



INSTITUTE REPORT

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

Volume 47, Number 7, May 2019

Power Lifters Break Records, Head to Second National Championship

By Mary Price

In just one weekend, they broke 11 Virginia state records and four world records—and the women's team finished first in the nation for the second year in a row. Not bad for a quick trip to Ohio.

Fifteen members of VMI's power lifting team traveled to Athens, Ohio, in February, to compete at the USPA Raw Collegiate Nationals. At the meet, Annie Wilson '20 broke the Virginia state records for squat bench and total pounds lifted. She was also named best female lifter at the meet and earned a national championship. Finishing second in their respective weight classes were Leslie Giron-Molina '21 and Evan Morcom '20. Taking third place was Virginia Villani '19.

As of early April, the team was gearing up for its next national championship, the USAPL Collegiate Nationals, to be held April 11-15 at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Unlike athletes in many sports, power lifters have the option of competing in two different leagues, noted Lt. David Henson Jr., a member of the VMI Police who's coached the team for the past decade. The USPA is a "raw" league in which equipment is prohibited, so lifters can only use the natural strength of their bodies. The USAPL, by contrast, allows equipment that's designed to enhance lifters' performance.

"The equipped meet—the gear they wear is compressed," explained Henson. "It keeps everything really, really tight."



Virginia Villani '19 squats 253 pounds during the USPA Raw Collegiate National Championship.—Photo courtesy of Lt. David Henson.

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Scott Shipp Renovation to Kick off This Summer

By Mary Price

Beginning this summer, one of VMI's most heavily used academic buildings will undergo a \$43.2 million renovation.

Scott Shipp Hall, home to five academic departments, will be under renovation and construction for the next two years with the goal of easing crowding and modernizing classrooms. The building, originally constructed in 1918-19 with an addition in 1955, will remain in use throughout the renovation, with

departments and classrooms moving from one part of the building to another as the work takes place.

In addition to a complete renovation of the existing structure, plans call for a 28,000-square foot addition to be built onto the rear of the building. Work on the new addition, plus renovation

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Villanueva Speaks on Honor, Accountability

By Maj. John Robertson IV

Decorated Afghanistan War veteran and Pittsburgh Steelers offensive tackle Alejandro Villanueva visited post March 12 as part of the Center for Leadership and Ethics' Courageous Leadership series.

Villanueva is a graduate of West Point, and he played defensive and offensive positions for the Black Knights. Villanueva commissioned into the Army in 2010 alongside Army football teammate and Lexington native Chase Prasnicki, who died in Afghanistan in 2012.

He deployed a total of three times to Afghanistan, reaching the rank of captain before joining the NFL in 2014. He served with the 10th Mountain Division and the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment. During his first tour in Afghanistan, he was awarded a Bronze Star Medal with V device for rescuing wounded soldiers under enemy fire.



Offensive tackle for the Pittsburgh Steelers, Alejandro Villanueva, meets with the VMI football team in Clarkson-McKenna Hall.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

While not a regular public speaker, Villanueva made the rare address both because of his regard for VMI's cadets and because Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin began his coaching career at the Institute in 1995.

"When it comes to the military, I can never say no," said Villanueva. "I was a cadet just like you guys nine years ago."

In addition to that institutional connection, Villanueva shared his personal ties to the Institute.

"This is an extremely honorable privilege for me to be here today. Coach Tomlin mandated me to be here, but it is also where one of my best friends is buried from the military academy. He was a teammate of mine and his father works here," said Villanueva "This is a very special place for me."

Villanueva presented his remarks in terms of personal accountability, with culture, ethics, and leadership being key components. Illustrating that concept, he shared an experience at the Pir Mohammed School in Kandahar Province. After Afghan allies fired on a motorcycle, Villanueva was ordered to conduct a battle damage assessment in what he and his soldiers suspected was an ambush.

The soldiers under his command were unwilling to conduct the assessment and suggested Villanueva tell his commanding officer that they checked out the scene without doing so.

"I never thought I would encounter a situation like this where I had to choose between my men and my mission," said Villanueva.

Villanueva ultimately decided to tell his soldiers that he would conduct the battle damage assessment on his own, leading members of the Afghan National Police.

"I said 'I'm going to go down by myself. If anyone wants to come with me, they can come with me,'" said Villanueva. To his surprise, two of the soldiers who were unwilling to go moments before joined him.

As soon as the three soldiers left their secure compound alongside three members of the Afghan National Police, the insurgents opened fire. Villanueva and his soldiers returned to the compound safely.

In this and other experiences, Villanueva noted that West Point's honor code had served him well—along with other lessons inculcated by four years at the U.S. Military Academy.

Villanueva also shared his thoughts on "attention economics," the level of focus that individuals devote to various areas of their lives. He observed that a Spartan military lifestyle helps pare down trivial concerns and allows for greater attention towards attaining goals.

"You eat the same meals every day of the week... You get the same haircut. You wear the same clothes," said Villanueva. "You're prioritizing your future. You're prioritizing who you want to be, and you're showing that on a daily basis."

Villanueva made national headlines in 2017 when he was the lone member of the Steelers to appear at the entrance tunnel as the national anthem was performed at Soldier Field in Chicago. The rest of the team did not

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Alejandro Villanueva signs autographs after his talk in Gillis Theater.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

INSTITUTE REPORT

Volume 47, Number 7, May 2019

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.
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Continued

take the field in order to avoid the controversy around players kneeling during the anthem. He revisited that episode to highlight the theme of personal accountability.

"I was told that I would be watching the anthem with my teammates to my left and my right, but, when it came down to it, they were nowhere to be seen," said Villanueva.

He had received hundreds of text messages by the end of the game and was on the front page of newspapers across the country the next morning. "Everybody's pressuring you to take a stand, to voice a message."

Villanueva made the decision to step back from the controversy, falling back on his training as an Army officer not to advocate a stance on political matters.

"I did what I thought was right based on the culture I received," said Villanueva.

Before speaking, Villanueva toured post, spoke with members of the football team, and observed Supper Roll Call. Villanueva remained in Gillis Theater following his talk to autograph cadets' covers, Steelers memorabilia, and even a pocket Constitution. 🍀



Azalea Festival

Eight cadets attended the North Carolina Azalea Festival April 3-7 in Wilmington. The cadets escorted the queen's court—beauty pageant winners from across North Carolina—to various events including an elementary school visit, a dance, and a parade.—Photos courtesy of Cindy Bither.



Honors Presentations Focus on Hometown Needs

By Mary Price

With a spirit of giving back to their hometowns, and to the places that formed them into the people they are today, three 1st Class cadets from disparate majors presented the results of their honors thesis research during VMI's Honors Week, held March 11-15.

Honors Week, an annual event that's been ongoing since 2003, showcases cadet research and scholarship across all disciplines. This year, 19 cadets presented their research to the wider VMI community, and a large number of cadets were inducted into academic honor societies.

As a native of Norfolk, Virginia, Demetra Protogyrou has long known that her coastal hometown is both vulnerable to hurricanes and home to a very large population. Bordered on two sides by water, Norfolk is also handicapped by the fact that there are three tunnels that become choke points during times of high traffic. One of those tunnels, which is the primary route inland to safety during an evacuation, is the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel, which is only two lanes in each direction as it runs under the body of water.

To come up with an evacuation plan for Norfolk, Protogyrou, an applied mathematics major, used operations research, which was developed during World War II to analyze the efficiency of military operations. Protogyrou referred to it as "the math behind logistics," as businesses often use operations research to find the best ways to minimize costs.

