

# PEACE CORPS NEWS

VOL. 2, NO. 3

A Special College Supplement

FALL, 1964



A graduate of the University of Colorado, Ardis Gaither, 22, watches as two local women grind corn in Tukuyu, Tanganyika. Gaither, of Sweetwater, Texas, is one of 125 Peace Corps Volunteers serving in Tanganyika. He teaches at the Igogwe Upper Primary School there.

## 350 College Students Finish Advanced Training Session

Four college campuses were sites this summer for the Peace Corps' first advanced training program for college juniors.

More than 400 students, representing 91 schools, had eight-week training sessions at Yale, Dartmouth, the University of California at Berkeley and San Francisco State College. An in-house training camp in Puerto Rico served as a fifth facility.

By the end of August, 350 of the juniors had received basic training for teaching in Africa and community development work in Latin America.

Following completion of their senior year, the trainees will return to training sites for additional four-to-six week periods before being sent overseas.

Dartmouth, host for the largest program, saw 134 students complete its session, preparing for secondary teaching in French-speaking West Africa.

Trainees had a full schedule, beginning their day of classes, seminars, panel discussions and recreation activities at 8 a.m. and closing out the slate at 9 p.m. Much of the rest of the evening was devoted to preparation for the next day's classes.

One of the big advantages of the Advanced Training program is that it provides participants with more intensive language training," said Roger Landrum, the program's training officer, a former Volunteer who spent two years teaching at the college level in Nigeria. Trainees received classroom training in French four hours a day, six days a week.

## Peace Corps Growing As Fourth Year Starts

The future of the Peace Corps looks bright regardless of which candidate sits in the White House in 1965.

Both candidates have publicly supported the work of the Peace Corps. Senator Goldwater, an initial skeptic, has said, "At first I thought it would advance work for a group of beatniks, but this is not so . . . I'll back it all the way."

President Johnson, an original backer of the Peace Corps and chairman of the Peace Corps National Advisory Council, last summer called for doubling the size of the Corps.

"The nations of the world want our young people. The peoples of the world need our young people. And surely a nation rich in goods and ideals can provide young people," said the President.

The Democratic platform specifically calls for expansion of the Peace Corps. Neither the President in his speech nor the platform presented any date by which this expansion should be completed.

Peace Corps legislation on the Senate agenda calls for expansion of the Peace Corps to 14,000 by the end of next summer, explained Nathaniel Davis, deputy director of the Office of Program Development and Operations.

Both Davis and Harris Wofford, associate director of the Peace Corps in charge of Planning, Evaluation and Research,

felt that, in the future, major areas of work of the agency will continue to be in teaching and community development.

While Volunteers now teach primarily in secondary schools, both officials look for more Peace Corps help at the primary and college levels.

"They both felt the Peace Corps had learned in almost every phase of its operations. Wofford cited a need for acquiring

## Staff Works For Volunteers

The Washington office of the Peace Corps was described by one administrator there as "just a glorified support group for the Volunteers in the field."

"The real work goes on out there," he said, "so we don't like to get too many big ideas about ourselves here."

The structure of the Peace Corps, then, is centered around the Office of Program Development and Operations (PDO), one of five offices within the Peace Corps. It is headed by Associate Director Warren Wiggins.

PDO includes four world areas in which Peace Corps Volunteers are working. These are Latin America, Far East, Africa and North Africa-Near East-South Asia (NANESA). Each area is headed by a regional director.

(Continued on page 2)

more of the top students and added that there is a shortage of Volunteers who are interested in the political process.

"Some of the training program is too rigidly constructed for some of the situations the Volunteers encounter," said Davis. "We need to prepare Volunteers for the unstructured situation abroad."

"Requests from countries for Peace Corps help are growing and the number of Volunteers is on the rise. We should meet these interests with expanded programs," he said.

Davis referred to the impact of the Peace Corps on American society.

