

Air Force Bringing Christmas to Thousand 'Kids Along the Yukon'



HQ AAC, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, Dec. 10—Clothing, toys, school supplies and other contributions to Project Santa Claus are being loaded on an Air Force helicopter at Galena Air Force Station for distribution to nearly 1,000 "Kids Along the Yukon" by project officers, left to right, 2nd Lieutenant Wayne E. Balthun, Chaplain (Captain) Daniel E. Saarinen, and Major Tommie Tilley. Lieutenant Balthun is chief of administration at Campion; Chaplain Saarinen is a remote station Chaplain; and Major Tilley is the operations officer for the station.

HQ AAC, ELMENDORF AFB, Alaska, Dec. 10—"It's better to give than receive." This is the feeling of men of the Alaskan Air Command's Galena and Campion Air Force Stations as they undertake a major project to provide gifts and food for almost 1,000 children in 10 villages along the Yukon River in Alaska.

The purpose of this effort, appropriately named PROJECT SANTA CLAUS "Kids along the Yukon," is to give these native children a Merry Christmas and provide them with some of the comforts which are considered normal necessities in the lower 48.

To date over 5,000 pounds of clothing, toys, school supplies, hygiene kits and \$450 in cash donations has been collected for

these youngsters. Many are members of large families who live in one-room cabins.

Also, 1,000 pounds of "Florida Sunshine" in the form of fresh oranges was received as a donation from the general manager of the Florida Citrus Growers Association, E.S. Beeland of Winter Haven, Fla.

All the contributions will be delivered to the children between Dec. 15 and 19 by an Air Force helicopter from Galena Air Force Station. The villages visited will be Hughes, Ruby, Huslia, Galena, Nulato, Kaltag, Koyukuk, Holy Cross, Hog River and Kokrines.

Since August, airmen serving at the two remote stations have been digging through closets and billfolds and writing home to their families and churches about the project to make the project a success.

In November they held a telethon in the Fairbanks area with the help of KFTV and KFRB, the local television and radio stations, and the Polar Bear Citizens Band Radio Club.

Help was also received from the United Services Organization (USO) in Fairbanks and the Galena Lions Club in collecting contributions and wrapping them for distribution to the "Kids Along the Yukon."