



**CHRISTMAS CHOPPER** — A CH-47 Chinook helicopter of the Ft. Wainwright based 242nd Aviation Company unloads a shipment of Christmas goodies at the Yukon River community of Nulato, 300 miles west of Fairbanks. More than 200 children's presents, boxes of fruit, clothing and other staples were collected by the Ft. Wainwright Madonna Society for the Nulato Natives. The Christmas shipment is an annual event for the Catholic ladies' society. Social, religious and military organizations at Ft. Wainwright annually send Christmas cheer to remote Alaskan villages. (U.S. Army Photo)

# Christmas at Nulato—

## *Army Copter Brings Loads of Gifts*

**FORT WAINWRIGHT, AK** — When you load an Army helicopter with 200 children's gifts, chip in two chaplains to escort the party and head 300 miles west into the Yukon River basin, you have the ingredients for a whale of a yarn.

It happened Tuesday when the Madonna Society of Ft. Wainwright embarked on their annual Christmas visit to the tiny village of Nulato. And, as if primed by a time clock, the town's bumper crop of youngsters were on hand to greet the emissaries from Santa Claus.

The 20-member society of Catholic ladies has adopted the village and each year sends a gift by name to each school-age child, enough extras are added so the pre-schoolers also all get a present from the Wainwright organization.

This year was no exception and carton upon carton of gaily

wrapped toys slid off the ramp of the 222nd Aviation Battalion Chinook. Quickly loaded onto snowmobile sleds they were zipped off to the rectory of Rev. John Donahue, a Jesuit missionary who distributes the presents.

The village natives are a self-sufficient community existing off the land by hunting, fishing and gathering fuel in the forests. There are few frills but the children are happy, healthy and bubble with gratitude.

The youngsters know Ft. Wainwright bordered Santa's home in North Pole and they were ready with two large envelopes crammed with notes for the jolly bearer of Christmas joy.

Back aboard the Chinook heading for home it was obvious the short hour and a half on the ground was worth the month-long preparation.