"It is changing some of our attitudes toward service and is helping to make the orientation to service more respectable on the college campus."

Both officials said the Peace Corps idea should bring foreign visitors to the United States to work in schools and community improvement projects.

"A greater two-way movement of peoples to and from America, a 'Reverse Peace Corps for America,' would be beneficial to the U. S. and to other nations," Wofford said.

"The experience of actually working here on American social problems, helping and educating Americans, should have a profound impact on young leaders from developing nations. They should return to their lands with new ideas and new determination," explained Wofford.

## Self-Help Idea Contagious

"Peace Corps . . . where is that?" asked an incredulous Nepalese villager, unable to believe the young man standing before him was "a Westerner."

Though somewhat naive in approach, the Nepalese was not so far wrong in asking "where" rather than "what" the Peace Corps is. Since the American variety was inaugurated in 1961, some 18 other similar corps have sprung up in countries all over the world. The fever has become so intense that 14 more nations currently have peace corps plans in the works, including ambitious little Liechtenstein, with a population of less than 17,000.

Foreign peace corps fall naturally into two categories, depending on the internal needs and fiscal resources of the country. Industrial nations of western Europe and elsewhere, as in the United States, are sending volunteers abroad. Those nations with workers currently in the field include The Netherlands, West Germany, Norway, Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Denmark, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Countries such as Peru, El Salvador, Northern Rhodesia, Tanganyika, Kenya, Malawi, and the Philippines use their volunteers for internal development, often working in conjunction with American Peace Corps Volunteers.

Foreign peace corps differ from the American version in other respects, particularly in size, length of training programs and administrative support.

France, typical of the foreign ventures, had 75 volunteers in the field, as of June, with plans to add 175 more by the end of the year. Northern Rhodesia, concentrating on internal development and an unemployment problem, is shooting for a goal of 3,000 in the field by 1965, with hopes of eventually building a force of 50,000.

Industrial nations, drawing heavily on skilled and professional volunteers, have often cut the American training period of 10-12 weeks in half. Britain's Committee for Service Overseas, an intermediary body between private volunteer organizations and the British government, has broken all records by running training programs as short as seven days.

Burgeoning efforts by other countries to create and strengthen their own peace corps are currently being aided by the International Secretariat for Volunteer Service. Born in 1962 under the aegis of the U. S. Peace Corps, the Secretariat, although quartered in the Peace Corps Building in Washington, is a separate entity.

## The Editors

This special Peace Corps college supplement — distributed by the nation's college newspapers to nearly a million college students — was written and edited for the Peace Corps by four college journalists.

The four who spent a week at the Peace Corps Washington headquarters preparing this supplement are:

Carrol Cagle, editor of the *New Mexico Lobo* (University of New Mexico, Albuquerque); Vincent O'Brien, managing editor of the *St. John's Downtown* (St. John's University, New York); Ron Russell, editor of the *Daily Collegian* (Wayne State University, Detroit); and Phil Yaffe, editor of the *UCLA Daily Bruin* (University of California, Los Angeles).

The supplement is being distributed to college newspapers in cooperation with the newspapers, the United States Student Press Association and the Associated Collegiate Press.

# Peace Corps Gives Personal Touch to Selection Process

The Peace Corps selection process amounts to an assembly line with the personal touch.

Once a prospective trainee has proven his stamina by completing the 123-item Questionnaire, the selection team begins the long, trying task of selecting a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Frank Erwin, director of recruiting operations, stresses that the job of the selection team is "to select men and women into the Peace Corps, not to select them out. We don't want this process to take on a negative outlook."

After the Questionnaire arrives in Washington its 12 pages are carefully read and only the obviously unqualified applicants are dropped. The number dropped at this point is about 10 per cent. Such applicants are usually dropped for filing incomplete Questionnaires or because the applicant is not a citizen or has dependents under 18.

All information concerning a prospective Volunteer is put on a computer tape. Any later information is added so the

Peace Corps can keep a complete file on each Volunteer.

