

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Extracts from a CIA Report titled: The Berlin Tunnel*

*[https://www.CIA.gov/library/center for the study of intelligence/books and monographs/On the Front Line of the Cold War/ Documents on the Intelligence War in Berlin, 1946-1961. Document V—the Berlin Tunnel](https://www.CIA.gov/library/center%20for%20the%20study%20of%20intelligence/books%20and%20monographs/On%20the%20Front%20Line%20of%20the%20Cold%20War/Documents%20on%20the%20Intelligence%20War%20in%20Berlin,%201946-1961.%20Document%20V—the%20Berlin%20Tunnel)

No single operation more typifies Berlin's importance as a strategic intelligence base than the construction of the Berlin Tunnel. Probably one of the most ambitious operations undertaken by the CIA in the 1950s, it succeeded despite the fact that the KGB knew about the operation even before construction of the tunnel began!

The genesis of the tunnel operation lay in Berlin's location in Europe and its prewar status as the capital of a militarily and economically dominant Germany. The largest city on the Continent, Berlin lay at the center of a vast network of transportation and communications lines that extended from Western France to deep into Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe. This was still true in the 1950s; Soviet telephone and telegraph communications between Moscow, Warsaw, and Bucharest wererouted through Berlin....This became became a factor of crucial importance beginning in 1951 when the Soviets began to shift from wireless communications to encrypted landlines for almost all military traffic....encrypted messages as well as nonsecure voice communications.

Thus was born the idea of tunneling into the Soviet sector of Berlin to tap into Soviet military communications [known to insiders as Operation Gold]....By August 1953, detailed plans for the tunnel were completed, and a proposal was drawn up for approval by DCI Allen Dulles. After much discussion, this was obtained on 20 January 1954.

Having learned the location of the underground cables used by the Soviets from an agent inside the East Berlin post office, the Altglienicke district was selected as the best site for a cable tap...The tunnel itself was completed a year later, at the end of February 1955, and the taps were in place and operating shortly thereafter.

In all, about 40,000 hours of telephone conversations were recorded, along with 6,000,000 hours of teletype traffic. Most of the useful information dealt with Soviet orders of battle and force dispositions—information that was invaluable in the days before reconnaissance satellites....Unfortunately, the whole operation was blown even before the DCI approved the project. On 22 October 1953, US intelligence officers briefed a British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) audience that included KGB mole, George Blake.

Although the KGB was aware of the potential importance of the tap, its first priority was to protect Blake. Early in 1956, the Soviets developed a plan whereby the tap would be "accidentally" discovered....On the night of 21-22 April 1956, a special signal corps team....penetrated the tunnel in the full glare of a well-organized publicity coup.

The above extract describes the first time that US Intelligence Agencies built a tunnel into Soviet-controlled East Berlin. This is a fictional account of the building of a second tunnel in 1960-1961 during the period of the closing of the Berlin Wall and the Berlin Crisis.

THE BERLIN TUNNEL

A COLD WAR THRILLER

BY

ROGER L. LILES

Acorn Publishing LLC
West Columbia, South Carolina, 29172

FBI Anti-Piracy Warning: The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of a copyrighted work is illegal. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is punishable by up to five years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000.

Advertencia Antipirateria del FBI: La reproducción o distribución no autorizada de una obra protegida por derechos de autor es ilegal. La infracción criminal de los derechos de autor, incluyendo la infracción sin lucro monetario, es investigada por el FBI y es castigable con pena de hasta cinco años en prisión federal y una multa de \$250,000.

The Berlin Tunnel—A Cold War Thriller

First Edition

Copyright © 2018 Roger Liles

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever, including Internet usage, without written permission from the author.

This story is a work of fiction. References to real people, events, establishments, organizations, or locales are intended only to provide a sense of authenticity and are used fictitiously. All other characters, and all incidents and dialogue are drawn from the author's imagination and are not to be construed as real.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

LCCN: 2018039198

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-947392-27-4

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-947392-28-1

Published by Acorn Publishing LLC West Columbia, South Carolina, 29172

Manufactured in the United States of America

“In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger.”

John F Kennedy’s Inaugural Address
—January 20, 1961

Author's Notes:

As the citation from President Kennedy's inaugural address states, the world in the early 1960's was a perilous place. The Russians possessed the hydrogen bomb. Both the U.S.A and U.S.S.R. had settled on a policy of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)—if you strike us with nuclear weapons, we will retaliate in kind. Everyone realized that both Russia and America, perhaps even the whole world, would cease to exist if an all-out nuclear war occurred.

