

CHU LAI, (MACV) — Why would a young American girl choose to spend a year of hard work in the South Vietnam war zone?

Ask Patti Bright of Honolulu or Pam Harvey of Berkeley, Calif. These young ladies are serving one-year tours of duty as members of the Red Cross Center and Clubmobile Unit here.

They are two of the more than 110 young women college graduates who are helping to boost the morale of our fighting men in Vietnam.

Each Red Cross girl spends nearly 70 hours a week traveling by helicopter, jeep, and foot to outlying units to bring a smile, an encouraging word and a touch of home to battle-weary servicemen. It's all part of the American Red Cross service to members of the U.S. armed forces both at home and abroad.

Patti, a pretty 24-year-old who graduated from Poli-tech College, Calif., is one of six Red Cross Clubmobile girls stationed at the headquarters of the Americal Division. Day after day, these young ladies toil through the mud and heat of Vietnam to bring short recreational programs featuring audience-participation games and quizzes to soldiers in the field.

To show they care

Why did Patti, Pam and others like them go to Vietnam? Certainly not for money—most could earn larger salaries and enjoy far more comfort and safety at home.

A few do it for adventure and the experience. Many probably want an opportunity to prove their commitment, to show that they support their country's efforts in Vietnam. But all of them go because of their concern for the American soldiers who are there.

"I believe in the men who are fighting this war," Pam explained. "And somebody has to do this. I'm young, and a year of my life is no great sacrifice. And it's a year of not thinking about yourself all the time. We're here to help the men. After a while you realize you can get along without many of the comforts you're accustomed to at home. And when we go back we'll appreciate things more. . . little things, like the



RED CROSS GIRL Pam Harvey has a few minutes to eat her lunch as she flies in a helicopter between two Americal camps. (ARC PHOTO)

feel of a carpet underfoot."

Find soldiers shy

And what is it like for a young city-bred girl in the jungles of Vietnam, surrounded by battle-hardened soldiers who were engaged in combat a day earlier.

"I expected to find tough, rough men over here," one of the girls explained. "I could hardly imagine myself getting up in front of 150 soldiers and conducting a program. But I found them such gentlemen, very considerate and thoughtful.

Sometimes the men act so young and boyish and shy, almost like it was the first time they'd ever been around a girl."

The Red Cross Clubmobile girls are not professional entertainers. Their mission is simply to be there and to plan and lead programs of interest so that young American servicemen, amidst a grueling war on the other side of the world, can enjoy the sight and sound of an American girl and a touch of laughter from home.