After this initial screening, the selection team sends out 12 to 15 reference forms. "Those who complete the Peace Corps forms," says Erwin, "are completely honest and sincere."

"People recognize the seriousness of sending others overseas to represent the United States," he says.

After the applicant processing has been completed, suitability screening begins. Both the Questionnaire and the references are reviewed again and suitability ratings are assigned.

These suitability ratings are a "prediction of success," and score an applicant on a point system of one to five. A score of three or better is necessary for the process to continue.

The average trainee rates a three, which is a sign he has the basic qualifications. Candidates who score a four show a high amount of promise, while the uncommon ones who score a five practically are "shoo-ins."

Once the suitability screening has been completed, classification begins so that the Peace Corps can "find the best assignment for the person and the best person for the assignment."

All of the candidate's capabilities are fed into a computer with the requirements for a specific assignment overseas. Included with the requirements are what we know as "highly desired" and "desired" characteristics. These three items are used as a basis for scoring, on a zero to two range. The average score is between 1.5 and 1.8.

The machine then "nominates" candidates to serve at a specific post. Both Erwin and other officials are quick to point out that the computer merely nominates, it does not judge. All decisions are made by the selection

## Many Decline Training

Those selected are then invited to train. Because of the amount of time spent in selection, many candidates have changed their plans due to other commitments, marriage or simply a reconsideration of the sacrifice involved. About 45 per cent of those invited turn the offer down.

The trainee must then fill out a form dealing with his background. This form is investigated by the Civil Service Commission, which checks the places where trainees have lived, worked, gone to school, etc.

The trainee then travels to one of the college training centers. "Up to now," Erwin says, "everything has been on paper. At the training center we get our first look at the Volunteer. We look so much that he's literally in a goldfish bowl."

At the training center, a field selection officer, a field assessment officer and other members of the selection board participate in the final process. The training project director is also a participant in the board's deliberations.

Other members of the board include a staff member from the country to which the Volunteers will go, a medical doctor, a psychiatrist and members of the university training site faculty.

After the first five or six weeks of training, the board meets and studies what is now a relatively complete picture of the trainee.

## Final Rating

The trainee is rated again, this time on a one to six rating scale. A one is dropped and a two is postponed. A three is deemed not suitable for the particular post and may be transferred. The other patterns are the same as before — a four is average, a five has good potential and a six has his foot in the door.

The board meets once again at the end of the training stint. It makes its final decision — the trainee goes or he does not go. The fruits of the trainees' labors are generally good. Some 82 per cent of those who make it this far are sent overseas.



"Oh, missionaries are OK, I guess. But I like Peace Corpsmen better—they always help us build the fire."

Used by special permission of The Saturday Evening Post © 1964 by The Curtis Publishing Company.

## Staff Supports PCVs . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Perhaps the second most important segment of the Corps — the Division of Recruitment — is located in the Office of Public Affairs. Besides recruiting, the office also handles public information and advertising.

The recruiting duties are looked upon as of prime importance, because without new recruits there soon would be no Peace Corps. All personnel in all offices are expected to take at least one recruiting trip during the year.

Ten former Volunteers are the only full-time recruiters.

A third office is that of the Peace Corps Volunteers, which takes over where the recruiters leave off. This office in turn is divided into three areas — Selection, Training and Volunteer Support.

The Selection division processes applications, checks Questionnaires and invites applicants who qualify to go through the training process.

During training, the prospective Volunteers undergo physical training, instruction in a language and practice in the work they will be doing overseas. At this point, trainees who do not qualify may be "selected out" for various reasons.

Volunteer Support arranges for the Volunteers travel overseas and to training sites, takes care of their personnel needs, publishes the Peace Corps newsletter and acquires materials helpful to the Volunteers on their job.

The fourth office is the Office of Management, which includes the divisions of Personnel, Budget and Finance and Management Services.

