

INSTITUTE REPORT

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Flight Simulator Offers 'Chance to Inspire'

By Ashlie Walter

VMI's Air Force ROTC now has a new tool to get cadets interested in flying and to help current Air Force ROTC cadets planning to become pilots stay up to date on their training.

Last fall, the department bought a flight simulator that uses three large screens attached together with a table, chair, and a fourth computer screen showing the different instruments, like a real plane.

The simulator can show a variety of aviation controls and allow the pilot to simulate flying in real-life areas.

Air Force ROTC commander Col. Steven Biggs said that prior to the acquisition of the simulator, the closest place cadets could train or practice was flying out of Eagle's Nest, a private airport outside of Waynesboro, or the Roanoke Regional Airport.

The simulator gives prospective pilots who might not have been at the controls of a plane before a chance to test it out, an experience that could get them interested in joining the Air Force.

See Flight Simulator, page 3

Inaugural Parade 'Extra Special'

Corps of Cadets Marches for First VMI Alumnus Governor in a Century

By Mary Price



The Corps of Cadets marches past the reviewing stand during the inaugural parade of Gov. Ralph Northam '81.—VMI Photo by Maj. John Robertson IV.

Just under 1,400 strong, members of the VMI Corps of Cadets marched through the streets of Richmond Saturday, Jan. 13, as part of the inaugural parade for Gov. Ralph Northam '81, the first alumnus to serve as governor of Virginia in a century.

And as a special favor to the cadets, Northam made his first official act as governor the granting of amnesty for all penalty tours and confinements. Amnesty, noted Col. William "Bill" Wanovich '87, commandant of the Corps of Cadets, is a seldom-granted privilege, and one that can only be granted by the commander in chief.

Preparations for the parade had been underway since the fall semester, as the Corps is traditionally invited to march in the inaugural parade for each new Virginia governor. This time, that involved bringing the Corps back early from Christmas furlough so cadets would have time to get haircuts, have their uniforms repaired, if necessary, and practice for the big day.

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Dean to Step Down

By Col. Stewart MacInnis

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey G. Smith, Jr. '79, deputy superintendent for academics and dean of the faculty, will resign from his position at the conclusion of this 2017-18 academic year, after four years of service to the Institute. After a brief leave, Smith will remain at VMI as a member of the faculty.

"General Smith's background as a cyber leader, and his work as dean in maturing VMI's transformational Computer and Information Sciences Department, make him the ideal fit for the CIS faculty, especially at a time when the nation is seeking a workforce of principled leaders to defend our interests in cyberspace," said Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, superintendent. "It has been an honor to have served as dean of my alma mater's faculty," said Smith. "Our educational framework is unique to this nation, essential to its security, and performing on a level consistent with the very best colleges in America. I believe you can trace that performance to the intellectual and moral development of cadets, provoked by VMI's remarkable faculty and staff."

Smith was named VMI's 10th dean in the spring of 2014, joining the Institute after the conclusion of a 34-year military career that culminated with his assignment as deputy commanding general of U.S. Army Cyber Command.

"General Smith's tenure has been marked by singular achievements along multiple lines of effort, accompanied by focused modernization of the academic program," said Peay. "Jeff has been a strong advocate for the faculty, and advanced the mission of the Institute with great energy and vision. He led our efforts to improve faculty pay, while enhancing the faculty's reputation as superb teachers, cadet mentors, and scholars in their respective fields. In particular, Jeff's stewardship of VMI's reaccreditation effort affirmed the Institute's reputation as one of the nation's premier colleges, whose academic program remains relevant and vital to the needs of our nation."

Under Smith's leadership, VMI has aligned curricula to account for national



Brig. Gen. Jeffrey G. Smith '79

security and workforce needs in data analysis and cybersecurity, introduced computational skills as an academic requirement for future graduates, and planned the modernization of labs to exploit the revolution in information technologies. The number of cadets who major in computer science has more than quadrupled. The CIS Department has introduced its first minor in cybersecurity, which includes course contributions from six departments. Smith further implemented a "right-sizing" plan that focused on well-managed majors with "right-sized" enrollments and department faculty to insure small classrooms and instructor-cadet relationships vital to academic excellence.

"Whatever work I've led, it has been derived from a shared vision; and whatever outcomes we've achieved have been the consequence of exceptional teams built across the Institute, its agencies, the alumni, our board of visitors, and the state's political leadership," remarked Smith. "I am particularly grateful for the generosity of donors whose unprecedented contributions will ensure VMI's faculty are recognized for their individual excellence, and paid commensurate with their talent and sacrifice."

Smith added, "Deborah and I are grateful to each of you for your support and friendship over the past four years, and we anticipate hearing of your continued success in the years that follow."

A national search for a successor will begin shortly. 🍀

"If it gets some cadet thinking about it and deciding he wants to fly, it has done its job," Biggs said.

Phillip Meyer '18 said the simulator works well for learning how to handle emergency situations, such as an engine fire, without actually being in an emergency. The only thing the simulator can't do is flip over, as a real plane might do.

If a certified private instructor was willing to help with the simulator, the department could offer training to maintain a pilot's license.

Meyer said he already has a license from his time flying in his hometown of Yorktown, and the simulator helps him stay current on his instrument certification.

Eric Arnesen '18 noted the simulator also helps with the cost of learning to fly. Flying with an instructor can cost up to \$125 an hour, while the simulator is free for cadets.

The system runs on Microsoft Flight Simulator software. Charles Remig '19 said the software is available to consumers, which means it is very customizable, with the ability to add more planes or flight areas to suit the department's needs.



Phillip Meyer '18 uses the flight simulator located in the Air Force ROTC department of Kilbourne Hall to practice flying.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



Air Force ROTC cadet Phillip Meyer '18 sets the location and the weather conditions on the flight simulator located in Kilbourne Hall.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

A cadet is selected each semester to be responsible for the simulator, to help new people try the simulator, and to create special training plans.

Meyer was the first cadet to have stewardship over the simulator and there was a large range of cadets, from 4th Class to 1st Class cadets, who wanted to try it out.

"It's a chance to inspire and see firsthand how to fly. They don't think they can be a pilot, but this is accessible," he said while demonstrating a simulation of a single-engine Cessna flying over Waynesboro's Eagle's Nest Airport.

"Some had some hours [in a plane before], and some didn't have any time," he said of this

first group of cadets to log hours on the simulator. And those hours will pay off as cadets continue to explore flight opportunities and those committed to commissioning prepare for more advanced training with the Air Force.

The new training opportunities come as VMI's Air Force ROTC is poised to commission its largest group since mandatory commissioning ended, with nearly 50 cadets on track to take their oaths May 15. 🇺🇸

Community Memoir Project

Residents from Kendal at Lexington, a local retirement community, meet with cadets from Maj. Stephanie Hodde's ERHS 411 Fieldwork class and Maj. Polly Atwell's Advanced Creative Writing class to begin the Rockbridge Community Memoir Project. The cadets will lead and participate in a writing workshop with the residents which will culminate in April with a public reading of their work. Cadets will also meet with students from Lylburn Downing Middle School to discuss autobiographical and creative non-fiction. The service learning project gives cadets a chance to connect with community members from different generations and provide a creative outlet.—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye.



Renovations to Historic Houses Underway

Jackson House Will Reopen in April with Better Access, More Space

By Mary Price

Renovations currently underway at the Davidson-Tucker House will greatly expand the Stonewall Jackson House's capacity to welcome visitors and interpret the pre-Civil War life of Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson.

