

## Cold War Trail

The information in *italics* does not appear on the students' print out.

### 1. Germany divided: East and West



Make your way to the back of the exhibition space and find the Trabant car

**Who owned this car?**

*Klaus Ackermann*

**Was this car easy to get hold of?**

*No. Waiting lists were up to 15 years. The car was a prized possession in the East although it was ridiculed in the West.*

**Read the quote by Dan van der Vat underneath the Trabant car. How would you describe the car based on the information in its object label and in the quote?**

*The object label describes the car as very basic, with the quote comparing a drive in it 'like a ride in a speedboat on choppy water'.*



**Walk towards the tank and follow the Cold War section of the timeline to the right until you find this poster in the corner.**

**How would you describe the Trabant car based only on this poster?**

*This is of course subjective, but hopefully the students will see that the advert is creating an image of the car which is positive and quite different to the reality which they have just read about.*

**Why do you think we have this car in a museum about the impact of war?** *To encourage visitors to think about how the division of Germany affected people's everyday lives.*

## 2. The Berlin wall



Follow the timeline back to the light box with the picture on Mao Tse-tung on it to find the answer this question - when was the Berlin Wall built and why?

*The wall was erected by the East German Government in 1961. The wall separated East Berlin and West Berlin. It was built in order to prevent people from fleeing East Berlin to the freedom of the West. It has become an iconic symbol of the Cold War.*

In addition, read the information on the *Divided City Action Station* opposite and play the game.



### Find this Berlin Wall Search-light

Read the information in its object description panel.

### What extreme measures were taken to ensure that people did not cross the Berlin wall?

*The Berlin wall was fortified with watchtowers and barbed wire*

*Heavily guarded*

*Bordered by the 'death strip' - this was a mined area of gravel under constant surveillance*

### When did the Berlin Wall finally open up and why?

*The wall opened up in the November of 1989. Throughout that summer communist regimes in Poland and Hungary collapsed, opening up routes to the West. Mass protests and the number of people wanting to leave forced the East German government to open up border crossings in the wall. Ordinary citizens then ripped the wall down themselves.*

**Conrad Schuman, an East German border guard defected to West Berlin, on 15 August 1961, just three days into the construction of the Berlin Wall. This image has since become an iconic image of the Cold War era.**



### 3. Military action in the Cold War

The two superpowers of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union, did not declare war on one another. Instead, they engaged in 'proxy wars'. This refers to conflicts in which one or both of the two superpowers gave military aid to opposing forces.



You will need to use the second large light box and the Cold War cabinet to answer these questions.

**Can you find any examples of conflicts that occurred during this time which could be considered part of the Cold War?**

*The Korean War (1950 – 1953) and the Vietnam War (1961-1975) are both referred to on this section of the timeline.*

**What was the outcome of the 3 year conflict in Korea?**

*While in the initial stages, support from China and the Soviet Union allowed the troops from the communist North to move rapidly into the non-communist South, with support from American troops, the South fought back. The conflict ended in a stalemate after 3 years. A peace treaty has yet to be signed uniting the North and South of the country.*

**Which conflict in Asia involved Britain?**

*Objects 8 and 10 in the cabinet refer to the Malayan conflict. China supported the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), which led a guerrilla campaign from 1948 until their defeat by British and Commonwealth forces in 1960.*

**Looking at the objects, can you identify what other major Communist power (not the Soviet Union) was involved in these 'proxy wars'?**

*Led by the Communist leader Chairman Mao Tse-tung, China was an influential presence during the Cold War period, particularly during the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam.*

**If you were creating a display about the Cold War and could borrow one item from this cabinet, what would you choose and why?**

*Encourage the students to choose an object that interests them in relation to their knowledge of the Cold War. Ask them to explain why they have chosen that object and what it would tell people looking at their display about the Cold War.*

## 4. Reactions to the nuclear threat

During the Cold War, Britain built an arsenal of nuclear weapons. Britain was allied with the United States, which was involved in a nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union.



In 1962, nuclear war was narrowly averted during the Cuban Missile Crisis. British civilians were provided with advice on how to protect themselves from nuclear attack.



Follow the timeline to Silo 5: *Science, Technology & War* and find this object.

Read the information about the effects of a nuclear bomb and then watch the safety film produced by the Government in 1976.

**Why do you think the British government produced this film?**

*Students may suggest that the government is trying to calm the population, avoiding mass panic about the threat of nuclear war. They may suggest that they want people to be well informed and that giving advice about how people can protect themselves is better than giving people a very bleak outlook about realities of the fallout from a nuclear bomb.*

**Do you think the advice in the video would have been useful given what you have read about the effects of a nuclear explosion? Explain your answer.**

*Encourage students to compare the video with the content they have read on the text panel.*



**Look in the cabinet to the right. Can you find any other publications provided to civilians to advise them in the event of a nuclear attack?**

- Object number 6 – WVA Leaflet
- Object number 7 – ‘Bert the Turtle says Duck and Cover’ produced by the US Federal Civil Defence Administration
- Object number 8 – ‘Emergency Planning and Nuclear War in Greater Manchester’ produced by MUND and GMC

## 5. Protests for peace



In June 1980 the British Government’s decision to allow the United States to site 96 cruise missiles at Greenham Common was met with widespread protest. Those in favour believed that the Soviet Union might be deterred from initiating a nuclear strike on Western Europe if the Soviet Union thought Britain was capable of nuclear retaliation.



Head to Silo 2: *Women & War* (near the trabant) and find this Greenham Common badge in the ‘Peace workers’ case. Read the information about it on the object label.

In December 1982 more than 30,000 women gathered to join hands around the base at the ‘Embrace the Base’ event. The women were invited to bring a gift with them that symbolised the life that they wanted to protect.



Protester, Ann Pettitt describes what she saw that day.

*One woman had hung her wedding dress on the fence and left it there. She hung her wedding on the fence and walked away and left it. To me, I just sort of walked around with tears streaming down my face looking at these things; you know laughing and crying at the same time.*

**Why do you think people felt so strongly about the Government's decision?  
What do you think their concerns were?**

*The threat of nuclear conflict caused deep public concern and many people campaigned for nuclear weapons to be banned. Individuals had a number of reasons for feeling strongly about the decision to site missiles at this base. Pacifists felt strongly against all forms of war, others opposed nuclear weapons specifically. Many people were especially concerned that the United States was using Britain as a platform from which to launch a possible nuclear strike. Many would have been concerned about their own and their family's safety and for the future of Britain and its population.*

**In 1983 the base was ready and the missiles were stationed at Greenham as planned.**

**Who would you have supported? The government or the protesters? Why?**  
*Encourage the students to support their answer using evidence from the museum's collections. They could consider the quote above from Ann Pettit alongside their answers in the 'Reactions to the nuclear threat' section of this trail.*