosselin, Lewiston

Donald Priest, my husband, served in the Army during the Berlin conflict, 1961-63.

Dianne Priest, North Anson

The Fall

During the **summer of 1989**, Hungary allowed East Germans to pass through Hungary on their way through to Austria and West Germany. By fall the East German regime had lost its power. On November 9, private citizens began to destroy entire sections of the concrete wall that had divided the city of Berlin for nearly 30 years. On November 22, new passages were opened north and south of the Brandenburg Gate, eliminating the separation that had divided the people of Germany since the end of World War II.

On **July 1, 1990**, an economic, monetary, and social union between East and West Germany is formed, and all travel restrictions are eliminated. The two Germany's are reunited as the Federal Republic of Germany.

Today a museum stands near the most famous crossing point, "Checkpoint Charlie," of what once was the infamous Berlin Wall.

Additional Tributes Submitted Online

Tribute to my husband, Lucien Belanger:

Served with Hq. Trp. 2nd rec. Sq. 2nd A/C transportation from Dec.6 1960 to July 15 1963 patrolling the order.

Lorraine Belanger, Sabattus, Maine