

'Mail Call' Important At Orleans

By MARION CHAMBERLAIN

ORLEANS — In every small town throughout the nation the high spot of every week-day is mail time. In Orleans that has always been, up until the Dec. 22nd flood, around 1:00 p.m. Pete Peters left Happy Camp early in the morning, stopped at Some Bar and Orleans to take the mail to Willow Creek and then brought mail from there back on his way to Happy Camp. From 1 to 2 p.m., people gathered at the post office waiting for their mail, chatting with one another and catching up on the daily news.

Now — with no highway — even more emphasis than usual is on mail time but until lately deliveries by helicopter and plane were sporadic. Several days would go by with no mail and then it would all come at once. It was Jan. 6th before the first newspapers were brought in.

Mrs. Libby Medaris is having all sort of experiences concerning mail which are not covered in any post office manual. There is no house delivery at all in Orleans. Everyone has a post office box. So, whenever she hears a copter flying overhead and thinks there might be mail on it she drives to the airstrip and if there is mail she loads it in the back of her car. Then back to the post office. Since there was no electricity between Dec. 22nd and Jan 16, she frequently sorted mail by flashlight.

There was three feet of flood water in the post office and some of the lower boxes will not open and shut properly so she puts that mail to one side. Then, too, she must sort the mail for people living on the Red Cap side of the river since most of them cannot come after it. One day she had 152 sacks of mail. That is a nightmare she won't forget.

When all medals for "performance above and beyond the call of duty" are passed out, surely the one should read, "For LIBBY MEDARIS, Orleans Postmaster."