The fifth office is the Office of Planning and Evaluation, which among other things, does an annual evaluation of each overseas project so that the Peace Corps can benefit by any mistakes that it may have made and continue to do what has been successful.

## Advanced Training Starts . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Volunteers. They served as language tutors, lectured and led panel discussions and seminars.

The program is not divided into separate subject components as are most Peace Corps training projects. African studies, world affairs, communism and American studies were considered as an integrated unit of ideas and issues. These subjects were taught and discussed as they have been found to be relevant to contemporary Africa and to the specific work and experiences of Peace Corps Volunteers.

Next summer several parts of the Peace Corps' regular training program, such as health training, specific country and assignment briefings and additional intensive

language and teacher training, will be emphasized.

To participate in the advanced training program, juniors must fill out a regular Peace Corps Questionnaire, write on the front "Advanced Training," and submit it when they take the nation-wide placement test.

All applicants should have an up-to-date transcript of college records forwarded to the Peace Corps, Division of Selection, as soon as possible.

As with all trainees, juniors selected to participate in the Advanced Training program receive travel allowances to cover transportation to and from the training center and a modest living allowance during the training period.

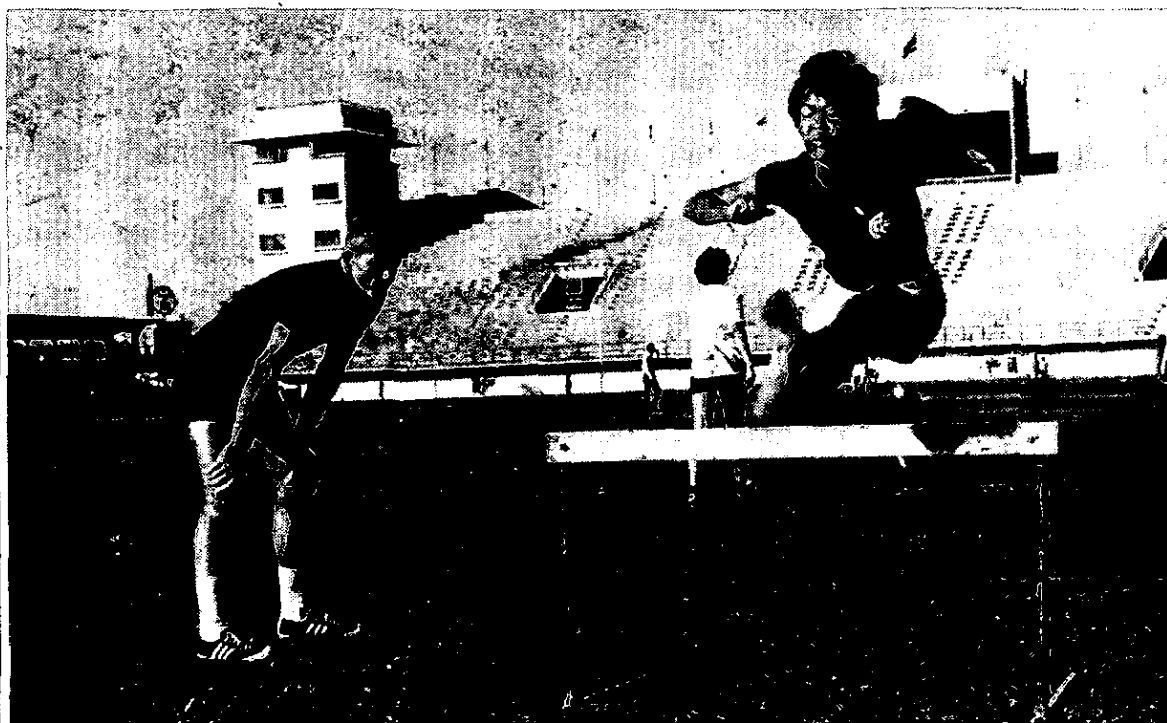
## Corps Now in 46 Countries

Over 5,300 Peace Corps Volunteers were serving in 46 countries in Africa, Latin America, the Near and Far East at the end of the summer.

