

## *Guardsmen in Unique Adventure—*

# National Guardsmen Parachutists Visit Gambell

For 22 Anchorage area National Guardsmen, last weekend proved to be a highlight of the past training year.

The men, members of the Guard's 38th Special Forces, flew nearly 600 miles to the Eskimo village of Gambell on St. Lawrence Island for a two day training session with their Gambell-based detachment.

CPT Lowell Barrick, commander of the 38th, led the men aboard an Alaska Air Guard C-123 on Friday morning (May 5) for the five hour flight. A two hour stop in Nome allowed time for lunch and a bit of souvenir shopping for the green beret troopers, many of whom had never been to the Norton Sound city.

Taking off from Nome, the twin-engine C-123 flew through drifting fog banks for most of the 200 mile trip to Gambell.

Almost as if by divine interference, the fog cleared away and the sun shone brilliantly as the airplane touched down on the Gambell landing strip. As usual in the remote native villages of Alaska, the entire village population met the airplane.

For the Guardsmen, the first order of business was parachuting. A number of the Gambell members of the 38th needed to make at least two jumps to keep their parachute proficiency current.

The parachutes were off-loaded from the airplane along with baggage and other cargo.

Jumpers donned their chutes in the shadow of the airplane's tail, and were checked by the jumpmaster, CPT Dell Husted, prior to reboarding the C-123.

The airplane turned, taxied to the end of the runway, and with a roar of engines, took off over the village, accompanied by the shouts of excited villagers.

A long, climbing turn, and the aircraft headed back toward the frozen lake surface adjacent to the village which had been selected as the drop zone.

Villagers on snowmobile, all-terrain vehicles and on foot lined the lake shore, awaiting the drop.

As the airplane passed over the lake at 1250 feet, the jumpers began to tumble from its rear ramp, looking much like puppets being jerked off by the string of their opening chutes.

As they landed, the people of Gambell rushed to help gather up chutes and jumpers, loading them aboard sleds for the short

trip back to the runway, where the aircraft was approaching for a landing. Only a matter of minutes, and the aircraft was approaching for a landing. Only a matter of minutes, and the aircraft was loaded again and airborne for the second drop.