



INSTITUTE REPORT

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

Volume 47, Number 6, March 2019

Preston Library Renovation Underway

By Mary Price

A project that's been in the planning stages for two years is finally getting underway: the first renovation of Preston Library in almost a quarter century.

The floor-by-floor renovation, beginning at the top and working downward, is expected to take approximately 18 months to complete, at a cost of \$19.2 million. The building, a hub of learning

and research that's used not only by cadets, but also by faculty, staff, and the general public, will remain open during the renovation, with hours and operations as usual.

Overseeing library operations during the renovation process is Col. Diane Jacob, a 40-year veteran of the library staff who's currently library director and head of archives. She remembers that when the library was last renovated, from 1994 to 1996, the building had to be emptied



An architectural rendering shows the plan for the learning commons on the library's fifth floor.—Image courtesy of Diane Jacob.

See Library, page 18

Dimitrova-Grajzl Wins Outstanding Faculty Award

By Kelly Nye

Lt. Col. Valentina Dimitrova-Grajzl, associate professor of economics and business, was one of 13 recipients of the 2019 State Council of Higher Education for Virginia's Outstanding Faculty Award. The award was presented at the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond on March 7.

SCHEV has presented the award every year since 1987. It recognizes superior accomplishments in teaching, research, and public service among faculty at Virginia's public and private college and universities. Dimitrova-Grajzl is VMI's 7th faculty member to receive it and is the Institute's

first female recipient. There were 86 nominations from across the state this year.

"There are so many people at VMI that deserve this award," said Dimitrova-Grajzl. "It's really a very holistic approach

See Dimitrova-Grajzl, page 2

that VMI faculty take to teaching, research, and service.”

Along with teaching a full course load in economics during the academic year, Dimitrova-Grajzl, who is from Bulgaria, has established a summer study abroad course in central Europe. She is currently developing a new study abroad program that will take students to new and old members of the European Union and connect the history, economics, and politics of the region.

Locally, she is also active in connecting cadets with the community, co-founding the VMI service club Building BRIDGES. What began as the VMI Women Build with Habitat Initiative expanded into a program that engages cadets with service organizations throughout the community, including Project Horizon, the SPCA, and the Rockbridge Area Relief Association.

During her seven years at VMI,

Dimitrova-Grajzl has published 16 articles. Her extensive research into economics and social science is informed by her childhood. She grew up in Bulgaria as it transitioned from communism to capitalism, and her research has included the impact of the historical origins of institutions in today’s post-socialist nations.

Her experiences, research, and dedication to cadets are present in the classroom,

from introductory economics courses such as Principles of Microeconomics to upper-level electives such as Institutions and Economic Development.

Dimitrova-Grajzl was one of three VMI faculty members nominated by the Dean’s Office this fall. Part of her submission included letters of recommendation from VMI faculty and former students.

“The biggest award for me was the letters of support from the alumni,” said Dimitrova-Grajzl. “It’s very rewarding to do what we do.”

One of them, written by Casey Field ’17, described Dimitrova-Grajzl’s dedication to community service.

“Dr. Dimitrova-Grajzl develops relationships with her students that extend far beyond the classroom,” said Field. “I deeply respect her as both a professor and mentor.”

In Dimitrova-Grajzl’s personal statement she recognized her own teachers and the example they set.

“I integrate my life experiences and my research findings in my classes,” said Dimitrova-Grajzl. “Ultimately, I want my students to feel the way I felt in my middle school math class or my Wittenberg classes—inspired to learn, safe to explore different ideas and learn different skills, enriched by my teachers’ knowledge and peers’ experiences.” ❁



Lt. Col. Valentina Dimitrova-Grajzl, associate professor of economics and business, is one of 13 statewide winners of the 2019 SCHEV outstanding faculty award.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

TAPS—Brig. Gen. Mike Bissell '61

The Superintendent regrets to inform the VMI community of the death Feb. 7 of retired Brig. Gen. N. Mike Bissell '61. Brig. Gen. Bissell served as Commandant of the VMI Corps of Cadets, special assistant to the superintendent for the assimilation of women into VMI, and founding Commandant of Cadets for the Virginia Women’s Institute for Leadership.

A decorated combat veteran, Brig. Gen. Bissell



Brig. Gen. Mike Bissell '61 speaks during a 2012 ceremony honoring alumni recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross.—VMI File Photo by Kevin Remington.

served two tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. He was nominated for the Medal of Honor and received, among many service awards, the Distinguished Service Cross. He is among the most highly decorated graduates of the Institute.

“Mike Bissell was a special person,” said General J.H. Binford Peay III '62, VMI Superintendent. “He devoted his entire life to service in uniform to his country and to the Commonwealth: he was distinguished in combat; he demonstrated efficiency of character and service in demanding leadership roles; he was passionate and tireless in his work for his beloved VMI and the Class of 1961; and he was steadfast in forming the Virginia Women’s Institute for Leadership at Mary Baldwin. He was one of the most caring, thoughtful, and sensitive men I have known. He will be missed. Our thoughts are with his wife, Jan, their children, and their families.” ❁

The Institute Report, VMI's monthly newsletter, publishes eight issues during each academic year. Inquiries, suggestions, news items, and address changes should be directed to Editor, Institute Report, VMI Communications and Marketing, Lexington, VA 24450-0304; (540) 464-7207; or VMIReport@vmi.edu.
© 2019 Virginia Military Institute.

Director	Col. Stewart MacInnis
Editor	Maj. John Robertson IV
Assistant Editor	Kelly Nye
Designer	Robbin Youngblood
Institute Report Staff	
	Chris Floyd
	Stephen Hanes
	H. Lockwood McLaughlin
	Mary Price
Header photo on page 1 by	Kelly Nye

The Virginia Military Institute is committed to providing an environment that emphasizes the dignity and worth of every member of its community and that is free from harassment and discrimination based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, genetic information, against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities, or based on any other status protected by law. In pursuit of this goal, any question of impermissible discrimination on these bases will be addressed with efficiency and energy and in accordance with VMI General Order 16. General Order 16 also addresses complaints or reports of retaliation against those who have opposed prohibited practices, those who have filed complaints or reports of prohibited practices, and those who have testified or otherwise participated in enforcement of General Order 16. Questions regarding discrimination prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, or other federal law, may be referred to the VMI Inspector General and Title IX Coordinator, 212 Carroll Hall, VMI, Lexington, VA 24450, (540) 464-7072. Any cadet or prospective cadet having questions about disability services for students should contact the Director of the Center for Cadet Counseling and Disability Services, 448 Institute Hill, 2nd floor, Post Infirmary, Lexington, Va. 24450, (540) 464-7667. For employment-related disability services, contact the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator in the VMI Human Resources Office, Lexington, VA 24450, (540) 464-7322.

Marsh Remembered at New Market

By Maj. John Robertson IV

VMI cadets performed the ceremonial duties as former Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh Jr. was laid to rest Feb. 15 in a service at New Market Battlefield and State Historical Park.

Though not a graduate of the Institute, Marsh's ties to VMI were deep. He served on the VMI Board of Visitors from 1976 to 1980 and was frequently involved in Institute events, including delivering the Oath Day speech at New Market for over 20 years.

Members of the Corps of Cadets participated throughout the service, ushering guests, serving as pall bearers, and with seven riflemen firing three volleys in salute. Cadet musicians performed during the service with the Glee Club singing Marsh's favorite song, Shenandoah, and cadet buglers playing Echo Taps at the graveside.

