



**"Diana"-- USO Showtime girl -- adds a feminine voice to the radio,  
while Janie does the weather on TV**



# Bringing the

SAIGON, (USARV) -- An artilleryman on a firebase, a grunt in the field, or a clerk in an orderly room can certainly recognize the phrase "From the delta to the DMZ."

From Can Tho to Quang Tri, "from the delta to the DMZ" is heard over the airwaves of AFVN-the American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) outlet in-country.

Since the birth of AFRTS 29 years ago in Kodiak, Alaska, the Department of Defense has been providing troops with information and entertainment through the electronic media.

The Vietnam station made its first broadcast from studios in Saigon's Rex Hotel. At that time the radio facility employed several volunteer announcers and utilized borrowed equipment for its 18 hour a day transmissions.

The intensifying hostilities dealt the fledgling station many setbacks. For example, early Christmas Eve, 1964, instead of a visit from St. Nick the Viet Cong delivered 250 pounds of explosives, partially destroying the studios then located at the Brinks Hotel.

During the Tet offensive of 1968, a concerted Viet Cong effort to overrun South Vietnam did not leave AFVN unscarred. Taken by surprise the Hue detachment, which consisted of eight persons, was overwhelmed. There was one known dead and three were listed as missing in action.

The facilities and the staff were expanded with the American troop buildup. With the increase of radio broadcasting to 24 hours daily, the installation of FM equipment and the construction of a two-way Pacific cable linking Saigon to Los Angeles, radio became an accepted feature of the American presence.

By March 1966, not only had radio broadcasting reached a professional level, but television had made its debut. A specially designed C-121 Navy aircraft, Blue Eagle, traveling in circular patterns around Vietnam made it possible to receive television transmissions. However, the arrival of TV vans, positioned around the country, first in Qui Nhon and then in Da Nang diminished the role of the Blue Eagles.

Five years after the first broadcast "American Forces Vietnam Network" became a reality on July 1, 1967. Based in Saigon, AFVN has detachments in Qui Nhon Da Nang, Pleiku, Cam Ranh Bay and Hue/Phu Bai. While radio can truly be classified as a network, television is a semi-network, in the sense that programs are "bicycled" around to the various stations rather than being transmitted from Saigon.

Field detachments are granted some degree of autonomy in order to provide three to five hours of news and information of local interest.

AFRTS-Washington furnishes AFVN with timely items and has the capacity to transmit live radio broadcasts. A presidential address can be heard live throughout Vietnam via AFRTS-W. The remainder of the radio programming originates in Saigon.

AFRTS-Los Angeles provides the bulk of the de-commercialized stateside TV shows. This Los Angeles facility compiles sporting events, special features, and regular weekly programming which is then shipped

**"Jumpin" Jim Huntley  
keeps the oldies comin**

Story By SP5 James M. Connolly

(USA Photos)