

Vietnam Aid Among Largest of CRS Programs

SAIGON (AP)—One of the largest, single programs of the U.S. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is being carried out in Vietnam.

In the fiscal year ending June 30, CRS helped over 40 million needy persons in 70 countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

In Vietnam, CRS Catholic Relief Services carried out its activities in cooperation with Caritas-Vietnam, the relief agency of the Catholic bishops in Vietnam. It also works in close harmony with the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare, Health and Relief.

Father Robert L. Charlebois, a priest of the Gary diocese, Indiana, and program director for Vietnam, said that in the period from July 1, 1967 to June 30, 1968 his agency made available over 127,000,000 pounds of food donated by the United States government for distribution to the needy. This part of the Food-For-Freedom program was valued at \$9,303,895. This food was distributed at 510

centers throughout South Vietnam with special emphasis placed on feeding both preschool and school children.

Other groups receiving food included 75,000 people in families, 45,000 in institutions and 200,000 in Food-For-Work projects, as well as another 929,160 displaced persons, including widows, orphans and refugees gathered at church compounds, schools, pagodas, athletic fields, hospital grounds and private farms brought the number receiving food to 1,782,630 people.

One of the biggest projects for the year was emergency relief supplied by CRS following the two communist offensives, the first at Tet and the second in May, 1968. The communists attacked 102 cities and towns, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. CRS headquarters in New York rushed 300,000 pounds of clothing and medicines to Vietnam at the height of the Tet offensive in February. Even with the main ware-

houses in Saigon closed by enemy action CRS was able to maintain a continuous flow of commodities to the needy from its own distribution point in the city.

CRS provided medical supplies valued at \$456,376 to hospitals, dispensaries, outpatient clinics, medical civic action projects, refugee camps, orphanages and leprosaria throughout the country.

In the last year, CRS has sponsored hundreds of self-help projects. These projects are based on the Food-For-Work program in which voluntary workers receive as wages U.S. surplus foodstuffs. CRS and other agencies in the United States and Europe gave grants totaling \$1,197,323 for welfare and development projects in Vietnam. A total of 23 projects were funded for \$246,943 and there were pending projects to be funded with \$950,380.

On Nov. 20, 1967 CRS signed a contract with the United States Agency of In-

ternational Development to provide medical-social welfare teams within South Vietnam. The contract authorizes the employment of 52 people, of whom 16 are nurses and 16 social welfare workers. There will be eight team sites at refugee camps, hospitals, child welfare institutions.

The goals of the social welfare projects are to give professional service in medicine, social welfare and community development; to provide professional training for local personnel; to assist in the development of the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Health and to provide the government of Vietnam and all voluntary agencies with professional social welfare research data.

Catholic Relief Services personnel in Vietnam at present include American nursing Sisters, and laymen and professional personnel from Canada, Korea, the Philippines, Ireland and Australia as well as local Vietnamese employees.

total 20 million pounds collected during last year's campaign almost two million pounds (1,991,598), valued at \$2,584,876, were sent to Vietnam.

CRS has a project for re-making the clothing into something more suitable for Vietnamese wear by American men and women organized into tailoring training schools using sewing machines obtained by CRS and supported by food commodities under the Food-For-Freedom program.



Michaela ("Mike") Cohan, the granddaughter of George M. Cohan, watches two servicemen entertain in a South Vietnam service club.

Yankee Doodle Granddaughter

Catholic Press Features

Qui Nhon, South Vietnam—There is still a Cohan entertaining American troops "over there."

Michaela ("Mike") Cohan, 24-year-old granddaughter of George Michael Cohan, has been a program director in Army service clubs in Korea and Vietnam the past two years, in what you might call the Cohan version of the Peace Corps.

It was George M. Cohan, the flag-waving "Yankee Doodle Dandy" himself who during World War I first encouraged performers to entertain U.S. fighting men overseas. Cohan issued that first call for volunteers in a gigantic rally in Broadway's famed "Palace Theatre," which today houses a hit musical based on the life of the composer-singer-dancer-actor-producer, and titled, simply, "George M!"

Michaela (pronounced MA-KAY-ah) volunteered for an Army Special Services position right after graduating from a small Catholic women's college in 1965, but except for the name tag she wears on her slate-blue Special Services uniform, even George M. would have difficulty recognizing her as a Cohan.

She doesn't sing or dance ("I'm afraid I don't have the talent"), the only entertainers she has asked to volunteer are servicemen whom she frequently coaxes to go up on the service club stage to sing or play a musical instrument, and in sharp contrast to the "Grand Old Flag" super-patriotism of her grandfather, Michaela has nothing to say about anti-Vietnam demonstrations, admitting that "U.S. involvement is a tough subject. It is sometimes a difficult war to understand."

But whether a war is simple or complex, servicemen who are able to get away from the fighting for a few days of rest and relaxation find the service club a tremendous morale builder, particularly if there is someone there like Michaela, whose duties range from making sure there are enough ping-pong balls in the game room, to chatting with a soldier.

"Mostly, they talk about their home towns, about their girl friends or their wives, or just about going home," said Michaela, who will now and then play "Monopoly" with some of the men, or conduct quiz games.

She insists that the Cohan heritage had nothing to do with her decision to volunteer for her Special Services tour, which will end in early September. "It sounded like interesting work," she said, "and I was anxious to travel after I graduated from Marywood" which is a Catholic women's college in Scranton, Pa., a college whose other claim to show-business fame

is author-playwright Jean Kerr.

George M. Cohan died in 1942—a year before Michaela was born. Her father, George M. Cohan Jr., toured the country during the late 1940s with an act in which he sang his father's songs. Michaela and her mother traveled with him, although Michaela never was out on stage—as her grandfather was at the age of three months.

She admits that many of her grandfather's patriotic sentiments have become dated and even controversial, although she does point to the success on Broadway of "George M!" A music critic for "The New York Times," reviewing the cast album, called the show "the one flicker of light in a drab Broadway season." Commented Michaela: "Perhaps there is still an audience for 'Grand Old Flag' and 'Over There.'"

Michaela volunteered for Special Services work the summer after her college graduation, but she had to wait about six months while Washington, among other things, ran a security check on her. Her first assignment, in March 1966 was in Korea, where she spent 14 months.

In September 1967, she went to Vietnam, where she has been program director—organizing game tournaments, talent contests and even ordering pool-table-pockets—in several service clubs, one at Chu Lai, near the Demilitarized Zone, another at Bear Cat Base Camp, 30 miles south of Saigon and now at Qui Nhon in the Phu Valley, at a place called "The Happy Valley Service Club."

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