The heaviest concentration of Volunteers was in Latin America, where Peace Corps projects were under way in 17 countries. Two thousand Volunteers were working south of the border. There were programs in 15 African nations.

Volunteers also were serving in four Far Eastern countries and eight nations in North Africa, the Near East and South Asia.

There were more than 4,300 Volunteers in training in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.



Tex Lee Boggs, 25, from Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, W. Va., coaches a candidate for the Thai women's Olympic team in the National Stadium in Bangkok. Boggs, from Pulaski, Va., teaches at the College of Physical Education in Bangkok.

# Peace Corps Training: 'A Miracle'

Teach over 40 languages — some of which have never been parts of formal instruction programs in the United States . . . develop complete training programs with as little advance notice as 10 days . . . prepare a Volunteer for overseas service in 2 weeks.

"A miracle," said Dr. John Groebli, deputy director, Division of Training, in describing the success of the Peace Corps training program.

The Peace Corps works with more than 80 colleges and universities in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and 10 private agencies to prepare Volunteers for two years of service in 46 nations.

## Custom-Designed

"Every program is custom-designed on the basis of the individual involved and the type of job he will perform in his assigned country," explained Dr. Groebli.

## Agency Has Three Goals

What are the purposes of the Peace Corps? What are the goals of the Volunteers in the field?

There are three broad guidelines by which the Peace Corps governs its operations, said Nathaniel Davis, deputy director of the Office of Program Development and Operation, which administers operations in the field.

The general aims of the Peace Corps are:

To provide skilled manpower for developing countries which request help,

To contribute to the understanding abroad of the United States and its people and

To send Americans abroad so they may learn about the peoples of other nations and spread this understanding in the United States upon their return.

"We don't just blindly accept an invitation to go to a country," Davis said. "There has to be a commitment on the part of the nation which invites the Peace Corps."

"This decision on where to send a Volunteer is not purely scientific," Davis said. He pointed out that the Volunteer's basic needs such as shelter and health facilities have to be taken care of.

And before any Volunteers are sent into an area, the Peace Corps representative must check with local or tribal leaders and with governmental officials of the country.

As for the functions of Volunteers, Davis emphasized that they are not supposed to be "advisors" but workers. Their work should be a catalyst for change in a community.

"The Peace Corps shouldn't have to supply a lot of equipment and machinery," Davis said. "We're in the business of supplying people, not machines."

The Peace Corps designs its training programs with the idea that the Volunteer must be technically, physically, intellectually, socially and psychologically prepared.

## 60 Hours a Week

Basic training is usually conducted in this country and lasts from eight to twelve weeks. The normal training week consists of 60 scheduled hours.— 10 hours a day for a six-day week. This includes some planned study time.

The university training program includes:

• Technical Studies — The trainee acquires the technical

and academic skills needed for the type of work he will perform overseas.

• Language Training — Instruction averages five hours daily.

• Area Studies—The trainee gains a background in the culture in which he will work.

• American Studies — The trainee receives a refresher course in the geography, history and institutions of the United States.

• World Affairs — A background in contemporary world affairs is obtained.

• Health and Medical Training — This course teaches a trainee to protect himself and to

help improve the health conditions in the host country through health education.

• Physical Training and Recreation — This course is designed to assure the trainee of his physical capacity to perform his assigned task and provides him with basic recreational knowledge and skills.

• Peace Corps Service—The trainee learns of the purpose, philosophy and various programs of the Peace Corps.

A small portion of Volunteers then goes into 26 days of field training. This affords the opportunity for testing and improving the linguistic, technical, informational, physical and social skills

required of the trainee's assignment.

To encourage confidence in the Volunteer, he is confronted with a program of physical conditioning, rock-climbing, swimming, map-reading, hiking and outdoor living.

