



'Charlie:' West Berlin's focal point

Another chapter in the history of Berlin ended May 20: The old wooden Checkpoint Charlie control building that straddled the middle of Friedrich-Strasse for nearly 15 years had served its time and was moved onto a flatbed truck (top left) and taken away.

That section of it which faced the Communist barrier to the East will be set up in the Berlin Brigade Museum at McNair Barracks while the rest will probably go the way of all old wood. While waiting for

the new building to be put into place, British, French and American MPs continued carrying out their duties in the open air (top right).

Below, three members of the Allied team watch traffic as it flows past the checkpoint. They are (from left): American Spec. 4 Robert Potts, French Gendarme Joseph Post and British Cpl. Brian Miles.

Among those who also has seen traffic go by over the years is Lt. Col. Gilbert E.

Jones, Berlin provost marshal. He was there when it all began — as a lieutenant — on Aug. 12, 1961, and recalls how it got its name.

"A lot of people always asked why we called this particular place Checkpoint Charlie. Any military knows the phonetic alphabet and with Checkpoint Alpha at Helmstedt, Checkpoint Bravo near the Wannsee, it was just the logical GI way of naming it.

"As I think back, a lot happened during

those early months. Vice President Johnson came to visit. A battle group came through the autobahn and we were reinforced by a platoon of MPs from the 385th MP Bn in Stuttgart. They were known as the '40 Hired Guns' and I think those words are carved somewhere inside the old checkpoint building."

This was nearly 15 years ago and Charlie is still there with a new look and facing the same way — East.

—For S&S by Bob Crossley

