

Opinions

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Super Troupers: A day with the MC Police

By John Arnold
Opinions Editor

The white Crown Vic police interceptor had a full tank and was ready to go. It was Saturday, February 8th and Corporal Steve Haire had already been on shift eight hours prior to me joining him; he still had four more to go. In the hours that followed, I would be riding along with Cpl Haire in attempt to understand the man inside the uniform.

On the outside Officer Haire appears to be a real hard nose. At first glance Haire displayed the kind of "show no mercy" attitude that sparks fear into the hearts of evildoers. I quickly discovered however that Haire is a real mellow and down to earth guy. Born and raised in Fayetteville, Haire attended the North Carolina Police Academy. After the Academy, Haire worked in Hoke County as a reserve Deputy Sheriff. For the last 5 1/2 years Haire has been with the Methodist Police force, last December Haire graduated from MC with a major in sociology and a minor in criminal justice. MC isn't just a part of life for Haire; it's in his blood. His mother, Denise Guidetti, was the first French student to graduate MC. The flag she donated still hangs today in Burns Student Center. Haire's two brothers Jean-Paul and Michel were graduates as well. Even Haire's wife Mary attends night school here. Often Mary sings the national anthem at MC basketball games. Officer Haire is a father of two. He is a scoutmaster to his seven-year-old stepson Billy. His daughter Ashlyn is 20 months.

2:58 PM. We responded to a 10-6, a routine parameter check of the president's house. Officer Haire determined that everything looked normal and so we moved along. Today Officer Haire is pulling double duty. Normally he works Monday through Friday, 7:30 to 5:30. Haire's typical duties include training new officers, scheduling work hours, and of course patrolling the campus. Haire ex-

plained that due to the lack of police officers he usually works well over 40 hours a week. Haire looks forward to his time off in which he spends camping in the mountains of NC or the beaches of SC.

On his belt Haire wears a Glock Model 22, a can of pepper spray and an Asp Baton. Though he has never had to use any of these devices on the campus, he seen a few things that have stayed with him. Sadly, Haire's most traumatic call was a response to a suicide on campus, he still remembers that death and it haunts him till this day.

On patrol down Lowder Milk, Hair reflects on the time he was put in a life-threatening situation on the grounds of MC. "A few years back a deer had saw its reflection in the window of the new part of the library. I was called in when the deer had broken through the window and was trapped inside the library. For about an hour I tried to coax the deer out, he had broken one antler and was bleeding pretty bad. I knew he could have easily killed me if he wanted to." Fortunately, Haire thought fast and opened a door bringing in fresh air, the deer felt the air and ran out; it was never seen from again.

4:15 PM. While passing Cumberland Hall a speeder burst through a stop sign doing well over 30-mph. This is both dangerous and illegal. Officer Haire pulls the vehicle over and explains, "I can either issue a state ticket or a college citation." The driver gets lucky and receives only a \$25 citation. Contrary to popular belief, Haire doesn't sit around and look to get people in trouble. Haire explains, "my main purpose is to protect students." Hair enjoys student life here on campus, "the majority of students here are courteous and respectful, they are po-

lite to me, and I give them the same respect."

6:30 PM. Officer Hair's shift is coming to an end. Haire explains how the radar in his car works and we clock passing vehicles. The 400-megahertz Motorola radio calls in a radio check while dusk falls on the campus. Officer Haire has had a long day at the office but it's all been worthwhile. Maybe everything wasn't perfect, but it rarely is when you're an officer of the law. Officer Haire drops me off at my car; I need the time to get my thoughts together before the next shift. I watch as Haire's cruiser fades

away into the distance, his day is over but not done. There is a family waiting for him at home, he will retire there tonight and assume his other duties; husband, father, friend.

9:01 PM. The heated squad car is a welcome relief from the cold. I began my second shift with the Campus Police and am greeted by Officer Charles Peele, a man of great stature and integrity. Since childhood Peele has dreamed of becoming a police officer. Peele grew up in Robersonville, NC and at the age of 18 joined the army. For 22yrs Peele resided in countries such as Greece, Turkey, and his personal favorite, Italy. For the past 14 years Peele has resided in Fayetteville. After retirement from the army Peele decided to fulfill his dreams of becoming a police officer and attended the Police Academy in 2000. Peele worked as a Deputy for Cumberland County, and while he misses the excitement of the streets he enjoys the atmosphere of the college campus. Like Officer Haire, Peele is much more than just a cop. During the day he is a fulltime student here at Methodist. Peele intends to graduate next December with a degree in criminal justice. Peele is an active mem-

ber at Parks Chapel Will Chapel where he is both a Deacon and president of the men's choir. He has two daughters; 26 year old Alisa Renee who works as a hairstylist. 15-year-old Christian lives in Larton, Virginia with her mother and dreams of becoming a journalist.

10:56 PM. We sit and clock speeders and watch for stop sign violators. Peele reflects on his time as a police officer here at Methodist. I asked him what a good night would be here on patrol. "A goodnight? We have lots of good nights here; a good night, the best night you can hope for, is when nothing happens. When you don't have to stop anyone, no one runs a stop sign, and there are no disturbances on campus." Just when I thought it was going to be a "goodnight" a speeder runs a stop sign doing over 27-mph. Officer Peele hits the lights and we take off after him, we catch up to him in the Burns parking lot. The three occupants in the car appear to be nervous, officer Peere pursues with caution. He takes their license and registration and returns to the car without incident. I ask him if there was any problem. "No, most people know what they did wrong and are courteous. Every now and then (he laughs) you get someone who acts like they are surprised, but they we what they did."

12:02 AM. I sit with Officer Peele and clock speeders. So far we have issued two situations and one verbal warning; I find that Peele is more than fare in his actions. We sit in the cruiser and trade stories, Peele hopes to one day join the SBI (Special Bureau of Investigation) or maybe join the DMV as an inspector after graduation. I look at the green dashboard clock; my time with Peele is coming to close. Peele still has 7 more hours on duty before he can get off, before he can go back to his life. If anything can be said about officer Peele, it is this; No matter where his life may take him, he will make his dreams come true.