Using data supplied by the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization, Protogyrou developed an evacuation plan for residents in Norfolk's Zone A, which is the area most vulnerable to flooding.

Annika Tice, who helped to organize and run a camp for middle school girls, also brought life experience to her honors thesis—but for her, the experience was a lack of opportunity as a youth. Tice grew up in Java, Virginia, a small community in Pittsylvania County far from the suburbs of Northern Virginia and Richmond that are home to many of her peers. She attended very small and rural schools before going on to Chatham Hall, a private, all girls school in Chatham, Virginia, for high school.

At the beginning of her presentation, Tice related that she came into high school self-identifying as unsuccessful, and when she met girls participating in a



Brigitta Hendren '19 presents her Institute Honors project on western-based globalized universities during Honors Week.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

local middle school's after school program, she discovered they felt the same way.

Working with Maj. Stephanie Hodde, assistant professor of English, rhetoric, and humanistic studies, in the spring of 2018 Tice began to plan a summer camp experience that would challenge and hopefully change that assumption. As part of that process, she delved deep into research about how adolescent girls develop a sense of their capabilities.

Held on and off post June 4-8, 2018, the Rockbridge Girls Leadership Exchange attracted 15 girls and three female cadets as

counselors, including Tice, who's double majoring in English and modern languages and cultures (French).

"The purpose was to focus on leadership and also STEAM, so science, technology, engineering, [arts], and math, to further their academics," Tice explained.

Tice, who will commission into the Army, now plans to teach once she's completed her military service.

Also looking to alleviate the effects of poverty in his honors thesis work was John O'Donnell, who grew up in Goshen, New York, but was introduced to the neighboring,



John O'Donnell '19 shares his honors thesis research on local initiatives to fight poverty during Honors Week.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

and much poorer, community of Newburgh, New York, through a middle school basketball team.

"I was the only Caucasian kid on the team," O'Donnell noted. "I lived in a bubble 30 minutes away ... My friends and teammates had to deal with things I could never imagine."

As a high schooler, O'Donnell began volunteering at the Newburgh Armory Unity Center, a community center focused on providing academic support and enrichment opportunities for youth. For his honors thesis, O'Donnell surveyed parents whose children were enrolled in the center's programs.

Specifically, O'Donnell, an economics and business major, was seeking to understand what can be done to address the cyclical nature of poverty: the fact that a child born into poverty is extremely likely to remain poor, despite a consistently high level of federal spending on anti-poverty programs for over half a century.

The results of his research led O'Donnell to conclude that local governments, rather than the federal government, should take a leading role in fighting poverty because they're more in touch with local needs.

"Local programs are a little more equipped to serve their community," O'Donnell commented. "They're more understanding of the specific problems and needs of the people they serve."

O'Donnell also believes that education is the key to overcoming poverty. "You have to get in with the children in poverty," he commented. "You need to get them more opportunities. All poverty is a lack of opportunity and a better life."

O'Donnell, who will commission into the Army as a field artillery officer, had some advice for underclass cadets considering honors research: "Pick something that you care about. Pick something that matters to you." ❀

'Dykelopedia'

Cadet Project Seeks to Create Searchable Database of Rat/Dyke Relationships

The internet has now been around long enough that doing genealogical research online has become commonplace. But what if VMI relationships were as easy to trace as those between ancestors and descendants?

During his 4th class year, Kirk Kallian '19 hit upon an idea that he's been pursuing ever since: creating a searchable database, available online, of the "dyke line" that binds together cadets that are three class years apart, as each 4th Class cadet is assigned a 1st Class cadet as a "dyke," or mentor. Cadets that are six class years apart are in the same dyke line.

Kallian, a computer and information science major, took his idea and developed it into a workable prototype for his Institute Honors project, titling his work, "Dykelopedia: VMI's Dykeline Digitized."



Kirk Kallian '19 discusses his Institute Honors project "Dykelopedia" during Honors Week. —VMI Photo by Mary Price.

The dyke line "creates a special bond that's unique to VMI," Kallian commented during his Honors Week presentation in the Turman Room of Preston Library. Knowing one's dyke line "would be a great conversation starter and increase your networking capability as a cadet," he stated.

Agreeing with Kallian's assessment was his adviser, Dr. Ramoni Lasisi, assistant professor of computer and information sciences. "This is VMI history—the kind of thing that many cadets would like to see," he commented.

Initially, Kallian had hoped to be able to trace dyke lines all the way back to 1974, which is when VMI began keeping track of rat/dyke relationships. Reality set in, though, as the laborious nature of the process took a toll on Kallian's time available for the project. By mid-March, he'd only been able to go back as far as 2003, although he was planning to keep working on the project until graduation.

Another hurdle Kallian had to overcome was inaccuracies in his source material, specifically *The Bomb*, VMI's yearbook. Because of this, his database currently has an accuracy rate of 88 percent for three generations or greater—a figure that Kallian would very much like to see improved.

The accuracy rate "needs to be much higher than that to be trusted," Lasisi confirmed. He stated that an accuracy rate in the mid-90's or higher would be ideal.

At his honors thesis presentation, Kallian was able to demonstrate his database for cadets in the audience, with good results. But he hasn't been able to come up with an online version accessible to anyone interested. That's a goal, but privacy concerns are something he's yet to address, and he's also aware that his creation has some weaknesses, such as not being able to adjust for dyke lines that are not exactly three years apart, as they might be in the case of a dyke who is taking a fifth year to complete his or her education.

Going forward, Kallian would like to pass his project off to another cadet who might complete it as a capstone project. "This is something I'm passionate about," he noted.

— Mary Price

'Speak Up, Step Out'

Save the Children CEO Carolyn Miles Receives Jonathan Daniels Award

By Mary Price

Carolyn Miles, CEO of Save the Children and the first woman to receive the Jonathan Myrick Daniels '61 Humanitarian Award, encouraged cadets to see the world from another person's perspective and thus follow in the footsteps of Daniels.

Miles visited post March 6 to accept the award established to honor the sacrifice of Daniels, who as an Episcopal seminarian gave his life to save a young black girl during a voter registration drive in Alabama in 1965.

Miles, who has traveled to 92 countries advocating for children's rights, was only the fifth individual to be honored with the Daniels Award since it was established by the VMI Board of Visitors in 1997. The award recognizes individuals who have made significant personal sacrifices to protect or improve the lives of others.

In addition to her speech in Cameron Hall, Miles' agenda on post included a meeting with Honors Program cadets, an office call with Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, and taking the review of a parade alongside Peay.

On hand to see Miles receive the Daniels Award was Richard Morrisroe, a former Catholic priest who was steps behind Daniels on Aug. 20, 1965, when a part-time deputy sheriff fatally shot Daniels in Hayneville, Alabama. Morrisroe, who was seriously wounded in the incident, endured an 11-hour surgery and spent six months recovering.



Carolyn Miles, president and CEO of Save the Children, addresses the Corps of Cadets in Cameron Hall shortly after receiving the Jonathan Myrick Daniels '61 Humanitarian Award.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Over the years, Morrisroe has made several trips to Hayneville to honor the memory of Daniels, and he's attended each of the Daniels Award presentations at VMI.

"VMI has chosen to be proud of Jonathan, and has chosen to see Jonathan as a continuing asset in a way that inspires students today to still know the name Jonathan, to have an arch on [post] in memory of Jonathan," said Morrisroe. "All of that is so important for today's students—it's a long time ago but they still have that memory of 1961."