"Secretary Marsh's contributions to the nation have been remarkable," said Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, VMI's superintendent. "His many accomplishments demonstrate those traits we work to inculcate in our cadets: leadership, duty, honor, and devotion. He has been both an inspiration to, and a friend of, VMI. It is appropriate that cadets rendered final honors in the name of the nation, and I am proud of the professionalism they displayed as they performed this solemn duty."

A dedicated public servant, Marsh was also remembered as a dedicated father and grandfather. His grandson, Capt. Adam Marsh '15, spoke during the ceremony.

"He instilled in us a respect for the value and history of our family as well as an appreciation for the importance of the impact we would individually leave on this world," he said. "To our family his greatest accomplishment is that of a grandfather."

The battlefield had special significance for Marsh, who had deep ties to the place and was instrumental to its preservation.

"It is difficult to imagine anyone will ever replicate [what] this valley and this specific place meant to Jack Marsh," said Col. Keith Gibson '77, executive director of the VMI Museum System.

Gibson told of how Marsh visited the family farm that was the site of the battle when he was a child. There Marsh learned the story of the Battle of New Market and the VMI cadets' charge across the field.

"For Jack Marsh, the battle was a demonstration of the most vital elements of character and human conduct—public service, duty, integrity, selflessness. He never forgot those lessons," said Gibson, "The nine-year-old boy found something here. He found

See Marsh, page 16



Cadet pall bearers carry John Marsh to his final resting place at New Market Battlefield Feb. 15.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Cyber Fusion Offers Challenges, Opportunities

By H. Lockwood McLaughlin

On Feb. 22-23, VMI hosted the third annual Commonwealth Cyber Fusion in the Center for Leadership and Ethics. During the two-day event, students and faculty members from 17 schools learned, collaborated, and competed in a myriad of cybersecurity related activities while having the opportunity to interact with and learn from companies and employers related to the field.

“What this is really trying to get us to do is look further into cyber security and how it’s going to affect the world,” summarized cadet Zach Harris ’20.

Most of the job-oriented activities took place on Friday. Activities throughout the day included a couple job fairs, an employer panel discussion, and a student, faculty, and co-host dinner.

“It’s good to be back,” said Darius Parker ’99. Parker was there representing Northrup Grumman, where he has worked for 20 years. He talked with interested students and potential future employees of the company at the event.

“It’s always good to be back and to help out. A lot of people helped me, so to be able to turn around and help somebody else I think is tremendous,” he said.

“They’re qualified candidates right away so it’s advanced interviewing when they go on in there, and that has improved each year,” said Maj. Doug Wainwright, coach of the VMI cyber club. “I expect the improvement to keep coming”

Friday evening, keynote speaker Chris Wysopal, co-founder and chief technology officer of Veracode, spoke to the attendees in the Gillis Theater. Wysopal was part of a high-profile hacker team in the ’90s called Lopht that helped shed light on cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

“I wanted to talk about some of my roots from the hacker community,” said Wysopal adding that they “used the hacker mindset and took it from something that you might think of as the bad guy and used our thinking to improve cybersecurity, and use that thinking to make cybersecurity better.”

“One my favorite parts was the keynote speaker,” said Harris, who competed at the conference. “He was talking about how he testified before Congress, and that’s a really famous moment in the community. And it’s just kind of surprising that you can get people like that.”



Keynote speaker, Chris Wysopal, co-founder of Veracode, addresses the participants of the Cyber Fusion conference in Gillis Theater Feb. 22.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Andrew Morin '21 and Willem Sciandra '21 compete with the VMI team during the Cyber Fusion Cup Competition Feb. 23 in Marshall Hall.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

In association with the Virginia Cyber Range, a state funded research and educational institute, U.S. Sen. Mark Warner played a role in making this year’s conference a reality. Although he could not attend due to the senate being in session, his video address helped kick off the conference.

“We need talented cybersecurity professionals now more than ever,” Warner said. “That’s why I’m encouraged to hear about the high quality of students attending this year’s Cyber Fusion. I hope this event will allow you to strengthen your skills and connect with experts in your fields and potentially folks that might be interested in hiring you.”

The main event on Saturday was the cyber competition itself. Teams from schools all over Virginia gathered in the Hall of Valor, where, over the course of several hours, they were presented with a set of cybersecurity challenges that would test their knowledge and problem-solving abilities. There were plenty of difficult problems set forth, and, while no team solved all of them in the allotted time, some got close. A live feed that charted each team’s progress and standings was projected onto a large screen as the competition progressed.

“Got up to 4th place,” said Peter Boyle ’19. “We were there for about half an hour.” By the end of the allotted time, VMI’s team placed 8th amid the competitive pool of seventeen teams, and the University of Virginia walked away with the top spot.

“This year went a lot better,” said Boyle, noting that the team was able to build on the knowledge gained in last year’s cyber challenge. “The competition was one of my favorites due to its practical application of your skills and it’s all helping you learn.”

“We are trying to solve problems that are in computer systems...maybe a decade older than what we have right now but it’s still problems that are going to continue to grow and

we need to learn to solve things like this, and look for them,” said Harris, who with his VMI team came close to breaking the WEP authentication challenge before they were cut short by the clock. WEP authentication is used in internet connected devices, including many modern internet routers.

Outside of the competition itself, there was constant collaboration and interaction among students from each school. “It’s nice to see people coming in from all part of the state coming together, sharing

ideas, and just getting to know each other,” said Boyle. “We’re going to be working together in some capacity and getting that foundation started now. It’s just going to help build and make improvements that much better.”

With another successful conference wrapped up, coach Wainwright reflected on his team’s experience. “We’re getting better every year and I look forward to maybe getting to top three next year.” ❧

VMI Cadet Intern Inspires Alumnus to Support VMI Cybersecurity

Eight co-hosts representing the nation’s premiere cybersecurity employers, including Booz Allen Hamilton and Northrop Grumman, were on hand for Commonwealth Cyber Fusion 2019. The two-day event’s job fair and cyber competition gave employers the opportunity to interact with and observe the work habits of over 200 potential employees and interns.

A new sponsor this year was SAP’s national security services, or NS2, represented by the company’s chief information security officer, Ted Wagner ‘88. SAP is a multinational German software company—Systems, Applications, and Products in Data Processing.

“I came on a whim ... thinking that coming to a cybersecurity job fair at VMI I’d be able to find potential employees who would ‘show up ready to work,’” said Wagner as he sat in his empty booth with none of the regular brochures, pop-ups, or giveaways.

One factor that motivated Wagner to participate was the encouragement of computer and information science major Kathleen Yates ‘20, who was his intern this past summer and suggested he attend and support cybersecurity at VMI.

“The opportunity to work with a defense contractor was ideal in getting in some practical experience as well as beginning to make some industry connections,” explained Yates, who has hopes of becoming a cybersecurity officer in the Air Force. “Working at NS2 was my first real experience in my chosen career. I’ve done other internships, but this one was really more in line with what I want to do in the future.”

Wagner is a retired Army Reserve colonel who commissioned in the Virginia Army National Guard after



Ted Wagner '88 speaks with Zachary Harris '20 during Commonwealth Cyber Fusion 2019.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

graduation. Though he was an economics major, his National Guard unit frequently sent him for technical training and certification exams.

“I learned that with each certification I earned, I got a little bit more money so I kept doing them,” explained Wagner. By 2001, that training

had prepared him for a position with a newly created unit in Maryland which served as the Army Computer Emergency Team or A-CERT. This unit would eventually become Army Cyber Command.

In 2009, he was promoted and assigned as a battalion commander at Ft. Devins, where he began a collaboration with MIT conducting ‘force on force’ exercises, much like the Virginia Cyber Cup competition held during Cyber Fusion. The relationship with MIT opened up opportunities for Wagner to begin lecturing, where he found his passion for working with young people—particularly in preparing them to develop cybersecurity policy.

