

A present for the police

What is happening in this picture? Did the policeman on the pedestal possibly just do his shopping and put down the bags while on duty? Not quite. In the 1950s and 1960s, police officers controlled traffic at busy intersections and junctions on pedestals or in so-called traffic control bins. Their elevated position made them easier to see for road users. At Christmas time, it was a common custom throughout Germany for motorists to stop at the pedestals and hand out gifts for the police from their vehicles. Usually it was liquor bottles or sweets that were given to the Schupos. The bins and platforms were often so full of gifts after a short time that the officers could hardly move. In these cases, reinforcements were called in to bring the good gifts to the police station. What seems like an offering made by motorists to show mercy to the parking ticket god was joyfully accepted by the officers at the time, but today would lead to criminal proceedings for accepting benefits (Photo: Kawelovski Collection).