Carolyn Miles meets with cadet leaders shortly after the parade in her honor.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Morrisroe noted that Daniels' sacrifice is particularly important today because racism is not a problem solved long ago, but rather one at the uncomfortable forefront of our national conversation today.

"[Racism] bears different faces today," said Morrisroe, who left the priesthood several years after Daniels' death to attend law school and is still a practicing attorney at the age of 80. "Charlottesville [site of a Aug. 11, 2017, riot by white supremacists] isn't so very far away or so long ago and yet you have students here trying to provide an alternative to that, and hopefully that alternative will not simply create elite minority students or women students, but will create people in the image of

Jonathan to reach out to others who don't have the advantages they have."

Miles stressed that the world needs more leaders like Daniels if the suffering of millions of children in war-torn countries such as Syria and Yemen is to be alleviated. Syria, she noted, has been at war for eight years—the entire lifetime, or more than the entire lifetime, of some of its youngest residents.

Miles commented that Save the Children began 100 years ago this year as a response to the plight of children orphaned by World

War I—and today, the impact of war on children only continues to increase.

"Nearly one in five children around the world are living in conflict zones right now," she said. Miles added that today's wars tend to have a direct impact on children because fighting is often being waged in urban areas, and schools and hospitals are frequent bomb targets.

Moral leadership of the kind practiced by Daniels is the only way this will change, Miles stated.

"He saw his fellow men and women being mistreated and

did not hesitate to stand alongside them,” she said of Daniels.

It’s up to the next generation, exemplified by today’s cadets, to make sure that legacy is continued, the 21-year veteran of Save the Children commented.

“Children today need leaders like the ones in this room,” said Miles, a mother of

three. “They need leaders who will stand up and say, ‘These are the things that are right for people.’

“We need you to speak up, step out and declare that the kind of treatment that’s happening in war to children is unacceptable. ... I ask you to look at the world from a child’s point of view.”

Previous recipients of the Daniels Award are former President Jimmy Carter, who received the inaugural award in 2001; former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young, honored in 2006; international humanitarian worker Paul Hebert ’68, in 2011; and Georgia congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis in 2015. ❁

Power Lifters *continued from page 1*

And the gear is painful, Henson added, to the point that many lifters don’t want to wear it at all, so they do the raw meets instead.

While the sport itself is tough, Henson feels that coaching the team is relatively easy. “I basically motivate them,” he said. “They love to train. Strength and conditioning—they absolutely love it. They motivate each other.”

Matt Zwiren ’19, who’s now cadet in charge of the powerlifting team, exemplifies that love of training. He’d lifted some in high school, so he quickly gravitated to the power lifting club during his rat year.

Zwiren is the first to admit that it’s not easy to find time to lift—but it helps that he’s a cadet assistant in Cocke Hall, and can do some lifting while he’s supervising gym users and watching for safety violations.

Like most lifters, Zwiren watches what he eats carefully. “It’s mostly proteins and carbs, and low in fats,” he said of his eating plan, which he manages through an app on his phone.

But eating a perfectly clean diet as a college student, and especially as a cadet, is difficult at best. “I’m not the best at [managing diet],” he acknowledged. “For me, food is my weakness. I kind of dive off every once in a while.”

A civil and environmental engineering major who purposely picked that major to challenge himself, Zwiren sees power lifting as a break from the mental heavy lifting that



Leslie Giron-Molina ’21 deadlifts 286 pounds during the United States Powerlifting Association Raw Collegiate National Championship in Athens, Ohio in February.—Photo courtesy of Lt. David Henson.

his discipline requires. “It gives me confidence,” he stated. “It also helps me deal with all of the stress. I think a big thing about this school is having something so you can get your stress out. The weight room is where I can do that.”

After graduation, Zwiren will be headed to Northern Virginia to work for Turner Construction—and he hopes to keep lifting as well.

Villani, who is assistant cadet in charge of the powerlifting team, has likewise drawn confidence from getting stronger, while continuing in a family tradition of powerlifting.

Her brother, Johnny Villani ’15, who was cadet in charge of the power lifting team his 1st Class year at VMI, had suggested to his sister that she try the sport herself, but it wasn’t until halfway through her rat year that she gave it a try.

“I like how you can see your own personal progress,” she noted. “In order to stay sane,

you have to realize your competition is yourself. You can’t compare yourself to other people and their progress.”

Villani has certainly seen much progress in her own lifting. When she first started, she was able to lift 145 pounds from a squat position, but her form was poor and an injury struck the week before nationals. She took six weeks off, and then spent the summer afterward learning how to squat properly. Now, with better form and increased strength, she can lift 275 pounds squatting. Meanwhile, her deadlift capacity has increased from

225 pounds to 375 pounds.

“You can see your progression, your form improving and your numbers improving, because they’re both equally important,” said Villani.

Like Zwiren, Villani watches what she eats carefully. “Moderation is the key. ... I try to eat really, really well on weekdays, and relax it a little bit on the weekends.”

As a biology major and exercise science minor, Villani brings a scientific understanding of the human body and of nutrition to the gym with her. “I’ve learned a lot about how to fuel my body,” she stated. “A lot of people who lift don’t have that background.”

As of early April, Villani was looking forward to her last national championship as a college student. For her, the pain of the compression gear is worth it so she can lift more. “I really like equipped lifting,” she said. “It adds another thing to be accountable for and to learn.” ❁

Aquatics Center Groundbreaking Moves Closer

By Mary Price

Barring unforeseen delays, this time next year ground will be broken for VMI's new aquatics center, officially known as Phase III of the Corps Physical Training Facility.

State funding—about three-quarters of total cost of the \$41.275 million facility—was included in the biennial budget proposed by Gov. Ralph Northam '81, and that funding remained in the budget as it passed through both houses of the General Assembly. The remainder of the overall cost of the project came from private donations.

"We were very happy to see [the funding] get through all of the hurdles down in Richmond," said Col. Keith Jarvis '82, director of construction.

Once the design work is complete, ground should be broken in the spring of 2020, Jarvis explained, with completion expected approximately 20 to 24 months later. The aquatics center will be built alongside North Main Street, immediately adjacent and connected to the Corps Physical Training Facility. The center will also be connected to the Knights of Pythias building, a historically significant structure with ties to Lexington's African-American community.

"It will attach to the new aquatics center via a glass walkway," said Jarvis of the Knights of Pythias building, also known as the American Legion building, which was moved in 2014 to make way for the Corps Physical Training Facility. "As part of the project, we'll renovate the Legion building, and it'll be utilized for conference and office space that supports the aquatics center."

The centerpiece of the aquatics center, the new swimming pool, will be 50 meters long and 25 yards wide, a feature that allows swimmers to compete in meets that measure distances in meters and those that measure distances in yards. The pool will have lane

markers running both horizontally and vertically, along with floating bulkheads to separate the pool into segments.

"For a daily practice, you could have diving practice, swimming practice, and water polo practice all occurring in this pool at the same time," Jarvis stated.

That's an exciting possibility for Andrew Bretscher, head swimming and diving

very hard for him to find time to work with swimmers individually because pool time is so scarce. Divers, too, struggle to fit in practice time because they can't dive while swimmers are using the pool.

"It'll be much better with the new facility," he commented. "It won't be such a headache finding available pool space."

