

National Guard takes Santa Claus to Aniak

by Barbara Crane
for the Tundra Times

ANIAK — "Operation Santa Claus," a joint project of the Jaycees, the Salvation Army and the Alaska National Guard, delighted pre-schoolers here Friday. A planned stop at the McGrath Senior Center had to be cancelled, however, due to weather.

"I'm so sorry to disappoint the folks in McGrath," Santa said, sighing. "If only I'd brought Rudolph!"

The red-nosed reindeer might have
(Continued on Page Ten)



Santa talked with pre-schoolers in his visit to Aniak.

photo by Barbara Crane

• McGrath to get gifts

(Continued from Page One)

been able to guide Santa's sleigh into McGrath, but low clouds and poor visability prevented the Alaska National Guard's C-130 cargo plane from landing.

Santa promised, however, to see that the gifts he'd brought would be delivered somehow. "I have lots of friends, and they all want to help," he said.

Santa and his helpers were met at the Aniak airport by about 30 preschoolers and their teachers. The children had been waiting about an hour inside the Ryan terminal, and came running outside as soon as Santa stepped off the plane.

Every child had the chance to sit on

Santa's knee, but some of the younger ones found this strange man just a little too frightening. Even the most timid received a present, though, and managed a very soft "Thank you."

After all the presents and candy canes had been handed out, the children presented Santa with a large card they had made which read, "To Santa and his helpers. . . Aniak Day Care children would like to thank you for thinking of them this Christmas year!!"

When it was time for Santa to leave, the children ran outside and waved goodbye. The last thing he heard was a small voice crying, "Santa, I love you." That was all the thanks that Santa needed.