The Berlin Airlift - 1

Berlin Airlift flight directions 1945-46

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 Easern 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.

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. Plaines flying out of

the American sector, British sector, and the French sector succeeded in supplying the

Berlin population of over two million for over yearr until the Soviets capitulated on May

12, 1949.

Some 277,569 flights carrying food and fuel were necessary. The US flew C47 first and

then the larger C-54. The British flew Lancasters, Yorks and Hastings aircraft. At first

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.