Closing out the field training preparation is an opportunity for the prospective Volunteer to perform his assigned task under conditions approximating those he will confront abroad. This course lasts from one to two weeks.

Dr. Groebli pointed out that there have been some misconceptions about the physical training undergone by Volunteers. He stressed that all such programs are geared to the trainee's age and physical condition.

"The majority of trainees never go through the outward bound training phase which involves more strenuous activities like rock-climbing. Only those whose assignment overseas calls for such training receive it," said Dr. Groebli.

Before entering the field, the Volunteer spends one to two weeks of orientation in the host country.

## Money, Jobs Not Lacking

During the past academic year more than 250 scholarships have been made available to returning Peace Corps Volunteers. The number of scholarships, offered to both graduate and undergraduate students, continues to increase as more colleges realize the potential value of the returning Volunteers.

One of the leaders in this drive is the University of Wisconsin. This university offers 15 full graduate and undergraduate scholarships, including tuition and out-of-state fees. Also available are assistantships, fellowships and internships in different schools of the university.

Many colleges across the country now are offering academic credit toward degrees to Volunteers who have completed their tour of service in the Peace Corps. Both New York and California have waived student teaching requirements for Volunteers who have taught overseas.

In the business world the demand for Volunteers is impressive. The Ford Motor Company, IBM, Shell Oil Company, Hilton Hotels and Proctor and Gamble, to name a few, have enthusiastically sought Volunteers.

The State Department has a policy whereby Volunteers who receive appointments as foreign service officers enter at an advanced level. Both the State Department and the United States Information Agency now conduct overseas interviews with interested Volunteers.



Volunteer Barbara Tetrault, 26, of Hartford Junior College, Hartford, Conn., teaches art in Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city. Here she encourages a first grade class to begin their drawings of a rooster named Fidel. Miss Tetrault lives in Hopewell Junction, New York.

## Volunteers Being Recruited From New, Varied Sources

The Peace Corps is looking for workers ranging from university science professors to secretaries to young farmers who may never have gone to college.

To prevent the Peace Corps from becoming an organization made up solely of liberal arts graduates, Director Sargent Shriver recently appointed a task force to develop ways for the agency to become more representative of the American people.

### Arts Grads Needed

At the top of list from other nations are requests for doctors, nurses, math and science teachers and agriculture experts. But also much in demand are liberal arts graduates who don't have one particular skill, senior citizens who would like to contribute two years to helping others and general "handymen."

The recruiting efforts to date have been geared closely to college campuses and will continue

to be so, since the overwhelming majority of Volunteers are recent college graduates. But there will be a corresponding recruiting effort made in industrial plants, junior colleges and labor conventions.

Ken Coffey, special assistant in the Peace Corps Recruiting Office, said the following types of non-college Volunteers would be sought:

• The "practical agriculturist" who could work in rural community development projects.

• Secretaries who could work in Peace Corps offices overseas.

• Skilled workers who could teach lesser skilled workers either in vocational programs or in on-the-job training programs.

• "General handymen" who could work in machine shops doing a wide range of mechanical jobs.

• Senior citizens who, although having retired, would be inter-

ested in contributing their experience for two years in whatever field they may be skilled.

• Intelligent young men and women who, although they do not have a degree, are the "common sense" type needed for community development programs.

"We need the kind of Volunteer who can go into a community, see what problems exist, and work them out," one official explained. "The Volunteer doesn't have to have a special interest, but simply the ability to get along with people and to get them organized to work out solutions."

### Volunteer Type

These Volunteers might be the type who, while on campus, had been precinct workers for political parties, volunteers for tutorial projects or civil rights workers, he said.

"They should be the free-wheeling type and should be well organized," he concluded.

# Peace Corps Frightened By Any Hints of "Bureaucracy"

One thing the Peace Corps doesn't want to become is a bureaucracy.