The goal of the renovations is to move the gift shop and the entrance to the Stonewall Jackson House from the basement of the Jackson House, where it has been since the house was opened to the public in the 1980s, to the Davidson-Tucker House, which is immediately adjacent to the Stonewall Jackson House on W. Washington Street. Both houses are owned by VMI.

"Because we have the confines of working in an historic home, our shop is very small, and also our orientation room," explained Grace Abele, site director at the Jackson House. "This is going to more than double both of those spaces for us. ... During our busy season we won't feel so cramped."

Once the renovations are completed, which is slated for sometime in March, entrance to the Stonewall Jackson House will be through the Davidson-Tucker House. The renovations will provide a covered porch for visitors waiting to enter the Davidson-Tucker House, as well as restrooms for visitors and lockers where they can store valuables.

The work, now ongoing, has been in the planning stages for some time. Abele explained that the project, which was first announced three years ago, came in well over budget the first two times. The third time, the bids again came in over budget, but Maj. Barbara Botkin, senior project manager at VMI's Physical Plant, was able to work with the lowest bidder to trim costs and bring the project to fruition.

Abele is particularly excited about the possibilities inherent in the new orientation room. Here, visitors who may not know much about Jackson other than his battlefield prowess can learn about the man who taught natural philosophy (now physics) at VMI in the years



Construction begins on the Davidson Tucker House as crews remove a patio and concrete walkway.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

before the Civil War. To enhance their learning, she's planning on replacing the static interpretive panels which have been part of the Jackson House for years with interactive exhibits.

"We definitely want to engage visitors, because you learn more when you're engaged, and not just reading," said Abele. "There will be some interactive feature to each of the panels, and it's going to dive more into the [Jackson] family on the eve of the Civil War."

More space will also allow greater interpretation of the enslaved Africans who were part of the Jackson household. "Five slaves lived in the house with the Jacksons, and they knew [Jackson] best besides his wife," Abele commented. She added that the staff at the Jackson House has recently learned more about those slaves, so giving a more complete picture of their lives will become part of the Jackson House's mission as well.

There's another change coming, too, to the orientation room. Entrance to the orientation room will be free, so visitors who are only mildly interested in Jackson or have little knowledge of him can



This artistic rendering shows the Davidson-Tucker House additions from the Stonewall Jackson House garden.—Image courtesy of Stonewall Jackson House.

learn more before deciding whether or not to pay for a tour of the Jackson House.

Visitors to the museum shop will find an upgraded experience as well, with movable glass shelving that can better showcase merchandise. Along with museum shop manager Natalie Carey, Abele is working to obtain more items unique to the Jackson House and a wider selection of items for children.

Abele is still working on plans for the basement of the Jackson House, which will be vacant once the museum shop and orientation

room are moved next door. "That might be the area where we explore more of the slaves' lives in the house," she stated. Other possibilities she mentioned include creating a more hands-on experience for school tours and bringing out items in the collection that aren't normally on display due to lack of space.

"[The renovations] are really going to allow us to expand on what we've been doing for 40-some years," Abele commented. "There's a lot of excitement. Our volunteers are excited. It's nice that we're going to be able to accommodate our visitors better." ❧

Inaugural Parade *continued from page 1*

"We just planned ahead of time," said Kate Dixon '18, S-3 regimental lieutenant. "Back in the fall semester, we made sure that the armory would be open, [along with] the tailor shop, military store and barbershop."

Traditionally, she explained, cadets must return from a furlough by 10 p.m. This time, members of the commandant's staff stipulated a return time of 4 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10, so cadets would have time to get themselves ready.

Practice parades began the next day. A few days before Christmas, Dixon, along with Wanovich and Col. Gary Bissell '89, deputy chief of staff and operations, had traveled to Richmond to scope out the parade route. The trio quickly realized that because the route was long and narrow, it would make better sense to split the Corps into three battalions rather than the traditional two.

That worked nicely—and so did the decision to split Band Company into two sections, with the regimental band at the front and the pipe band at the rear. This way, Wanovich explained, all of the cadets would be able to hear the music and keep in step.

Three practice parades had been scheduled—one on Thursday and two on Friday—but in the end, a downpour Friday afternoon led to the cancellation of the last practice. Thankfully, the last practice wasn't really needed.

"Sergeant Major [Neel] and I were watching Friday morning," said Dixon. "[The Corps] looked great, so there was no need for that second practice."

On the day of the parade, everything went like clockwork, except for when one of the 31 buses carrying the Corps broke down along Interstate 81. But even that was just a small hiccup, as the Corps always travels with a spare bus in case of a breakdown.

"It was a standard blown tire, and in the course of about 10 minutes we were able to move all of the kids off one [bus], onto

the other one, and keep on going," said Wanovich.

While most of the cadets formed into their companies to march in the parade, 50 of them, including Dixon, formed an honor guard to escort the outgoing governor, Terry McAuliffe, to the inauguration, and then formed a cordon through which Northam walked back to the governor's mansion.

"We actually got to watch the parade, which was really nice," Dixon commented.

As she watched the inauguration, and listened to Northam's inaugural address, Dixon found herself appreciating the fact that the new governor once wore the uniform of a VMI cadet.

"I started to think about my own brother rats, like who could be the next governor," she stated.

Dixon also noted that Northam's governorship had shown her that there are many paths to service for a VMI graduate. Northam served as a doctor in the Army, established a medical practice when he left the military, served as the volunteer director of a pediatric hospice, then sought elective office.

"It's pretty impressive and it speaks to the education and training we get here at VMI," Dixon said of Northam's career path. "You can be prepared to tackle nearly anything, and it doesn't have to be in the military."

Once the parade was over, cadets loaded back onto the buses, and were all back at VMI by 5 p.m. It was a much less stressful



Gov. Ralph Northam '81 watches the Corps of Cadets march past the reviewing stand during his inauguration on Jan. 13.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

event, Dixon noted, than was the inaugural parade for President Donald Trump, held in January 2017, because the parade route was much shorter and there were fewer security checkpoints.

"It went very well," said Wanovich of the gubernatorial parade. "It was a big deal to march in an inaugural parade for an alumnus. It added meaning to the day. It was extra special."

Wanovich added that without the contributions of someone working very quietly behind the scenes, the day might not have gone so well. Neel, who has served as sergeant major for the past 17 years, retired Feb. 1.

"This is a tribute to Sgt. Maj. John Neel," said Wanovich. "This was his last parade. He's done many, many of these in his time here. He led the effort toward briefing and preparing the Corps. ... Their very strong performance was a tribute to his hard work."

Northam, a pediatric neurologist from Norfolk, Virginia, is the second VMI alumnus to serve as Virginia's governor. The first, Westmoreland Davis, VMI Class of 1877, served as governor from 1918 to 1922. ❧

Parkhurst Fare a Hit with the Corps

By Ashlie Walter

The first month of Parkhurst's new dining services contract with VMI has been a successful one.

"There is no question that the Corps enjoys and appreciates the quality and variety of the food. We have received dozens of unsolicited 'thank yous' and compliments about the food from cadets as well as faculty and staff," said David Shutt '82, a retired U.S. Army colonel who serves as director of board operations and associate general manager for Parkhurst.

