

Horse Patrol

(Continued from Page C24)

needed to fulfill the normal duties of either a foot beat or a car patrol. Each is equipped with a radio to receive messages, and in addition, they can issue traffic tickets, write citations, and make up traffic reports. The bags are also equipped with flashlights for night riding. At night, the yellow band on the housing surrounding the saddle on the horses shows up well in car headlights. The horses also wear fluorescent orange leg bands at night to attract the attention of drivers. Nevertheless, the officers try to avoid riding back to the quarters in the park after dark.

When necessary, the patrol is equipped with a van and horse trailer bearing the Mounted Patrol identification. When time or darkness are factors, they transport their mounts to headquarters and unload and tack them up there.

The three officers are seldom on duty at the same time. On market days, two officers are on duty, while other days usually one works. Sunday is only worked on special occasions.

The officers presently on the team met stiff competition for their jobs. Over 20 men applied for the posts. Both Deibert and Kuhns agreed that they made the right decision.

Training for the patrol was conducted at the Wilmington Police Academy. The Wilmington department donated the training to the new patrol.

There during a ten week course of both written and mounted instruction, the officers learned the fundamentals of horse care. In addition, the officers were started in their riding instruction working the animals bareback. Deibert explained that the purpose here was to give the riders the confidence they needed to stick with their horses and to avoid reliance on stirrups as crutches.

Kuhns pointed out that tradition has it that when a patrolman falls, gets bitten or is stepped on he treats. He noted that he picked up the tab a number of times.

The patrolmen were drilled on bareback for the first three weeks of training. During the first 5 weeks of the course, they switched horses with each other. In the last half of the course, each chose the mount he wanted to work with and received training on that horse and on the spare, Fiber.

Training during those weeks in Wilmington progressed to riding around the park, then gradually

worked up to beat work in the city.

The officers were cautioned by their instructor to pay particular attention to their mounts. He cautioned them that their horses once they could read them well would tell them about hazards they themselves could not see.

The patrol was drilled in individual work as well as work in formation with side passes and some elementary dressage work. Deibert noted that the Wilmington patrol has reached the second level in dressage work.

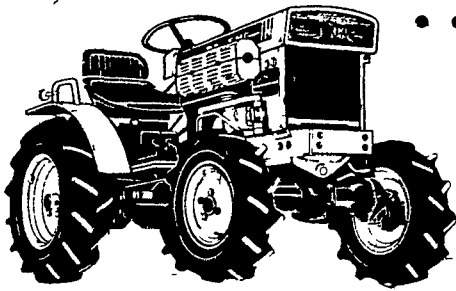
Both officers agreed that each day is a training day for them. They pointed out that a patrol horse takes from 6 months to 1 year to become fully trained in its job. And that they were taught during their training to look for something out of the ordinary to ask their mount to do each day. This technique they explained is used to counteract boredom and to keep the horse in alert and responsive.

The training for the horses included standing quietly while patrol cars circled with sirens blaring. It also

(Turn to Page C26)

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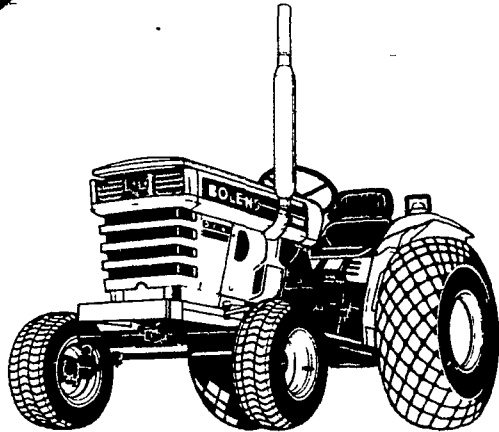
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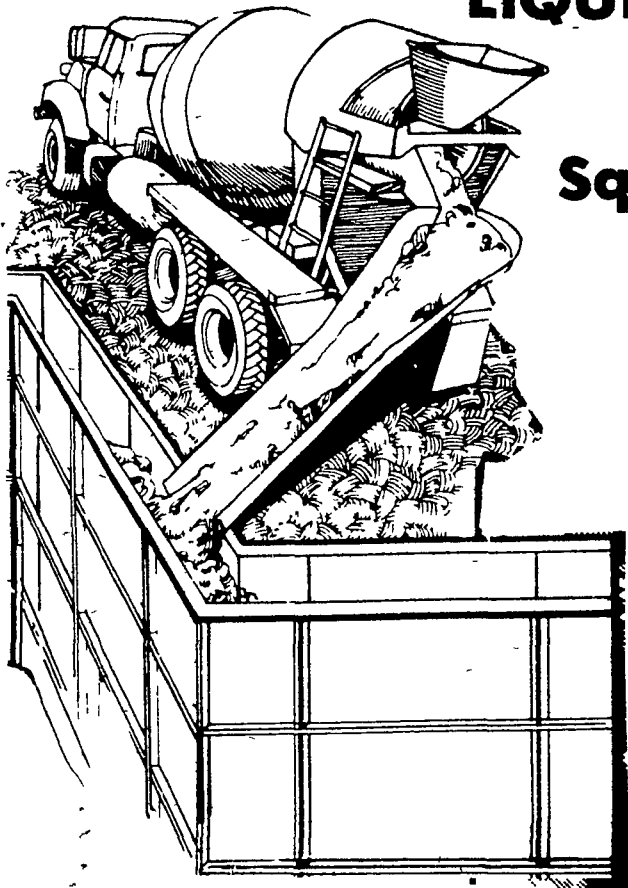
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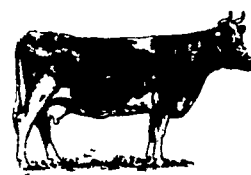
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