Bretscher would also like to see the number of Keydet swimmers increase. This year, he had 18 men and 11 women, but once the new facility is up and running, he's hoping to have about 25 swimmers of each gender. At conference championships, he explained, 18 scores count, but given the fact that injury or illness can easily sideline an athlete, it's always better to start with a deep roster.

When the aquatics center is completed in 2022, it will bring to an end a plan for athletic facility renovations and additions that began in 2014 with the Corps Physical Training Facility Phase I, which included renovations of Cormack and Cocke Halls.

Phase II of the project was building the Corps Physical Training Facility, which opened in the fall of 2016 as home to the Institute's NCAA track teams. The building provides a venue for ROTC and individual cadet physical training as well, especially in inclement weather. All together, the three phases of the Corps Physical Training Facility cost \$122 million. 🌿

coach since 2017. "One of the challenges we've had since I've been here is just space," said Bretscher. "We are very limited by the current pool."

Constructed in 1969, when the Corps of Cadets was much smaller than it is now, the existing pool in Clark King Hall is greatly in demand not only for swimming and diving practice, but also water polo, ROTC activities, and physical education classes.

Bretscher noted that at 25 yards long, and 42 feet across, the Clark King pool is too small to accommodate more than one team practice or PE class at a time. It's also



The new swimming pool will be large enough to accommodate water polo, swimming, and diving simultaneously.—Image courtesy of Col. Keith Jarvis '82.



The aquatics center will be built along North Main Street, adjacent to the Corps Physical Training Facility.—Image courtesy of Col. Keith Jarvis '82.

'VMI Leads the Way'

By Maj. John R. Robertson IV

VMI's Marshall-New Market Battalion is the only Army ROTC unit in the nation to participate in testing out the Army Combat Fitness Test that will soon be required for every soldier in the U.S. Army.

On two days in early March, cadets gathered on the fields above Foster Stadium to conduct field tests of the ACFT. Those tests built on December's cadre training conducted at VMI by the Center for Initial Military Training's mobile training team based in Fort Eustis, Virginia.

On hand for the March field test were two members of that same training team, Maj. Joseph Flores and Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Brown.

"We trained the cadre, so we wanted to see if our training held firm. It looks like it has," said Flores. "It's good for VMI because they're leading the way across all of the universities in regards to cadet command. I don't think any other school was chosen as a field test battalion, so VMI leads the way."



Cadets perform the power standing throw with a 10-pound ball as part of the ACFT trials.—VMI Photo by Maj. John Robertson IV.

The new test is designed to better gauge combat readiness and will be implemented this October, when the entire Army takes two not-for-record tests. The ACFT will replace the current Army Physical Fitness Test no later than October 2020.

"There's a rough draft of what the Army Combat Fitness Test is right now, and we're validating that throughout the Army between now and Oct. 1," explained Maj. Brandon Lindsey, military science instructor in VMI's Army ROTC battalion.

Whereas the old test had three elements—push-ups, sit-ups, and a two-mile run—the new test has six. Those components are a three-repetition maximum deadlift, a standing power throw with a 10-pound ball, hand release push-ups with hands off the ground between each effort, a sprint-drag-carry event, leg tucks, and a two-mile run. Those being tested having 70 minutes to complete all of the activities.

"It looks like they're conducting it to standard," observed Brown. "Looks like they're having some fun doing it here, so everything's good."



Cadets perform hand release push-ups as their peers keep score.—VMI Photo by Maj. John Robertson IV.

The new test "allowed us to show off our athleticism as cadets," said Austin Barrette '21, a linebacker for the Keydet football team. "The different variations of sprints and pulls allowed us to display what we as future officers need to have for our potential jobs. It provides a more well-rounded test."

Agreeing with Barrette about the benefits of the new test was Isaiah Domio '20, "It was something new, something different." Domio noted that the hand release pushups made him focus more on form than do standard pushups and provided a better test of upper body strength.

Like many of the cadets who participated in trying out the new test, Domio is looking beyond commissioning, when the soldiers under his command will be taking the test.

"I'm excited for the new direction, and I can't wait to lead a platoon as an officer," Domio concluded. 🍀



Drum Major Instruction

Marine Corps Master Gunnery Sgt. Keith Martinez, drum major for the Commandant's Own, gives cadet Tahvon Davis '21 some tips on how to become a better drum major. Martinez, a longtime friend of Regimental Band Director Col. John Brodie, visited post Wednesday, April 3.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

'Look Behind the Scenes'

Spring FTX Offers Base Visits, Leadership Lessons

By Mary Price

Held in early April each year, spring field training exercises provide commissioning cadets with an opportunity to get a feel for real life in the military—and since each branch of the armed services is different from the others, it's no wonder that experiences over those four days are as unique as the cadets themselves.

This year's field training exercises (FTX), held April 5-9, gave cadets entering the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force chances to practice their leadership skills, prepare for upcoming summer training, and explore career interests in their chosen branch of the service.

For Wilson George '20, spring FTX was a chance to give back, as others before had done for him. As a 4th Class cadet who'd matriculated with the career goal of becoming a Navy SEAL, George looked up to Brandon Hogge '17 and Tyler Hogge '17, twins who are now Navy SEALs.

"They were my inspiration to who I am today," said George.

While they were cadets, the Hogge twins began a training program for aspiring SEALs, the Naval Tactical Squad, which George will lead next year as a 1st Class cadet. Over FTX, he and others led a mini-boot camp for 4th and 3rd Class cadets interested in becoming SEALs, complete with 28 miles of running, including some with 60-pound rucksacks strapped to their backs, five miles of swimming, and shooting at the North Post firing range. To cap it off, the group spent their evenings doing land navigation at night.

"[The goal is] to stress them mentally and physically and even emotionally," said Col. Craig Streeter, head of Naval ROTC.

For George, whose 2nd Class year is rapidly coming to a close, there's a growing awareness that 4th and 3rd Class cadets will be looking up to him just as he once looked up to Brandon and Tyler Hogge. "That's the biggest learning curve—seeing how someone else does it," he said.

While George was leading aspiring SEALs, Rachel Zachweija '21 traveled to Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where she was able to see a variety of military aircraft and even talk to some pilots. She's long wanted to become a Naval aviator.

"It was a wonderful experience because normally as midshipmen we're exposed to one type of aircraft because we don't have a lot of time," she commented. "But we were able to see every form of Naval aviation."

Soon to commission into the Marine Corps, Jameson Donahue '19 spent much of his FTX at Fort Pickett, Virginia, where he helped to lead over 100 cadets, 38 of whom will



Naval ROTC cadets practice land navigation tactics at Fort Pickett during spring FTX.—Photo courtesy of Naval ROTC.

be attending Officer Candidate School (OCS) for the Marine Corps this summer.

"Our number one goal is to provide an environment that mimics OCS," said Donahue. "It puts them under pressure. It exhausts them, both mentally and physically."

This time last year, Donahue was one of those cadets preparing for OCS. This year, he was helping others prepare.

"This was my first chance at getting to look behind the scenes," he commented. "I'd never had a chance to coordinate, organize an entire

event such as this—so many different moving parts."

Also having the same experience, but from an Army point of view, was Ryan Edsall '19, S-3 officer (operations) for the Marshall-New Market Army ROTC Battalion. In that capacity, he helped to plan and execute three days of outdoor training for just under 600 cadets.

"I never got the umbrella view [before this year]," said Edsall, who will commission as an infantry officer.

