

This Is Armed Forces Radio Station—Saigon!

By SSgt. BOB REID
Americans in the Republic of Viet Nam wake up to and go to sleep with the Armed Forces Radio Station, Saigon: still a growing infant less than a year old.

With the aid of four in-country repeater stations plus its 1,000 watts of power in Saigon it covers Viet Nam from the rice-rich Mekong Delta in the South to the high mountain country in the north.

Now staffed by 14 persons, headed by AF 1st Lt. Donald R. Kirtley, 25, of Washington D.C., and Navy Chief Journalist Bryant J. Arbuckle, 39, of Pensacola, Fla., AFRS Saigon is on the air 18 hours a day, featuring 13 hours of music and 16 scheduled news and headline breaks.

The station opened last Aug. 15 with only five men, and a host of volunteer announcers and newsmen, without whom, says Arbuckle, "we could not have gone on the air."

Truly tri-service, the present staff consists of six Army, four AF, and four Navy personnel, broken down into five announcers, three newsmen, three engineers, a supply man, and a record librarian, and a continuity writer.

Presently the station is housed in seven tiny rooms atop the Rex Hotel in downtown Saigon in what Arbuckle calls "a hip pocket operation." But future plans call for a move to more spacious studios where a **audience participation** shows are slated.

Originally opened with borrowed, scrounged and reconditioned equipment, the station is now receiving new equipment for better reception. With over 8,000 records in the library, AFRS Saigon further boasts "every conceivable type of music available in the world."

The time checks given on the air are probably the most accurate in Viet Nam, with time signals received twice daily from Tokyo.

The station is proud of two recent milestones. It stayed on the air round the clock during Maj. Gordon Cooper's recent space flight relaying the short wave reports to listeners, and re-created the Doug Jones-Cassius Clay boxing tilt so realistically that many listeners thought the broadcast live.

Many letters of appreciation and requests for de-



THE 'DAWNBUSTER' OPENS DAY'S PROGRAMMING
Navy Journalist John Ramsey, up with the early birds



THE STATION'S BOSSES CONFER
Chief Arbuckle, Lieutenant Kirtley check plans.



PFC GERALD MASINI TUNES TRANSMITTER
With Vietnamese engineer, Nguyen Tanh Nhat.



AIC LEE MALTENFORT READIES TAPE
Chief Announcer, SFC Jack Brice, seated.



SMSGT FRANK MONTELEONE, AFRS NEWS CHIEF
Checks wire copy with PFC Steve Sevits, news editor.



SKI FRANCIS REILLY DELIVERS RECORDS
To Tran To Tri, station's record librarian.

dications are received from listeners who have returned to the U.S. But not all comments are favorable.

When the station first went on the air it was resoundingly condemned by the communist Hanoi press as another step in American imperialism in Southeast Asia.

And, as in most broadcasting stations, all is not always smooth at mikeside. "AFRS spotlights the sports desk" always wants to come out "AFRS spotlights the spot desk" and occasionally the old clicker, "stay stewed for the news" accidentally gets on the air.