"There are signs of it creeping in now and then, but we try to fight it," said one Washington office administrator. He attributed these problems to the rapid growth of the Peace Corps.

The atmosphere in the Washington office is more like that of a busy city room in a metropolitan newspaper plant than that of a government department.

The work gets done, and lots of it, but it is done in a friendly, informal atmosphere which enables departmental chiefs to work alongside typists and secretaries without any thought of protocol.

The main reason for this refusal to become tied up in the traditional red tape of the government is that about three-fourths or more of the employees, according to one administrator, have not been government workers previously.

Corresponding to this factor is the fact that most of the Peace Corps people are around only for two or three years, then they move on to other public jobs or back to private business. There is no hard and fast rule decreeing that two years shall be the length of service in the United States, just as it is overseas; but that is the way the system works.

Another Washington official, with the Peace Corps two years, put it this way:

"The Peace Corps, as a rule, is not something to make a career of, but rather an ideal or dream with which to work while you are fresh. After several years in any job, a person tends to become entrenched and set in his ways. This is not the kind of person that is best for the Peace Corps."

Another example of the lack of bureaucracy is evident in the recruiting system, which sooner or later uses everyone in every office for road trips to explain the Peace Corps to prospective Volunteers.

"Instead of setting up a rigid system of trying to bring in new people, we like to send out the people who really know the Peace Corps to explain it to others," said the administrator.

Perhaps the most revealing glimpse into the free-wheeling setup of the Peace Corps is the fact that the recruiting department doesn't recruit — it merely explains the Peace Corps to those who are interested in it.

"If we tried to sell the Peace Corps, we would be defeating our own purpose," a recruiting official said. "The Peace Corps by its very nature demands that its workers should be 'sold' on it by its own merits — not by some high pressure sales from Washington."

## Restlessness a Good Sign

The Peace Corps hopes Volunteers returning from two years of service overseas will not completely readjust to American society as they left it.

"Upon returning to the United States, the Volunteer sees some of the problems here that he witnessed abroad, but he doesn't immediately see how he can do anything about them," said Dr. Joseph English, chief psychiatrist with the Peace Corps.

"We don't want the returnees to lose this restlessness, but rather we hope they will be able to use some of the knowledge and skills they acquired overseas to help alleviate some of the

problems facing this country," he said.

"The greatest adjustment for the Volunteer when he gets overseas is a psychological one," explained Dr. English. "His life can be filled with boredom, frustration and disappointment."

"Most Volunteers feel a deep sense of depression after being in the field about six months. However, all but a few cheer up in a short time and fill out their two years of service," said Dr. Joseph Colmen, a psychologist and deputy director of the Peace Corps Division of Planning, Evaluation and Research.

For further information, complete this form and mail to:

**PEACE CORPS**, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D. C. 20525

Mr. Mrs. Miss \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

College or University \_\_\_\_\_

Level at present time (circle one): 1 2 3 4 Grad. Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Major \_\_\_\_\_

Major field of experience outside of school: (Jobs, Farm background, hobbies, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Date you could enter training: \_\_\_\_\_

## American Sacred Cow

# Peace Corps Stature Grows

In three years the Peace Corps has become a fixture on the world scene. Movie stars willingly donate their talents to promotion film clips, radio and television stations provide enormous amounts of prime broadcast time and even Congress casts an approving smile at nearly everything the Peace Corps does. In short, the Peace Corps has become perhaps the most sacred of America's sacred cows.

But it was not always that way. In its early days, the Peace Corps had more critics than any governmental agency can comfortably handle and more troubles than any fledgling project deserves.

Anticipating the pitfalls, President Kennedy put the project in charge of his brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver, on the premise that "It is easier to fire a relative than a friend."

Even a simple thing such as choosing a name caused no end of consternation. On Nov. 2, 1960, the then Senator Kennedy had proposed a peace corps in a San Francisco campaign speech. The name seemed a natural, but advisors were critical. The word "peace" had been distorted by Communists, while "corps" had a military stigma.