Edsall used the spring FTX weekend as a chance to put into practice his latest mantra: "Inexperience is only a temporary obstacle." If you listen to others and use your resources wisely, he's learned, you will feel like a rookie for a much shorter period of time.

Also taking a large role in planning FTX activities was Jake Wentworth '19, cadet commander for the Air Force ROTC.



Army ROTC prepare for firearms training during spring FTX at Fort Pickett.—Photo courtesy of Army ROTC.

Cadets Partner with Community for FTX

By H. Lockwood McLaughlin

A productive round of community service activity marked spring field training exercises April 6-9 with as many as 482 non-commissioning cadets partnering with 20 local and statewide non-profits to total 4,700 hours of community service.

A highlight of the weekend's activities was the VMI Games, a Special Olympics event that made use of facilities across post and enlisted the help of enthusiastic cadets to coordinate and referee the action.

"The cadets have been awesome. This group of cadets is the best one that I've worked with. Everyone's been super nice and asked great questions," said Daniel



Cadets help coordinate the VMI Games, a Special Olympics event held on post during spring FTX. —VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Leake, senior regional director for Special Olympics Virginia.

"Special Olympics is blessed to be here on post," said Leake. "It used to be Special Olympics was at your high school in the spring and that's all there was. Now we're 365, 24/7 and these guys will go in eight or 10 events this size and this is clearly their favorite because the cadets are so nice and they just like being on this campus."

Troy Evans, a competitor and Special Olympics global messenger, agreed.

"This is my favorite venue and I love it," he said as he stepped off the court after back-to-back basketball games.

Outside, on the parade ground, the weather was warm and sunny for the bocce players as cadets helped orchestrate and cheer for the competitors.

"I think it's a great experience," said Brent Rushing '20, who was helping coordinate track events in the Corps Physical Training Facility. "I've done stuff similar to this prior and it's always fun putting a smile on people's faces."

On the same day, less than a mile away, a group of cadets was busy preparing Lime

Kiln Theater for its upcoming season of events.

"We look forward to this weekend every year and depend on it every year because the cadets help us do a lot of the heavy lifting that has to happen before the season kicks off," said Spencer McElroy, executive director of Lime Kiln Theater in Lexington. Looking at the bustle of activity that included mulching, brush clearing, and chain sawing, he added, "We're getting a lot of work done and we've only been here for an hour and a half. And we've got three days, so I'm excited."

Across town, cadets were doing similar upkeep at the Roots and Shoots garden at Waddell Elementary School, bringing in wheelbarrows of mulch and cleaning the garden.

"They're a huge help to me," said Heather Marion, a 14-year Roots and Shoots volunteer. She expressed her gratitude for all the help the cadets have given year after year at



Gunnar Eichler '19 picks up brush at the Rockbridge Area SPCA during spring FTX. —VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

the garden which is used to teach students at Waddell about gardening. "I really appreciate it. And they do a great job."

Benefiting the Rockbridge Area Health Center, the Bull and Oyster Festival provided a much different opportunity for service. One of the event organizers, Katie Hall, stepped away from the bluegrass music, oyster shucking, and din of the crowd to say a few words. "We really appreciate our



Rhiannon Moore '20 changes the letters on the sign for Hull's Drive-In. Cadets from her company also painted picnic tables for the local venue during spring FTX. —Photo courtesy of Lauren Summers.

of the 1955 addition, will begin in June 2019 and be completed in the summer of 2020. Classes and faculty offices will relocate to the oldest part of the building while the work is taking place.

Next, the original part of Scott Shipp will be renovated, with the goal of completing all of the work in time for the 2020-21 school year. The project is entirely funded by the state.

When the work is completed, Scott Shipp will have an auditorium with tiered seating—something the building currently lacks. “Nichols [Engineering Building] has one, and Maury-Brooke has one, but Scott Shipp doesn’t,” noted Lt. Col. Daren Payne ’90, construction project manager.

The main entrance off Letcher Avenue across from Shell Hall will also be completely reworked to eliminate what’s now on the most common “choke points” on post for cadets as they pass through a set of narrow doors to enter and exit Scott Shipp.

“You’ll actually come off Letcher Avenue up a set of stairs and go into a fairly large lobby or vestibule,” said Col. Keith Jarvis ’82, director of construction.

Also part of the renovation plan is a new, secondary entrance directly across from Crozet Hall.

“There’s a steady stream of cadets coming directly from Crozet Hall after breakfast to Scott Shipp,” Jarvis remarked. “This will become a well-used entrance as well.”

Faculty whose departments are located in Scott Shipp say the discomfort of the renovation will be well worth it in the end.

“We wanted to make sure everything was centered around cadet activity and collaboration,” said Col. Dennis Foster, former head of the Scott Shipp renovation committee.

“In terms of our home, it’s exactly what we want,” continued Foster, who is department head and professor of international studies. “It’s all about cadet collaboration. ... Providing them not just with opportunities to hang their hat, but a place to actually do work.”

At present, Foster explained, cadets who want to work together have to find an empty classroom, which is not an easy proposition in a building as heavily used as Scott Shipp.

In the newly renovated Scott Shipp, “There’s going to be a lot more attention paid to 21st century instruction,” Foster concluded. ✪



Once renovations are complete, Scott Shipp Hall will have an additional entrance facing Crozet Hall, as shown by this architect’s rendering. —Image courtesy of Col. Keith Jarvis ’82.

Rocket Competition

Clay Penney ’19 and a team of eight other cadets participated in the Mars Rover event of the Battle of the Rockets Competition in Culpeper, April 6. The requirements were to design a robot and rocket system that launches, deploys, collects soil, then transmits data. The team was successful until the rover got tangled in the parachute gear due to high winds. Despite the disqualifying landing, VMI placed third overall, and none of the teams fully completed the contest. Penney had a positive outlook on the experience. “I’ve never learned as much about engineering or project management in any classroom as I did in this project,” he said. —Photos courtesy of Col. Jim Squire.



Adams Center to Occupy Improved Space in Renovated Scott Shipp

As part of the upcoming renovation of Scott Shipp Hall, the John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis will move into its own, dedicated space.

Currently housed in the small corner office of its director, Col. Brad Coleman '95, professor of history, the Adams Center has as its mission to preserve and promote the study of military history, especially as it pertains to the Cold War.

It's a mission that's been ongoing ever since the center was established in the early years of the 21st century, but one that's been hard to fulfill because of a lack of both visibility and space. The center was conceived as a bridge between the history and international studies departments, Coleman explained, yet the international studies aspect is often overlooked because the center is housed in the history department.

As conceived by its namesake donor, who died last July, the Adams Center is to be "a collaborative platform for faculty across disciplines, both to enrich the educational program here at VMI and also to connect VMI with the wider scholarly community," said Coleman.

In the next few years, the center will move toward a greater fulfillment of that mission as it moves into a 3,600-square-foot space of its own on the 300 level of Scott Shipp Hall. The new Adams Center will include offices for the director and deputy director, plus cadet

assistants. Currently, the Adams Center has no deputy director, and while the center does have cadet assistants, they have nowhere to work.

Included in the plans is a research library. "We're not trying to reproduce Preston Library, but we will have some specialized research material here for scholars, for cadets, and for others who are inter-

ested in working on relevant topics," said Coleman.

There will also be a space for cadet collaboration and giving presentations. "It'll give us the space to do some of the programming that we want to do here and also increase the visibility and prestige of the center," Coleman commented.