Most employees previously employed by VMI's former food service vendor, Aramark, numbering almost 100, were hired by Parkhurst. Aramark moved three upper-level management positions from VMI to other locations in the company. Over the Christmas furlough, Parkhurst employees worked hard to install new equipment in Crozet Hall, train staff, and stock the shelves.

A change in the quality of the food in Crozet was immediately apparent, said Brian Gooch, who took over as executive chef at VMI after previously working in the same position at Bridgewater College.

Gooch said he plans to bring many of the same ideas he used at Bridgewater to VMI, such as using local produce vendors like Cavalier Produce in Charlottesville and Local Food Hub, a nonprofit that helps Virginia farmers supply food to their communities.

"Everything's natural; if it's broccoli, it's coming on the stalk; potatoes, we boil them and mash.

Everything's coming in as an actual fresh vegetable, actual piece of meat, unprocessed," he said.

Gooch said they are also looking at sourcing dairy from Wirtz-based Homestead Creamery and beef from Buffalo Creek Beef.

Local restaurants will be given chances to partner with dining services. The Southern Inn restaurant and



Cadets choose breakfast items in Crozet Hall Jan. 31.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

Matsumoto Sushi have indicated their interest in a partnership. Greenberry's Coffee, a Charlottesville-based roaster, will move its offerings from the PX to Crozet Hall.

Last month was the first meeting of the Mess Hall Committee, which consisted of representatives from the Parents Council, Commandant's Office, and a cadet representing every company in the Corps.

Shutt said they all provided positive feedback and asked for certain changes such as different brands of hot sauce, cereals, alternative milk options, and different fruits.

A big part of Parkhurst coming on board is building relationships with the physical education department and athletics department. Shutt said many of the cadets they interviewed indicated a desire for cleaner, lean protein, along with calorie-dense and nutritious foods needed for sports.

"The chef [Brian Gooch] went down and met with [Col. James Coale] and his staff and has taken it all to put together these menus. The PE department is

saying 'we need good nutrition.' The athletic department said 'we need good calories.' And the cadets are saying 'we want it to taste good.' We want to make sure we are working with them," Shutt said.

Gluten-free and allergen-free foods will be offered, as well as options for vegetarians.

For the PX, Parkhurst plans to change up the offerings and create a larger variety of



Parkhurst Dining Services offer cadets a variety of breakfast choices in Crozet Hall.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

food items. A Starbucks coffee bar is now open, along with a made-to-order submarine sandwich station. Grill items such as chicken sandwiches, burgers, and flatbreads will also be available. Stations open during the day will alternate between two or three items, while after supper roll call, all stations will be open for cadets until closing.

The convenience items section will remain mostly the same.

Over the summer, construction will begin on remodeling the shop fronts, names, and the convenience items section. The former

Subway will be replaced with Freshens, a restaurant offering crepes, salads, flat breads, rice bowls, smoothies, and yogurt.

Amy Jo DeCarlo, director of catering, indicated improvements will extend to VMI's catering services as well. Boxed lunches for traveling cadets will be more customizable and at times mirror what is served in Crozet that day.

"We have met with all the coaches; all have come to tell us what they are getting in the box lunches and when they need it. We have developed a high-protein snack pack, with

cheese and fruit, not as many cookies and chips," she said.

Gooch added that at one of Parkhurst's other locations they created a special, home-made granola bar for before, during, and after workouts.

Cookies, however, will still be sticking around, though perhaps with a bit more style. Parkhurst Dining is owned by Eat'n'Park Hospitality Group which also owns the Smiley Cookie franchise. That will allow the VMI team to offer custom cookie creations for special events on post. 🍪

Keydet Powerlifters Claim Team Titles

By Chris Floyd



Holly-Guolanie Njabo '20 deadlifts 231 pounds for the VMI powerlifting team during a match in Cocke Hall on Jan. 20.—VMI Photo by Chris Floyd.

The United States Powerlifting Association brought its Collegiate Raw Nationals to VMI's Cocke Hall Saturday, Jan. 20, and the league left behind some hardware.

Seven different VMI lifters took first place in their respective weight classes, and the Keydets claimed two team titles in one of their most successful competitions ever.

"This is the most champions that we have had at a meet of this level," said VMI head coach Lt. David Henson. "A lot of the cadets set personal records and broke state records. We are extremely proud of the team."

Though VMI was awaiting official results to post those state records, Henson and his charges do know that they captured team titles in both the women's and co-ed divisions in the meet that featured 15 teams from across the country.

Included among the individual winners for VMI was Annie Wilson '20, who finished first in her division and was named the best junior female lifter at the meet.

To win an individual title, a lifter must complete three lifts in three different disciplines (squat, bench press, and deadlift), and when all

of the lifts are tallied, the individual with the highest total weight is declared the winner. Wilson finished with a total of 787 pounds, including a 358-pound deadlift.

Also placing first for VMI was Virginia Villani '19, who finished with a total of 700 pounds. Abigail Zyk '20 totaled 721 pounds to win her weight class, while Holly Njabo '20 finished with 580 pounds to win her weight class.

On the men's side, Sean Kim '20 took a top finish with his total of 800 pounds. Alec Ewansik '20 counted a 490-pound deadlift among his top effort as he finished with a total of 1,255, and Wyatt Fagan took first place as both a squat and deadlift of over 600 pounds contributed to his 1,600-pound total.

"The team has spent a majority of this season preparing for this meet," Henson said. "Coach [Rebecca] Wilder and I are very pleased with the effort that the cadets have shown, both in practice and at the competition."

Preparations now begin for the biggest meets of the season for the Keydets. Next up is the Virginia State Meet, which will be held on post March 10. The USA Powerlifting Collegiate Nationals are slated to take place at Texas A&M University in April. 🍪



Caitlyn Casten '18 bench presses 165 pounds during a powerlifting match in Cocke Hall on Jan. 20.—VMI Photo by Chris Floyd.

Journalist, Author Reflects on Female Code Breakers

By Ashlie Walter

Prior to the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Navy and Army had very small code-breaking units. When nearly all of the draft-eligible men in the U.S. were shipped off to the battlefield, the military had to scramble to find a way to staff expanding units. They looked to women's colleges, which broke new ground for enlisting nearly 11,000 young women to break Japanese and later German codes during World War II.

All were sworn to secrecy and told they would be shot if they talked about their work. That secrecy almost led to their stories being forgotten completely.

Former *Washington Post* journalist Liza Mundy, author of the book *Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II*, talked about her experience uncovering the untold story in VMI's Gillis Theater on Feb. 5.

"It's like there were rooms of women and lights were turned off," said Mundy, quoting Margot Lee Shetterly, author of *Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race*.

Andrew Schifalacqua '19 waited in line after the talk to have Mundy sign his copy of *Code Girls*.

He said intelligence operations are often ignored. He added that women's role in intelligence gathering was very significant and the untold story of it was what captured his attention.

Catherine Berry '18 also read the book and said she was interested as a history major.

"She made a good point that women in the military have made the push for innovation and creativity," Berry said.

It was an era in which occupations for women were largely restricted. The most reliable career path for women in the 1940s was teaching. At the same time, women were pressured to get married and it was often seen as shameful to graduate from college without an engagement ring.

Mundy said many women enlisted in the code-breaking effort to get out of unwanted engagements. They were asked two questions by recruiters: "Do you like crossword puzzles?" and "Are you engaged?"

Mundy's book focused on Lynchburg native Dorothy Braden Bruce, who was recruited from her job as a teacher at a Chatham High School.