In reaction, Americans built fallout shelters in their backyards, confident that Armageddon was imminent. The communists dominated most of Europe and Asia. The space race was on—spectacular Russian feats contrasted with a string of failures on the part of the U.S.A.

By 1960, the Warsaw Pact countries enjoyed a five-to-one advantage in conventional forces in Europe. President Dwight Eisenhower frequently declared that, if the Russians attacked Western Europe, he'd employ tactical nuclear weapons to prevent them from overrunning our allies and American forces stationed in Europe.

Since 1958, the Russians repeatedly threatened to sign a separate peace treaty with the East Germans. Such a treaty would recognize East Germany's right to incorporate all of Berlin into a sovereign country. The Russians, utilizing the United Nations and other international forums, inflamed world opinion in support of this planned action. Their saber rattling threatened a crisis, even war, if the West did not capitulate on this issue.

Since the two million West Berliners relied on the two-way flow of virtually everything, the constant communist threat of another Berlin Blockade was especially compelling.

In the mid-1950s, the American CIA and British Secret Intelligence Service (MI-6) dug a tunnel and tapped into a buried communication cable located in East Berlin. The frontispiece of this novel contains a one-page excerpt from a CIA report, which describes that monumental feat. More details about that Berlin Tunnel—PROJECT GOLD/STOPWATCH—are available on the internet.

As far as the author can determine, a second tunnel was never built in Berlin during the Cold War. I'm sure that, at many levels of the American government, it was contemplated. You can almost hear someone say, "All that valuable intelligence is readily available, if only..."

This is a fictionalized account of how a second tunnel might have been built by the Americans. It is based on real events and seeks to recall a time—1960/1961—and a place, a divided Berlin before, during, and after the dramatic events that surrounded the closing of the Wall and the Berlin Crisis.

The conditions and events that occurred on both sides of the Iron Curtain, and which divided Berlin, are faithfully recreated. The characters are the product of the author's imagination. The leaders of this period are quoted, and one is included in the story as a character for dramatic purposes.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the estimated fifty million American citizen soldiers who, like Cincinnatus, selflessly served their country in the fight against Communism between the conclusion of World War II and the end of the Cold War. As a result of their efforts, the communist grip on the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union ended in the last decade of the twentieth century.

Those Cold War warriors, and the individuals who served in the “Hot Wars” in Korea and Vietnam, deserve the recognition often withheld when they returned home after their service.

Finally, this book is dedicated to those American servicemen and women ‘who gave the last full measure’ in death or disability during this period.

Prologue

Robert

April 14, 2010

My quest intensified after an internet search revealed that after fifty years, the code word LUMAR had been declassified. In the months that followed, I spent time each day on Google as I searched for additional information.

My eleven-year-old grandson Jonathan recently helped me set up a Google Alert to automatically inform me when someone posted something new. My search terms included Berlin Tunnel, U.S. Air Force, and, of course, Project LUMAR.

Following my regular routine, after lunch I checked my email account. Startled, I discovered my first alert. When I opened the URL and the subject document, a familiar page jumped out at me from my computer screen. Shocked, I pushed back my chair and sat frozen in place. I finally caught my breath, and shouted, “Well, I’ll be damned!”

Anna rushed from her nearby potting studio, gasping, “Are you okay, *liebchen?*”

“Come here! Come around so you can see what I’ve found!”

“I thought you were having another heart attack or something.”

“No! No!” I pointed. “Look! Look here! The construction plan I wrote in Berlin almost fifty years ago. It’s on the internet!”

She moved behind me, smoothed an errant tuft of my thinning gray hair into place. She put both hands on my shoulders, bending forward for a better view.

I felt her stiffen. She moved her hands to my throat, pretending to choke me. “So is this what you’ve hidden from me all these years!”

Knowing I’d opened an old wound, I turned to face her. “There was a reason I couldn’t tell you. An important reason.”

“What might that be?”

“I signed a non-disclosure agreement with the American government.” I raised my hands in mock surrender. “I could have gone to prison for thirty years for the unauthorized disclosure of information about Project LUMAR, the program I managed.”

Her face softened. She put her arms around me. “Robbie, if you’d told me about that agreement, I wouldn’t have pressed you so hard for information or been so hurt that you wouldn’t trust me.”

