

Tunnel Escape from East to West Berlin (January 24, 1962)

Abstract

One of the first escapes by tunnel from East to West Berlin succeeded on January 24, 1962. Brothers Günter and Bruno Becker had spent six days digging a tunnel from their apartment near the border on Oranienburger Chaussee in the Glienecke district. Twenty-eight people managed to escape from the GDR to West Berlin by way of this tunnel. The story was filmed the same year as “Tunnel 28 – Escape from East Berlin” by Robert Siodmak. A translation of the voice-over appears below.

Source

Translation of transcript

On January 24, 1962, twenty-eight Berliners succeed in escaping from East to West through a twenty-seven-meter-long tunnel that they built themselves. The spectacular escape under the Wall is followed by other similar attempts. In the first half of 1962, a total of sixty East Berliners succeed in smuggling themselves through six tunnels under the Wall. But these attempts claim human lives. In March 1962, a person assisting with an escape is shot dead. Three months later, a sergeant in the [East German] People's Police is killed. The GDR border commandos now refine their surveillance and security tactics. There are eight more attempted escapes in the second half of 1962 but only one succeeds. Twenty would-be escapees are arrested. Once again, someone trying to assist with an escape attempt is killed. Nevertheless, GDR citizens continue trying to dig their way through to West Berlin.

Source: 24. January 1962 – First Tunnel Flight from East to West Berlin. History Vision (history-vision.de), Clip-ID: JHT000264D (1962).

history-vision.de

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