

## Newsletter Cold War Museum of Berlin Chapter---August, 2007

Dear Friends and Supporter of the Cold War Museum Berlin Chapter

By Baerbel E. Simon –German Affairs-

After a year and a half of intensive work the Berlin Chapter's first exhibit has finally opened. Although we had an open air event planned, the weather in the form of intense rain unfortunately forced us inside. I must once again thank all the guests for making the long journey to Harnekop. More than 100 guests from Poland, Czech Republic, Austria and USA took part in the celebration. The director and founder of the Cold War Museum, Francis Gary Powers Jr, traveled from the USA. It was a great pleasure to also welcome patron and advisor to the Berlin Chapter, Gail Halvorsen, Col. USAF Retired and his wife Lorraine. As guests of the Federal Republic of Germany, the opening ceremony was one part of the official schedule for the couple.

**Gail S. Halvorsen** was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. During the time of the Berlin Airlift, 1948/49, he served as a pilot in the US Air Force.

Each time he flew over Tempelhof, Colonel Halvorsen saw how the children waved at the pilots, and he had the idea to throw down little parachutes with candy. His colleagues loved this idea, and his buddies dropped the goodies also. They dropped over 20 tons in 14 months. Schools in the states were sending over 850 pounds every other day. All the US candy makers were giving the schools the candy; the pupils tied it on to parachutes for the air crews.



The children still waiting every day, the planes were landing average between three to five minutes. The children naturally couldn't distinguish him from the others. However, Halvorsen promised to wiggle the wings to identify himself, which led to his nickname

### "Uncle Wiggly Wings"

Colonel Halvorsen and his colleagues, through these actions, laid the foundation for the German-American friendship. As he has returned time and again to Berlin, both in good times and bad, we can truly say that

### Col. Halvorsen is a "Berliner".

Between 1970 and 1974 Halvorsen was the Airport Commander for Flughafen Tempelhof.

When the 2002 Olympic Winter games came to his hometown of Salt Lake City, Gail Halvorsen was invited by the German National Team to carry the sign reading "Germany" that led the team into the stadium for the opening ceremonies.

By USAF Col. Ret. Gail Halvorsen and Baerbel E. Simon – German Affairs-

**Representative from the media were also there to report on the occasion.**

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<http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/Brandenburg;art128,2331680>

<http://www.moz.de/index.php/Moz/Article/id/160153>



[http://www.rbb-online.de/\\_includes/multimediakonsole/mmkonsole.jsp?key=multimedia\\_6086622.html](http://www.rbb-online.de/_includes/multimediakonsole/mmkonsole.jsp?key=multimedia_6086622.html)

<http://www.lr-online.de/regionen/brandenburg/art25,1697595>

**I would like to thank the people who have helped to make the event possible.**

Many thanks to the mayor of Proetzel, Maerkisch Oderland, Mr. Schlothauer, for all his support. Also, thanks to all the volunteers of the Berlin Chapter, who have helped so much in the past and from whom we need continued generous support.

**On the 31st May** a cooperative contract was agreed upon between the Cold War Museum Berlin Chapter and the Foerderverein Luftwaffenmuseums der Bundeswehr. This is yet another important step forward for Berlin Chapter.

**On the 29th May** the first student conference took place in Harnekop. Hosted by the "Foerderverein Atombunker Harnekop" (Historic Atomic Shelter Harnekop) and the Cold War Museum - Berlin Chapter.

The guests came from Rockford College, Illinois, in the USA and from of a secondary school in Mieszkowice, Poland. After a bunker tour given by Mr. Kirchner contemporary witnesses were available for a discussion with the students. It was a tremendously interesting meeting and I hope that there will be more meetings of this kind in the future.

By Baerbel E. Simon –German Affairs-

**On the 12th May** the 58-th anniversary, end of the Berlin Blockade in 1949, with official celebration

### **Take a look back to 1948-49**

By Baerbel E. Simon –German Affairs-

One of the most dangerous moments of the Cold War was the Berlin Blockade in 1948-49. A few days after the currency reform in Western Germany, the new currency was also introduced in the western sectors of Berlin. On June 24, 1948 in response, the Soviets blocked the street-, water, and railways to West Berlin.

Only the skies were open, and thus began an almost unbelievable logistic and humanitarian mission, as the allies delivered supplies through the air. The population of West Berlin gave its trust to the three Western occupation powers. The noise of airplane motors in all weather and at all hours was music to the ears of the West Berliners, as they knew they were not forgotten. This mission was dangerous. A total of seventy eight people were killed during the operation, of which thirty-one were American, eight were German civilians and thirty-nine were British, Commonwealth and Civilian air and ground crews.

At the beginning they started to deliver supplies of 750 tons of air freight per day.

After the new organization under US General William H. Tunner, who took over the command some weeks after the beginning of the Airlift, at the end of July, 1948 the delivered supplies were already more than 2,000 tons of air freight per day.

On the 15th/16th of April, 1949 the record was set with 12.849 short tons of air freight and 1.398 flights in 24 hours, the only day that planes were landing every 96 seconds. The average over time was three to five minutes between landings.

Primarily food like dry milk, dry potatoes and flour was delivered to the city. Also coal as a fuel and to the production of electricity, gasoline, medicine and all equipment in Berlin came in that way to the city.



The aircraft were supplied and flown by the United States, United Kingdom, but pilots and crew also came from Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand in order to assist the supply of Berlin. The US Air Force was the major carrier.

We are very grateful and thank all the Airmen of Great Britain. The Germans destroyed their country with bombs. It had many civilian victims, and after a short time, the Royal Air Force flew, to "Save the City".

Later Canadian-, Australian-, New Zealand- and South African - Aircrews still arrived to support the operation.



I hope that next year, the 60-th anniversary, will get the attention it deserves.

The Cold War Museum Berlin Chapter plans (is already in preparation) for 2008 an exhibit about the Berlin Airlift.

Please help spread the word about the Berlin Chapter. Together we can make this vision a reality. If you should have any questions or want additional information, please visit the German Homepage: [www.coldwar.org/BerlinChapter/](http://www.coldwar.org/BerlinChapter/)

or give me a call : 030.745.1980

Thank you for your support

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