“I was even ordered not to tell anyone about the non-disclosure agreement,” I explained. I felt both relieved and exhilarated that, at last, I could share this secret with Anna, my wife and best friend of almost fifty years.

I’d suppressed thoughts about the Top Secret construction program in Berlin, but the old visceral reaction persisted. Perhaps this once highly classified information could still be used by our former enemies, although they no longer existed. East Germany and their Secret Police, the Stasi, as well as the Soviet Union and its KGB, had passed into the history books many years earlier.

Anna kissed the top of my head. “From the start of our relationship, I knew you were hiding something important, but I trusted you and believed you would tell me one day. I helped you with the charade, didn’t I?”

“Yes, despite everything that happened to you—to both of us, you helped to preserve my cover. I wouldn’t have succeeded without your support every step of the way, Anna.” I stood to give her a heartfelt hug and kiss.

“So now that this information is on the internet, you can tell me everything. I’ve always wanted to know the complete story.”

Anna deserved to know why she’d been the target of Stasi harassment and torture. I positioned her chair next to mine. “Let’s read this report together. Then you’ll finally learn what my construction crew and I were doing in Berlin.” Holding her hand to reassure her, I continued. “See the original classifications on the top and bottom of my plan? **TOP SECRET RESTRICTED DISTRIBUTION/US EYES ONLY** and the caveat **PROJECT LUMAR.**”

“All of those lines have been crossed out,” she observed. “What does that mean?”

“First, twenty years ago, the document was reclassified to **SECRET**. You can see that word was also lined through and dated. Last year, a large rubber stamp was used to declare the document I generated officially **UNCLASSIFIED.**”

“Early in our relationship, I realized that those communist bastards in the Stasi were making every effort to uncover your secret. My distinct impression was that you, Scott, Mark, and Kurt were dedicated to whatever you were doing. Because I trusted you, I hid my disappointment at being kept in the dark and did my best to help every step of the way.”

“Yes, you did! There was an excellent reason I couldn’t tell you or anyone what I was doing. If one of the thousands of communist spies who entered West Berlin every day, or their myriad operatives at every level of German society, heard just one word, the whole game would have been over. The communists would have enjoyed another major victory.”

“What one word, for heaven’s sake?” she asked, clearly intrigued.

“TUNNEL. Upon hearing that one word, the Russians and East Germans would have immediately begun a concerted search on both sides of the border between East and West Berlin. They would have discovered where we were digging and then used every means, including force, to sabotage my project.”

“I knew there was a tunnel!” Anna insisted. “During family reunions, our nieces and nephews still talk about your amazing tunnel. But you always avoid those conversations. You’ve even refused to confirm such a structure existed. Finally, you’ll be able to share the part you played in the building of that tunnel.”

“Yes...Yes, I can!” So many memorable events, I realized. The closing of the Berlin Wall, the Berlin Crisis, and the Tunnel. Memories of those fifteen months came rushing back, as if they’d happened only yesterday. Now, I could share it all with Anna. “Where should I start? The day I arrived in Berlin. Let’s see it was October....October 11, 1960....As the aircraft began its descent....”

PART ONE

“We will bury you!”

Threat made against the United States and her
Allies by Russian Premier Nikita Khrushchev
while banging his shoe on the rostrum at a
meeting of the United Nations General Assembly
—October 12, 1960

Chapter 1

Tuesday, October 11, 1960

The Pan American DC-6B aircraft descended through the cloud cover on its approach to Tempelhof Airport. Through my window seat forward of the rotating propellers, I saw farmland, forests, and lakes. Then, an ugly, wide ribbon of barren earth with a long row of guard towers resting between two barbed-wire fences came into view. The sight sent shivers up and down my spine.

“Welcome to Berlin,” I whispered to myself. Passing over this communist-built barrier meant I was now in West Berlin, an island of freedom 110 miles inside a totalitarian sea.

I’d hoped to see the world while serving my country. With my usual bad luck, my first duty station had been March Air Force Base, just eighty-three miles from my parents’ home in Pacific Palisades, California.

My luck hadn’t improved. Now I was assigned to what was widely recognized as the front lines of an ongoing battle of wills between two superpowers over the fate of mankind on this planet—Tempelhof Air Force Base in the divided city of Berlin.

Having only dozed off for a few minutes at a time during three flights and two lengthy layovers, I was exhausted. I craved food, a warm shower, and a bed. With my destination beneath me, I perked up, anxious to experience my new duty station and first foreign city. My sleep cycle was messed up because of the time difference, so I didn’t expect to sleep right away.

