

Digging begins - Tunnel 29 Part 3

Over the next few nights, they dug straight down, 1.3m exactly. Now they could start digging horizontally towards the East. This was the moment they realised how difficult it was going to be.

"When you were down in the tunnel, you had to lie flat on your back," says Joachim. "You'd point your feet in the direction you were digging, you held onto the spade with both hands, and you'd use your feet to push it down into the clay."

It would take them hours to dig out a small heap of earth. They'd put it on a cart, and with an old World War Two telephone that Joachim had found, ring through to the cellar to alert them that the cart was ready. Someone would then pull the cart up on a piece of rope.

Before long, they established a steady rhythm, spending hours in the tunnel, digging and hauling carts of clay. After a few weeks, though, they were exhausted. Their hands were covered in blisters, their backs ached, but they had little to show for it. They hadn't even reached the border. They needed two things - people and money.