

# I'm a Royal Ranger

By DOUGLAS EARLE MARSH

I was a 6-year-old MK (missionary kid) living in Puno, Peru, when my father proudly pinned my first Royal Rangers badge on my uniform. That moment ignited a spark in my heart that has steadily grown.

Several months later my family and I returned to the United States for furlough. I joined the Royal Rangers of Central Assembly of God in Springfield, Missouri. By the end of our furlough I had earned the Buckaroo "top hand" award, and was on my way to becoming a Pioneer, the group for boys ages 9 to 11.

We returned to the field, this time to Bolivia, and I was eager to begin Royal Rangers again. But there was no Royal Rangers in Bolivia. So for the next 4 years I studied the *Pioneer Handbook* on my own. Near the end of our first term in Bolivia, I had progressed to Trailblazer, for boys 12 to 14.

In fall 1983 on furlough, I again joined the Royal Rangers at Central

Assembly. Because of the cultural changes I had experienced, I felt somewhat isolated. The group leader, David North, welcomed me warmly, however, and with his encouragement I soon felt a part of the group.

During the year with Dave's encouragement, I advanced in the program and soon caught Royal Rangers "fever." Later in the year I was admitted to the advanced leadership training program of Royal Rangers, known as Frontiersmen Camping Fraternity (FCF). This program gave me instruction in survival techniques. But more importantly, we were encouraged to grow in the Lord personally and were taught how to evangelize others for Christ.

I determined to do all I could to get a strong Royal Rangers program going in Bolivia. When we returned, I realized this would be a nearly impossible task especially for a 13-year-old boy. At that time there was one active Royal Rangers group in all of Bolivia.

But 9 months later, with the help of Missionary George Davis, the first

Royal Rangers district conference was held in our district of Bolivia. And since December 1985 the program has grown steadily. Royal Rangers in Bolivia has 33 outposts with approximately 750 boys involved. In the past 3 years we have had nine leadership training courses, two national training camps, five sectional powwows, and two district powwows. In our last district powwow 190 boys and adult leaders participated.

The greatest fruit of this growth has been the changes in the lives of hundreds of boys throughout Bolivia. I have seen rebellious boys come to the Lord and become new creations in Christ. In many cases the parents of these boys have given their lives to Christ through the witness of their sons. I have seen drug addicts and homosexuals changed through the blood of Jesus. And because the Holy Spirit's power works through the Royal Rangers program in Bolivia, I have seen the youth in churches grow both in number and spirituality.

The greatest effect Royal Rangers has had on me is that I have grown close to God. I rely on God for my strength, for "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1, NIV). I desire to become a total young man for Christ, by growing in the four areas in which Royal Rangers provides training and encouragement—physical, mental, social, and spiritual.

Royal Rangers has also helped me to become aware of the needs of the world. I see a great need for Christians to reach out and touch our dying world—especially the children and youth for Christ.

If it is the Lord's will, and if He tarries His coming, I plan to be a missionary for the Royal Rangers in Latin America. With the Lord's help, the *Exploradores del Rey* are going to spread all across Latin America to ignite the love of Christ in every heart, soul, and mind. ☐

Photo by Paula Anderson

Douglas Earle Marsh is the 17-year-old son of Lloyd and Rozella Marsh, missionaries to Bolivia.