She said when Bruce first arrived in Washington, D.C., after a long train ride from Lynchburg with just two suitcases, a raincoat, and an umbrella, there was a culture shock.

"On her first day, she was told she would be shot if she talked, and they didn't have a place for her to stay," Mundy said.

The fast pace of recruiting and the war effort meant the military took over a private women's college, Arlington Hall, as the base for their units in Washington, D.C. The students were taught at a nearby department store during the war.

The Naval code-breaking unit focused on breaking Japanese Navy codes while the Army unit decoded military messages from Japan, Italy, and Germany.

Often the women knew firsthand what was happening in the

Pacific Theater via numerous messages that arrived to be decoded each day.

During Mundy's presentation, she read a quote from one of the women in her book, "We could tell what was happening in the Pacific because the stack got larger."

Their first code-breaking success came during the Battle of Midway, where the U.S. gained a large victory over the previously undefeated Japanese Navy. That success propelled commanders and officers to



Liza Mundy signs Catherine Berry's '18 copy of *Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II* after her lecture in Gillis Theater Feb. 5.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

start paying more attention to the women's work. Later in the war, the Navy built special "bombe" decoding machines to assist the British in deciphering the Enigma code. The British effort also included large numbers of female code breakers. Their success contribute to intelligence necessary for planning the Normandy landings on D-Day.

The women in the Army code-breaking unit were able to break the ciphers on the Japanese Army supply movement carrying everything from food to oil in the Pacific. Ann Caracristi, the first woman to be named NSA deputy director in 1980, was on that Army code-breaking team.

"It was incredibly stressful work ... they were also worrying about their brothers and boyfriends," Mundy said.

As part of the war effort supporting soldiers, the women wrote letters encouraging the men. Sometimes one woman would write up to six men. Bruce later married one of those men.

The women were the first to learn of the end of the war but could not tell anyone until President Harry Truman's announcement. Once

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the war was finally over, they were simply told by their commander, "You did a great job, girls."

"You shortened the war by a year. ... Don't tell anyone," Mundy said.

Many of the women were pushed back into their restrictive roles at home but some, such as Caracristi, did achieve a high level of professional success.

Another code breaker, Jacqueline Jenkins-Nye, would go on to have a son, Bill Nye, host of the "Bill Nye the Science Guy" television show.

Nearly 70 years later, as Mundy was tracking down the surviving female code breakers, she remarked how many of the women still remembered in immense detail their time during the war.

Massachusetts native Anne Barus Seeley, who was interviewed at 97 years old, was still able to explain how she broke the Japanese codes.

Mundy said as more of these stories of women working behind the scenes of historic events become more visible, women's abilities will no longer be questioned.

"We will no longer ask 'Do women belong in the military or in Silicon Valley?'" Mundy said. ❧

SoCon Awards Faculty and Staff

John Iamarino, commissioner of the Southern Conference, presents Evan Simmons, facilities maintenance team supervisor, with the All-Conference Staff Award on Feb. 8 in Cameron Hall. During the half-time presentation, the All-Conference Faculty award was also presented to Lt. Col. Wakeel Idewu, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering. The award is part of the Southern Conference's Academic Exchange, an effort to promote membership that benefits all students, not just athletes. —VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



'VMI Spirit' Featured in *The Shape of Water*

By Ashlie Walter

VMI shares a tiny corner of this year's Oscar spotlight, with the "VMI Spirit"—officially titled "The Spirit of V.M.I."—briefly featured in Guillermo del Toro's *The Shape of Water*. The film is nominated for 13 awards ranging from best director to best picture.

The Institute shows up in a movie within the movie when two of the main characters have a discussion as a television plays a scene from the movie *Mardi Gras*. Almost imperceptibly, the "VMI Spirit" plays in the background.

Mardi Gras, a film about four VMI cadets who try to invite a French movie star to go with them to their annual ball in New Orleans, was released in 1958 as a television-only movie and gained an Oscar nomination for music scoring of a musical picture.

The "VMI Spirit" was written by Benjamin Bowering, VMI Class of 1915. He copyrighted the February 2018



The "VMI Spirit" plays on a television in the background of this scene from *The Shape of Water* with Richard Jenkins and Sally Hawkins.—Photo courtesy of 2017 Twentieth Century Fox Film.

work in 1916 and the copyright passed through several owners until it was eventually transferred to VMI in 1981, according to Communications and Marketing Director Col. Stewart MacInnis.

MacInnis was contacted by the *Shape of Water* production team in July 2017 to obtain the license to use the song. After consulting with the Virginia Attorney General's office, it was determined the song was considered to be in the public domain, but VMI granted a license in case the movie was shown in countries with different copyright standards.

"I find it interesting that VMI found its way into an Oscar-nominated film via a 60-year-old movie that itself received an Oscar nomination," he said. ❧



The Academy Awards nominated movie *The Shape of Water* features a scene with the "VMI Spirit" playing in the background.—Photo courtesy of 2017 Twentieth Century Fox Film.



Breakout

The Class of 2021 finishes the rat line on Saturday Feb. 3. Breakout began at 5 a.m. with a sweat party in Cocke Hall followed by workout stations on North Post. After lunch, the physical activity continued with a march to McKethan Park and more workout stations. Once back on post, the rats crawled across the Parade Ground and charged into barracks for the culminating event. That evening in New Barracks, cadre members recreated the Matriculation Day event "Meet Your Cadre," this time shaking hands and congratulating the new cadets. —VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin, Kelly Nye, and Ben Outland '19.



'There's Always Time for It'

String Ensemble Cadets Share Their Talents On and Off Post

By Mary Price

Anyone who's ever been to a VMI parade knows about the Regimental Band. With its classic blend of woodwinds, brass, and percussion, Band Company keeps the beat as cadets march in step to its cadence.

But over the past few years, another musical group has developed at VMI. Four years ago, the VMI String Ensemble had just three members—and this academic year, it's up to 10. And with bigger numbers have come bigger audiences, and more playing engagements, both on and off post.

The group had its genesis in the spring of 2015, when Jin Lee '17, a violin player, asked McKenzie Raber '18 and Joshua Orr '18 to play with him. Raber, a cello player, and Orr, who also plays the violin, formed the nucleus of the group.

One year later, Jamie Lindsay '19, a violin player since the 5th grade, also joined the string ensemble. This year's instrument lineup includes two cellos, two double basses, four violins, and two violas. Not surprisingly, word of mouth has been the best referral source for the group.

"Col. Brodie has helped us a lot with the recruiting of rats who play musical instruments," said Raber. "Many of the Band [Company] rats also play string instruments."

That's exactly what happened with Lindsay, who joined Band Company as a new cadet so she could continue to play the snare drum as she had in high school. When Brodie learned that she also played the violin, he invited her to join the string ensemble.

For Lindsay, being able to continue playing both instruments was a happy surprise, as she thought her days of playing a string instrument were over when she received her high school diploma.

"To be able to continue in college with kids who have the same busy schedules as me is awesome," she commented. "I thought [playing the violin] was completely over ... I was super lucky."

Raber, who'd been playing the cello since 5th grade, was determined to keep playing once high school was done.

"You don't want to just give up [playing] an instrument when you go to college," she stated.

Now, with a larger and more well-established group, the string ensemble is busier than ever. The group has performed for the Board of Visitors twice, and once for the Southern Military

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Colleges Leadership Conference. The string ensemble has also played at the chaplain's Christmas parties and for VMI's spring chamber music concert.

