

# VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

October 15, 2020

Dear VMI Community:

The ongoing pandemic has posed many challenges at every turn making this semester one unlike any other. As we pass the midterm mark, I am proud of the spirit, resilience, and perseverance of our Corps of Cadets for rising to the challenge. Additionally, I'd like to thank the many faculty and staff who have worked so diligently to care for all cadets but particularly the isolated and quarantined cadets.

When our COVID-19 operations plan was certified in July by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, we knew that there were many decisions to be made as we worked through the academic year. Our plan called for a 30-day rolling decision making process to allow Institute officials to make decisions based on the most up-to-date information. As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, we have been assessing the health of the Corps, current local and regional trends related to COVID-19, and best practices in higher education. We also recognize that, in making these decisions, families need time to make the necessary travel arrangements for the return of their cadets.

Rather than have the Corps come and go from post further exposing cadets and families to additional virus and to limit the overlap of the pandemic and cold and flu season with the academic instruction, we will move to an online environment beginning on Monday, Nov. 23, 2020. The Corps of Cadets will be furloughed from post in a phased approach beginning on Friday, Nov. 20, 2020 as follows:

- Friday, Nov. 20, 2020, CAD: 1<sup>st</sup> class cadets and Rats as well as cadets being transported by 1<sup>st</sup> class cadets
- Saturday morning, Nov. 21, 2020: 3<sup>rd</sup> class cadets
- Saturday afternoon, Nov. 21, 2020: 2<sup>nd</sup> class cadets

Cadets are to take all books, computers, and other necessary supplies to complete their academic coursework in an online environment for the remainder of the semester. All travel must be completed in time so that cadets are able to participate remotely in classes on Monday, Nov. 23.

To make things easier on families, cadets with siblings in a different class may stay in barracks until their sibling's class is authorized to leave. The cadet who is staying should notify the Commandant's staff of such an arrangement.

Barracks and cadet support services will remain open through the end of the fall semester for those cadets who have extenuating circumstances such as a family member at home who is at-risk or those with internet connectivity issues. International cadets and designated cadet-athletes will stay in barracks through the end of the fall semester. Cadets who are approved to stay in barracks through the end of the fall semester will be required to stay on post during that time (including Nov. 26-29). Those cadets who are in isolation (COVID-19 positive) or quarantine on their scheduled date of departure will remain on post until they have met the CDC requirements for being released from isolation or quarantine. The cadets remaining in barracks through the end of the semester or until they have met CDC requirements to depart will be required to complete the LiveSafe app daily and follow guidance produced by the survey.

Beginning Monday, Nov. 16, COVID-19 testing will be available to any cadet who wishes to be tested prior to departing post. Any cadet with a positive test result will be isolated on post in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Cadets will return to post for the spring semester Jan. 17 - 18 to begin academic classes on Jan. 21, 2021. Cadets will, once again, be strongly encouraged to quarantine accordingly prior to their return and will be screened for symptoms upon their return. The Institute will be applying for the Corps to march, in some manner, in the Presidential Inaugural Parade on Jan. 20, 2021. A more specific return order will be issued once details of the parade are known.

Ring Figure festivities for the Class of 2022 will occur on Friday, Nov. 20 and Saturday, Nov. 21. A class dinner where combat rings will be distributed will be held Friday and a traditional ring presentation ceremony will be held on Saturday. Families will be invited to attend the ring presentation ceremony, though the number of guests per cadet will be limited. The ceremony will be livestreamed for those who are unable to attend. Further details to be published shortly.

December commencement will be held on Saturday, Dec. 19 in Cameron Hall. Communication will be sent out next week to May 2020 graduates, as well as those on track for December graduation. Participation and attendance details associated with Winter Commissioning Exercises for Dec. 18 will also be made available.

In the coming weeks, additional and specific details, orders, instructions and information will be provided on cadet departure, the Class of 2022 Ring Figure, December Commencement, cadet return and the support services for all of these events and activities. More information regarding refunds for fall room, board, and fees will also be forthcoming.

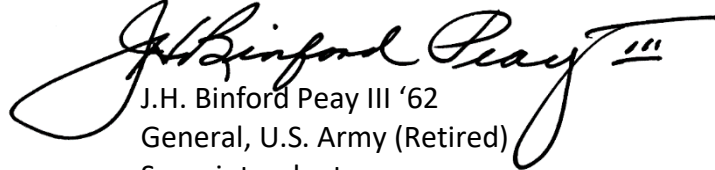
As we look to the second semester of academic year 2020-21, the following are some of the tentative planning decisions and thoughts:

- Corps of Cadets phased return: Jan. 17-18;
- Class registration: Jan. 18;
- First day of classes: Jan. 21;

- To limit the exposure of the Corps to the pandemic, there will be no Spring Furlough;
- Last day of classes: May 4;
- Exams: May 6 – 11;
- Commissioning: May 15;
- Commencement: May 16
- More to come.

Though this transition to an online environment is just over a month away, we know how quickly things can change during this pandemic. We must continue to work together to deliver on our mission. As we navigate the remainder of this semester, our ability to control the virus depends on the entire community's continued adherence to the COVID-19 protocols.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.H. Binford Peay III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

J.H. Binford Peay III '62  
General, U.S. Army (Retired)  
Superintendent