

damage to airlift transports.(64)

The Soviet resolve began to weaken over the winter of 1948-49, since the airlift appeared to be succeeding. It was broken with the Easter Parade. On 25 April, nine days after the big push, the TASS news agency revealed that the Soviet Union was willing to lift the blockade. On 4 May the delegates who had been negotiating over the blockade announced that it would be lifted effective 12 May. As promised, on that day the rail lines and highways to Berlin from the west were reopened. But the airlift did not end immediately. Fearing that the Soviets might reinstate the blockade after the allies had dismantled the Combined Airlift Task Force, General Clay continued the operation through the summer to lay in a reserve of commodities. On 30 July 1949 allied representatives officially announced the date for the termination of the airlift as 31 October 1949. During August operations began to wind down and C-54s were released for service elsewhere. Effective 1 September 1949 Turner's Combined Airlift Task Force was inactivated. On 30 September, one month ahead of schedule, the last C-54 left Rhein-Main for Berlin.(65)

In terms of sheer numbers, it would be an understatement to call the Berlin Airlift impressive. It delivered a total of 2,325,509.6 tons of food, fuel, and supplies to Berlin in 15 months and transported a total of 227,655 passengers either in or out of the city. See the tally depicted in Table 2 for a full breakdown. The flying hours, missions, and safety of the operation were also most impressive, as shown in Table 3.(66)

One of the keys to the successful delivery of so much tonnage was the large number of aircraft involved in Operation Vittles. Turner ultimately was able to assemble some 441 aircraft, comprising 309 C-54s, 105 C-47s, 21 R-50s, five C-82s, and a lone C-97, for the airlift. It should be noted, however, that 106 C-54s were normally assigned to airlift duties between European bases rather than corridor flights to Berlin. The RAF contributed another 101 aircraft: 40 Dakotas, 35 Yorks, and 26 Hastings. During the summer months, the British also supplied occasional amphibious aircraft which landed on waterways in the city. These were especially useful in bringing in salt because the amphibious aircraft were resistant to salt corrosion. (67)

TABLE I
SUMMARY OF HARASSMENT INCIDENTS IN AIR
CORRIDOR TO BERLIN
10 August 1948- 15 August 1949

Buzzing 77
Close Flying 96
Flak 54
Air-to-Air Fire 14
Flares 59
Radio Interference 82
Searchlights 103
Air-to-Ground Fire 42
Ground Fire 55
Ground Explosions 39
Rockets 4
Balloons 11
Chemical Laying 54
Bombing 36
Unidentified Objects 7
Total 733

SOURCE: Memo, 1st Airlift Task Force Intel, to 1st Airlift Task Force Comdr "Summary of Corridor Incidents," 2 Sep 49, Berlin Airlift Files, Ofc of Hist, MAC; news release, USAFE Office of Information, n.s., n.d., MAC Hist Ofc.

TABLE 2 CARGO TRANSPORTED DURING BERLIN
AIRLIFT 26 June 1948-30 September 1949
(All Figures in Tons)

CARGO INBOUND			
Food	Coal	Misc. Commodities	Total
U.S. 296,319.3	1,421,118.8	66,134.6	1,783,572.7
U.K. 240,386.0	164,910.5	136,640.4	541,936.9
Totals			
536,705.3	1,586,029.3	202,775.0	2,325,509.6

CARGO OUTBOUND TO U.S. AND BRITISH ZONES

U.S.	45,887.7
U.K.	35,843.1
Total	81,730.8

PASSENGERS FLOWN

	Inbound	Outbound	Total
U.S.	25,263	37,486	62,749
U.K.	34,815	130,091	164,906
Total	60,078	167,577	227,655

SOURCE: News Release, USAFE Office of Information, "Berlin Airlift Status," n.d.

TABLE 3 BERLIN AIRLIFT FLIGHTS
26 June 1948 - 30 September 1949

TOTAL FLIGHTS

U.S.	189,963
U.K.	87,606

TOTAL HOURS FLOWN

U.S.	586,827
U.K.	Unknown

TOTAL AIRCRAFT MILES FLOWN BY C-47s AND C-54s

C-47	7,584,009
C-54	84,477,853
Total	92,061,862

U.S. FATALITIES DURING BERLIN AIRLIFT

USAF Officers	22
USAF Airmen	6
U.S. Navy Petty Officer	1
U.S. Army Private	1
U.S. Civilian Employee	1
Total	31

U.S. AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS

Major	70
Minor	56
Total	126

(Aircraft miles flown by USAFE's 5 C-82, 1 C-97A and 1 C-74 unavailable.) SOURCE: News Release, USAFE Office of Information, "Berlin Airlift Status," n.d.