In December, group members took their music farther afield than they ever had before when they toured Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C., for three days, playing at venues ranging from the Fort Belvoir Community Hospital to the Sacred Heart Catholic School to the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle.

And for anyone who still thinks a string ensemble only plays classical music by long-dead composers, the VMI group has a surprise or two up its sleeve. Once, the group played the theme song from the James Bond movie *Skyfall* for the Board of Visitors. They've also played music from the *Lord of the Rings* film series.

"That was really fun," said Raber of playing the theme song from *Skyfall*. "Everybody enjoyed it."

Both Raber and Lindsay said making the string ensemble a priority has greatly enhanced their cadetships.

"There's always time for it," said Lindsay. "I've tried different clubs and different cadet leadership positions, but this is the one thing that's just part of my life here now."

Raber agreed, saying, "You put so much effort and energy into lessons growing up I in particular didn't want to just drop it. Playing an instrument is a life skill."

Brodie, director of the Regimental Band, agreed with Raber, saying that he's encouraged cadets who play string instruments to keep on playing them because developing true proficiency on strings can take up to six years.

And it's not just developing a skill for its own sake. There's also the satisfaction that comes from performing for an audience.

"I really like to perform—to share this skill and talent that we have with other people," said Raber. "A huge part of playing an instrument

is being able to share that skill with others and bring them joy."

As the spring semester gets underway, Brodie is still scouting out opportunities for the group. He's been thinking of engagements closer to home, which could include playing at retirement homes and in local schools, since March is music in the schools month.

"Music isn't music until it's shared with other people," he commented. ❁



Members of the string ensemble played at the Fort Belvoir Community Hospital in December.—Photo Courtesy of Col. John Brodie.

Construction Highlights Academic, Fitness Missions

By Mary Price

At its January meeting, the VMI Board of Visitors approved the *Post Facilities Master Plan 2018*, a document that guides the Institute in its decision-making process about facilities and building maintenance.

Among the Institute's top priorities as identified in the plan is the Corps Physical Training Facility Phase III, a proposed 58,000 square-foot aquatics center featuring a

50-meter pool that will replace the Clark King pool. Authority to proceed with preliminary design for the aquatics center, which would be built on North Main Street adjacent to the Corps Physical Training Facility, is being sought in the 2018 session of the General Assembly.

Commitments of \$10 million to \$12 million are already on the table from private donors, said Col. Dale Brown, Institute planning officer. The total budget for the project is just over \$41 million. Brown estimated that construction on the aquatics center would not begin until 2020 at the earliest, and possibly later.

The aquatics center will complement Phases I and II of the Corps Physical Training Facility project, which involved the renovations of Cocke and Cormack Halls and the construction of the new indoor track facility at the corner of Main and Diamond streets, all in support of cadets' athletic training efforts. Work on those buildings was completed in 2015 and 2016.

Also on the agenda are renovations to Preston Library and Scott Shipp Hall—and work on those should begin well before construction of the aquatics center. A renovation of Preston Library, which was built in 1939 and last renovated in 1996, was approved by the General Assembly in 2015. Work on the \$15.3 million project will begin this fall, said Col. Keith Jarvis '82, director of construction, with a 15-month timeline to completion.



This architectural rendering shows future renovations to Scott Shipp Hall.—Image courtesy of the VMI construction office.

“We’ll renovate from the top down, one floor at a time,” said Jarvis. Because of this, library staff and most books will be able to stay in the building, and cadets will continue to have access to the library during the renovations.

Work on Scott Shipp Hall, a 1919 structure that now houses five academic departments, is slated to begin in the spring of 2019, with an estimated price

tag of \$39.8 million. The Scott Shipp Hall project, which was approved by the General Assembly in 2016, will include construction of a five-story, 28,000-square-foot addition.

Jarvis said that the addition would likely be built first, and then it could be used for classroom and faculty office space while the rest of the building is renovated. He also noted that the phased renovation—Preston Library first, followed by Scott Shipp—is a deliberate strategy.

“Preston Library and Scott Shipp [Hall] are both huge study centers for the cadets, and we didn’t want to take them both offline at the same time,” he commented. ❄



This architectural rendering features the future addition to the Corps Physical Training Facility which will house a pool.—Image courtesy of Institute Planning.

Alumna Elected to State Legislature

By Ashlie Walter

Jennifer Carroll Foy '03 made history during the 2017 election by being the first public defender elected to the General Assembly. She is part of a wave of female newcomers to the Virginia state legislature.

Her election to the 2nd District, which covers Virginia's coastal region, also marks the first time a VMI alumna has taken a seat in the state legislature. The current session of the General Assembly broke a record for the percentage of women in the legislature at 27 percent, according to the Virginia Public Access Project.

Carroll Foy said she was always politically active, but the skills that allowed her to adapt to becoming a politician are rooted in her education at VMI.

"VMI teaches how to lead from the front and be the change you want to see. I saw a decline in civility in conversations," she said,



Jennifer Carroll Foy '03 presents a bill on raising the grand larceny threshold above its current limit of \$200 at a press conference in Richmond.—VMI Photo by Ashlie Walter.



Jennifer Carroll Foy '03 reviews documents at her desk in Richmond.—VMI Photo by Ashlie Walter.

noting VMI's emphasis on courtesy and respect. "I thought I could add to that and bring skills I learned as a cadet."

She defeated her opponent 62 percent to 37 percent.

Carroll Foy, who broke new ground as part of the third class of women admitted to VMI, ran track and field at the Institute. She developed a powerful work ethic, learning to manage her time among the academic, athletic, and military demands of life at VMI.

"I felt the fire in me to make a difference," she said.

As the first public defender to serve in the General Assembly, her priorities include increasing the grand larceny threshold—in addition to eliminating coal ash pollution and reducing traffic congestion in her district. 🌿



20 Mile March

Rats and their dykes—1st Class mentors—march along Robinson Gap Road on Sunday Jan. 14. The 20-mile hike began at Parry McCluer High School, crossed the Blue Ridge Parkway and ended in the George Washington National Forest. The exercise is meant to build closer relationships between rats and their dykes.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



POST BRIEFS

Smigrod Featured in Photography Journal

Claudia Smigrod, English, rhetoric, and humanistic studies' Conquest Visiting Chair of Humanity, is featured in the No. 3 Winter 2018 issue of *Focal Plane: A Journal for Photography Educators and Students*. The journal, published out of Barton College in North Carolina, highlights

photography educators in three parts, highlighting their art, their educational theory, and the art of one of their students. Smigrod, who was chosen after a nomination process, then chose Samuel McGaughey, a former student from the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design, to feature.

Cadets Recognized by Local Fire Departments

Four VMI cadets were honored for their service and received awards during the South River Volunteer Fire Department's end-of-the-year banquet, held Jan. 20. They were also recognized for helping to save the life of Kenneth Coleman '71 after he suffered a heart attack. Zach Theole '19 received the line officer's choice award and was in first place for most training hours of the year. John Camarella '19 also received the line officer's choice award

and was on standby for call of the year—a brush fire that burned 15 acres of a hay field. Ian Morris '19 likewise received the line officer's choice award and was in second place for most training hours of the year. Jon Kaiser '18 received a training certificate for having completed over 50 hours of training. All of the cadets have standing permits allowing them to serve the community as firefighters and EMS personnel.