The aircraft made its final approach to Tempelhof. It parked under a massive canopy designed to protect passengers from the steady rain. At the bottom of the movable metal stairs, I was greeted by two fellow American Air Force officers. We exchanged salutes. A slender man of medium height with dark hair and a bright, friendly smile greeted me, “Welcome to West Berlin, Captain Kerr. I’m Colonel Mark Powell.”

“Glad to meet you, sir,” I replied, shaking his offered hand.

“And this is Captain Scott Taylor.”

The lanky, red-headed captain greeted me with a grin and a firm grip. “Welcome to Berlin.” Turning, he pointed. “Our base occupies the ground through sixth floors of the north end of this building. Commercial aviation occupies the other half of the building.”

“We’ll get you settled in your temporary quarters, get acquainted over lunch at the Officer’s Club, and then attend a short meeting. How does that sound?” the colonel asked. With his unwrinkled brow and jet-black hair, he looked much too young to be a Lieutenant Colonel.

“Food sounds good. It’ll help me stay awake for a few more hours.”

Mark Powell explained over lunch, “Tempelhof was the main Berlin airport in the 1930s. Back then, this was one of the twenty largest buildings in the world...”

“—It’s a huge, almost mile-long semi-circle,” Scott interjected in a slow Texas drawl. “It was one of Hitler’s pet projects, designed to show the superiority of the German people and the Third Reich.”

“During the height of the Berlin Airlift, an aircraft landed at Tempelhof every 45 seconds,” Mark continued. “That mind-boggling logistical feat saved the people of Berlin and avoided another war. Imagine bringing everything a city of two million people needed here by air...”

After lunch, Scott Taylor and I passed two armed security guards at a checkpoint and made our way down a long hall into his office. His vinyl topped, gray metal desk and conference table were standard U.S. government issue. Matching grey, metal straight-back and swivel chairs were positioned around the conference table and behind his desk.

I already liked Scott because of his easy-going manner. My kind of military man—one who didn’t take himself too seriously. He closed the door, then removed some papers from one of gray metal safes that lined the wall. “Please be seated.”

Once we sat across from each other at the conference table, he became all business. “I’m the head of the Office of Special Investigations here in Berlin. We serve as detectives for the Air Force. Because of the project you’re being assigned to manage, you’ve been cleared for Top Secret LUMAR information. LUMAR is the code word assigned to this highly classified, compartmentalized program. Access to any information about this program is strictly limited on a need-to-know basis. Here in Berlin, only the Wing Commander, Colonel Morgan, Colonel Powell, who’s our boss, myself, and you are cleared at this time. I’ll inform you when others are added to the access list. Have you understood what I’ve told you?”

“Yes,” I replied with some trepidation. *What kind of super-secret program could they expect me to manage?*

“If you have questions about security, ask me. Colonel Powell will answer your questions about what you’ll be doing. Do you have any security issues?”

“None that I can think of at this time.”

