

# MEET DICK CHAPPELL

# SOUTH



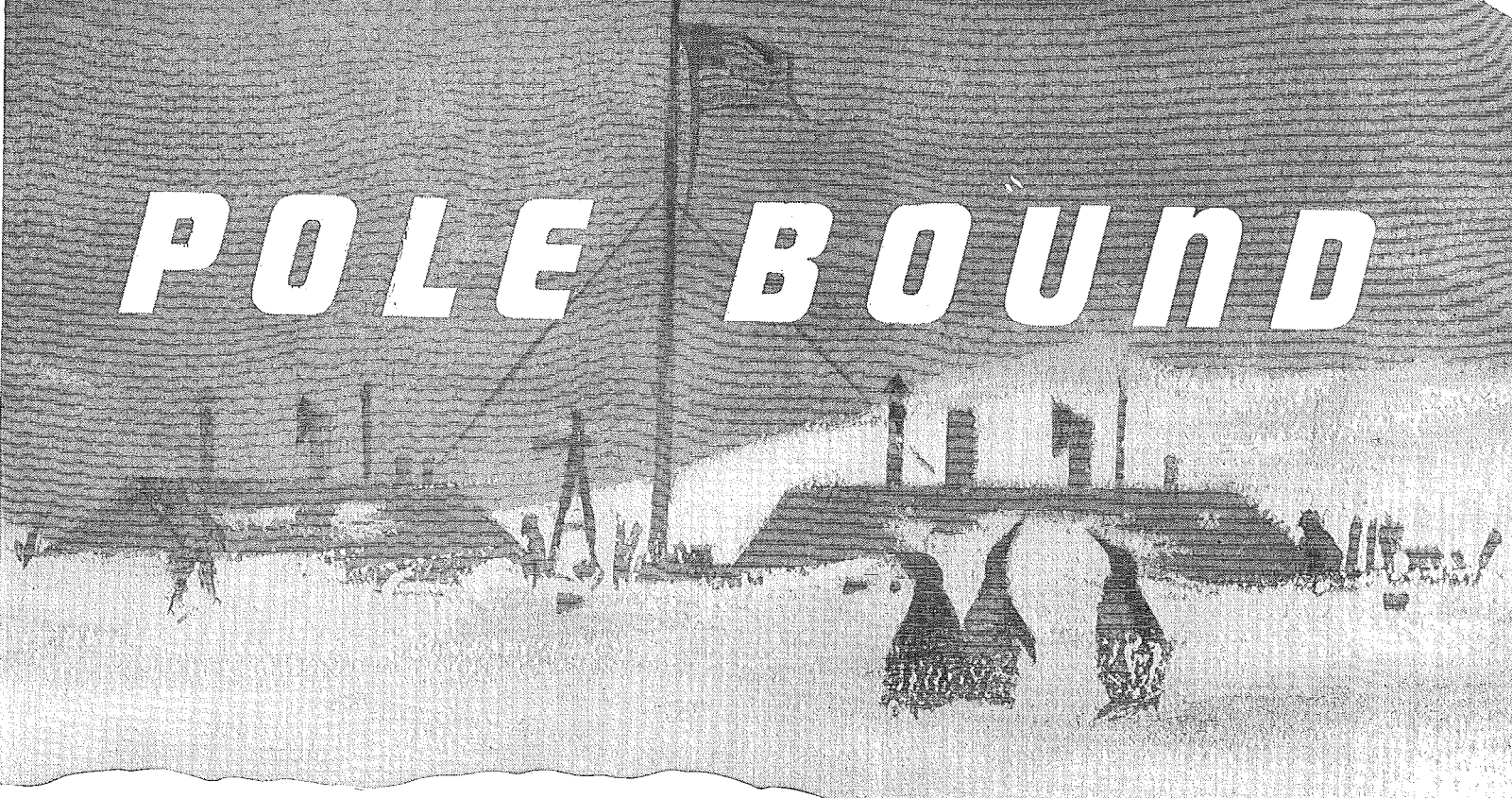
By **JIM MOISE**  
SCOUTING *Magazine*  
*Field Reporter*

**“W**E WERE RETURNING FROM A PICNIC, and as we turned into the driveway Grandma rushed out of the house waving her arms and shouting something at us. We figured either the house was on fire or the telegram had come saying that I had been picked to go to the South Pole. Since she was smiling, I figured it was the telegram.”

