

The Berlin Airlift - 1

At the end of WWII Germany was divided amongst the victors, the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France. The Soviet Union took control of the Eastern half of Germany, the Western half was divided amongst the US, Great Britain, and France. Like the rest of the country, the capital city of Berlin, was also divided into four parts, one half being Soviet controlled, and the rest divided amongst the others. A four-power provisional government, called the Allied Control Council, was installed. This union of governments was to control and rebuild the city of Berlin.

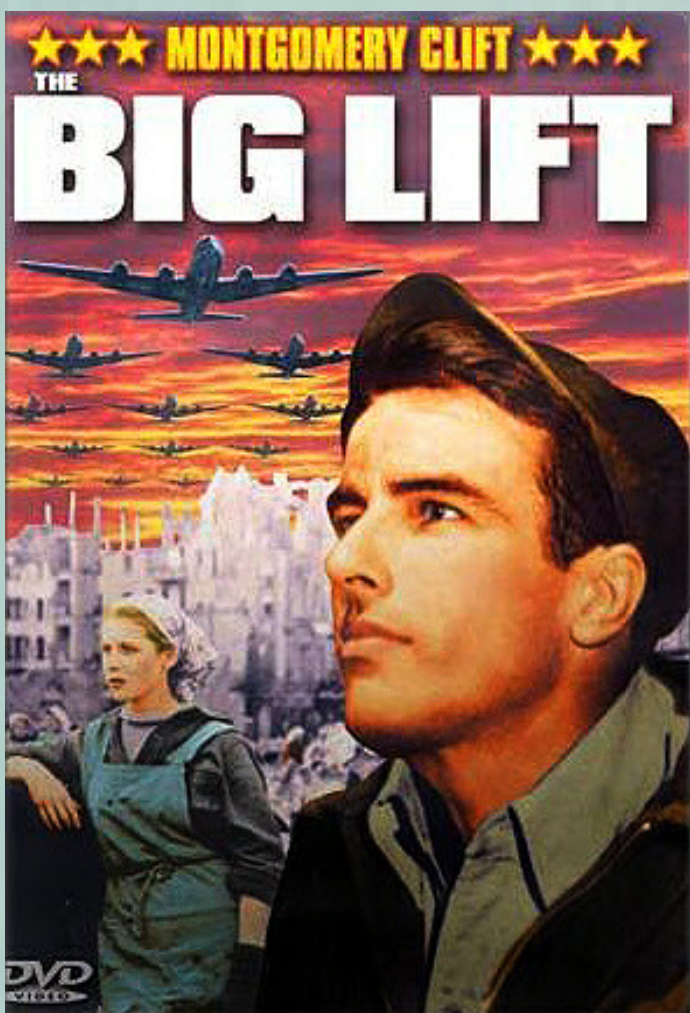


Berlin Airlift flight directions 1945-46



By 1948 it was apparent the the Allied plans for rebuilding Germany was different than the Soviets and they responded with the Berlin Blockade (June 24, 1948 - May 12, 1949). This was the first major international crisis of the Cold War. The Soviets blocked the railroad and road access to the Allied Control sectors. The Soviets thought by this action they could force the allied sectors to give them control of the entire city.

The western Allies organized the Berlin Airlift to supply West Berlin. Planes flying out of the American sector, British sector, and the French sector succeeded in supplying the Berlin population of over two million for over a year until the Soviets capitulated on May 12, 1949.



Some 277,569 flights carrying food and fuel were then the larger C-54. The British flew Lancasters, unorganized the airlift became successful under the leadership of General William H. Tunner. Total tonnage flown was almost 18 million tons. There were 101 fatalities recorded in the operation including 31 Americans.