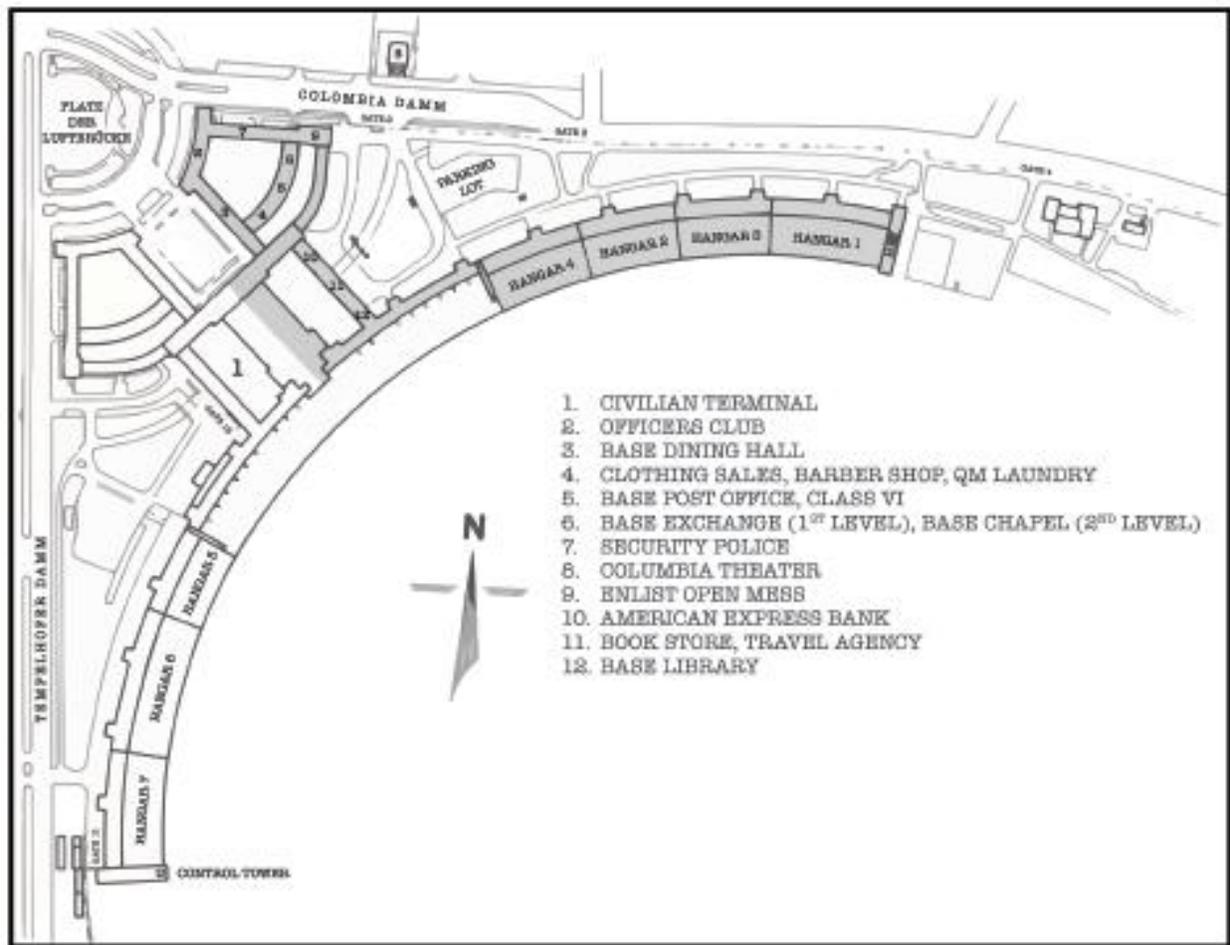
“Then sign this Classified Information Non-Disclosure Agreement. If you tell an unauthorized person anything about this project, you’ll be prosecuted. The current statutes call for thirty years in a military prison. You’ll essentially be locked up, and they’ll throw away the key.” His sober facial expression left no doubt that I should take his admonition seriously.

I’d taken an oath to protect and defend the United States with my life. Although I felt apprehension over the task I would be expected to manage, I took the offered pen and signed the intimidating document.

“Your cover while you’re here in Berlin is that you’re the new chief of the Berlin weather station at Tempelhof. Here is a USAF manual on weather forecasting—study it and be prepared to use the correct terminology when describing what you do. We’ll discuss this more next week.”

He directed me to follow him across the hall where I was photographed. The photo was laminated into my security badge, then attached to a chain which went around my neck.

Templehof Air Force Base



Scott instructed, “When you enter this Special Security Area, hold your badge up beside your face so that the guard on duty can verify that your face matches the photo. Like this,” he said demonstrating. “Wear the badge at all times while you’re in this area.”

He then escorted me to Wing Commander Colonel Glen Morgan’s office. There, I met a tall, slender man with a ruddy complexion. His greeting was reserved, even aloof, but his handshake was firm. I immediately noticed the puckered scars on the left side of his face, which also covered his misshapen ear. His dark blond hair was combed to cover the scarring on his scalp. He said little, but I sensed he was assessing me, trying to determine if I would be suitable for my new assignment.

On the way toward Colonel Powell’s office, I asked Scott, “Are Colonel Morgan’s wounds from Korea?”

“No. WW II,” Scott replied. “He has an impressive war record. He was commissioned at eighteen and flew his first combat mission over Germany before his twentieth birthday. He bailed out of his burning bomber during his 47th mission, and he spent a year and a half in a German POW camp. He’s a battle-scared veteran whom you’ll grow to respect. Do a good job for him, and he’ll support you every step of the way.”

Scott led me down the hallway. “This area contains the unit administrative offices and our main conference room.”