In his work at NS2, Wagner explained that interns are ideal candidates for reviewing and researching documentation requirements on government contracts and cited Yates’ performance.

“I would give her work that I knew would last a few days and then follow up for her feedback and more assignments. ... Up until now, hiring interns has been a fairly informal process so coming to Cyber Fusion helps us to formalize the process,” said Wagner.

Wagner extended an offer to Yates to intern again at NS2.

“I was very pleased to hear that offer and I received a few others,” said Yates. “Right now, I’m weighing my options, including exploring the logistical aspects.”

— By Capt. Catherine Roy, Center for Leadership and Ethics



Kathleen Yates '20 sits down with other cadet participants on the first day of the event.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Promaji Club Celebrates Black History Month

By Kelly Nye

The Promaji Club hosted a Black History Month celebration Feb. 28 in Marshall Hall's Gillis Theater, complete with a Glee Club performance and a talk from guest speaker Solomon Abah.

Abah is the director of appeals and legal hearings at the Virginia Department of Social Services. His talk focused on criminal justice reform, race, and politics in America.

The Promaji Club was founded in 1972 when the first African-Americans admitted to VMI were 1st Class cadets. Club membership was steady through the '80s and '90s then dropped off around 2009. This year membership rose from 4 or 5 in September to over 50.

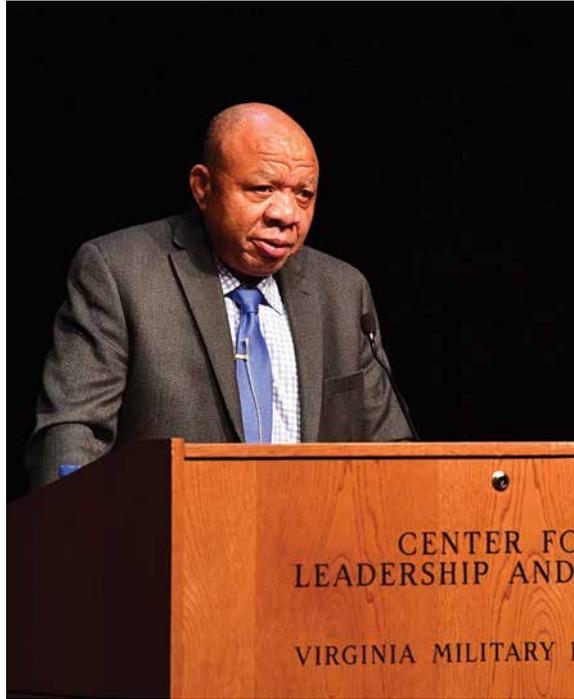
The mission of the club is to provide an open forum for cadets to discuss diversity issues.

"I think that this is a platform that allows people to come who have a shared experience, to just be who they are and speak what's on their mind," said club president Matthew Cotton '19.

Most of the club activities are community service related. They read to elementary school students every Thursday at the Waddell Book Club, and have also volunteered at the Community Table in Lexington and Saturday's Child in Buena Vista.

"We are very dedicated to community service," said Cotton. "That's what we consider our bread and butter—to go out in the community and show our faces, to show that we can contribute as well."

Hosting a guest speaker was a first for Cotton. The event was originally intended to be a jazz concert to celebrate African American music. But after consulting with Col. James Gire, professor of psychology, and club adviser Maj. Josh Iddings, assistant



Solomon Abah, director of appeals and legal hearing at the Virginia Department of Social Services, addresses the audience at the Black History Month celebration Feb. 28 in Gillis Theater.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

professor of English, rhetoric, and humanistic studies, Cotton decided to add a speaker.

Many of the points Abah made validated the need for the Promaji Club or any club that supports young African-Americans, and the content of his discussion hinted at possible reasons for the sudden increase in the Promaji Club's membership.

During his talk, Abah described the political initiatives and systematic racism of the late 1980s and early 1990s that led to the current climate. Both Democratic and Republican led policies resulted in an increase in mass incarceration affecting African-American communities.

"By 2000, America had more inmates in prison than any other country in the world," Abah explained, adding that the "tough on crime" attitude targeted young black males as "super predators."

His closing advice for the young black cadets in the audience was not to live in fear. "When you leave Lexington and go back to the big cities you become just another black man, you become a potential 'super predator,'" Abah said. "I want you to live proudly. I want you to live and proceed with intelligence."

Cotton was pleased with the lessons Abah stressed. "I had no idea how impactful it was going to be. I had no idea how much I was going to learn," he said. "Even if one person was able to take something away from

this speech tonight then ... I think it was very meaningful for our country." ❄



Nathan Mumford '19 prefaces the Glee Club's performance of *Hallelujah*.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

Reptile Fungus Offers Opportunity for Cadet Study

By Mary Price

Lt. Col. Emily Lilly knows how to take lemons and make lemonade. Confronted by yellow fungus, a fatal disease affecting lizards coming into her Blue Ridge Reptile Rescue, she's taking steps to both solve the problem and create learning opportunities for cadets.

At her Fairfield home, where she runs her rescue operation for unwanted reptiles, Lilly often encounters mystified pet owners who tell her that their lizards used to be good-natured but are now snappish and don't want to be handled. One glance at rotting flesh and necrotic extremities is usu-



Tavis Andrews '20 prepares to extract a DNA sample as Lt. Col. Emily Lilly, associate professor of biology, looks on.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

Lilly, associate professor of biology, has four cadets conducting an independent study in molecular biology with her this spring. The four—Tavis Andrews '20, Corey Johnstone '19, John Hatgas '19, and Holly Njabo '20—are charged with extracting fungal DNA from lizards who've been euthanized due to yellow fungus and then performing a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) analysis to determine what species of the fungus infected the lizard in question.

Long interested in reptiles, Lilly explained that yellow fungus currently only affects lizards kept as pets, but since unwise pet owners sometimes release their pets into the wild, there is a high potential for the disease to spread to wild populations.

"The variety of taxa it can affect is very, very broad," said Lilly. "That indicates it could leap to our native lizards. ... There's the potential for this to pose an ecological threat."

ally all it takes for Lilly to make the diagnosis. If the disease is advanced to a certain point, ending the animal's suffering through euthanasia is the only option.

"As a biologist, I'm looking at this and thinking, 'This should be treatable,'" said Lilly.

But to treat the disease, it's essential to know as much as

possible about it. Lilly explained that no one really knows if there is a separate species of fungus affecting separate species of lizards, or if all lizards are susceptible to the same strain of fungus.

That's where the cadets come in. "We're trying to figure out where this [fungus] falls in the taxonomic hierarchy," said Johnstone. He explained that he signed up for the independent study because either graduate school or medical school might be in his future down the road.

"A lot of these skills look really good on an application," he said. "And if all else fails, I have a chance to work in a lab somewhere."

The independent study format also gives cadets a chance to hone their lab techniques in a way that regular classes cannot.

"I actually get to come into the lab on my own time, and I get to go more in-depth," said Andrews, who took a genetics class with Lilly last fall. "With the genetics class, because of the course load, if you fail [at a lab technique], you have to move on. But with [Lt.] Col. Lilly, I have enough time that if I fail, I get to come back and do it again and again."

Lilly echoed this, saying, "In a typical class, like in genetics, we'll run the PCR lab once, and then we have to move on to something else, whether or not each student was successful. In this independent study, each student will be successful."