At the same time the renovation is ongoing, a significant amount of money is expected to come into the Adams Center from the estate of John Adams, thus enriching the center's ability to fulfill its

mission. Adams, a corporate economist and amateur historian who had several papers published in his lifetime, "had a lifelong and enduring passion for VMI," said Coleman.

"This is a transformational moment," Coleman concluded. "I expect that we will emerge from the construction in 2021 with a large, vibrant, and impactful center."

— Mary Price



An architect's rendering shows the newly expanded John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis, to be built as part of the renovation of Scott Shipp Hall.—Image courtesy of Col. Brad Coleman '95.

Military *continued from page 10*

In the Air Force, he explained, each class year has a different assignment for FTX: 4th Class cadets travel to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, where they can see many components of the Air Force in one place, while 3rd Class cadets undergo a rigorous preparation for field training, which they'll attend this summer. Second class cadets, having completed field training themselves, help train 3rd Class cadets, and 1st Class cadets oversee the training.

This year, approximately 110 cadets from three other schools—the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, and Howard



Air Force ROTC cadets utilize the Leadership Reaction Course on North Post during spring FTX.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

University—joined about 75 Air Force ROTC cadets on Saturday, April 6, for a day of physical training and formal inspections.

"From what I saw, it was some of the best training I've ever done," said Wentworth.

Wentworth, who has already secured a pilot's slot in the Air Force, said he was "super stressed" the week before FTX, but when the time arrived, all went well.

"VMI has taught me that executing is the easy part," he said. "We're very good at executing here." 🍀

Inaugural Symposium Highlights Coaches' Impacts

By Maj. John Robertson IV

VMI's physical education faculty hosted their first-ever Coaching and Leadership Performance Symposium March 30, providing the coaching community an opportunity to share knowledge and insight into cutting-edge physical training methods.

"We've been wanting to do something like this for about five years in our department," said Col. Jimmy Coale, head of the physical education department. "We've got a number of people in our department who are subject matter experts and we just wanted to utilize that to do something for the community."

The symposium, held in Cormack Hall, drew coaches, athletic directors, and trainers from around the region, with prominent coaches delivering talks on aspects of ethical leadership and performance enhancement in an effort to help those who work with young people to be better and more effective at what they do. The emphasis throughout the day was the immense impact that coaches have on the lives of their athletes.

Kicking off the symposium was Mike Gentry, founder of High School Strength and former associate director of athletic performance at Virginia Tech.

"If you're teaching and coaching teenagers, they want to be strong. They want to be powerful," said Gentry. "You're a walking role model for them. They want to be like you, so make sure what they're seeing is worthy."

Gentry proudly displayed his coach's whistle—an Acme Thunderer with a patina created by years of sweat and used through countless training sessions—as a symbol of the commitment that the profession demands.

"To me, that whistle carries a similar significance to a badge on a law enforcement officer's chest," said Gentry. "It's a responsibility. It's a commitment to doing your best for these kids and being the best coach that you can be for them."

Practical demonstrations of technique punctuated the day's keynote sessions.

"We wanted to do a clinic that was performance based, where people could come in and learn how to do different things, whether it's speed, agility, and quickness or lifting. But we also wanted that leadership aspect of coaching," said Col. Jay Johnson, professor of physical education, noting that the combination of those two elements is vital for effective coaching. "Hopefully we're able to give people the tools to go back to their schools and be able to do some new things."

Over a dozen coaches, trainers, and professors led sessions throughout the day. Their expertise, added to the decades of experience brought by coaches in the crowd, made for a dynamic learning environment.



Mike Gentry shares his philosophy on training athletes effectively during the Coaching and Leadership Performance Symposium in Cormack Hall March 30.—VMI Photo by Maj. John Robertson IV.

Among the presenters was Jarrett Ferguson, a master strength and conditioning coach who led a session on speed, quickness, and agility.

"I'm going to give my presentation, and then I'm going to learn from the other guys that I haven't heard yet," said Ferguson. "Everybody's really engaged and they're here to learn. This is what it's for. It's for educating the coaches and helping them with how they're going to prepare their athletes."

Several cadets got in on the action as well, taking advantage of the opportunity to learn new physical training techniques with the added bonus of seeing their own coaches from a new perspective.

"I came down here because I personally powerlift and I'm part of the powerlifting team," said James Rainone '20, who noted that he had learned new dynamic stretch-

ing and warmup techniques to incorporate into his own routine. "Coaches put so much time into helping everybody reach their personal goals, so that was great to see. It was kind of an eye opener."

The symposium received support from local businesses, VMI alumni, and the Institute to offset the event's expenses. With dozens of local coaches from all backgrounds coming together to share ideas this year, the department is looking to grow the symposium into an annual pilgrimage for the region's coaching community.

"I'm really pleased with the diversity of coaches we have. We've got swimming coaches, field hockey coaches, tennis coaches, track coaches, football coaches—you name it, we have it," said Coale. "We want to continue to generate interest from the coaching community so that this thing continues to build." ❁



Dave Lawson, VMI's director of sports performance for Olympic sports, demonstrates lifting techniques during the symposium.—VMI Photo by Maj. John Robertson IV.

Boxers Return From Furlough with National Title

By Chris Floyd

With just seven boxers traveling to Syracuse, New York, for the United States Intercollegiate Boxing Association national tournament March 22-24, the Keydets returned home with an impressive third-place finish in the team standings. VMI boxers earned three titles, and all seven fighters earned All-America honors.

"Fighting for three days takes its toll on everybody, but hats off to the team," said Joe Shafer, in his second year at the helm of the VMI boxing program. "They really represented well and did what they were supposed to do. Every one of them did the best they could do in the ring, which makes me proud as a coach."

Illinois, which brought 17 fighters to the national championships, won its second straight team title, the first time any school has accomplished that feat since the USIBA was founded in 2012. The University of California, Riverside was the runner-up, followed by VMI, the University of Michigan and Texas A&M to round out the top five in the field of 30 squads.

Three Keydets entered the tournament as top seeds in the beginner class, and all three walked away with championship belts. Kameron Warlittner '20 was the champion at 165 pounds, while Troy Smith '21 took top honors at 178. Adam Fodness '21 was the last man standing at 189, and it was his championship bout that embodied VMI's effort at the tournament.

At one point in the match, the referee called for a break, but as Fodness was stepping back, he was struck by a late right hand, which induced a standing eight count. Undeterred, Fodness responded with a flurry of punches that forced the referee to stop the fight, giving the title to the VMI fighter via TKO.

"He really showed the courage of the team, what the team's spirit is all about," Shafer said. "What a way to dig in and come back. That showed how tough these guys are."

"They really impressed the officials, coaches and other teams there," the coach continued. "They are gentlemen everywhere they go, and it shows in the tournament, too."

With the national tournament behind them, the Keydets will now begin focusing on the future. Shafer, who was recently elected as the vice president of the USIBA, said that efforts at the practice facility located in Clark King Hall will be aimed at grooming a younger group of boxers for competition next year, and plans are already in the works for next year's schedule.

"I'm going to try to host a first semester home show next year and invite some big teams," said Shafer, who noted that USIBA is continuing to grow, with colleges and universities around the country starting teams. "We [are hoping for] just a whole day of boxing."

That regular-season schedule, of course, is geared toward preparing the VMI boxing club for its national championships. Shafer is hoping that his contingent will be much larger next year, and while the site is still to be determined, VMI has submitted a bid, along with Georgia Tech and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, to play host to the 2020 National Championships.