It was the telegram. And it signaled for one American boy among the millions the beginning of a supreme adventure—an adventure that will endure as the high-water mark of a lifetime.

It all began last winter when the United States Antarctic Expedition announced they would like a Boy Scout to go along as a junior scientific aid, as another

# POLE BOUND



Scout, Paul Siple, had done in the 1928 Byrd expedition. At once the applications began to pour in, hundreds of them, from candidates all over the country. A special committee was named to evaluate them. The applications were narrowed to eighty—then to thirty-four—and finally, after careful deliberation, to seven. The seven were invited to New York City to meet the committee. From the seven the committee chose one. This story is about that one—Scouting's ambassador to the South Pole, Richard Chappell of Eggertsville, New York.

It isn't easy to find out about Dick Chappell by asking Dick Chappell. For running deep in this talented boy is a modesty that is often close to humility. Yet the more you do learn about him, the more you understand why he is representing the Boy Scouts of America with the U.S. expedition.

Take, for example, his Scouting record. Starting up the ladder as a Cub Scout in Pack 61, he made Webelos and served as assistant denner, then as denner. He went on into Troop 61, moved upward through the ranks to Eagle (he holds forty-six merit badges), and served as patrol leader, senior patrol leader, and junior assistant Scoutmaster. He was elected to the Order of the Arrow and holds the God and Country Award.

This left him, you suspect, no time for school activities? Not so. In high school, Dick was president of his freshman class, made the soccer team two years, the swimming and tennis teams three years, and in his senior year served as president of the student council and was voted the best all-round boy of the year. He won election to the National Honor Society and a four-year Navy scholarship to Princeton University, where he will enroll after returning from the expedition.

Time for Scouting, time for school—and time for church. Active in Sunday school from an early age, Dick served his church as crucifer and acolyte, later sang in the church choir, and served as president of the youth fellowship, first of his church and later of the entire district.

No time left for hobbies? Again, not so. He's found time to learn to play the piano and clarinet, to play in the school dance band, and to call a mean square dance. Somehow there's been time enough at home to supervise a stable of pets, ranging from pollywogs to parakeets and including dogs, hamsters, an alligator, an injured cedar waxwing, and a garter snake that slipped out of its cage one night and hasn't been seen since. There's even been time to rebuild a boat, wire his room so that he can control radio, lights, and windows without getting out of bed, and tinker lovingly with a 1937 Ford convertible named "Honey Bun."

"I've been interested in the South Pole ever since I first heard of it," Dick recalls. "I've been reading books about it for several years, and I remember especially reading about Paul Siple, the Scout who accompanied the Byrd expedition in 1928. When I read that I asked my dad 'Do you suppose they'll take another Scout someday?' 'Well,' he said, 'they haven't taken one since that first time. Besides, you'd have to miss school and everything. Better just wait and see!'"

"I sort of stopped thinking about it after that, although it was always in the back of my mind. Then last winter—almost five years after that little talk with my dad—came the news that the current American expedition—the one in connection with the International

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# SOUTH POLE BOUND

(Continued from page 3)

Geophysical Year—was going to take a Scout. I knew right away I was going to try for it—but I honestly felt that, with all the qualified and deserving Scouts who would be applying, I wouldn't have a chance in a thousand. I also felt that I should do everything I could to try."

And try Dick Chappell did. There were forms to be filled out and sent in, additional merit badges to be won, references to be obtained, parents to be sold. "Not really sold," Dick relates. "They were willing for me to try for it—my job was to make them enthusiastic."