Andrews said he enjoys having a project with real-world applicability, plus the chance to practice lab skills. "You're not just doing something because it's an assignment. ... I know the purpose of each step, which really helps my learning," he noted.

"You've got to go out of your way to learn," said Njabo, who plans to take the Medical College Admissions Test this summer. She admitted to being frustrated sometimes, especially when she's spent the better part of an hour trying to extract DNA and only got water, but she feels the independent study is worth her while. "The more times you run [a DNA extraction], the better results you get," she commented. "Everybody should try [an independent study] at least once." ❁



Cadets (from left) Tavis Andrews '20, Holly Njabo '20, John Hatgas '19, and Corey Johnstone '19 ready their DNA samples for analysis in Maury-Brooke Hall.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

ATHLETICS

Wrestling

The Keydets closed the regular season with a 23-22 victory over rival The Citadel Feb. 23 in Lexington. VMI won five of the 10 matches on the night, including Dom Gallo '19's 17-2 technical fall victory over Keegan Connolly at 141 pounds that sealed the victory. At 157, Darren Ostrander '20 scored a 12-8 decision over Rian Burns. Max Gallahan '20 (184) was an 8-2 winner over Martin Duane. At 174, Neal Richards '20 needed only 26 seconds to pin Cooper Youngblood, while Derek Shockey '22 was awarded a forfeit at 125.

The Keydets traveled to Boone, North Carolina, March 10 for the Southern Conference Championships.

Basketball

VMI snapped an eight-game skid and picked up its second SoCon victory of the season with an 83-78 win over Western Carolina Saturday, Feb. 23 in Cullowhee, North Carolina. Bubba Parham '21 led the way for the Keydets pouring in 38 points and eclipsing the 1,000-point mark for his career. Myles Lewis '21 chipped in with 15 points and 12 rebounds, and Garrett Gilkeson '20 added 15 points of his own.

The Keydets closed out the regular season with a pair of home games, defeating Mercer 84-71 on Feb. 28 and The Citadel 81-78 March 2.



Kris Thornton '21 congratulates Bubba Parham '21 after his game winning three-pointers against the Citadel in Cameron Hall March 2.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

Indoor Track

VMI played host to the Southern Conference Championships Feb. 23 and 24, with the Keydet women taking sixth and the men placing fourth in the event held at the Corps Physical Training Facility.

The women were paced by Sarah Leckman '21 and Eliza Brooks '22, who both placed second in their events. Leckman was the runner-up in the shot put with her toss of 44 feet, 3 1/2 inches, while Brown placed fourth in the 400-meter run with a time of 56.62 seconds. Ariana Ruffin '21 was sixth in the 400, followed by Ahilyah Williams '22, who placed sixth.



Dominick Gallo '19 faces off against The Citadel's Kelgan Connolly at a meet in Lexington Feb. 23.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

The Citadel led 46-34 at the close of the half in Cameron Hall and maintained an advantage for most of the second half. A pair of three-pointers from Parham in the last minute of the game secured the win for VMI with the entire Corps of Cadets on hand to witness the thrilling victory.

Swimming

The VMI men placed fourth, and the women seventh in the American East Championships that concluded Feb. 17 in Worcester, Massachusetts. In all, both squads set 18 school records at the meet, with a couple of swimmers coming home with medals.

Brady Gannon '19 was one of those, taking fourth place in the 100-yard freestyle. Stephen Hopta '22 also swam to a fourth-place finish in the 1,650 free.

Next up for VMI was the ECAC Championships, which began March 1 in Annapolis, Maryland.



The Keydets played host to the Southern Conference Championships Feb. 23-24, with the women placing sixth and the men fourth.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Brown, Ruffin and Williams then teamed up with Ingrid Joseph '22 to take third in the 4x400 relay. The men's 4x400 relay team of Jonathan Gray '22, Blaine Ashton '22, Rafael Mas '22 and Johnnie

Walker '22 placed second in its race. Ashton also took second in the triple jump. Griffin Kowal '21 and Andrew Arlint '19 tied for fifth in the pole vault, and Daniel Usher '21 was eighth in the shot put.

Rifle

The Keydets received one final tune-up for the Southern Conference Championships when they met North Georgia in an NCAA sectional qualifier Feb. 17 in Lexington. The VMI men finished second in that event, while the women took third.

Individually, VMI was led by John Pittman '19, who took fifth in the overall standings with 1,143 points. Kelia Aardema '20 finished sixth.

The SoCon Championships began March 2 in Statesboro, Georgia.

Water Polo

VMI exploded for 85 goals and picked up five wins at the Macalaster Invite Feb. 22-24 in St. Paul, Minnesota. The weekend began with a 14-7 victory over the host team and culminated with a thrilling 16-15 overtime win against Redlands.

McKenna Imset '21, Sarah Dolitsky '19 and Emma Noble '20 all tallied goals for the Keydets in the extra session. Goalkeeper Isabel

French '20 also came up with two of her 10 saves in the contest to preserve the victory.

Dolitsky led the way for VMI with six goals.

Then 8-2 on the year, the Keydets departed on their West Coast trip March 1 to play four matches in the Claremont Convergence and played four matches at home March 9-10.

Lacrosse

VMI opened the season with victories over Manhattan (11-10) and the New Jersey Institute of Technology (15-8) to match last year's win total in the first two weeks of the season.

The victory over Manhattan on Feb. 16 marked the first win in an opener for the Keydets since 2000 and featured a fourth-quarter comeback that propelled VMI to the win. The Keydets trailed 9-6 heading into the final period but scored three goals in the first five minutes to tie the contest and then surged ahead for the win.

Ryan Perouty '21 led the way for VMI, tallying four goals, while Josh Bass '21 and John Daniel '20 chipped in with three and two goals, respectively. Benjamin Stump '20 came up with 14 saves in goal.

A week later, Daniel netted four goals, and the Keydets rolled past NJIT at home in Lexington. Michael Santos '22 added three goals to the cause, and Perouty scored a pair of goals and handed out six assists. Stump came up with 12 stops to earn the 15-8 victory over the Highlanders.



The Keydet lacrosse team opened its season with two victories.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Baseball

With a brutal early season schedule, which included contests against national powers Virginia and Clemson, the VMI baseball team struggled early, but the Keydets were able to pick up a pair of wins against St. Joseph's University.

In the season opener Feb. 15 in Wilmington, North Carolina, Jake Huggins '19 pounded out three hits and drove in three runs as the Keydets scored a 9-3 win. Cody Warner '21 also drove in a pair of runs, while pitcher Jonathan Clines '20 picked up the win on the mound in his four innings of relief.

Two days later, Huggins was at it again, this time blasting a pair of home runs and picking up four RBIs as the Keydets topped St. Joe's, 9-4. Michael Diodato '20 tallied three hits for the Keydets, while Will Knight '21 notched two. 🍀

Iraq Veteran Presents Reading

Matt Gallagher, author of *Youngblood* and the Iraq War memoir *Kaboom*, gives a public reading in the Turman Room of the Preston Library, Feb. 13. The former Army captain visited two classes and met with cadets during his visit. His talk is part of the English, rhetoric, and humanistic studies' lecture series The Other Side of War: Veteran Writers at VMI and co-sponsored by the John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Combat Artist Depicts Battlefield Experience

By Mary Price

Growing up, all Col. Craig Streeter '91 wanted to do was draw—and follow his Army officer father into a military career. He didn't know it when he was a youngster happily settled at the kitchen table with paper and crayons, but he'd go on to succeed at both in spades.

Streeter, who's currently the head of Naval ROTC at VMI, is one of a handful of combat artists in the Marine Corps. Like courtroom artists, combat artists sketch scenes of what's going on in front of them—only the images they create are those of war. Their work complements that of photographers, both civilian and service affiliated.

