

PAD SECURITY

TALES OF THE FOLKS WHO WATCHED US

Anytime you are on a military installation you have to deal with security . Even though we really didn't have any strategic missile capability we did have an abundance of pad security . Now let me make something very clear . I am in no way putting down the Air Police that were at VAFB . They had a very hard job simply because there were so many different companies and groups at work on VAFB . The military personnel were subject to the AP first and foremost . They did the gates all around and enforced the rules on base . (much to the chagrin of our civilian counter parts) .

Now "A" site , because of it's low security status , seem to get all the new recruits . Not a bad thing most of the time . Usually they just went about their jobs and were more than glad to do their walk with their weapon that had no ammo or at best one round . The key word here is most of the time .

I remember one time when we got a brand new "jeepo" , that is a very new recruit , and he was out to single handedly change the way the pad was run . I happened to be on duty doing the late night tank watch . This required me to do hourly rounds of the pad mostly to check the missile tank pressures . To do this I had to go to the top of the pad each and every hour , sometime more often if the temperature was changing fast . This one night for some reason this was the case . The first trip I made I was greeted by our guard and informed that I was to contact him each time I came to the top of the pad , even for just a minute . Ok , this was not normal but I could go along with that . By the general rule this was the way it was suppose to work anyway and if the AP wanted to a very good job I would go with it . The next hour I went to the top of the pad for my check with out my shirt , just my "T" shirt . I reported in the AP and he wrote me up for a uniform violation . Now I had been doing a lot of cleaning and it was hot in the personal shelter and I just had to run up for a minute and check the pressures . Again he was right I was wrong , butwell it seem a bit extreme at 0100 . I took my write up knowing that there would be a sympathetic ear in the morning . No big deal , right . A half hour later I went up to the tank pressure gages again , complete with my shirt but no hat . Guess what , I got another write up . Things were getting out of hand . Still the man was completely right . I was getting upset but really didn't have a leg to stand on . About 0300 I went again and there behold was my faithful guard sound asleep ! This is a court martial offence for an AP . I went past quietly and did my thing but on the way back I could stand it no longer . His M/1 carbine was standing in the corner of his shack and he was still fast asleep . I could have just called in and gotten the poor guy in so much trouble he would still be trying to find his way out . Instead I just reach in and picked up his M/1 carbine . I was sure no one would show that late at

night to our pad . They never did . I set the weapon on the desk and waited . Pretty soon the door flew open in can my “friend” . “Where's my gun !!!” . Of course that's not the right name for your weapon but we'll let that slide . I was informed that if , or should I say when , he turned me in I was in big trouble and he was surly right . I offered to call the AP station and he was more than glad to let me , at least at that moment . “This I fine I said , but how are you going to explain how I got your “gun” ? All at once the gravity of the predicament started to soak in . We talked . There were a lot of words in a short time . In the end I got my violations erased and he got his “gun” back . The next time I went up on the top of the pad I had my shirt on , my hat on , and I reported in like I was required to do . He didn't have a lot to say . Latter when they came to pick him up he asked his driver to wait for a minute and he can down to the room I was in and told me how glad he was that I hadn't turned him in . We talked for moment and I told him sometimes things have to gauged by the time and place . I also told him that he was right in every thing he said and I fully realized how stupid it was for me to take his weapon and I apologized for that . Later I though about what would have happened if he had called in . It's not good . In the end I suppose it all worked out for good . I am sure that he learned a lot that night and so did I . I can't help but think that he remained a strict supporter law but it was probably tempered with some thought of the circumstances .

I never seen him again . I looked as I was around the base but he was never there . I often wonder what ever happened to the guard and his “gun” ?