

Anyone can get lost on patrol from time to time, it happens to the best of us...Veteran and rookie alike. Even Daniel Boone, while exploring the unknown forests and the fertile meadows of Kentucky once wandered around for five days and nights without having the slightest idea where he was and had a tough time getting back to Wilderness Road and Main Street.

Police officers are no different and have been known to find themselves 'a mite bewildered' or totally disorientated when trying to get back to headquarters in time to go off duty. Should you ever find yourself lost while on patrol, it is important for you to know what to do and how to act professionally in such a situation.

The main thing is to stay calm, take it easy and don't panic! Stay off the radio no matter how much you want to call in a "Mayday!Mayday!" Attempt to reason your way out. Search for the major highway, flip a coin and decide which direction to follow, Never talk to strangers, they are probably lost, too. Try to remember where you were last. Recall the exact moment when you were not lost. Think things out, plan ahead.

Try to remember the telephone number at headquarters, if not, call the operator and she may be able to help you out. Never admit that you are a police officer, no matter how tough an interrogator she is. Utilize your Miranda rights. Never stray from your patrol car, there could be lions and tigers and bears out there in the darkness.

While on patrol it is wise and proper procedure for patrol units to travel in packs, there's safety in numbers. Form a convoy whenever possible, stay together at all times. Eat together and sleep together. However, should you become separated, always let them find you. There are always more of them and only one of you, so your chances of being found are much better! Remember, and have faith, that if someone wakes up and

discovers that you are missing, he or she may try to find you.

Always play the odds, continue driving only if you are sure no one will find you. Follow the cardinal rule, never run off in the darkness screaming like a woman in labor, it's bad for our image. Think positive. Humming helps, or count as high as you can, then start all over. Think of a color, a favorite teacher, friendly butterflies, your dark closet, or that special blanket that you sleep with at home.

Keep in mind that you have a badge, a gun, extra ammo, a nightstick, a pocket knife. a new police car, a full tank of gas, a spare tire and jack, a First Aid kit, and if you're lucky a map. Ask yourself, "What would John Wayne do in this situation?" Use your initiative and Academy training

If you think that you will not be found before your tour of duty ends, simply kick off your shoes and snuggle up comfortably on the front seat. Surer than sure, a supervisor will come upon you when he wakes up.

In the event you have to leave the car for any reason, to look for food, water, or the coffee truck, leave your roof lights on, just in case. Better yet, never go out on patrol alone until you have developed basic pathfinding skills or until you have been on the job for at least ten years and have committed to memory a minimum of seven travel routes back to headquarters.

Remember, any police officer can become lost on patrol, but only a rookie is late going off duty!