"There's room for both [illustrators and photographers]," noted Streeter. "What illustration can do and combat art can do, the artist has the freedom to take many experiences and distill them down into one powerful image that tells the story in ways that photography just can't. That's just one of many things that makes it powerful."

When he matriculated at VMI, Streeter didn't even know the combat artist program existed. He drew plentifully while at the Institute, sketching barracks life for the amusement of his brother rats, but art was always a side pursuit. He graduated with a degree in history and commissioned into the Marine Corps, and soon found himself on the usual career military path of frequent moves and regular promotions.



Col. Craig Streeter '91 sits in his office studio, where he does much of his drawing and painting.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

Even while he was flying Cobras, though, Streeter was finding outlets for his artistic skills.

"I would seek opportunities to use my art in ways that would benefit the unit," said Streeter. Creating new squadron patches and designing logos for the Marine Corps birthday ball were among his side jobs.

Later, while stationed at the Pentagon, Streeter was charged with the task of creat-

ing one-of-a-kind farewell gifts for retiring generals and admirals. "It got to the point where my boss, who was a Marine colonel, would tell me to take time off," Streeter recalled. "He'd say, 'Don't come in. The general needs his farewell gift.'"

ing one-of-a-kind farewell gifts for retiring generals and admirals. "It got to the point where my boss, who was a Marine colonel, would tell me to take time off," Streeter recalled. "He'd say, 'Don't come in. The general needs his farewell gift.'"

ing one-of-a-kind farewell gifts for retiring generals and admirals. "It got to the point where my boss, who was a Marine colonel, would tell me to take time off," Streeter recalled. "He'd say, 'Don't come in. The general needs his farewell gift.'"

ing one-of-a-kind farewell gifts for retiring generals and admirals. "It got to the point where my boss, who was a Marine colonel, would tell me to take time off," Streeter recalled. "He'd say, 'Don't come in. The general needs his farewell gift.'"

ing one-of-a-kind farewell gifts for retiring generals and admirals. "It got to the point where my boss, who was a Marine colonel, would tell me to take time off," Streeter recalled. "He'd say, 'Don't come in. The general needs his farewell gift.'"

ing one-of-a-kind farewell gifts for retiring generals and admirals. "It got to the point where my boss, who was a Marine colonel, would tell me to take time off," Streeter recalled. "He'd say, 'Don't come in. The general needs his farewell gift.'"



Streeter touches up his most recent work *Come Left* which depicts a cobra helicopter he flew in Iraq.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

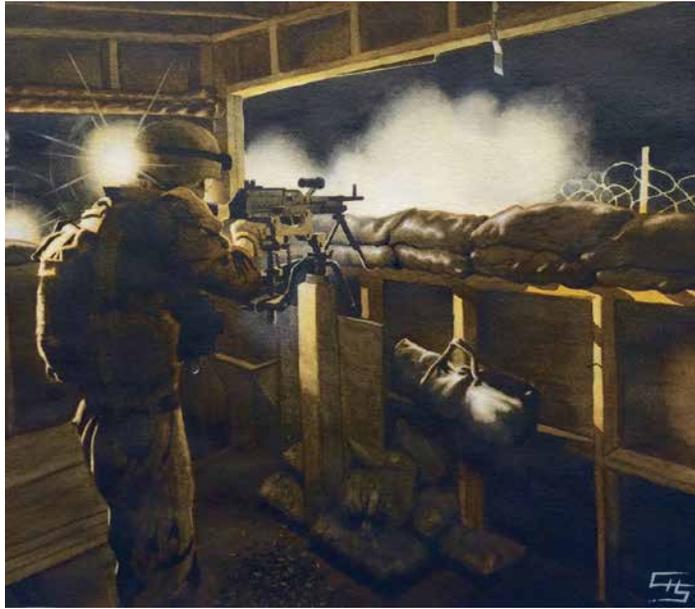
to discover that both Fay and Battles had left the Marine Corps, leaving the service with no combat artists.

With his dream reignited, Streeter began asking those higher in the chain of command if he could become one. Each time, the senior officer said “yes” because he already knew Streeter as a person.

In the summer of 2014, the career Marine Corps officer’s dream came true as he received orders to go to Afghanistan as a combat artist.

“I had a blast,” said Streeter. “One day I was with infantry and I’d go on patrols. The next day I’d be with the aviation elements and I’d be in the back of a Huey. ... Being a colonel, I felt like I had the red carpet rolled out wherever I went. I couldn’t be happier.”

All too soon his time was up—but the art Streeter was able to create in Afghanistan is work he’s still proud of today. One graphite and water color painting, “Friendly Fires,” hung in the National Museum of the Marine Corps for over a year.



Friendly Fires, a watercolor and graphite mix painted by Col. Craig Streeter '91, hung in the National Museum of the Marine Corps for a year.—Image courtesy of Col. Craig Streeter '91.

“To have been able to work myself into the system, and to be rewarded by the fact that someone thought something I’d created was good enough to hang in the NMMC, for me was that was the best thing I could imagine for my art,” he commented.

“That’s what I love to do, and that’s what I want to do again and again.”

But even today, Streeter is still learning. He’s enrolled in a master of fine arts program at the University of Hartford, with plans to graduate next year.

“It’s taken my art to another level and taught me how to be effective as an illustrator,” Streeter said of the MFA program. “To tell a story in pictures—how to distill it all down and make a powerful image that communicates to the audience.”

Meeting civilians he otherwise never would have encountered has been a highlight of the master’s program, Streeter observed, as many of them know military life and people only from the media.

“I’m able to tell the Marine Corps story to people who have no knowledge of the military,”

said Streeter.

He’s likewise excited about the possibility of being able to tell the VMI story by creating art that showcases the Institute. “I want to take this passion of mine, and I want to direct it toward VMI too because I love VMI,” he stated. ✪

Rank Announcement

The class of 2020 gathered in Jackson Memorial Hall March 2 as rank announcements were made for academic year 2019-20. Next year’s cadet captains are Austin Stansberry, regimental commander; Jack Taggart, regimental executive officer; Madeline Moger, 1st Battalion commander; Justin Adams, 1st Battalion executive officer; Patiphan Kaeosanit, 2nd Battalion commander; James Granderson, 2nd Battalion executive officer; Benjamin Rising, regimental S-1 captain; Nicholas Wainwright, regimental S-2 captain; Ryan Bess, regimental S-3 captain; Braxton Wilkinson, regimental S-4 captain; Emma Noble, regimental S-5 captain; Thomas Hupp, regimental S-6 captain; Samantha Franklin, regimental S-7 captain; Taylor Batte, Company A commander; Colby Burke, Company B commander; Jacob Keith, Company C commander; Anna McFarlane, Company D commander; Skylar Birdie, Band Company commander; Justin Polito, Company E commander; Karl Skerry, Company F commander; Anah Bozentka, Company G commander; Alexander Dragan, Company H commander; and Dolan Delaney, Company I commander.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



All Cadet Starters Finish in Their First 50K

By Mary Price

On Saturday, Feb. 16, a group of 15 cadets set out to do what none of them had ever done before: finish a 50 kilometer race—31 miles—in under eight hours.

Incredibly, all of them did so, despite freezing temperatures, snow, sleet, and for one cadet, a case of the flu.

All of the cadets are part of the VMI's two Army Ranger Challenge teams that placed second and third to the University of North Georgia at the Ranger Challenge competition held at Fort Knox, Kentucky, last fall. Thanks to their strong performance at that event, the cadets earned a place at the Sandhurst

International Military Skills Competition, to be held at West Point, New York, April 12-13.