I saw standard government-issue furnishings—light blue vinyl tile floors, tan enameled walls, and

fluorescent fixtures hanging from white acoustic tile ceilings. Typewriters atop desks along with brown metal desk lamps and in/out baskets. Uniformed males of various ranks made up the office staff.

Scott paused to brief me on Lt. Colonel Powell's background. "He graduated from West Point in 1947 and requested duty with the Air Force soon after it became a separate service. Despite the fact that he never flew airplanes, he is now one of the Air Force's youngest Lieutenant Colonels. You'll find we're lucky to have Colonels Morgan and Powell as our top brass, especially given the nature of your project."

I glanced at Scott, expecting more. Just then Lt. Colonel Powell approached us. He motioned for me to follow him down a nearby hall into a windowless area with two small offices and a large conference room. Entry into the three-room complex was controlled by a single door with a cipher lock.

"Welcome to our tank," Colonel Powell said with a sweeping arm gesture. "It's universally known as a tank, because all six walls are metal-lined. It'll be your office and primary work area as long as you're assigned to this project. Have a seat on this side of the conference table so we can both view the same things together."

I sat and listened intently.

"Currently, it's the only place where cleared individuals can discuss the LUMAR project. It's designed so that nothing said or done here can be compromised by anyone in the adjoining offices, the rest of the building, or the myriad of outsiders interested in everything that goes on here. Select either of the other smaller rooms to be your office."

I nodded, feeling overwhelmed.

"Your phone is on the desk outside of the door. Like all of the phones on the base, it's tied directly into the German telephone network. Never say anything that might be even remotely valuable to the enemy who surrounds us here. Assume they're listening to every word you utter, because they probably are." Pausing for emphasis, Colonel Powell continued, "The necessity for this level of security will become apparent as we talk."

Still unable to envision what duty I would be expected to perform, I listened intently.

"You and I have an especially important task which, if completed successfully, could thwart the Russians' intention to spread Communism to other countries."

The colonel captured my full attention with that comment.

"We relieved the man you're replacing. You're on probation until you prove you can handle the job."

I wanted to say "I have a new master's degree in civil engineering and no experience in the management of large construction programs." Instead I asked, "Why me?"

"You're here partially because you're the only one available with the required security clearance. You were initially considered because one of your professors at Cal Berkeley praised you to a senior NSA civilian. No offense, but we searched for a more senior officer with more construction project management experience. None were available."

I shook my head and smiled faintly, appreciating his candor.

"When the Cold War intensified in the mid-1950s, the communists began construction of five nuclear-hardened bunkers in East Berlin," Colonel Powell said, pointing to each in turn on a map spread out on the conference table.

"In 1958, the designers of those five facilities were ordered to connect them into a nuclear-hardened communications system," the Colonel said. "They were also instructed to reroute all important government and military communication lines via that system. Soon, an almost meter-wide metal pipe filled with communications cables was buried ten feet underground. That metal pipe connected the two communist decision makers' bunkers in central Berlin with similar facilities at Russian and East German military

headquarters here and here. A trunk line runs up here to the bunker at Stasi headquarters....”

“—Stasi?”

“The East German Secret Police. Commonly known as the Stasi. They are our number one enemy here in Berlin. The Russians let them do all the dirty work—murder, torture, brainwashing—any and every bad act you can imagine. Everything that a totalitarian regime needs are their stock in trade. You’ll encounter them first hand and learn to hate everything they stand for.”

Colonel Powell pointed to the bottom of the map and continued, “A tunnel built here five years ago by the British Secret Service and our CIA allowed us to tap into high-level Russian and Warsaw Pact communication lines. Unfortunately, it was exposed by the Russians about a year after it became operational. The voluminous amount of extremely valuable information gleaned from that source has prompted our leaders to build a new tunnel into East Berlin. You and I have been tasked with its construction. We’ll not only be tapping into the lines that connect those bunkers—we’ll also access communication links between Berlin, the rest of the Warsaw Pact and Russia. Your job is to manage that project.”

Stunned, I said, “If that red line on the map is the border and the blue line is the route of the pipe between each of the bunkers, it’s quite a long distance from West Berlin.”

“It is, except right here.” He indicated a spot on the map. “Where the border is the River Spree. The buried pipe is only about 1400 feet from a vacant apartment building that our government recently purchased to house the western terminus of the tunnel. The plan is to start the tunnel inside that building, go under the river, and come up beneath the pipe on the other side.”