Finally his application was ready. "It cleared the local council offices in Buffalo," Dick remembers, "and went on to the regional office. Then we heard that it had been sent on to national headquarters. For a long time, then, we heard nothing, and I remember thinking, 'Well, I certainly got a lot out of being prepared for it anyway.'" Then came good news—he

was summoned to New York City as one of only seven finalists.

In New York the seven were together several days and came to know each other well. "I'll never forget what a wonderful bunch of guys they were," Dick declares. "We were almost like a patrol. There was no sense of competition between us, it was more like sharing an experience together. We had a kind of motto—'Even if I don't go, I'm going to know the fellow who does!'"

"Just before the committee gave us our final interviews, Dr. Schuck told us that the six who were not selected would be given a free summer at Philmont Scout Ranch as a sort of consolation prize. We all thought this was pretty wonderful and jokingly wondered who would go to Philmont, and who would 'lose' and have to go to the South Pole."

A few days later the telegram arrived at Dick Chappell's house and changed the course of his life.

"My first thought on reading that telegram was not elation, strangely enough, but this—I thought of all the millions of Scouts and leaders I would be representing down there and of the many, many fellows I felt were just as qualified as I to represent them. I guess I sent up a little prayer of hope that I could justify the confidence our movement was placing in me."

Dick Chappell will leave the United States in November, 1956, and return in the spring of 1958. For the last two months he has been serving in Washington, D.C., with the staff of the United States National Committee for the International Geophysical Year. There he has received training in polar subjects and assisted in the planning of the Antarctic program.

What will be actually be doing during the fifteen long months at the South Pole?

"I hope, of course, to get in on part of the scientific program there," he says. "I plan to take up either engineering or physics in college, and I feel this experience will be of great help to me. But I want so much to be a part of this expedition that I'll gladly shovel snow for the snow melter, care for the sled dogs, or whatever they ask. You see, this International Geophysical Year is a big thing all over the world. I'd certainly like to feel I had made a contribution to it, no matter how small."

What about spare time, if any, at a polar expedition? What do you do when you can't saunter down to the corner drugstore for a chocolate shake or watch TV or go for a spin in "Honey Bun"? "Well," smiles Dick, "I understand there'll be a library, and movies once a week or so. I plan to do some photography and some writing, and who knows—there may even be a piano down there!"

There is another—and very basic—reason that Dick Chappell wants to go to the South Pole. "I guess every fellow feels he'd like to do something a little different. Antarctica is the world's last frontier. Scouting has given me a chance to tackle it—and the skills to tackle it with. Down there I'll stand for Scouting—and I feel I can succeed by living up to all that Scouting stands for."

And, hearing him say it, you know that he will. END

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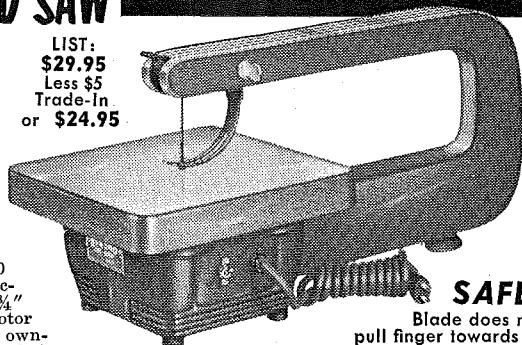
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**CHRISTMAS GRATITUDE.** "Again Boy Scouts of this area are showing their appreciation of the support given them by the community by providing free Christmas trees for everyone. The trees will be cut and hauled to town this week. They will be available on a help yourself basis on the lot next to the theater. For several years many local homes have had beautiful Boy Scout Christmas trees, and this year will be no exception." Quoted from the December 15, 1955, edition of the *Tonasket Tribune*, Tonasket, Washington.