Arabic Professor Invited to Lead Session at National Conference

Dr. Anouar El Younsi, assistant professor of modern languages and cultures, has been invited to present at the STARTALK Spring Conference, to be held April 27-28 in Philadelphia. STARTALK is a national program that seeks to increase the number of U.S. citizens learning, speaking, and teaching critically needed foreign languages. El Younsi brought the program to VMI for the first time last summer, teaching a six-week

intensive immersion program in Arabic that was open to VMI cadets, students from other colleges and universities, and high school students. At his presentation in Philadelphia, El Younsi will discuss designing effective learner plans. He was identified as a potential presenter based on positive feedback from the STARTALK observation team which visited his classes last summer.

Reunion Classes Give Generously

Total gift amounts were recently announced for the Class of 1992 and the Class of 2007, both of which celebrated milestone reunions last fall. Celebrating its 25th reunion, the Class of 1992 gave a total of \$1.83 million

and had a 52 percent participation rate. The Class of 2007, which celebrated its 10th reunion, gave \$222,000 and had a participation rate of 35 percent. Both classes exceeded their fundraising goals.

History Professor a Guest on Civil War Talk Radio

Maj. John Matsui, assistant professor of history, was a recent guest on the "Civil War Talk Radio." On the show, Matsui discussed his 2016 book, *The First Republican Army: The Army of Virginia and the Radicalization of the Civil War*. The book covers the summer 1862 campaign of Union Maj. Gen.

John Pope, a United States Military Academy graduate who is best known for his defeat at the Battle of Second Manassas. The episode is available online at www.voiceamerica.com/episode/105234/civil-war-talk-radio-february-7th-2018. 🎧

Club Fair

Henry Atwill '18 and Ben Outland '19 talk to cadets about joining the service club Ducks Unlimited during the Club Fair in Cocke Hall Feb. 8. More than 40 clubs were represented during the event ranging from theatre, rock climbing, fire-fighting, swordsmanship, timber framers, running, equestrian, and more.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



Donating a Liver, Extending a Life

VMI Police Investigator Donates Half of her Liver to Area Father in Need

By Mary Price

"It's been the most amazing experience—I would totally do it again if I could."

That's how Sgt. Beth Hunt, an investigator with the VMI Police Department, talks about the experience of donating half of her liver to Rex Miller, the husband of a friend of a friend.

For Hunt, a native of Amherst who's worked at VMI for almost six years, it was the fulfillment of a childhood dream to become an organ donor.

Two hundred miles away in Bristol, the Miller family is still trying to digest the impact Hunt's selfless act has had on their lives. "Words aren't enough to express what she's done for our family," said Rex Miller's wife, Tammy.

Hunt explained that she'd first thought of becoming an organ donor when she watched the movie *Steel Magnolias*. The film's main character, Shelby Latcherie, played by Julia Roberts, dies of kidney failure caused by Type 1 diabetes.

Hunt's dream stayed with her throughout her college years at Randolph-Macon Women's College, now Randolph College. After graduation, she tried law school but decided it wasn't for her, and ultimately went to work in law enforcement, first at the Lynchburg Police Department and then at VMI.

Despite the challenges of a fast-paced career, organ donation never left her mind.

Four years ago, she tried to become a kidney donor, but two weeks before surgery was rejected because of a benign tumor on one of her kidneys. In the spring of 2017, Hunt began to think about organ donation again. "I felt God telling me, 'You need to do this,'" she related.

In July she contacted the University of Virginia Medical Center to start the process of becoming an altruistic liver donor, a case in which the donor and recipient don't know each other. Then she went to the beach, an annual family gathering at Cape Charles, Virginia.

Hunt was sitting in the sand drying off from a dip in the Chesapeake Bay when she saw a Facebook post from a friend, saying that the friend had another friend whose husband was suffering from non-alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver. He was thus desperately in need of a transplant from someone with Type A blood.

"At that point in time I hadn't even told my family that I was scheduled for the testing," she recalled.

But at UVA, Hunt learned of a potential obstacle. Usually, liver donors can only donate to someone their own size or smaller, so female donors usually can only donate to other women or to children. In Hunt's case, an MRI revealed a surprise. A few days after the scan, she was told, "You have an abnormally large liver for someone your



Sgt. Beth Hunt and Rex Miller pose for a photo after their surgeries at the UVA Medical Center in December.—Photo courtesy of Sgt. Beth Hunt.

size, so you have sufficient liver volume to donate to him."

On Hunt's birthday, Oct. 28, she met Miller, his wife, and their teenage children when they came to Amherst to visit friends. "We've become very close very quickly," she commented.

Surgery was set for Dec. 7, so Hunt could continue to work through the final weeks of the VMI football season. In the weeks before the surgery, Hunt had another surprise. The liver has two lobes, one on the right and another on the left, and in an altruistic donation, the left lobe is always the one used because using the right is slightly riskier. Hunt's left lobe has an irregular blood vessel configuration, so she would not have been eligible as an altruistic donor. She could only donate to a designated individual.

For Hunt, that news was even more proof that she was meant

to donate to Miller. "It was just crazy timing," she stated. "Everything just fell into place so completely."

After the surgery, Hunt only stayed in the hospital two days before going home to recuperate. "It wasn't bad," she recalled of her post-surgical experience.

On Jan. 18, six weeks after the surgery, Hunt returned to work. She's passionate about spreading the word about organ donation.

State employees, she explained, get an automatic 30-day leave period after an organ donation. "I haven't even touched my sick leave," she noted.

More than 3,000 Virginians are waiting on a life-saving transplant right now. Hunt is doing everything she can to make sure that list grows shorter by persuading others, particularly those who don't know much about organ donation, to sign up.

"I don't think many people realize you can donate while you're alive," said Hunt. She added that three types of donation—bone marrow, kidney, and liver—can come from living donors. In the case of the liver, the organ regenerates itself after a transplant, so Hunt's right lobe will grow back.

In any case, Hunt is thinking much more of Miller—who now has years of life ahead of him—than she is of herself. "It's surgery, but when you can compare some minor pain and some minor inconvenience to somebody dying, it's no contest," she stated. "In the big scheme of things, it's such a small thing to do." 🌸

Cadets Prepare for International Law Competition

By Ashlie Walter

The Institute for International Humanitarian Law military academy competition in San Remo, Italy, is about two months away and cadets at VMI are already preparing for the competition there.

VMI is sending six 1st Class cadets to Italy in late March for the competition, which allows them to test their knowledge of international and national law, as well as meet military cadets from across the world.

At the competition, cadets will be separated into mixed teams with other countries and then act as lawyers to a military commander in a military situation.

The teams are judged on how they find the answer to a scenario and how it is presented to the “commander.” VMI won second place two years ago and fifth place last year. In 2013, the team’s first year at the competition, a cadet took the “Spirit of San Remo” award for best cooperation with a team.

Col. Bob James, VMI team advisor, gave examples of the situations.

“You’ve got a 13th century property being used as a shelter for [enemy] troops. They put a sniper, lookout, in the tower. The church is protected by international law because it’s a cultural property. What can I do as a commander?” James said. “I want those guys out of the tower or church but, I want to protect it as well. My first gut reaction is put a big round in it and blow it up, but that destroys cultural icons.”

The question of what to do in that scenario was what encouraged Hannah Gillan ’19 to join the team.

“He sold me with the sniper in a church tower. I went back and sat and researched; I



Col. Bob James answers questions about traveling to Italy during an International Law Club meeting.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

looked up humanitarian law, and I could not figure out the answer,” she said.

