The top room of the garrison tower was mainly used as a sleeping area for the guards. While on patrol, if an invading force would be attacking, the guards would set off a smoke signal inside the tower to warn the villages nearby. Every 3.1 Miles there was another tower that would set off their smoke signal as well when they saw the warning, thus triggering a chain reaction.

The garrison tower was used as the primary system of defense along with patrolling sentries along the wall itself. There were two kinds of towers, ones attached to the wall and others distant away from the wall used to signal further towards the town with smoke signals when trouble arose with invaders.

The space separated in the wall are called Ramparts, which enabled guards and archers to defend against invaders with the upperhand advantage. They also used small holes in the wall as windows keeping an eye out for invaders along with shooting arrows at them.

The wall is built in layers consisting of a surface of stone slabs and brick for a walkway. A tamped layer of earth and rubble underneath it. Bigger rocks and stones underneath that, and Kiln fired bricks and mortar of limestone underneath mixed with larger locally found rocks. Material the wall was built with was heavily influenced by local building materials in the area.

Between the Warring State period and the Han Dynasty, (where most wall progress was completed), the Kingdoms built the wall based on local resources. This usually resulted in the wall being built on stamped earth or stacked rocks that were simply drywall. Mortar was later added to keep sturdy. 3.2m tall.

Walls formed in the desert like the one shown below were made with gravel and sand that were packed into frames, then stacked in layers. The frames were made of rose willow & reeds. Groundwater with high salinity was also used to strengthen the layers so they could withstand the forces of erosion over time on arid land.

Perhaps the most famous legends of the wall is the Legend of Meng Jiangnu. It tells a story occurring in the Qin Dynasty where her husband Fan Qiliang was sentenced to work on the Great Wall. After his departure she didn’t hear from him so she went out looking for him. By the time she reached the wall, he had already died. Upon hearing the news she cried her heart out, her tears caused a portion of the wall to collapse, thus discovered bones of her lost husband in the wall.

Another legend is of the Jiayuguan Pass. It tells of Yi Kaizhan, an arithmetic worker, in the Ming Dynasty who calculated this project would need exactly 99,999 bricks to build. His supervisor didn’t believe him so he stated that if that prediction was miscalculated by even one brick, they would be punished for 3 years of work. Upon completion, one brick was left in the Xiwong city gate. He said it was left deliberately by a supernatural entity and if moved it would collapse the wall. Thus the brick remains there to this day.