The Holiday Lake 50K, held near Appomattox, Virginia, was a preparatory event for the Sandhurst competition. "Our only goal for them was to finish in under eight hours," said Sean Cook, an ultramarathon runner who is also an Army ROTC instructor. "We wanted them to work on their pace."

Cook explained that an ultramarathon, such as a 50K, requires a different mindset than shorter races. "You almost have to check out a little bit and focus on the next aid station rather than the whole 50 kilometers," he noted.

The race director, ultra-marathoner and Liberty

University professor Dr. David Horton, told Cook that he was quite impressed that all of the cadets completed the race within the time allowed.

Horton even had special awards—fleece blankets—made for the top male and female cadet finishers. Winning the blanket for the men was Josh Stacy '19, who was 22nd overall.

For the women, the top female cadet finisher was Rachael Dickenson '22, 61st.

"She really understands the philosophy of running," said Cook of Dickenson.

While Cook didn't run the 50K due to an injury sustained earlier this year, his fellow coach, Capt. Daniel Shear, finished 16th overall, out of 184 starters and 161 finishers.

Other strong performances came from Zachary Hering '19, Joseph Gummo '20, and Jacob Baehman '20, all of whom ran near the front of the pack.

"The bottom line was to test their mental resiliency and physically operating on their feet for a long period of time," said Cook.

At the Sandhurst competition, which VMI hasn't entered since 2005, the cadets will be required to run 30 miles—in addition to completing obstacle courses, land navigation tasks, a rifle marksmanship competition, and more.

"We have some pretty lofty goals this year," said Cook of the Sandhurst competition. "For the cadets, I'd love to see them finish in the top 10 and win some of the physical events." ❄️



Cadets pause with David Horton, race director and Liberty University professor, following the Holiday Lake 50K Feb. 16.—Photo courtesy of Arabelle Burke Photography.

"He expected that someone would not finish because they were all first timers," Cook related.



Rachael Dickenson '22 runs through the mud at Holiday Lake, finishing her first 50K in just over six hours.—Photo courtesy of Arabelle Burke Photography.

Arabic Both Near and Far

Two Opportunities for Language Immersion Offered This Summer

By Mary Price

Cadets studying Arabic will have two options this summer to further their learning.

Project Global Officer, informally known as Project GO, will pay all expenses for the 15 cadets traveling to Fez, Morocco, to participate in Dr. Mohamed Taifi's Arabic study abroad experience. Project GO, a government program designed to improve the language skills and cultural knowledge of future military officers, has provided \$250,000 in grant funds for this purpose. VMI is one of 20 schools nationwide to be designated as a Project GO institution for the 2019-20 academic year.

But it's not the first time VMI has been a Project GO school. The first time was from 2008 to 2011—and since the funds were used at that time to support the Arabic program in Morocco, it's no surprise that the number of cadets participating in the program peaked during those years, said Col. Dave Hall '83, director of international programs.

This year, in addition to funding the cadets who will travel to Morocco, Project GO will pay for an Arabic tutor, Evan Rosson, whose goal is to help cadets maintain their Arabic fluency. That's especially helpful for cadets who don't have room in their schedules to study Arabic during the academic year, noted Patricia Hardin, assistant director of international programs.

"He'll help them sustain the knowledge they gained abroad," said Hardin, who added that cadets can participate in the Morocco program more than once.

"[Project GO] is a wonderful opportunity for cadets," said Col. Don Sunnen, head of the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures. "Not only can it send them abroad, but it supports their efforts to keep up or improve their ability to speak a critical language in whatever walk of life they choose, civilian or military."

That's the message Hall and Hardin are eager to get out: that going abroad and learning a language can greatly enhance a cadet's chances of career success.

"Employers are looking for someone who is bilingual or culturally competent," said Hall. "Studying abroad gives [cadets] a chance to widen their aperture and develop a global perspective that in turn increases opportunities for them."

All slots for Project GO are filled this year, and cadets participating will be Daniel Bennett '21, Noah Birthisel '22, Zachary Boudabbous '22, Natalie Carpenter '21, Jonah Eger '21, Adam Fodness '21, Samantha Franklin '20, Ciera Henderson '21, Turner Leigh

'22, Garrett Johnson '22, Luke Nicksic '22, Amber Risheg '21, Fawaz Rudd '22, David Slack '22, and Jacob Whitehouse '22.

Meanwhile on post, the STARTALK program will be held for the third consecutive summer, this year taught by Maj. Jason Schroeffer, assistant professor of modern languages and cultures. This federal grant program, funded by the National Security Agency and administered by the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland, has as one of its goals increasing the number of students studying 11 critically needed languages, Arabic among them.

This year, Schroeffer is hopeful of attracting 20 cadets to STARTALK. Designed for students who have no background in Arabic, the program teaches all aspects of language learning—reading, writing and speaking—by immersion. At the end of the four-week term, students should be able to communicate in real-world situations such as bargaining in the market, reading simple ads and menus, and writing a short autobiography. The class carries three hours of college credit and prepares students for Arabic 201.

"Cadets can study a critical language, and it's a cultural and linguistic immersion that will enhance career opportunities for them," said Schroeffer.

"The students are for all intents and purposes in the Arab world during class, which brings the culture to life," added Sunnen.

As part of that immersion, STARTALK students will take a field trip to a Lebanese restaurant in Roanoke, where they can sample authentic Middle Eastern cuisine and order from the menu in Arabic.

The deadline for the STARTALK program is June 1, and successful applicants will take part in the program free of charge. ❁



Representatives from Project Global Officer, a Department of Defense program aimed at strengthening the language skills of future military officers, meet with cadets in Moody Hall Feb. 26.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

Concrete Learning

New Civil Engineering Lab Space Supports Learning by Doing

By Mary Price



Cadets (from left) Zach McBride '19, Andrew Polson '20 and David Rosario '19 discuss plans for the American Society of Civil Engineers' concrete canoe competition, to be held at George Mason University March 28-30.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

Long a goal for the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, a newly renovated structures lab has opened this academic year in the Nichols Engineering Building annex. The lab, which was formerly occupied by the mechanical engineering department, will allow a much larger space for class projects, as well as individual cadet and faculty research.

Obtaining more lab space has been a goal of the department for over a decade, said Col. Chuck Newhouse, professor of civil and environmental engineering. Last year, VMI wasn't able to field a team in the American Society of Civil Engineers' concrete canoe competition because there was no space for cadets to build a canoe, and the reinforced concrete class taught by Lt. Col. Matt Swenty, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, was also unable to have a lab component due to space constraints.

At more than four and a half times the size of the previous lab, the newly renovated space has solved both of those problems. Cadets working on the concrete canoe project, a staple of VMI's civil and environmental engineering department for several decades, have already cast their canoe in preparation for this year's competition, to be held March 28-30 at George Mason University. Also in the lab, the approximately 55 cadets enrolled in this spring's reinforced concrete class are setting up rebar and getting ready to pour concrete.

"Now we can do demonstrations hands on," said Swenty. "One of their homework assignments is to go down [to the lab] and get dirty."

One of those hands-on cadets appreciating the new lab space is Will Hostetler '20, who's taking Swenty's reinforced concrete class this semester.

"It's really nice because it gives you a hands-on experience," said Hostetler of the lab. "[In the class] you can kind of imagine what you're doing, but when you're down here actually making [concrete] and seeing what you're learning hands-on, it makes it resonate a lot better. It makes you a lot more interested in it when you can actually see what you're doing."