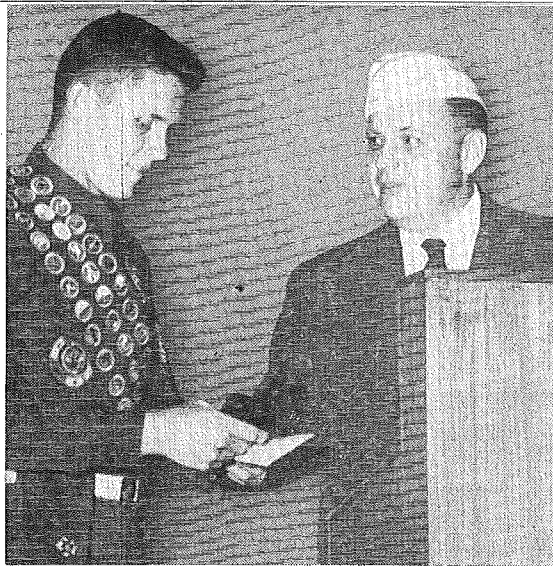


**TOUCHDOWN FOR APO.** Biggest home football game of the season at the University of Texas is with Texas Christian University. But members of Alpha Phi Omega, service fraternity of former Scouts and Scouters, missed it. They took Troop 8 of the Texas School for the Blind on a camping trip that weekend.



**DEN MOTHER'S CORNER.** On a corner table in the Lubbock, Texas, public library is a sign, "Den Mother's Corner." Here are books related to program themes of the next few months, copies of the latest CUB SCOUT PROGRAM QUARTERLY, and other helps for Den Mothers. "It's always a busy spot," reports the librarian.

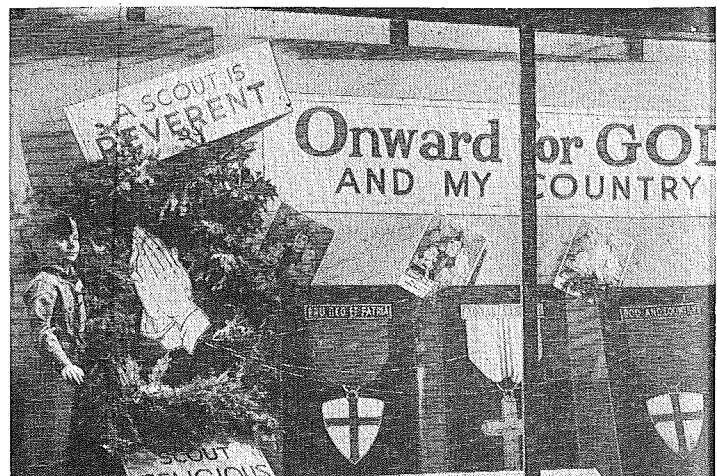
**CATHEDRAL SERVICE.** The church and national flags are carried by members of Pack 5 and Troop 5 in the processional of all services held in their chartered institution, the Episcopal Cathedral of St. Luke, Ancon, Panama Canal Zone.



**SCHOLARSHIP WINNER.** Winner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars annual scholarship is Explorer John R. Klautt, 17, of Troop 90, Waverly, Iowa. He is receiving a \$500 check and gold medal from Richard L. Roudebush, national VFW officer. For rescuing a friend from drowning, John has a certificate of heroism from the National Court of Honor. He wears the Eagle badge, was senior patrol leader and senior crew leader, won letters in four sports, played in the band and orchestra, and was president of the Waverly Youth Council. The VFW scholarship is given to winners of Scouting awards for heroism on the basis of scholarship, character, leadership, and Scouting participation.

**VERSATILE POSTERS.** Potawatomi Area Council makes wide use of the seven religious awards posters cut out and pasted on 28 x 44 poster board. They were featured on a religious-theme float—the only kind permitted in the Waukesha, Wisconsin, Christmas parade. Next the posters formed a display in the Scout distributor's window below. They are still being used at district committee meetings and roundtables. (A set of the posters is available at \$4.50, from the national Supply Service.)