Boxing team members and coaches pose with Col. Bill Wanovich '87, Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, and Sgt. Maj. Suzanne Rubenstein.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

"We're working for a bigger national team next year," said the VMI coach. "Our Super Bowl is the national tournament. It all leads up to that."

If Shafer's hopes of preparing 10 to 15 boxers for the next national tournament are realized, then it is just possible that VMI might just contend for that team championship.

"This team gelled together this year better than I've seen in a long time," said Shafer. "Now we get to focus on new talent. We're going to reset again." 🍀

French Film Festival

Maj. Abbey Carrico, assistant professor of modern languages and cultures, Noah Lawing '21, and Daequan Myers '19 pause with French actor Thierry Lhermitte outside Richmond's Byrd Theatre during the French Film Festival March 29. Now in its 27th year, the festival brings in a delegation of French directors, actors, producers and writers to present their films. The festival gave cadets, students in Carrico's intermediate French course, the chance to immerse themselves in French culture, even stopping for lunch in Cary Town's French brasserie.—Photo courtesy of Maj. Abbey Carrico.



Career Fair Offers Something for Everyone

By H. Lockwood McLaughlin



Alexander Alvarado '17 discusses job opportunities at the Virginia Department of Transportation with Holden Fellows '20 during the Career Fair in Marshall Hall. —VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

This semester's career and internship fair was held in early March in the Center for Leadership and Ethics' Hall of Valor. The event hosted over 60 employers offering a broader array of opportunities than ever before—all with the intent of helping shape cadets' future endeavors.

"We're doing things a little differently this semester," said Lt. Col. Ammad Sheikh, VMI's director of career services. While in the past, the fair centered largely on engineering firms and law enforcement agencies, this semester's event added new participants to that core group of employers.

The result was a room packed with a larger number and wider spectrum of employers catering to more cadets.

"We have employers upstairs and downstairs," said Sheikh. "We have increased the number of employers to make sure every major is represented"

Many employers were represented by VMI alumni who chose varied career paths. Kyle Lynch

'06 served in the Marine Corps for over seven years before beginning work for AECOM, a multinational engineering firm. With a large number of cadets on commissioning tracks, there is valuable insight to be gained from hearing about the transition from service to workforce.

"We're exposing them to different opportunities once they've [graduated]," Lynch said. He went on to highlight how important these events are for cadets planning shorter careers in the armed forces before returning to the civilian world. "I know there a lot of folks that are going to be interested in that."

Another much younger alumnus, John Mobley '18 who now works for Kjellstrom and Lee Construction, recalled his own participation in the career fair last year.

"Three hundred and sixty-five days ago, I was on the other side of the table talking to the guy that I'm standing next to right now," said Mobley. "It's good to be back and not be wearing woolies."

"It's going well. There are lots of new vendors and I'm learning a lot about new places," said John Chamberlain '19, a mechanical engineering major who has already interned with one of the companies at the fair.

"I'm looking for an internship in the future," said Nate Kholer '22, who is interested in software design and development, adding that it was "good to get several options" at the fair.

Encouraged to attend by professors and career services staff, hundreds of cadets cycled through the Hall of Valor during the four-hour event.

"I actually enjoy being forced to go," said Chamberlain. "It made me step out of my comfort zone and learn some new things."

The career fair is just one resource career services offers in order to start cadets on their career paths early and support them throughout their cadetships.

"I always tell cadets, don't wait till you're a senior to come to a career fair. Come in your sophomore year, let's do an internship," said Sheikh. "Our mission is to have every cadet walk away from VMI with a long-term career education plan, because it's not about the first job after college." ❁

Community *continued from page 11*

community partners. Getting to join in with VMI like this is always incredibly helpful and everybody's excited to see them."

The feeling is mutual for cadets.

"I appreciate everyone at the Bull and Oyster Festival for letting us come out here and help," said Thomas Tavenner '19. "It's definitely been a great time. People are super nice—very welcoming"

Cadets also made their way down to the Chessie Trail throughout the weekend, where they cleared away detritus and spread gravel. "We've got all sorts of projects we want to do and the cadets have been great," remarked Chris Wise, a board member of Friends of the Chessie, as he sat in a pickup truck hauling a load of orange trash bags bulging with debris.

"We need manpower to do our cleanup, trash pickup by the river and along the trail" said Cliff Kirakofe, another board member of Friends of the Chessie, who was also out helping the cadets. "It makes it nice for the community and it also makes it great for VMI students. So it's a win-win." ❁



Employers line the floor of Marshall Hall to hand out information and talk to cadets during the Career Fair. —VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

New Market Home-Schoolers Glimpse the Past

By Mary Price

On a bright, sunny Saturday in March, nearly 100 home schooled children and their parents descended on the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park to learn about the Civil War era and life on a 19th century farm.

Going on now for at least 13 years, this year's home school day at New Market attracted approximately 250 children and their family members, said Sarah Mink, supervisor of historical interpretation at the battlefield, which is owned by VMI.

Home school day helps the battlefield achieve its educational mission of interpreting Civil War-era life for 21st century visitors, Mink explained.

"[Home school day] gives us an opportunity to reach out to families, especially home school families, with the programming that we do with our regular school groups," said Mink. She added that in the spring, with field trip season in full swing, school groups arrive at the battlefield daily, with approximately 70 groups scheduled to tour in April alone.

On home school day, activities included tours of the battlefield and a chance to explore the Virginia Museum of the Civil War, plus visiting the historic Bushong farm, where the Bushong family lived throughout the 1860s and beyond.

The Bushong farm house and its

numerous outbuildings provided a wide variety of learning opportunities for young visitors. In the summer kitchen, children could smell and handle the spices used to

In another outbuilding, children learned how store-bought cloth and a new invention, the sewing machine, revolutionized women's lives by giving them more time in

the day than they had ever had before. Nearby, volunteers planted new trees and pruned old ones in the Bushong orchard as children gathered around to watch.

On the spacious grounds, there was plenty of time to play, as volunteers gave demonstrations of traditional games such as the egg and spoon, hoop rolling, and "graces," a game in which players use two hand-held sticks to toss a small hoop back and forth. Volunteers also taught youngsters

and their parents how to do traditional dances such as the Virginia Reel.

"They've enjoyed seeing how real this really was," said Brian Schmidt, father of two home schooled children who visited for the day from Bristow, Virginia. "They've had a chance to look in the buildings, see the grounds where all of these events happened. [Battlefield staff] made it real in a way that you don't get if you read it in a book or watch it in a movie."

David Detrow, who has now been volunteering at home school day for five years, led a group of children through one of the simplest games possible: an egg and spoon race, thankfully played with fake eggs.

"It's fun to help children see what children did long ago to have a good time," said Detrow. "They didn't even have the table games that we have today. When I see them get these very simple games, and they smile and they laugh, and they have such a good time, it's just encouraging to see that they can enjoy the same things that children did so long ago." ❀



Virginia Museum of the Civil War volunteer Nancy Copley demonstrates how to use a 19th century sewing machine during homeschool day March 23 at the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park. —VMI Photo by Mary Price.

preserve food in the days before refrigeration, and in the wheelwright shop, they could feel the heat of the fire that was used to soften metal in preparation for making wheels and farm implements.



Homeschool day participants and their parents dance the Virginia Reel next to the Bushong House at the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park, March 23. —VMI Photo by Mary Price.

