

**That Was the Week That Was
From Sixty Years or so Ago**

by Larry Neal

This is a tale of a single week
In sixty-two or three,
A week, I think, and hope you agree,
Will live in infamy.

I knew the week was going to be bad,
A Juice WPR wasn't all that I had.
Turned out in Chem and my turnout exam,
Was also this week ... how lucky I am.
Spinning the spurs on a midnight run
Was hardly my idea of evening fun.

I saw a mole upon the plain
And only counted six point oh.
Only Avogadro knows
Why that should be so,
Avo, Avo, help me find
That blasted missing hair,
I'm beginning to feel, and rightly so,
I may not be all there.

I climbed to Wirty Flirty,
Then searched down in the sinks,
Ten to the twenty third is just
Too much to count, methinks.

The doolie calling the minutes
Got it wrong again,
His clock was slow, thus I was late,
And so my day began.
The flag said short overcoats,
But he called jackets gray,
Not only late but wrongly dressed
I started off my day.

Of course, a watchful Tac
Was Johnny on the spot,
And helped adjust my attitude,
Of which I had a lot.

A slug, a quill, an H Report,
signed off by Roman Smith,
Just add it to my balance sheet
and I will walk forthwith.

Then came SAMI, a double whammy,
Shoes and brass unshined.
A few more hours to while away
On Saturday, I opined.
A century man I was destined to be,
Of that there was no doubt.
My big regret was the Holland date
I had to do without.

I saw her, though, in the sallyport,
Engaging in PDA,
Holding hands with my roommate,
Who just happened by that day.
He was carrying his typewriter case
And likely had a plan,
For her to help with his homework,
Or to get the lay of the land.

The boodler was out of butter pecan,
And my brown boy had a hole,
What else could go wrong today?
Oh yeah, that dreadful mole.

A WGR in calculus, then ES&GS
was really a mess,
Couldn't remember Riemann Sums
Got escarpments confused
With moraine and loess.

Now you know my tale of woe,
From times that seem so long ago.
I'm baring all my grief because,
That was the week: The week that was.

Notes:

WPR and WGR: Written partial and written general reviews. Comprehensive exams given quarterly (partial) and at the end of each semester (general).

Juice, Chem, ES&GS: Electricity, Chemistry, Earth Space & Graphic Sciences classes.

Turnout Exam: If a cadet fails a course, a final exam is given to determine if the cadet may remain, is to be discharged, or turned back to another class year.

Spinning the spurs: Traditionally, a cadet taking the turnout exam would visit the statue of Gen. Sedgwick at midnight, in full-dress uniform, under arms, and spin the rowels on the boot spurs to bring good luck on the exam.

Mole: In chemistry, a volume that contains 6.022×10^{23} indivisible units. In cadet slang, a small animal on the plain with Avogadro's number of hairs.

Wirty Flirty: The Wirt Robinson memorial, located on the hillside northwest above the gym. Secluded, it was a secondary Flirtation Walk.

Sinks: Basement areas that housed cadet showers and toilet facilities.

Doolie: Plebe.

Flag: References the system of colored flags used to convey the uniform of the day.

Tac: Tactical Officer. The Commandant's cadre that dealt with cadet regiments and discipline.

Slug, Quill, H-Report: Demerit and punishment system. Quill was a demerit; slug was several demerits coupled with hours walking the area and months of confinement. Severe infractions required cadets to write a Held Report explaining their poor judgment.

Roman Smith: A Chief Warrant Officer who managed the administrative affairs for the Commandant including the disciplinary system. Held in high esteem by a cult following known as the Roman Smith Society.

SAMI: Saturday morning inspection. Room and personal inspection by Tacs most Saturday mornings to ensure grooming and room and equipment standards were being met.

Walking the Area: Demerits over a specific limit became "punishment tours", one hour for each demerit marching back and forth in Central Area on Saturdays carrying a rifle. A cadet who accumulated a hundred or more hours walking was said to be a "century man".

Holland Date: Cadet Hostess Beatrice Holland arranged dates between cadets and young ladies seeking same.

Sallyport: Entryway into Central Area. Easily guarded to keep the inmates in and the real world out.

PDA: Public Display of Affection.

Typewriter Case: A blanket fits nicely inside.

Brown Boy: A quilt. When snuggled under all troubles went away. An indispensable escape.

Boodler: A small shop where cadets could buy desserts and sundries.