



## COLD WAR – THE BERLIN AIRLIFT

[The Berlin Blockade \(Berlin Airlift\)](#) was one of the first major multinational skirmishes of the Cold War. During the multinational (American, British, French and Soviet Union) [occupation of post-War Germany](#), the Soviet Union ([USSR](#)) blocked the Western Allies' railway, road, and canal access to the Western sectors of Berlin. The Soviets offered to drop the blockade if the Western Allies withdrew the newly introduced Deutsche Mark from West Berlin. The Allies organized the Berlin airlift to carry supplies to the people of West Berlin, a difficult feat given the size of the city's population. Aircrews from the United States, British, French, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, and South African Air Forces flew over 200,000 sorties in one year to provide West Berliners with 12,941 tons of necessities such as fuel and food, in a day. The Soviets did not disrupt the airlift for fear this might lead to open conflict, even though they far outnumbered the allies in Germany. By the spring of 1949, the airlift was delivering more cargo than had previously been transported into the city by rail. On May 12, 1949, the Soviet Union lifted the blockade.