Gillan is the alternate for this year’s competition, meaning she trains with the team but will not be able to go to Italy unless another cadet cannot.

To train for this type of competition, the team meets once a week for about an hour to go over different scenarios that James proposes. He said his job is not to teach them the law but to show them where to find the law.

Another avenue for training is an international law class new to VMI this year as well as a multinational peacekeeping class offered by the international studies department.

At the competition, the cadets have to think about international law but also U.S. law, which may contradict each other.

David Northington ’18, who is going to Italy, said the competition would prepare him for his Army career after graduation. He was the alternate last year.

“We are all commissioning into the army. [The competition] applies to my role if I’m

going over to the Middle East. It has critical info, like a sniper at a religious site, that is real world application of the knowledge,” Northington said, highlighting the fact these future Army officers will network with future officers from across the globe.

James noted he and the team members have been coordinating with Maj. Nathan Bankson, an Army Judge Advocate General (JAG), who works at the IIHL as the U.S. Army fellow on a cultural night held each night of the competition.

Bankson is also the son-in-law of Col. David Gray, Center for Leadership and Ethics director.

Each country is asked to bring a different food item that represents their country for the cultural nights.

European participants have the advantage of being relatively close to San Remo and don’t have to worry much about having a place to cook, but the U.S. cadets have to coordinate from almost 4,000 miles away. Nonetheless, cadets have a plan to serve sliders and s’more’s thanks to Bankson’s help securing a grill.

The other members of the team going to San Remo include Ryan Nagatoshi ’18, San Moffatt ’18, Chase Simpson ’18, Stephen Foster ’18, and Andrew Smith ’18. 🍷



Wrestling, Basketball Beat Citadel

Basketball and wrestling seasons are winding to a close, with both teams having scored wins against the Citadel. Basketball defeated the Citadel 88-81 Jan. 20 in Cameron Hall with the entire Corps of Cadets attending. For this special “blackout” game, cadets sported black T-shirts that said Beat Citadel. Wrestling earned a victory against the Bulldogs 24-21 in Charleston Jan 25. In the team’s last home competition Jan. 13, Keydet wrestling hosted Clarion, Ohio, and Davidson, defeating the latter 29-9.—VMI Photos by Ashlie Walter and Kelly Nye.



Jumper to Receive New Market Medal

By Col. Stewart MacInnis

Retired Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper '66 will be recognized by VMI for a lifetime of public service that reflects the values of the Institute.

Gen. Jumper will receive the Institute's highest honor, the New Market Medal, on May 15, the 154th anniversary the VMI Corps of Cadets' participation in the Battle of New Market, the only time in American history that the entire student body of a college fought in battle as a unit. The victory won by the actions of the cadets came with a price: 10 cadets were killed or died of their wounds and another 47 were wounded.

The award presentation will be made on VMI's Parade Ground beginning at 2 p.m. as part of the Corps of Cadets' annual New Market Ceremony, which honors the 10 slain cadets and all VMI alumni who have died in service to the country. This is the final parade of the academic year, with graduation the following day. The event is free and open to the public.

"The story of General Jumper's career is a testament to the traits we admire in the New Market cadets and upon which the award was founded: leadership, duty, honor, and devotion," said Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, superintendent.

Gen. Jumper completed a 39-year Air Force career in 2005 after serving as the service's 17th chief of staff. After that, he was named chairman and chief executive officer of SAIC,

then a \$11 billion public company. He led a transformational separation of the company and continued in leadership roles of the new public company, Leidos, until his retirement in 2014. He continues to serve on the board of Leidos, as well as on the boards of Hyster-Yale, NACCO Industries, and Rolls-Royce North America. He also serves on the non-profit boards of the Marshall Foundation, the Museum of the American

Revolution, and the Air Force Village Charitable Foundation.

Gen. Jumper served on the VMI Board of Visitors, including a year as its president, and on the VMI Foundation Board of Trustees. He earned a bachelor's of science degree in electrical engineering from VMI in 1966. In addition to leading the Air Force in the wartime early years of the 21st century, he was a fighter pilot, commanded



Gen. John P. Jumper '66

an F-16 fighter squadron, commanded two fighter wings, and was commander of U.S. Air Forces Europe and Allied Air Forces Central Europe. He earned a master of business administration degree from Golden Gate University.

Gen. Jumper and his wife, Ellen, live in Spotsylvania, Virginia. He is the 15th person to receive the prestigious New Market Medal since it was established in 1962. ❀

Annual Giving Continues to Build Momentum in FY 2018

By Scott Belliveau '83

If you ask John J. Wranek III '85, the VMI Foundation's vice president for annual and reunion giving, about his top priority for VMI annual giving, his answer comes quickly: "Building." By that, Wranek means that he strives to build an ever-larger base of donors who consistently support VMI. "I have seen firsthand the power of the money raised through annual giving to improve the experience of every cadet," said Wranek. "That makes me grateful for every donor—and more determined to inspire alumni and friends to support VMI in this important way."

Successful annual giving programs are founded on a cohort of donors who routinely give. Their gifts vary in size—some are big, some relatively small—but they are made each and every year. This routine giving, however, is hardly ordinary because the donors who prioritize annual giving to the Foundation Fund, the Keydet Club Scholarship Fund, and the Athletic Operations Fund have a collective impact that is powerful. Together, they ensure that VMI provides the

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Corps of Cadets with a four-year educational experience that is truly extraordinary. As Andrew Deal '12, vice president of the Keydet Club puts it, "Our donors are with them every day, every step of the way."

In the wake of the successful campaign *An Uncommon Purpose*, Wranek is mindful that he and his team have important work to do. "We need to keep our alumni, family, and friends aware that their annual support of our cadets—fine young men and women who chose a challenging but rewarding path—remains extremely valuable."

As VMI annual giving turned the corner into the second half of the 2018 fiscal year, it appears that that message is resonating within the VMI family. Donations to the Foundation Fund, the Keydet Club Scholarship Fund, and the Athletic Operations Fund are on pace to beat the amounts raised last year.

Yet this is not just a numbers game or an exercise in simple measurement. As Deal puts it, "You can't think solely in terms of dollars raised. You need to think about the impact that money has on cadets." ❀

Improvements Slated for the Chessie

By Ashlie Walter

A long-awaited South River bridge on the Chessie Nature Trail may be a reality as early as 2019. In the meantime, Virginia Military Institute is improving parking along the trail, and cadets are engaged in projects to support events on the trail and to interpret the trail's importance to the community.

"We think it will be attractive to folks to go from Buena Vista to Lexington," said post engineer Col. Jay Williams '83. "It will be a huge asset to the community."

VMI, which manages the trail, received a grant through the Eastern Federal Lands Access Program to pay for the design and construction of the bridge. Currently, visitors to the trail must make a quarter-mile detour onto Stuartsburg Road around the site of the old South River bridge that was washed out by Hurricane Isabel in 2003.

Construction of a new bridge is slated to begin in late 2018 or early 2019. Williams noted VMI turned down a grant from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation because of the grant requirements. However, VMI's matched portion of the grant will still be used for improvement to the trail.

Also new to the trail is a new parking lot off Old Buena Vista Road and a proposed second parking lot near the South River Bridge.

