



65 MILES TO DRILL—In this 16-foot boat, PFC Gregory Toolie traveled from Northeast Cape to Savoonga, to attend National Guard drill with his company. A member of the 1st Scout Battalion, Alaska Army National Guard,

Toolie made the 65 mile trip through the frigid Bering Sea waters in four hours, accompanied by his brother, Raymond.

—(Photo by PFC MATTHEW IYA, AKARNG)

Pfc. Toolie Three Days Late, But

Private First Class Gregory Toolie was late for his National Guard training assembly last month (October) - three days late, as a matter of fact.

However, when all the angles are considered, maybe PFC Toolie's lateness is something in which he can take pride.

In military parlance, Toolie's offense is called "failure to repair", meaning simply that he wasn't in the appointed place at the designated time. But there were good reasons.

Young Toolie is a member of Company A, 1st Scout Battalion, Alaska Army National Guard. He lives in an Eskimo village on the remote shores of St. Lawrence Island, about 150 miles southwest of Nome, Alaska.

His home, Northeast Cape, is 65 miles from his company armory in Savoonga, also a small village on St. Lawrence Island.

Company A was selected as the first company to test an extra-long training program, an MUTA-12. The abbreviation means that his company would take part in a training assembly covering twelve drill periods, or six days.

Normally National Guardsmen train one weekend each month. The MUTA-12 was intended as an experiment in consolidating training for the Eskimo Scouts, improving the quality of training, and removing some of the burden of travel to assembly points in the Alaska winter.

The only means Gregory Toolie had for reaching Savoonga was his 16-foot outboard-powered boat. But on the day Toolie was to report for drill, the seas were running too high for him to risk the journey.

They continued to run high for another day, but on the third day, the winds died down, and Toolie felt the danger was reduced to the point he could safely make the trip.

Gregory and his brother, Raymond, put out from the beach at Northeast Cape at 7:30 AM on Saturday, Oct. 17. Four hours and 15 gallons of gasoline later, they touched shore again at Savoonga.

For the Eskimos of the Bering Sea area, the trip in itself was not particularly significant. But for Major John Schaeffer, commanding officer of the 1st Scout Battalion, it meant a great deal.

"Toolie shows what the Eskimo Scout feels for his duty," Schaeffer says, "because the bad weather was excuse enough for him to get permission to make up the drill later. Toolie knew though, that his Scout team would be incomplete without him, and he reported as quickly as he could."

In citations, it's called "esprit-

de corps" or "positive attitude." Eskimo Scouts, it's called "going or some similar term. In the to drill."