Working in the lab "has taught me how to really think outside the box," noted Andrew Polson '20, who's also taking the reinforced concrete class. "You can do a bunch of problems on the board and understand it from a 2-D point of view, but coming down here and doing it gives you more of an appreciation for what you're actually doing," he continued.

Both Hostetler and Polson noted that the hands-on experience is especially valuable to them because they both plan to work in construction after graduating from VMI.

In another part of the lab, the four main members of VMI's concrete canoe team—Zach McBride '19, David "Bunny" Hansen '20, David Rosario '19, and Brian Halpin '19—are busy readying their yet-unnamed vessel to float on the waters of the Potomac River at George Mason University.

"It's a really great project—a way to get hands-on experience mixing concrete, building molds, etc." said Hansen.

"It's a pretty cool concept," added McBride, who plans to commission into the



Cole Childress '20 and Will Hostetler '20 complete the Institute's spider logo in the new civil and environmental engineering lab.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

Army and serve in the Corps of Engineers. “You tell people you’re building a canoe out of concrete and the first thing they’ll say is, ‘Does it float?’”

The concrete used for the canoe contains a lightweight aggregate in place of concrete’s typical crushed stone to vastly reduce the material’s weight. While the exact density of their concrete will not be known until it cures, McBride is optimistic about the cadet-designed material.

“The canoe is going to float no matter what,” McBride observed. “The actual weight of the concrete—its density—is lighter than water.”

It’s lessons such as that that the lab is meant to inculcate. “It’s a student project lab as much as [a structures lab],” said Newhouse.

“We’ve been a large department for a long time, and we do large projects,” he commented. “This is a nice space for us. Most schools this size wouldn’t have this.” ❁

From Locker Rooms to Labs

Mechanical Engineering Faculty to Move into Clark King

Thanks to an effort begun by Brig. Gen. Jeff Smith ‘79, former deputy superintendent of academics and dean of the faculty, two members of the mechanical engineering faculty will soon have dedicated lab space for the first time.

Occupying adjoining rooms for teaching and research in Clark King Hall will be Col.

Jay Sullivan, professor of mechanical engineering, and Lt. Col. Joyce Blandino, associate professor of mechanical engineering. Both rooms were formerly used as locker rooms before the Corps Physical Training Facility opened in the fall of 2016.

Once the space in Clark King was open,

Smith swung into action to remedy a longstanding problem among VMI’s engineering departments: a critical lack of lab space. At the time, the civil engineering department was using a small lab in the Nichols Engineering Building Annex, while the mechanical engineering department had a larger space next door. The larger space, though, was shared by three members of the mechanical engineering faculty.

The shared space had its drawbacks. “We couldn’t run tests concurrently,” said Col. Joe Blandino, professor of mechanical engineering. “Whoever was testing had to kick the other folks out.”

This academic year, the civil engineering department has expanded into the larger space formerly occupied by mechanical engineering. Sullivan has been making do as best he can by keeping his lab equipment on carts and hauling the carts through the hallways to classrooms, but as of early March, he was hoping to move into the new lab space in Clark King over spring furlough.

“They’re done a beautiful job down there,” said Sullivan. “[Brig. Gen.] Dallas Clark has been tremendously helpful to making this happen, and [Col.] Dale Brown and [Maj.] Michelle Carruthers. They’ve all been fantastic in making this happen as fast as it possibly can happen.”

The new space will be fully suited to the needs of cadets and

faculty in mechanical engineering, Sullivan explained, with lab benches ringing the room and multiple electrical circuits built into the walls. What’s more, projects in progress can stay in place without inconveniencing others.

“We’ll have a place to store things, and not just the hallway,” Sullivan commented.

Once he’s fully moved in, Sullivan hopes to use the new lab space to teach mechatronics, which is a discipline at the intersection of mechanics and electronics. Car parts that are controlled by computers are an example of mechatronics, Sullivan noted, as are MRI machines and CAT scan machines.

A mechatronics course “is something we should have here,”

he stated. “[The new lab space] will open up a lot of possibilities for us.”

Also looking forward to her new space is Joyce Blandino, whose research centers around biomechanics, or the structure and function of mechanical aspects of biological systems. For the past few years, Blandino has been working with Col. Mike Krackow, professor of physical education, to learn more about how muscle tone affects balance as a person ages.

Hoping to further their research, and take advantage of the new space, Blandino and Krackow have applied for a National Science Foundation-Major Research Instrumentation grant to obtain a Vicon camera system, which allows the user to capture motion. With such a camera system, “We can keep track of the movement of different body parts and investigate stress at joints,” said Blandino. She and Krackow will find out in June if they have received the grant.

– By Mary Price



Mechanical engineering faculty will soon have their own dedicated lab space in Clark King Hall. – VMI Photo by Mary Price.

something on this ground in 1935 that resonated through his entire life.”

A native of Winchester who served a decade as the region’s congressman, Marsh always called the Shenandoah Valley home.

“He was called to live on the mountaintop many times in his career, but he always returned to the valley,” said Dr. Gregory Saathoff, who delivered the eulogy. “Like Cincinnatus and Washington... he returned

to a place where he shared so much of his love and generosity.”

Marsh worked closely with three presidents, holding cabinet rank as counselor to the president under Gerald Ford and becoming the longest-serving U.S. Secretary of the Army in history under presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

The impact of his public service was reflected by the guests in attendance,

including former Vice President Dick Cheney and former Virginia Governor and U.S. Senator Chuck Robb.

Marsh’s burial on the grounds of the New Market Battlefield was a singular honor—one unlikely to be repeated. Glenn Ann Patterson Marsh will be reinterred alongside her husband in coming months, and a memorial will be placed over their graves. ❁



Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62 presents the folded American flag to John Marsh's daughter, Rebecca Whitener.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Former Vice President Dick Cheney discusses his relationship with John Marsh with members of the press.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



First Parade of 2019

Brig. Gen. Robert Bob Moreschi, deputy superintendent for academics and dean of the faculty, takes the review during the parade on Feb. 15. Presenting the Corps for review was regimental executive officer John Forehand '19. Many cadet leaders and VMI officers, including regimental commander Ben Dixon '19 and Superintendent Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, were away from post honoring former Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh Jr. in New Market at his funeral.—VMI Photos by Mary Price.



Evening Chapel Time Designed to Boost Attendance

By Mary Price

At the end of February, the VMI Chaplain's Office made a change designed to increase attendance at Sunday chapel services in Jackson Memorial Hall: moving the time of the weekly worship service from morning to evening.

"Sunday is the only morning cadets get to sleep in," said Col. Bob Phillips '87, now in his third academic year as chaplain to the Corps of Cadets.

What's more, he added, some cadets attend churches in Lexington, and when VMI's chapel service is held in the evening, rather than the morning, cadets can attend services both off and on post if they want to. NCAA athletes, too, are better served by an evening service, Phillips added, because after an away game or meet, they often don't arrive back on post until the wee hours of Sunday morning.

So far, cadet attendance at the non-denominational evening service has hovered around 80, which is close to what it was at the morning service, but both Phillips and his assistant chaplain, Maj. John Casper, are hopeful that attendance will increase over time.

To draw in more cadets, Phillips and Casper have done more than simply move the hour of the service—they've made changes designed to encourage a more informal and interactive worship experience. To set the stage for that, they've darkened the overhead lights at the Sunday night services and hung string lights to create a more intimate feel.

The changes in both time and lighting have had a



Cadet musicians were among the performers for the first Sunday evening worship service in Jackson Memorial Hall Feb. 24.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

somewhat surprising effect—rather than sitting toward the back, as churchgoers of many denominations often do, cadets sit closer to the front. "When we do a night time service, the kids sit much closer to the front than they do on Sunday morning," said Phillips. "They gravitate towards the front."

