

**GENERAL J. H. BINFORD PEAY, III
SUPERINTENDENT**

**Re-dedications of Coker Hall and Cormack Hall
Founders Day, 11 November 2016**

Re-Dedication of Cormack Hall

Good morning ladies and gentleman. I thank you for attending the re-dedication of this special facility, the first of two dedications scheduled for today. Cormack Hall and Coker Hall, together with the new Corps Physical Training Facility – now being completed on Main Street, and North Post – Leadership Valley – demonstrate VMI’s commitment to confidence building, wellness, fitness, toughness, athletic competition, and the historic ideal of a sound mind in a sound body. These two buildings – Cormack and Coker -- are a tangible expression of the goal of our founders to create “A healthful and pleasant abode of a crowd of honorable youths.” And it is good to be reminded of this goal because today, as you know, is Founders Day. I also want to introduce... “newly elected” Frank Friedman as our Mayor in Lexington...and always a great supporter and friend of VMI.

Building dedications on Founders Day may be a tradition at VMI, if we can say that four times makes a tradition. Preston Library was dedicated on the 11th of November in 1939, and the 100th Anniversary of the Institute; the New Science Building was dedicated on the 11th of November in 1989, and the 150th Anniversary of the Institute, and 3rd Barracks was dedicated on the 11th of November 2008. Today, of course, is the 177th Anniversary of VMI.

The renovation and full modernization of these “two” buildings ---- Cormack and Cocke --- was accomplished by a very good Team, that over a decade now has done remarkable major project work for us at the Institute. I will introduce them and ask each to step forward, wave, so you can receive our thanks:

- The Architect – Baskervill out of Richmond, VA

Bob Clark (*VMI Class '88*), *President & Project Executive*

Jay Woodburn, *Project Manager*

- The Construction Manager – Branch & Associates out of Roanoke

Ms. Cathy Underwood, *Vice President*

Jerry DeVault, *Project Executive*

- And, the VMI Construction Office Team:

COL Dale Brown, *VMI Director of Construction*

Colonel Keith Jarvis, *Deputy Director of Construction*

Will Reinholtz, *Project Inspector*

John Thompson, *Project Manager*

- And much of the planning and government relations work was accomplished by BG Bob Green and COL Kim Parker, Director of Government Relations.

In all, 53,087 square feet were involved in the Cormack Hall project. This included a new weight training facility, five classrooms, an exercise science laboratory for VMI's new Minor in Exercise Science, offices, a conference room, facilities for mat sports, and seating for 750 cadets and visitors. In support of NCAA wrestling, there are new locker rooms, coaches' offices, a modern training room, and a conference room.

Due to the need for a new floor slab and elevated slab, Cormack Hall required 2,000 cubic yards of concrete. In addition, there were 1,900 linear feet of cast iron pipe, 540 cast iron fittings, 7,000 linear feet of copper pipe, 1,750 linear feet of steel pipe, 600 steel fittings, 27,300 lbs. of sheet metal for ductwork, 140 tons of cooling capacity, and 18 miles of wire. Both Cormack and Coker were completed as a single project at \$38,053,166.00 total cost. It is estimated that the share for Cormack Hall was 40 percent, or \$15,221,266.00.

The new Cormack Hall – and I say “new” because of the complete renovation – is now the new home of the VMI Physical Education Department, relocating from Coker Hall. It is also the home of VMI's NCAA wrestling program and the new “Thunder Dome.” It has, as mentioned, weight rooms and classrooms for the very best of instruction. After 4 p.m. (1600 hours) each day, the instruction weight room is used by every NCAA team except football, which has its own weight room in Clarkson McKenna.

I, perhaps, should also mention that this renovated and upgraded building (retaining its historic appearance) improves the North Main Street entrance to the City of Lexington.

Now I would like to invite Colonel Keith Gibson, Executive Director of the VMI Museum System, to speak briefly on the history of this important structure, a building which went through many transformations and which certainly remains fresh in the memories of thousands of cadets that have used it.