“I have questions.”

“I’ll try to answer them.”

“What are my duties?”

“Program manager for the construction of the tunnel and the Signals Exploitation Center. You’ll plan and supervise the entire construction effort.”

“Isn’t that your job?”

“No. I’m the Deputy Commander of Detachment 1 of the 6910th Security Wing, which is the Air Force Signals Intelligence Collection Unit here at Tempelhof. I have a large number of other duties, and I’m not an engineer. I’ll be available to assist you to work within the military system.”

“What’d my predecessor do to get relieved?”

“He feared mistakes, wanted me to make all of the decisions, and drank too much. He was a potential security risk.”

“Do we know precisely where the pipe is buried?”

“No. It was buried two years ago, and the decision to exploit it is recent. One of our operatives traced its route on a map with a ballpoint pen. Here is a copy of the map he marked up.”

Looking at the map and its scale, I remarked, “This map covers a large area. The line showing the pipe’s possible route must be thirty, forty, perhaps even fifty feet wide, so we only have an idea about the route of the pipe.”

“That’s true.”

“Do we know what obstructions are between the building and the tube?”

“On this table is a set of public works drawings from the late 1930s. They show the location of the subway, storm drains, sewage pipes, underground electrical conduits, and certain other obstructions in that immediate area. Unfortunately, they haven’t been updated since 1945.”

“Does it show building foundations?”

“Unfortunately, no.”

“Let me summarize,” I said, trying hard to keep an amused tone out of my voice. “We are going to excavate a fourteen-hundred-foot-long tunnel under a wide, deep river into East Berlin, bisect a one-meter wide pipe without actually knowing where it’s located while also avoiding unknown obstructions that are probably in our path.”

Mark snickered at my description. “It’s even worse than that. While building the tunnel, we are also going to need to keep a paranoid, totalitarian East German regime and the three million civilians of Berlin, plus our closest allies, from discovering what we are doing.”

“Sir... Colonel Powell, if you’ll forgive me, my favorite professor in graduate school said, ‘Almost anything is possible given enough time and money, but many things are improbable.’ I think this project falls into the latter category. In fact, it’s highly improbable.”

The Colonel nodded his agreement. He even smiled. “I don’t disagree. But Captain Kerr, your job is to figure out how to accomplish the highly improbable.”

Feeling overwhelmed, I said, “Sir...I’m probably not the right man for this job. I do have bachelor and master’s degrees in civil engineering, but I’ve only worked under the direct supervision of experienced people. We relied on local contractors to perform most of the work. My experience is as a contracts administrator for the construction of aircraft hangars and the paving of runways, not as development manager for a tunnel.”

“For now, Captain, this is your responsibility. Thirty-four experienced construction workers will arrive in early January to start work. You have almost three months to prepare to direct their activities. Is that clear?”

In officer’s training, we learned there were only three acceptable responses to an order from a superior officer. Yes, sir—No, sir—No excuse, sir. I chose the only reasonable response. “Yes, Sir.”

“One more thing you need to know. By September of next year, the tunnel must be finished and preliminary operation of the Signals Exploitation Center must begin.”

“Eleven months from now! Why?”

“The East German and Russian leaders are committed to signing a separate World War II peace treaty in October or November of next year. Their objective is to negate the four-power control of Berlin. This action will cause a confrontation between the Russians and us, which might well lead to war.”

“Obviously advanced information on their intentions would be exceeding valuable,” I remarked, staring in disbelief at the Colonel. “Um...That’s a lot of responsibility on our shoulders.”

“Yes, it is, Captain.”

I cringed. *Doing all this in less than a year is unrealistic. I’m responsible for the whole thing. My God!*

“Be here in the tank early Friday. The combination of the cipher lock is 3192. Find an apartment as soon as you can. Captain Taylor has agreed to give you a tour of Berlin on Saturday.”

“Yes. Sir.” I responded, still feeling confused.

As we left the tank, he added, “Always make sure this door is secure before you leave the area. I expect a debriefing on your progress every Friday at 1300 in the tank.” He escorted me to a nearby stairway, shook my hand, smiled, and walked away.

His words rang in my ears. *“You’re the only one available.”* But if I fail, I thought, what happens to the world?

Feet of Tunnel Completed: 0 Days until Deadline: 351

Chapter 2

Wednesday, October 12, 1960

The sunlight that pierced the thin curtains of my drab Bachelor Officer Quarters (BOQ) room awakened me three times. Hunger finally forced me into the shower at 2 p.m. My body remained on California time, but I was half a world away in Berlin, Germany.