### Back to Original

"We studied dozens of other names and finally came back to the original," Shriver recalled. "Peace is the fundamental goal of our times. We believed the Peace Corps could contribute to its attainment, for while armaments can deter war, only men can create peace."

The stickiest question posed in those early days was how Volunteers should act in event of political crisis. Perhaps the most succinct and straightforward answer came from Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who said: "The Peace Corps is not an instrument of foreign policy, because to make it so would rob it of its contribution to foreign policy."

The Corps has gone a long way in adhering to this principle. Current rules prohibit any person who has formerly engaged in intelligence work from serving as a Volunteer.

Conceived through a Presidential executive order in the Spring, the Peace Corps took its first official breath of life on September 22, 1961. On October 22, it nearly took its last breath of life, being felled by an innocent, but ill-timed, postcard from Nigeria.

### Describes Conditions

Twenty-three-year-old Margery Michelmore penned a postcard to a friend in Massachusetts, describing her amazement at the squalid and filthy conditions prevalent in the country. Anti-American candidates in a student union election at the University of Nigeria played the comments for all they were worth.



Patsy Mason, 24, of Northampton, Mass., holds triplets that were just born at Muhimbili Hospital in Dar Es Salaam, Tanganyika. Patsy, a nurse at the hospital, received her degree from Cornell University.

The Peace Corps weathered the storm, though Miss Michelmore left the project and returned to the United States. Today, the Nigerian project is the largest operation in Africa and the second largest in the world, trailing Columbia by less than 40 workers.

A misplaced postcard wasn't the only menace to the infant Peace Corps in 1961. Attacks of equal intensity emanated from critics here at home. Many skeptics viewed the new agency as a haven for impractical idealists, confused liberals and beatniks. The "image" wasn't helped very much by Shriver's refusal to outlaw beards.

### Saved Trouble Abroad

But while the initial stereotype may have caused troubles at home, it may very well have saved trouble abroad. The Communists, expecting the Peace Corps to collapse of its own weight, launched vicious propaganda campaigns wherever the Volunteers landed, but did very little else. By the time they realized their mistake, it was too late. The Peace Corps was firmly entrenched and could not be dislodged.

The Peace Corps still has an "image" problem today, but not the same one it had three years ago. On the contrary, it is now trying to play down its successes rather than exploiting them.

### Image Difficult

In the words of one distressed Volunteer, "I am tired of being considered a hero. It is too difficult to live up to the image back in the States."

While it is true that not all Volunteers spend their days sloshing through alligator-infested swamps and their nights fighting off tsetse flies, neither do they while away their time danc-

ing at embassy balls or sunning themselves on the Riviera. They live at a level comparable to that of nationals doing the same jobs in the countries where they serve.

Strangely enough, though this sometimes may mean working in an air-conditioned office in the heart of the capital city, most Volunteers seem to prefer the mud hut-alligator swamp treatment.

"They feel they are accomplishing more," explained Dr. Joseph Colmen, Peace Corps psychologist.

### Intangible Things

Just what has the Peace Corps accomplished?

As with any application of the human equation, the answer is not easy to come by. The various news media emphasize the number of school rooms built, the number of acres plowed or the number of bridges completed. Returning Volunteers talk more subtle, more intangible things. A significant, but not unreasonably large, portion of the returnees believe their so-called "achievements" are non-existent.

President Johnson recently praised the organization for reversing Parkinson's Law. "As the size of the Peace Corps has gone up, its costs have come down," he beamed.

Director Shriver, who has been with the Corps since it was no more than a gleam in his brother-in-law's eye, might view his agency from any or all these perspectives — and a few others known only to him.

To date, however, the essence of the Peace Corps has best been described by a foreigner. In the countryside of Iran, a Volunteer was approached on Nov. 22 by an Iranian co-worker who, tears streaming from his eyes, announced, "Our President is dead."