

Art Reflects Life

By Pete Clark

I sorely miss the comedically talented stars of the 1950's and 60's, like Lucille Ball, Dick Van Dyke, Bob Newhart and others. They had good supporting casts and excellent writers. They sometimes twisted the King's English, but they never used Fractured French. They made me laugh until my rib cage felt as if it might collapse from the pressure produced by the muscles generating the strings of guffaws. Those days are gone, but their memories live on, at least within me.

One sitcom in particular resonated with that time of my life. *F Troop* premiered in the fall of 1966 and paralleled my last year of active duty in the Air Force, stationed at Buckley ANGB. At Lowry, I worked with a Captain Parmenter, a Sergeant O'Rourke and a Corporal Agarn. I met some of the other oddballs of *F Troop* when they came into Base Operations or Base Weather.

I was working a swing-shift with a Second Lieutenant, fresh out of ROTC and Weather Forecasting School, when I picked up a hook-echo on RADAR, near Limon. A hook-echo is a tornado. I used a plastic overlay and a grease pencil to plot the location of the echo. Before I transmitted the location of the tornado via long line teletype, I took the overlay to the forecast desk. I handed it to the Lieutenant. He did not give it back to me.

I hurried back to the Radar Room and replotted the echo's location, so I could transmit the information to Tinker AFB, Oklahoma for dissemination. He came into the RADAR room and took the second overlay from me. He continued to interrupt my work rendering me unable to transmit a special observation for the hook echo and making my hourly transmission late.

I reported in at 0700 the next morning for a day-shift. When the First Shift arrived, I went to his office and told him of the problem with the overlays. The Lieutenant was forbidden to enter the RADAR room and was not allowed to work without having another forecaster on duty.

In the midst of an Air Force drive to cut expenses, our detachment hit the end of a fiscal-year and had \$300.00 left in the unit fund. A Tech Sergeant went to supply and bought \$300.00 worth of sign painting stencils. On his way back to Base Weather, he threw the stencils into a dumpster. It was a matter of maintaining the level of our unit funding. The Air Force saved money by decreasing manhours.

One afternoon when I relieved the day-shift observer at Lowry, an Airman Second Class from maintenance, was disassembling complex electronic console as it would not power-up. After much careful work, he noticed the unit had not been plugged into the power outlet. The first rule is check to see if electrical items are connected to a power source.

At Buckley, the Air National Guard personnel were the Indians. The Air Guard was difficult to work with and it seemed as if we were military units of opposing countries.