

TURNING POINT

## The Berlin Airlift

Post World War II, Russia broke off all traffic to and from Berlin partly. But the unity of the Allies showed the Russians they were not going to get Berlin without a fight.

### What resulted in the Berlin Airlift?

The Berlin Airlift was the answer to the blockade of Berlin by the Soviet Union during post war Europe from June 1948 to May 1949. Post-war, Germany was divided into four sections, the Soviets wanted complete control of Berlin and the Airlift was an overwhelming success for the western allies.

### Why was it an answer to the Soviet Union?

Post World War II, the Soviet Union wanted to spread the influence of Communism under the term 'Iron Curtain' – described as the Soviet Union's control of Eastern Europe. As the city of Berlin was in the eastern zone, Soviet Union wanted a total control of the city. They blocked the supply of food and fuel by preventing access

by street and rail. In response, the western allies began a campaign to airlift the western controlled part of the city. The resultant airlift consisted of daily operations that flew more than 1,500 flights a day and delivered more than 4,500 tons of cargo.

### What was the immediate impact of the Airlift?

The Berlin Airlift was an outstanding success for the western allies and an embarrassment for the Soviet Union. The Easter Parade was the last straw for the Soviets and their blockade and was designed to break all records. From 12:00 pm on April 13 to 12:00 pm on April 16, 1949, flight crews worked round the clock. Over a total of 12,941 tons of coal had been delivered as a result of 1,383 flights, all without a single accident. On 4 May, 1949 the Allies announced an agreement to end the blockade in eight days.

### What was the impact of the Berlin Airlift?

As a result of the Western presence in Berlin and the embarrassment from the success of the Berlin Airlift, the Soviets took extreme measures. In 1961, they began construction of the Berlin wall that would essentially separate East and West Berlin. The wall stood until 1989 when communism collapsed with the fall of the Soviet Union.



GREAT CIVILISATIONS

## The Vikings

The Viking age in European history was about 700 AD to 1100 AD. Known widely as warrior pirates, the Vikings sailed most of Europe to either fight or steal treasure besides forming their own forced settlements across continents.

### Where did the Vikings originally come from?

They came from three countries of Scandinavia – Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The name 'Viking' comes from a language called 'Old Norse' meaning 'a pirate raid' as they were known as people who went off raiding in ships stating 'Going Viking'. They traveled in medium-sized sailing ships large enough to sail in the open sea, but small enough to navigate through the rivers of Europe.



### Where did the Vikings settle?

Most Vikings settled in parts of Britain especially in the Northern Scotland and Eastern England. From 900 AD, for nearly 500 years, Vikings ruled the north of Scotland, the Orkney and Shetland isles and the Hebrides islands off the west coast. The Vikings also founded the Irish capital city of Dublin.

### What was the unique Viking feature?

The Vikings were expert warriors and used their ships to steal and retreat their enemies before they could retaliate. They brutally tortured and killed their victims. They even attacked Churches and Monasteries treasuring valuables like gold, jewels, books, food, cattle and tools.



MAGNIFICENT MONUMENTS

## Great Wall of China



- It was built about 2000 years ago, around 221 BC. Most of the current Great Wall was built during the Ming Dynasty between 1368 and 1644.
- It is the longest manmade structure ever built with 25 feet in height and 15-30 meters wide.
- The Wall is approximately 6000 km long. However, if it is measured with all the individual structures and changes made to the wall over the centuries, it is believed to be measuring over 50,000 kms.
- The main purpose of building the Wall was to protect China from invasion or attack by northern tribes such as the Mongols.
- It can be seen from space and images have been sent from space shuttles by NASA.
- Nearly 3,00,000 soldiers and 5,00,000 common people were involved in constructing the Great Wall.