COL Gibson.....

Re-Dedication of Cocke Hall

Good morning again....

Ladies and Gentlemen... Thank you for attending this re-dedication ceremony, the second of two this morning, and being held on this very special day.

“Special,” I say, because as you know, today is Founders Day, the 177th anniversary of the founding of the Virginia Military Institute. It is especially appropriate to be here at Cocke Hall which, in keeping with the significance of Founders Day, faces the parapet. On that wall are the words, in letters of enduring bronze, of founder J. T. L. Preston that he expressed as he championed the establishment of the Institute in the local newspaper in 1837. These words became a perfect vision statement for the school and remain so over a century and a half later. In the context of today’s re-dedication ceremonies, it is important to note that Preston began by describing VMI as a “healthful and pleasant abode of a crowd of honorable youths.” In fact, throughout almost all of the writings of Preston and first superintendent Francis H. Smith, you will find a repeated emphasis on health and well-being. This was one of the important reasons VMI was founded far from crowded cities and close to the bracing environment of western Virginia. Cocke Hall has contributed for decades to the support of a “healthful and pleasant abode”...and now its role is assured for many more years to come.

The Architect, Construction Manager, and VMI Construction Office Teams and persons whom were introduced to you earlier at Cormack Hall designed and constructed this facility. This was a difficult undertaking complicated by the age of the structure, and “unknowns” that would be uncovered during the construction. The entire building was modernized, with special emphasis on improved space utilization.

In all, 79,942 square feet of space was affected. A small cardio room was completed in the winter of 2008 on the west end of the 500 level...additional exercise and fitness rooms were added to that initiative. Locker room facilities and offices were expanded and modernized to support the Corps, our NCAA Swimming and Water Polo athletic teams, and faculty and staff. The indoor track and basketball courts were resurfaced. The existing weight room was totally modernized with new weights and a power-lifting room was added. Restrooms were modernized and made more accessible. A service elevator was added, security and fire systems were upgraded, and air conditioning was installed. And key for energy conservation, all the historic windows were upgraded.

Both buildings, Cocke and Cormack, as previously mentioned, were completed as a single project, \$38,053,166.00 total project cost. It is estimated that 60 percent of the cost was for Cocke Hall. What did we get for this expenditure? In terms of some basic materials: there were 1,800 linear feet of cast iron pipe; 500 cast iron fittings; 10,555 linear feet of copper pipe; 1,950 copper fittings; 4,000 linear feet of steel pipe; 470 steel fittings; 34,000 lbs. of

sheet metal for ductwork; 260 tons cooling capacity; and 25 miles of wire. All in all, a total renovation was achieved of this central, important, and historic building...to include Memorial Gardens.

In its new life, Cocke Hall will serve as the Corps Support Building. It will be the center for cadet and faculty and staff fitness programs through its weight rooms, cardio rooms, running track, yoga room, and wrestling facilities. New offices will support the coaching staffs of our NCAA Swimming and Water Polo Teams. Locker rooms will be available to cadets for Rat Swimming and other PE instruction and the faculty and staff will have a separate set of locker rooms. Basketball and volleyball will benefit from the new flooring. Water polo, swimming, and diving competition will continue to be located in the connected pool annex. And, as in the past, Cocke Hall will be the location for popular cadet hops.

You will notice a new monument to the north of Memorial Gardens with the inscription ---- "IN HONOR OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED THE INSTITUTE." Initially, this was to be a "reflection" area for all of us, that perhaps needed time to reflect on classmates, family and staff, and others who have passed..., those who served VMI whether it be thru labor, wisdom, or encouragement of resources. We worded "this" to allow a broad interpretation. It is also an area for commissioning of our young Lieutenants and Ensigns and we will further "beautify" this garden area in the days ahead.

I'll now ask Col. Gibson to speak to you about the history of Cocks Hall, named for VMI's fourth superintendent, William H. Cocks, Class of 1894.

Col. Gibson.....