As I dressed, the knot in the pit of my stomach returned. I was on a very dangerous island of freedom, far behind enemy lines, and my new job was probably impossible.

The elevator stopped on the ground floor, and I walked out into an open courtyard. Overcast skies were visible between the tall buildings that made up Tempelhof Air Force Base. The air felt cool and crisp.

After I took a wrong turn, I passed several base support facilities, including the bookstore, and ended up on an aircraft parking ramp. Turning around, I finally found the Officers Club. The closest the chef could come to breakfast was a bowl of cereal and an egg salad sandwich. I needed to stay awake to get my body clock straightened out, so I stopped in the bookstore.

The bell attached to the door rang as I stepped into a small, high-ceilinged room with shelves arranged along three walls and in neat center rows. I immediately noticed a striking blonde with peaches and cream complexion sitting behind a desk at the entrance. To avoid staring at her, I scanned the austere décor as I approached the bestsellers table in the center of the room. I selected three volumes—*Advise and Consent* by Allen Drury, *Hawaii* by James A. Michener, and *The Leopard* by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa.

When I turned around, I caught her watching me. More cute than beautiful, her violet-blue eyes were enchanting. I smiled at her.

She beamed as she asked, “May I help you?”

“I need a book to keep me awake for the next thirty hours. What do you suggest?”

When she stood, I immediately noticed that her short-sleeved sweater and matching straight skirt showed her slim waist, trim figure, and breasts to advantage.

With only the slightest trace of an accent, she answered in English, “In my experience, a poorly written or complex book requires concentration, which is one way to stay awake or to quickly fall asleep. A well-

written book will keep you awake, because you want to find out what happens. Which do you want?"

"A page-turner, please."

"I have read *Hawaii*, which I thoroughly enjoyed," she advised. "It makes one want to continue, plus now I also want to visit Hawaii. *Advise and Consent* recounts US Senate confirmation hearings for a former member of the Communist Party. I do not like communists, so I will not be reading it. I read the first chapter of *The Leopard*. The book was written in Italian, and I think the translator made it difficult to understand."

Intelligent and attractive. "Do I detect a slight accent?"

"Yes, I am a native Berliner."

"My name is Robert Kerr, er...Captain Robert Kerr." I wore civilian clothes and wanted her to know I was an officer.

"My name is Anna Fischer, Miss Anna Fischer," she offered, smiling.

She looked flushed even as she sized me up.

"Why do you need to stay awake for thirty hours? It seems like a strange thing to do."

I explained my problem and concluded by stating, "I plan to stay up, drink coffee, and read this book"—I held up *Hawaii*—"until bedtime tomorrow."

"There is a café nearby that stays open 24 hours every day. I will be closing in 30 minutes, and I can show you where it is. That way, if you need coffee or food in the middle of the night, you will know where to go."

"Thank you. That's very kind of you." Our eyes met for a brief moment as I paid for the book. I sensed her interest in me. I, indeed, was interested in her, too.

Chapter 3

Anna

Wednesday, October 12, 1960

I sat alone at the front desk when Robert entered the bookstore that first time. Glancing up, I noted his striking appearance and long-legged stride. His tan and his sun-streaked light-brown hair indicated he spent a lot of time outdoors.

He browsed the bestseller table, his back to me. Broad shouldered and narrow-hipped, he looked athletic. When he caught me staring at him, he smiled, and his hazel eyes twinkled.

My heart beat faster. I blushed as he approached me. This was my first time to react to any man in such a positive way. When I stood, I saw he was taller than me. I could wear high heels if he asked me out on a date. Perhaps a strange thought, but I have always been self-conscious about my height.

I cleared my throat before I asked, "May I help you?" My voice sounded higher in tone than usual, reflecting the tension streaming through my entire body.

Few twenty-two-year-old women possess less experience with men than I. Though I had often resolved to allow a man into my life, I recoiled at the thought of physical contact with a man. It just brought back too many terrifying memories from the war.

When Robert remarked, "I arrived in Berlin yesterday and plan to stay up, drinking coffee, and reading a book," I surprised myself by offering to show him a nearby café.

I thought then that, if I intend to start a relationship with anyone, it should be with a man to whom I am attracted. Robert was handsome. I wondered if he might be the man to help break down the barriers I had erected as a girl.