

“Bei uns ist immer was los!”

Feb 4, 2014

der 5. Februar—Last Fatal Shots at Berlin Wall (der 5. Februar 1989)

Last Fatal Shots at Berlin Wall Fell 25 Years Ago



White crosses serve as memorials for people killed at the Berlin Wall in escape attempts. The one on the far right bears the name Chris Gueffroy and the date Feb. 5, 1989, the day he was shot while trying to escape to the West.

His mother heard the shots that night in February 1989. She didn't realize that it was her own son who had been killed not far from her apartment in East Berlin. He was trying to cross the Berlin Wall and flee to West Berlin. Chris Gueffroy, 20 years old, was the last GDR refugee to be shot dead by the regime's border troops. Nine months later, in November 1989, the inner-German border was opened and the wall fell.

At the beginning of 1989, Gueffroy had heard from a supposedly reliable source that the order to shoot at the border had been lifted. It was a fatal mistake. The escape attempt ended in the young man's death. A friend who accompanied him was badly injured but survived.



A view of the Britz Canal, along which the Berlin Wall once stood. It was near here on February 5, 1989, where Chris Gueffroy was shot by East German border guards along the southern bank while trying to escape to the West.

At first the GDR leadership tried to keep the deadly shooting secret. Gueffroy's death was officially declared as "an attack on military installations". But Karin Gueffroy, the victim's mother, managed to pass news of the events to media in the west along with a photo of her son, thus publicizing his fate. "I didn't want my child to be anonymously buried in some cemetery like so many others who were killed at the Wall," she said in 2011 in an interview marking the 50th anniversary of the building of the Wall.

Chris Gueffroy wanted to discover the world

Karin Gueffroy describes her son as courageous and a freedom lover who wanted to discover the world beyond the Wall. Chris Gueffroy first attended a school specializing in sport and dreamt of a professional career. But this goal could only be achieved if you were exceptionally loyal to the political