

For most of the two and one-half years I was stationed at Lowry, I lived at 16th and Beeler Street in Aurora. It was easier to ride a bicycle onto the base, weather permitting, than to drive. I entered Lowry at the Yosemite Gate and then headed for Hanger #2. When I arrived at the Weather Detachment, I parked my bike behind the Storm Detection Radar Console. When I drove onto base, I parked my car in the small parking lot between the hangers. Depending on the personnel schedule, I would either stay downstairs, separating and posting the weather data coming in via longline teletype for the forecasters. When required, I operated the radar set. The other option was to relieve the person at the Remote Observation Site in the middle of the hanger's roof.

My route to work took me past the Air Police Building. One afternoon in late fall, on my way in for a swing shift, an AP eased in behind my bike and turned on his flashing red light. I braked my two-wheeler and crept to a stop, not knowing I was resting on a frozen over puddle. I couldn't imagine him stopping me for speeding. When I dropped my foot to the ice, I went one way and the bike went the other direction. The AP exited his truck and hurried over to inquire if I had any injuries, while probably seeing his two stripes flying away for causing a ground accident. I told him I was fine and he told me why he had stopped me. He wanted to make sure that I was not riding a stolen bike. I showed him the registration sticker from the City of Aurora and told him the bike was also registered with his Air Police Unit. Satisfied and relieved, he sent me on my way to work.

During my first few days of using the Yosemite Gate, I noticed a fifty-five-gallon drum with its top cut off setting beside the door of the AP station. The barrel was in a wood frame that

held it at about a forty-five-degree angle. The existence of that barrel puzzled me. I couldn't figure out its purpose, but I was soon to learn its use. I had driven past the AP station after

having worked a swing shift, when I heard what sounded like a pistol shot. I was backing up to a day shift, so I ignored the sound and hurried home. The next morning, I told the First Shirt about hearing gunfire. He explained it was probably an AP who hadn't properly cleared his weapon before he went off shift and had fired into the barrel while clicking his revolver the required six times. I was to here many more pistol shots during my time at Lowry.

The revolver they used had a swing out cylinder that exposed all six chambers. How could anyone miss seeing loaded chambers? Now is the era of the more demanding semi-automatic pistol, when it comes to safety. I wish them luck.