Sermons are designed with cadets in mind. They're shorter and geared to the everyday needs and challenges college student face. And unlike at a traditional worship service, cadets are given a chance to respond.

respond," said Phillips. "There's no pressure, no expectations, and no altar calls, but there are opportunities for you to respond."

Services are enlivened by the participation of cadet musicians, who are organized and led by Micah Dance, a student at Liberty University majoring in praise and worship. Cadet guitar and mandolin players join with singers to provide uplifting music.

"We're looking for a service where the cadets feel like the needs and struggles they have on a daily basis are being addressed in chapel," Phillips noted. ❁

Opportunities to respond and reflect come in more than one form. Once the sermon has concluded, cadets have four choices: joining a prayer circle; receiving communion; gathering with others for coffee, cookies, and fellowship; or participating in a post-sermon discussion group led by one of the cadet chaplains.

"The idea is that we come in for a time of worship, fellowship, and a time to hear the word of God, and then you have an opportunity to



Associate Dean Awarded VMFA Fellowship

Col. Rob McDonald, associate dean of the faculty and professor of English, has been awarded an \$8,000 professional fellowship from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts for the 2019-20 academic year. McDonald, who was one of 28 individuals selected from a pool of over 750 applicants, will use the funds to deepen his study of film photography, an art form he's practiced for over two decades. In addition, McDonald has recently collaborated with writer John Lane to produce a newly published book, *The Father Box*. The book, with text by Lane and images by McDonald, chronicles the life of Lane's father, a World War II veteran who committed suicide in 1959 when John Lane was 5 years old.—Photo courtesy of Col. Rob McDonald.



Speaker Explores the History of Americans’ Love of Chinese Food

Piotr Gibas, associate professor of Chinese at the College of Charleston, presents “To Eat or Not to Eat: Christian Missionaries and Chinese Food” in the Turman Room of the Preston Library, Feb. 21. Gibas has studied early Chinese religion, literature, and history, as well as foodways and food culture. His talk centered on the 19th century Scottish Protestant missionary James Legge, who lived in Hong Kong for 30 years and never ate Chinese food. Gibas then addressed the history of Chinese food in the U.S. and Americans’ love of it today.—*Photo courtesy of Sabrina Laroussi.*

Library *continued from page 1*

completely—but this renovation should proceed in a much smoother fashion, since little is being moved out.

“Most of the materials will remain in the building,” said Jacob. “The locations of things will change during this process as we accommodate the floor-by-floor renovation.”

The only items not remaining on post are bound periodicals, which have had to be moved into offsite storage in Richmond to free up space for moving items temporarily displaced by the renovations. Jacob explained that inter-library loan services will be available for patrons who need periodicals not currently housed in the library.

“We’re going to do our very best to maintain normalcy [during the renovations] and disrupt cadet study space as little as possible,” Jacob commented.

When the work is complete, the library will have all new finishes and floors. The elevator, which currently stops at the 600 level, will go all of the way to the top floor. The Mathematics Education Resource Center (MERC) will move from its current home on the top level to a space on the next floor down adjacent to the VMI Center for

Undergraduate Research (VCUR), thus putting what Jacob termed “student enhancement services” next door to each other.

The top level of the library, which offers a commanding view of the Parade Ground, will be transformed into a conference and meeting room.

On the fifth floor, what’s currently known as the reference room will become a “learning commons,” with banks of computers and study space for cadets. There will also be a smart classroom for library instruction, and a group study room with smart classroom capabilities.

All of this is the result of Jacob and her staff working with the construction office and the architect in charge of the project to create spaces that will enhance learning. “The effort has been to look at what a 21st



The redesigned lobby will offer more open space as users enter through the main entrance.—*Image courtesy of Diane Jacob.*

century library needs and incorporate all of those elements into the renovation,” Jacob stated.

The VMI archives, too, will get a refurbished and more spacious home, with greater protection for its treasure trove of historical documents. Jacob, who worked in archives for decades before becoming library director, said that the HVAC system in the archives installed in the mid-1990s renovation has never worked as well as

it should have, and it's thus slated for replacement. The archives section of the library will have 25 percent more shelf space once the renovations are complete, and those doing research in the archives will find a larger reading room as well.

Internet connectivity, just becoming a necessity when the newly renovated Preston Library opened in 1996, will likewise be enhanced by the upcoming work. Jacob explained that currently, the building has wireless internet access, but there are "dead spots" where connecting is difficult.

"The number of wireless access points is going to be increased, and the signal strength, which has been a problem in certain areas of the building, shouldn't be a problem anymore," the head librarian commented.

When the renovation is completed, in the summer of 2020, the result will be a building that looks much the same as it did when it was dedicated on Founders Day 1939—100 years to the day since the founding of VMI. The stucco will be redone, just as it recently was on Jackson Memorial Hall, and new windows will be installed, but to a casual observer, the building will appear unchanged.

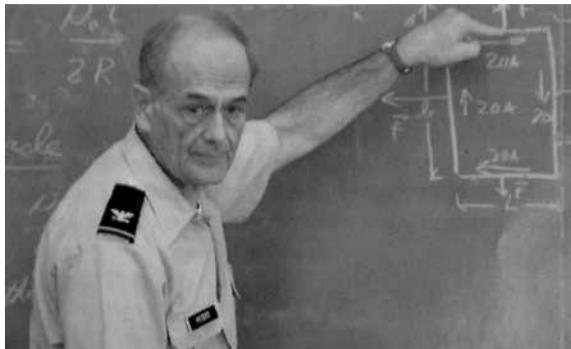
Inside, though, visitors will be greeted by an open, spacious entrance—and enhancements meant to help all library users find the information they are seeking.

"When it's done, we'll walk into a greatly enhanced, more modern building that's much more suitable for a 21st century learning community," said Jacob. ❁

TAPS—Col. Philip B. Peters '57

The Superintendent regrets to inform the VMI community of the death Feb. 13 of Colonel Philip B. Peters '57, professor emeritus and former head of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, at the age of 83.

Following graduation from VMI with a Bachelor's of Science degree in physics, Colonel Peters served in the U.S. Army for two years, and continued to serve in the U.S.



Col. Philip Peters teaches prior to his retirement in 2002.—VMI File Photo.

Army Reserve until 1967. After a brief stint in the private sector, he joined the faculty. He earned his PhD. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A 1991 recipient of the Institute's Distinguished Teaching Award, he served two terms as department head before retiring in 2002.

During his long residence in Lexington, Colonel Peters was involved in numerous community activities, including the Lexington Boys Club, the United Way, Rockbridge Jaycees, New Vision Prison Outreach, and the Rockbridge Christmas Basket Program. ❁

Mardi Gras in the Big Easy

The Regimental Band and Pipe Band march in the Krewe of Endymion parade in New Orleans March 2 as part of the Mardi Gras festivities. The cadets won an award for best military unit. The parade is one of the largest celebrations during Mardi Gras with over 30,000 people along the six and a half mile route beginning in City Park and ending at the Superdome.—Photos courtesy of Col. John Brodie.





Virginia Military Institute
Communications & Marketing Office
Lexington, VA 24450-0304

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 78
Harrisonburg, VA

Midwinter Formal

Cadets and their dates dance in Marshall Hall Feb. 9 during Midwinter Formal. The Great Gatsby-themed event took place over two nights, with 1st and 2nd Class cadets attending Friday night and 3rd and 4th Class Cadets attending Saturday. A band from Atlanta, The Free, performed for the cadets.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