Have Hard Hat, Will Lead

By Mary Price

In mid-January, three cadets majoring in civil and environmental engineering attended a seminar designed to foster leadership among women entering the construction field.

Jessica Slakman '19, Brittany Szczepanik '20, and Merry Jaroneski '19 traveled to Aurora, Colorado, Jan.

15-16 to attend the Women in Construction Leadership Seminar. The event was sponsored by Kiewit, an international construction firm with 2017 revenues of \$8.7 billion and a consistent top 10 ranking by industry publication Engineering News Record.



Brittany Szczepanik '20, Merry Jaroneski '19, and Jessica Slakman '19 pause on a job site in Aurora, Colorado.—Photo courtesy of Maj. Paul Ackerman '93.

This event, which is free to participants, has been going on for 11 years—yet until this year, no VMI cadet had been able to go because most years the dates conflicted with either a gubernatorial or presidential inauguration, explained Maj. Paul Ackerman Jr.

'93, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering.

This year, the cadets did have to miss registration day and the first day of classes, but all three agreed that the trip was worth it.

"It was so beneficial," said Slakman, who has accepted a position as a project engineer for a construction firm in the Washington, D.C., area. The two days, she explained, were filled with team-building exercises and seminars on leadership, along with a visit to a Kiewit construction site.

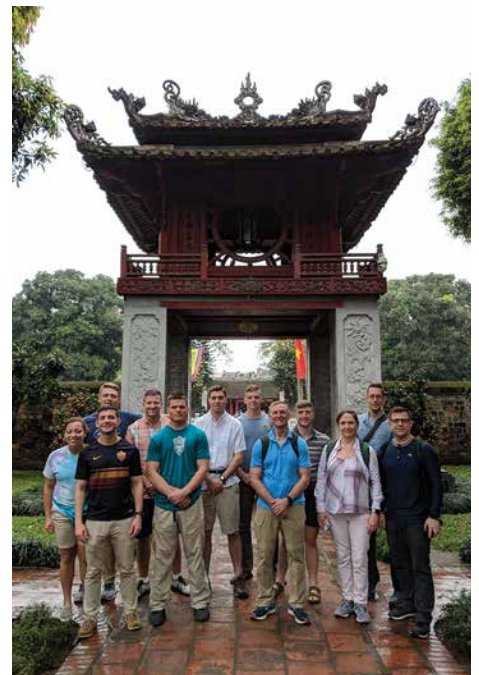
The 49 women attending the event were also required to read a book on leadership before attending. For Slakman, who is regimental S-5 captain (public relations) for the Corps of Cadets, the book reinforced and underscored what she'd already learned at VMI.

"Everything that was in the book was literally like what we learn in our leadership classes and what we learn at VMI," Slakman commented. There were also female engineers talking about leadership in a man's world, but for Slakman, their discussions



Olmsted in Vietnam

Cadets pose for photos in front of the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and the Temple of Literature in Hanoi, Vietnam, during a spring furlough trip sponsored by the Olmsted Foundation, an organization that provides cultural immersion opportunities for commissioning cadets. This was the first time since 2013 that a VMI Olmsted group had traveled to Vietnam. Eight cadets participated in this year's trip, visiting sites such as Ho Chi Minh City and Hue, in addition to Hanoi. The cadets were accompanied by Maj. Jochen Arndt, assistant professor of history, and Lt. Col. Houston Johnson, associate professor of history.—Photos courtesy of Lt. Col. Houston Johnson V.



primarily reinforced what she already knew, since the Corps of Cadets is 90 percent male.

"I've had to live that life for four years," she noted. As for the leadership lessons, the Kiewit experience made her realize "it's not just VMI," she added.

Slakman came to VMI as an economics and business major, but when the classes in that department didn't hold her attention, she switched to civil and environmental engineering. "I liked math a lot," she related. "I'd always liked building things. It just all worked out."

Szczepanik, who will commission into the Air Force, also got a lot from her trip to Colorado. "It offered a really unique experience," she stated. In many ways, she noted, it was the flip side of VMI because she's the only woman in the Class of 2020 majoring in civil engineering, yet during the Kiewit seminar, she was surrounded by other women studying that discipline.

"Some of the speakers brought in perspectives on things that I wouldn't have thought of," Szczepanik added. The female engineers who addressed the students, she said, discussed topics such as not being afraid to ask questions and finding the right work/life balance.

"A lot of them started as project engineers," she explained. "They wanted to be out with the men all of the time checking on them. ... They had to get into the mindset of, 'If you don't take care of yourself first, you're not going to be able to take care of your job, either.'"

Jaroneski likewise appreciated the life lessons the Kiewit women shared, especially as she's the only engineer in her family. "It was nice for somebody to teach us so we would feel strong and confident going into a male-dominated sphere," she commented. "The way they talk about confidence, standing up for yourself, being a woman while still being powerful—it was really beneficial."

Heading west, Jaronski had been somewhat concerned that the Kiewit trip would just be a sales pitch—and one she didn't need, as she's already accepted a position with an engineering firm in Fairfax, Virginia, specializing in stormwater and wastewater management. But thankfully, her concern turned out to be unwarranted.

"It didn't feel like a sales pitch," she noted. "It felt like they wanted us to be the best engineers we could be." ❄

NCMT Educates 4th Class Cadets

Class of 2022 cadets participate in New Cadet Military Training at Lackey Park March 30. The program, portions of which also take place at the Corps Physical Training Facility, teaches cadets survival, first aid, land navigation, and marksmanship skills.—Photos courtesy of Tyler Patrick Smith '17.



Parade Honors Vietnam Vets

Cadets march in a review parade March 29 coinciding with National Vietnam Veteran Day. Vietnam veterans in attendance sat in the front row as a place of honor. Parents and prospective cadets were also on hand for the parade as part of admissions open house weekend.—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye.





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Marksmanship Program Trains with New Pistols

By Kelly Nye

Keeping equipment up to date is critical to the success of students at any school. At VMI that equipment includes firearms.

VMI's marksmanship program recently traded in the old standard Army issue Beretta M9 pistols for the new standard Sig Sauer 320 9mm pistols, assuring that cadets are learning about firearms with the most modern weapons used by the Army.

All 1st Class Cadets train with them on the North Post firing range, as part of the Corps marksmanship program. The commandant's office sends cadets to the range by company during physical training time every Friday to familiarize themselves with the pistols.

"This is awesome, I don't know any other military school that takes it to this level for pistol training," explained rifle team coach Lt. Col. Bill Bither. "We work with the professors in military science so that they're excused from their military physical training time to come up here."

The Corps marksmanship program teaches 3rd Class Cadets how to shoot modern small arms. Initially designed to ensure rifle proficiency and safety, the program was expanded to semiautomatic pistols three years ago.

Cadets line the range at eight firing points, each with an instructor. The instructors are active duty



Range safety officer Angelo Cecchini '21 reviews the target score shot by Conor Bremer '19.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

or retired military, cadets on the three-gun team, or volunteers trained by Bither, an NRA pistol instructor. The one-on-one lessons in firearm safety and familiarization are paramount, whether the cadet is commissioning or not.

"We have a lot of kids who are going into law enforcement to be police officers," Bither explained. "Or it's just to teach them a little bit about protecting themselves and how to use a firearm. They're learning all the rules and safety procedures. We cover all of that."

The company with the best target scores will receive an award at the end of the semester and a banner for their company guidon. 🏆



Sig Sauer 320 9mm pistols are the new pistols used in the Corps Marksmanship Program.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.