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Montana State University drama group to entertain U. S. servicemen in Hawaii, Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines

University of Montana--Missoula. Office of University Relations

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Over in Missoula this morning (20th) Dr. Firman H. Brown and 11 members of a Montana State University drama group were set to climb aboard a plane. Destination: Hawaii, Japan, Korea, Okinawa, Formosa and the Philippines; then, back home again about the middle of December after having entertained U. S. servicemen all over the Pacific area.

Life of late had been anything but staid for members of the MSU troupe. Let alone rehearsals for "The Fantasticks," the musical show which they will carry on to the Orient, they have had to construct portable scenery, decide on what costumes to take, get shots against sundry diseases and other blights, listen to indoctrination lectures on how to behave in foreign climes, learn how to double in brass so as to increase individual utility and cut down on the size of the cast, go through the agonizing process of deciding what to take and what to leave behind in the way of personal possessions.

This is the 59th season that the Drama Department at MSU has been presenting plays, and the production that they are taking to the Pacific is one they have had prior experience with. "The Fantasticks" was originally an off-Broadway success that the MSU Masquers presented to Montanans about this time last year. During the past summer, the musical was also included in the repertoire of the Bigfork Summer Playhouse, directed by Bo Brown and with a number of the present overseas tour company in the cast. Thus, some of the members have been singing the roles for nearly a year.

According to Dr. Brown, some University credit will be granted to those students who are making the tour. They will be given scholastic credit for production and performance work. In addition, they have been taking a special course in the
theater of the Far East, studying daily at MSU prior to departure.

Arrangements for the tour were made through the American Educational Theater Association in cooperation with the USO and the U.S. Department of Defense. Similar tours by college and university entertainment groups have been going on for the past six years.

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