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SPATROLMAN DAVIS' FIRST NIGHT PATROL. Sgt. Malcolm Ross (right) acts as coach (Eccentric Photo)

Korean War Veteran Joins B'ham Police
 By WILLIAM F. ZACK

A former Detroit Conservatory of Music student who spent more than a year as a medical corpsman with the Marines in Korea, last week began service as a Birmingham policeman.

The new officer is Joseph Davis, 26-year-old native of Pontiac, who expects to move with his family to Birmingham soon.

Little of Davis' background was pointed toward a career as a public servant. After completing school in Pontiac, he attended Bob Jones college in Tennessee, and later the conservatory, where he majored in music. He still sings at his Pontiac church during services, with an occasional professional engagement.

WHAT DOES a brand new policeman find on his first night at work? Nothing exciting, in Davis' case, but a forecast of the routine hard work that makes up the lives of patrolmen.

First, after having his uniform fitted, Davis was issued his badge and gun by Chief Ralph W. Moxley. Then, with Sgt. Malcolm Ross, a 19-year veteran, he began his first patrol.

Sgt. Ross first explained the workings of the police radio which keeps each car in touch with headquarters and each other. Then, at 11 p.m., the car got underway.

After cruising Hunter and nearby streets, the first call to the car was received. "Investigate a report of prowlers on Linden."

WITHIN THREE minutes, the car was at the scene, with both officers alert to any threat to the family involved. However, investigation disclosed only that someone had let the air out all four tires on the family car. Further, courteous questioning determined that a teen-age daughter was having a party that night, and that it was probably a youth who had not been invited who took that juvenile form of revenge.

Back on patrol again, the officers began the nightly check of front and rear doors of Birmingham business houses. The third door tried had been left open.

THROUGH THE RADIO phone the owner was notified, and given the opportunity to lock it and prevent a possible theft of money and valuable property. Sgt. Ross explained.

"More than two-thirds of police work is preventive. If we are able to remove temptation from the path of a potential thief, we believe we have completed an important part of our function."

"The same thing is true of our traffic control efforts. We don't want to issue any more traffic tickets than we absolutely have to. But every ticket is a reminder to the guilty driver that he has violated some traffic law, and that the violation of that same law has brought injury and death to others in the past."

DAVIS AND Sgt. Ross wrote three tickets in the course of their patrol, two for speeding and one for making an illegal turn on Hunter. The odd part, to Davis, was that each of the drivers admitted that he knew he was breaking the law at the time of the offense.

After the end of his run, and now with a much more realistic idea of his future life with the force will be, the new patrolman returned to his home, where his daughter, Debra, 2, is thoroughly proud of her father in his new uniform.

His son, Joseph Mark, is not quite a year old, and likes the sparkle of the badge.

Mrs. Davis is quite sure that her husband is doing what he likes and wants to do, and like all other policemen's wives, never

comments on the ever-present possibility that a telephone call someday may bring her the news of another patrolman who had fallen in the line of duty.

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