Col. Dale Brown, Institute planning officer, said a new parking area was created behind property located near 167 Old Buena Vista Road. Directional signs have been placed along the road. The entrance to the trail has been moved to the new parking lot, and there is currently no



A sign indicates the parking area and current entrance to the Chessie Nature Trail.—VMI Photo by Ben Outland '19.

access to the trail between the East Lexington Bridge and this parking area.

Brown noted the situation may be temporary pending negotiations with landowners to reopen those portions of the trail currently closed.

Cadets have also been contributing to the trail's prosperity. During the fall semester, cadets in Maj. Stephanie L. Hodde's English, rhetoric, and humanistic studies class partnered with the Friends of the Chessie Trail to help support the Chessie Trail Half Marathon and 5K last fall and created educational signage to inform visitors of the area's rich history.

Hodde said the projects were based on two requests from the Friends group and the Chessie Trail Advisory Committee.

The requests were writing projects that would improve communications to the public such as "year in review" reports on

the Friends' website, profiles of the volunteers, and signage with QR codes.

"The fieldwork course offers ERH majors ways to apply their understanding of rhetoric in local, cultural contexts. Engaging in a community problem involving multiple stakeholders gives cadets valuable perspective, as well as concrete experiences with community partners as they construct solutions," she said.

To complement those improvements, Williams is developing a master plan that brings together efforts of physical plant, cadets, and the community to ensure the trail's continued vitality. ❁



The architectural rendering shows the future South River bridge and parking area on the Chessie Nature Trail.—Image courtesy of Col. Jay Williams '83.

'This Gold Mine of Experience'

Business Leadership and Innovation Summit Will Draw Together Cadets, Faculty, Alumni

By Mary Price

This March, a new kind of conference is coming to VMI—and its promoters hope it will become a regular event on the Institute calendar.

The Business Leadership and Innovation Summit, which will draw together hundreds of cadets and dozens of alumni who've been successful in a wide variety of fields, is the brainchild of Dr. Dekuwmini Mornah, assistant professor of economics and business.

Mornah, who teaches an entrepreneurship class, said that over the course of his six years of teaching at VMI, he's become more and more aware of how many alumni have gone on to successful careers in the business world. With that in mind, he began to think of bringing some of those alumni back to post so cadets could learn from their experiences.

"This is supposed to be a reunion of sorts of like-minded alumni," said Mornah. "Cadets will learn from alumni how the VMI experience and a VMI education can be an advantage for them in the business world. The idea is to bring back this gold mine of experience, in terms of alumni."

With that goal in mind, Mornah has spent the past several weeks making sure that all cadets and faculty are aware of the great potential for mentorship and collaboration that the summit will bring.

He's visited all three of VMI's engineering departments to make faculty members aware of the opportunity for cadets doing capstone projects to do poster presentations at the summit and possibly turn their ideas into businesses after graduation.

He's also encouraging all cadets, regardless of major, to visit the summit and soak up the lessons that alumni will be offering. As of early February, the number of alumni expected to attend was still in flux, but projections ranged from 60 to 120, from a variety of fields.

"Entrepreneurship cuts across disciplines," Mornah explained. "You would be amazed to see the number of entrepreneurs that don't have any business background."

Topics for the summit, to be held March 18-19 at the Center for Leadership and Ethics, will include turning ideas into reality,

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seeking venture capital funding, building a business culture, managing crises, taking advantage of global markets, and more.

Coming back to give the keynote address will be Jeff Minch '73, a Dallas, Texas, resident who has founded seven companies, most related to commercial real estate, and now serves as a consultant to other entrepreneurs.

"VMI delivers an excellent education packaged with discipline," said Minch, a former member of the VMI Foundation Board. "That discipline is necessary for an entrepreneur."

Minch said that in his keynote address he plans to talk about "the extraordinary power of a VMI education as it relates to success in the real world. ... VMI teaches leadership and the most important trait for an entrepreneur is leadership."



Alumni Association career networking officer Eric Hunter '08, professor Dee Mornah, and Alumni Association development officer Erica Putney '15 discuss the layout of Marshall Hall.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

Helping Mornah plan and organize this event has been John Kemper '68, a business consultant who mentors individuals starting businesses in the Richmond, Virginia, metro area.

"There's a ton of successful alumni entrepreneurs out there," noted Kemper. "The real goal [of the summit] is to bring alumni back and expose them to cadets early in their cadetships ... so we can create successful and ongoing mentoring relationships."

VMI, said Kemper, is an ideal place to

nurture such relationships, as the Institute teaches many of the skills an entrepreneur needs, such as time management, how to respond to adversity, and how to deal with others with integrity.

Furthermore, he noted, many young people today value the independence that self-employment brings. "When I graduated, we just wanted a job," he commented. "Millennials want to do their own thing."

As the days tick away toward the event, momentum and excitement are continuing to build. "People are coming from far and near," said Mornah, adding that at least one alumnus is coming all the way from California.

"Everybody we talk to is excited about this," said Kemper. "It has pretty much unlimited potential." ❧

Kerry D. Kirk '85 Addresses VMI Philanthropy Club

By Scott Belliveau '83

On Nov. 10, Kerry D. Kirk '85 spoke to the members of the VMI Philanthropy Club about philanthropy at VMI and the positive role it plays not only in the life of VMI, but also in the lives of those who give. Kirk, a former Marine Corps officer who earned a master's of business administration from the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia, has worked for 22 years at the global institutional investment consultancy Cambridge Associates, where he now is managing director in the company's endowments and foundations practice.

In his remarks, he addressed the importance of private support to VMI, pointing out that it made up more than \$21 million of the Institute's \$85 million budget in fiscal year 2016. He also stressed the importance that philanthropy has in the lives of individual cadets, using his own experience as an example. "My very attendance not only at VMI was scholarship supported, but my attendance at the Darden School at UVA was in measure funded by the James C. Wheat Scholarship," referring to a VMI-based

scholarship established by an alumnus that supports graduates attending the Darden School.

He also said that although many cadets aren't exactly enamored of the Institute when they graduate, their appreciation of its many benefits grows over time. With that growing appreciation, Kirk said, will come a desire to "share that truth." He commented, "This can be done through alumni chapters, through reunions and stories and new cadet recruiting efforts. But its purest manifestation—albeit sometimes indirect—is choosing to share the same experience with others by making it possible for them to experience it directly for themselves. And that, my friends, means money."

Kirk, who is currently a member of the board of trustees of the VMI Foundation and on the board of the Friends of Preston Library, assured the cadets that no one expects them to give a lot at first and then laid out a path for them to follow. "Get in the good habit of giving a little, but doing so regularly. And as you grow in age and your W-2 form grows, you give proportionately more."

He closed by commending the cadets present for being part of the Philanthropy Club. "Studies finds that young people are more likely to give and volunteer if they have been exposed to both conversations about philanthropy and role-modeling of philanthropic behaviors. That is what you are doing as members of this club. Don't be daunted in your mission."

"Having Kerry Kirk speak to cadets made a lot of sense," said John J. Wranek III '85, vice president for annual and reunion giving for the VMI Foundation. "He is a great example of both the power of philanthropy at VMI and, as someone who led the effort to establish the Class of 1985 Memorial Scholarship and endowed a scholarship on his own, he speaks with authority and credibility. Judging from the cadets' positive reaction to what he said, I am sure they got a lot out of it." 🌟



Kerry D. Kirk '85 speaks to cadets in the Philanthropy Club in Moody Hall Nov. 10.—VMI Alumni Association Photo by Micalyn Miller.