



Postage stamp honoring Berlin Airlift

How many of us are still around who remember the glory days of Templehof Airport in Berlin, Germany?

In the 1930s and early 1940s, it was the grandiose setting for meetings by Hitler with various foreign visitors, including Neville Chamberlain's infamous attempt to find "peace in our time". Hitler also staged big military events there to welcome home German athletes returning from Olympic games, as well as during WWII, when he honored heroic soldiers and airmen for their roles in Nazi conquests throughout Europe.

From 1942 through May, 1945, British and American bombers blasted the hell out of the city and virtually destroyed the airport. When Germany surrendered, Templehof was quickly restored and became a major base for Allied occupation air operations.

In 1946, after the Russians blockaded road traffic into Germany's capital city, Templehof became the destination in and out for the Berlin Airlift. Later, after the Cold War ended, the busy commercial airport was one of three major hubs in the Berlin area. However, two years ago Templehof was shut down.

Hitler, with his goose-stepping troops, flashy military aircraft, dancing maidens and military festivals held at Templehof, would never recognize it now. Most likely, if he did, he'd have one of his screaming rants.

Now, it looks like a love-in haven of the 1950s, where fashionably ragged teeners gather, hip-hop to the latest music, camp and enjoy soccer, amusement rides, kite-flying and refreshment stands. There are also some relic German aircraft where young children now frolic.