Photo by Warren S. O'Brien Studios



**O**UT MORE THAN FIVE MILES OF BRAND NEW TRAIL through some of the densest wilderness in Shenandoah National Park? Do the job with Explorers—in a single working day?

They said we couldn't do it.

They said we'd never get enough Explorers out to do the job.

They said that, even if we did get them out, we'd never be able to make that much trail in that little time.

That was the challenge they flung at us—the Explorers of the James E. West District of the National Capital Area Council, Washington, D. C.

For many years one of the most popular hikes out of Camp Hoover, the council camp located in Shenandoah National Park, was the hike to Old Rag Mountain. But Old Rag was twenty-six miles away, and the trail was rugged and cut up with steep switchbacks. Thus, distance, terrain, and long hours on the trail limited the number of hiking parties. If the trail could be shortened, if you could blaze a new trail, bypassing many of the meandering curves of the old trail, the hikes to Old Rag would be available to a lot more Scouts. A good idea? Sure—but a mighty ambitious one.

The Explorers of the West District decided to give the project a whirl.

### **GETTING ORGANIZED**

Our first hurdle was to get permission to cut such a trail. Camp Hoover—formerly the fishing camp used by Herbert Hoover when he was President—is located entirely within Shenandoah National Park, so naturally we had to get clearance from the park authorities before going ahead. This clearance they cheerfully gave.

The next move was to organize ourselves for the big job. Since we already had an Explorer activities committee in the district, we built the whole project around it. The vocational members were assigned menu and cooking, cleanup, trail feeding, photography, and sched-

uling. The service members took on the campfire, opening and closing ceremonies, and church services. The outdoor group became responsible for maps, trail cutting and clearing tools, and trail assignments. The social members provided the paint used for blazing the trail. Checking the mileage of the trail, keeping the log and similar duties were assigned to the committee secretary—me.

### **WEATHERMAN HELPS OUT**

Members of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club helped with guides and tools. The council office helped with promotion, mailing announcements, etc. Another big assist came from that wonderful guy, the weatherman. A nicer day we couldn't have asked.

We were shooting for an even hundred Explorers and leaders. When we counted noses we had 109.

