

FEATURE AT SIX

M*A*S*H filming becomes a reality

By Josh Shoverd
The Carlisle Mercury Staff

It took a full year to overcome red tape hurdles, but Michael Bullington succeeded in securing permission to film the 47th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital in a medical training hospital in Guatemala.

Bullington, a Carlisle resident, is a free lance documentary film maker working through grants and contracts from Kentucky Educational Television as well as many other public broadcasting service affiliates.

For the past months of May and June, Bullington worked with the 47th MASH who requested documentation of their medical assistance to remote areas of the Central American country of Guatemala.

His trip marks the second time he has visited the country and though it took a full year to have final arrangements for filming approved, he feels his experiences have developed within him a certain empathy for the Guatemalan people.



Bullington

The MASH unit, which comprises a section of the Kentucky Army National Guard, was on a humanitarian mission to providing both medical, dental, and veterinary services to small towns nearby Guatemala City.

Film shots were difficult and Bullington, along with his partner, John Dunn, had their hands full with video cameras and equipment getting clogged with dust, a perpetual hazard for anyone on a makeshift set.

Dunn, originally from Frankfort and a former professor at the University of Kentucky, moved to Guatemala City under the Fulbright Fellowship, to teach advanced film production at the central American university.

Dunn is co-producer of the project and is responsible for going to the clinics, he said. Doctors had their hands full caring for one patient after another.

The rural town of Chimaltenango, just north of the capital city, served as the base camp for all operations. From there Bullington was transported by bus and helicopter to three sites in the mountains where people received medical attention from army doctors and aides.

Outside of Guatemala city, Bullington said, most towns, with their structure and basic geography, reminded him of rural eastern Kentucky. "Certainly there were the obvious cultural differences, adobe brick houses instead of

clapboard houses and double wood trailers, but the mountainous territory bore strong similarities to eastern Kentucky landscapes," Bullington said.

The people are very family oriented in a clanish way, he said. Extended families ranged as far as third and fourth cousins distant and all living within a small, tightly woven community, he said.

The MASH units were greeted in a celebratory, almost holiday spirit, he said. Schools, which were basically concrete buildings with sheet metal roofs, were closed for the MASH unit visit and converted into medical clinics.

They began taking patients almost immediately after a small welcoming ceremony, he said.

Guatemalan natives treated the occasion formally. Many dressed in their best and walked several miles to go to the clinics, he said. Doctors had their hands full caring for one patient after another.

The basic rule of thumb for these people is if children made it to their adolescence, they lived to adulthood. The infant mortality rate in these villages is very high because there is no source of clean water and sanitary conditions are virtually nonexistent, Bullington said.

There are only three or four major highways running through the country, few paved roads, and all are fragmented and broken, he said. Homes are built from adobe brick and stone with a small enclosed garden on the outside, and packed earthen floors. At best these small

houses were equipped with one sleeping quarter for the entire family, he said. Villages are primarily agriculture oriented, their cash crops depending primarily on coffee beans and growth of a wide variety of vegetables for their own food stock and sale. They grow horseradish, snow peas, onions, potatoes and occasionally, villages have a few cattle or sheep.

The landscape, though, is misleading because it is so mountainous it does not look as if it would support farming, he said. The majority of the country stands at an elevation equal to or above Denver, Colorado and the terrain presents difficulties to farming not to mention the lack of irrigation.

Terminating at an extreme level, though, has helped them, he said.

"It is incredible to see the extent that they terrace their farms because most the land in our area went straight up and down.

"Farmers have to climb from one row to the next, sometimes having to make do with ropes to reach their crops," he said.

The high elevation offers a most fascinating sight, he said. Watching clouds actually have to climb up to overcast the sky and cover distant villages.

"In the morning everything is clear. I can see volcanic and mountain peaks clearly. From the base of the mountain I watched clouds gather and slowly lift above the horizon. Soon they would blot out the peaks and keep them obscure the rest of the day," Bullington said.

Guatemala, is a living testament to the violence in nature. Active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes have ravaged the country essentially roadless, he said, because the cost to maintain them in the wake of frequent natural upheaval is far more than the government can expend.

The old capital city of Antigua was destroyed by earthquakes and volcanoes, he said. The coastal beaches are thick with black sands, a mixture of crushed volcanic rock and ash.

Politically, Guatemala is a contrast between the very rich and the very poor, he said. At this point in the documentary process, Bullington is busy editing thousands of feet of footage and working it in order to present to KETV for a possible airing date.

He crosses his fingers and hopes for things to go well.

As a visiting journalist, even during times of relative peace, soldiers rode shotgun with them to provide security for potential guerrilla attack.

Flotilla scheduled for July 1
CARLISLE, June 28—Twenty boats will be in the water for the fourth annual Lake Carcino Flotilla Sunday, July 1 at 2 p.m. on the lake.

The flotilla has been a featured attraction of Fourth of July festivities in Nicholas County for the past three years and attendance for the event is hoped to be big. The flotilla is an idea hatched by Lake Carcino resident Edward "Baba" Sutherland. Carcino families decorate their boats, or anything else that can be made lake-worthy, for the boat parade and prizes were awarded for the three best decorated floats. The only modification added from last year's flotilla are the prizes. Trophies will

be awarded to the top three floats but no monetary award will be given. Because the boat parade is primarily done in fun, participants felt money prizes weren't necessary or particularly desired.

This year's theme has been altered from the traditional fourth of July theme to the catch all "Whatever floats your boat" category in order to include all floats though their decorations may not have the traditional birthday represented.

Original ideas and continuous three to four hour parade highlight a moment gradually working its way into a tradition for Nicholas County Fourth of July activities.

Store Hours Mon-Thurs 7:30 a.m. - 10 p.m. Sunday After Church 11:30 a.m. - 10 p.m.

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