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For Jim, it added up to six assignments in six years. It may be some kind of a record. But he didn't waste time. Every day of it was solid profit.

"My first assignment was installation of improved polymer transfer systems," says Jim. "Then some research. A patent was issued on my device to apply steam to a running threadline. Next I was a college recruiter. After that I worked on a five-year forecast of the company's engineering needs. Now I'm in a cost reduction group."

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A night with MIT's finest

(Ed. Note: Reporter Ted Lichtenstein spent an evening with the MIT Campus Patrol, riding along in one of their patrol wagons, and talking to Patrolmen. Here are his observations.)

By Ted Lichtenstein

The Campus Patrol wagon slides stealthily through the quiet night. Inside, two Campus Patrolmen are sternly surveying the passing scene. The cruiser loops around a corner, then another, eventually circling back to the same spot. Then it turns another corner, and again comes back to the same spot. This procedure is repeated four more times; the two cop-faced patrolmen sustain their intense gaze. Finally the objective comes into view -- the watch station of the Albany Street parking garage.

This is life for the Campus Patrol, a life spent driving through parking garages and quiet streets, looking for potential trouble, chasing uncles tampering with vending machines, and watching the corridors of the Institute. Occasionally there are moments of excitement -- a radiation leak in a lab, a fire, or Sergeant Sullivan's angry chase after some rascally Cambridge uncles who were trying to beat him with rocks. Maybe the building 13 elevator will get stuck again and the patrol will come to the rescue. But mostly the job consists of routine patrol duties, which require a virtue beyond loyalty and courage: patience.

The patrol car is equipped with a loudspeaker for addressing unruly crowds. It has never been used.

All patrolmen on duty are in communication with each other via walkie-talkies. Typically, in the midst of a sleepy patrol a terse, weary voice on the radio interrupts Sgt. Sullivan's yawn with "Gang of kids smashing car windows in front of the Veneras Street Garage." The car is quickly at the scene. A witness says, "They went thataway." The car cruises through the indicated area, but there's no sign of any unruly scurrying around. At this point the chances of catching them are all but nil, and the car goes back to routine patrolling.

Even answering the emergency phone in the office can be dull. A majority of the calls are wrong numbers, and most of the rest are more or less routine ambulance calls.

On the 8 am to 12 midnight shift, the巡逻men find that they are doing a lot of traffic maintenance. Occasionally there are moments of excitement -- a radiation leak in a lab, a fire, or Sergeant Sullivan's angry chase after some rascally Cambridge uncles who were trying to beat him with rocks. Maybe the building 13 elevator will get stuck again and the patrol will come to the rescue. But mostly the job consists of routine patrol duties, which require a virtue beyond loyalty and courage: patience.

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