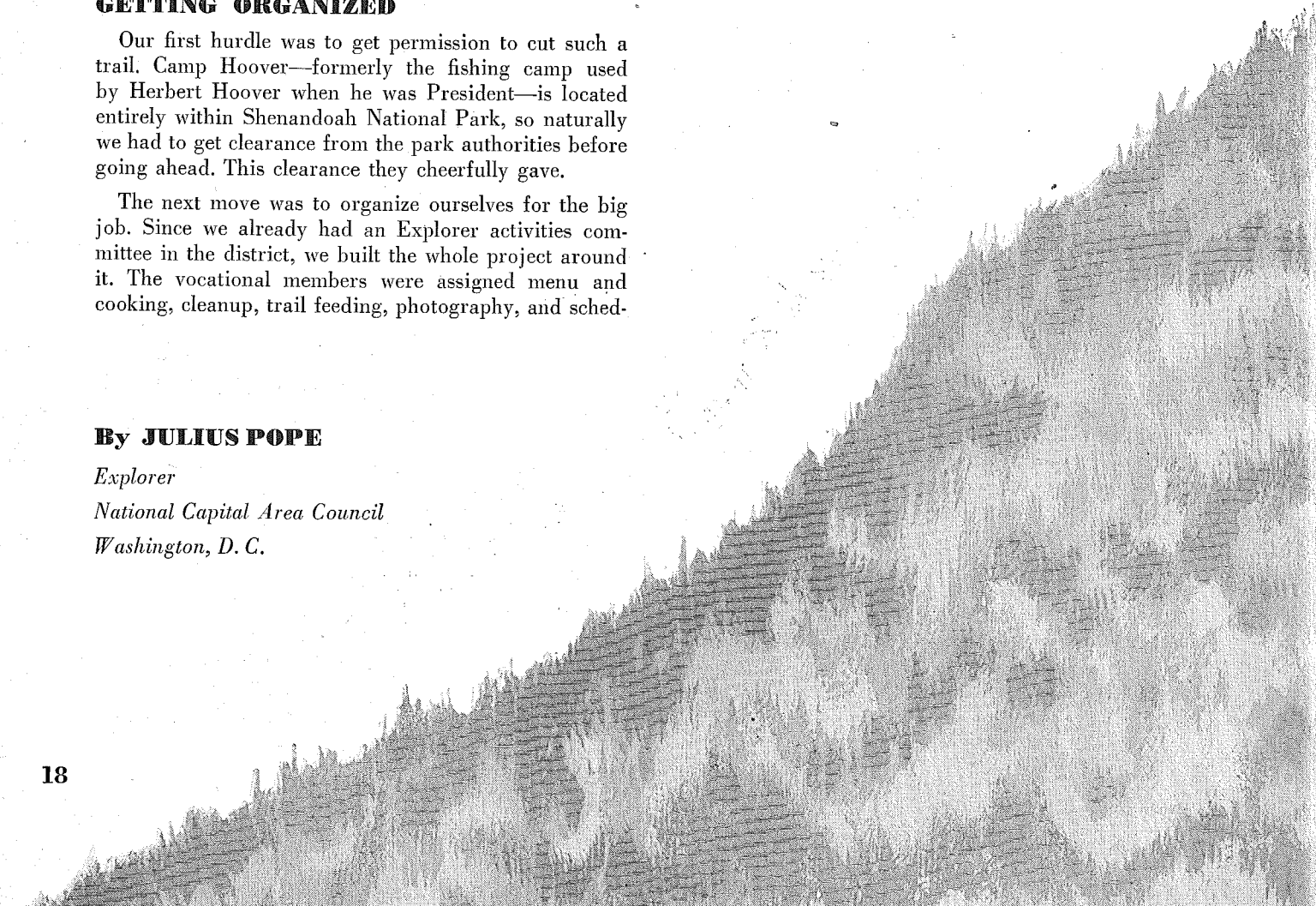
Most of this big gang checked into camp Friday evening, turned in early, and were up at dawn for a king-sized breakfast—cooked and served by Explorers. Work crews were formed then and assigned to given areas of the trail according to a carefully worked out plan. Cross-cut saws, axes, pruning shears, chain saws went into action. The early morning quiet was shattered with the buzzing, ripping, pounding sounds of a small army of

**By JULIUS POPE**

*Explorer*

*National Capital Area Council*

*Washington, D. C.*



Explorers slashing a new pathway through the park's deepest wilderness. It couldn't be done—but we were doing it.

Tragedy struck at noon. A big work crew bringing up the rear knocked off for lunch. But where was the lunch? Then we remembered—the paint-blazing crew was packing the lunches. Where were the paint blazers? Oh, up ahead somewhere, nobody was quite sure. So we broke out our emergency ration—one orange apiece—and started counting the hours to supper.

All work crews chopped and slashed and sawed their way ahead throughout the afternoon, and by five o'clock the new trail was in. Instead of twenty-six miles to Old

Rag Mountain it was now eleven—less than half as far. A lot more Scouts were going to get to Old Rag, now that this day's work was done!

We ate like emperors that night, and after a great campfire we turned in. And this was one night when taps meant sleep. After breakfast Sunday we rounded off a wonderful weekend with church services, and, just before lunch, our closing ceremony, in which we all received our "Trail Blazer" awards for taking part.

Our real reward, however, came from our belief that we had made a lasting contribution to our council's camp—and in the satisfaction of doing the "job that couldn't be done."  
*END*

# THEY SAID WE COULDN'T DO IT

