



INSTITUTE REPORT

Volume 52, Number 2, October 2023

VMI's New Emergency Manager

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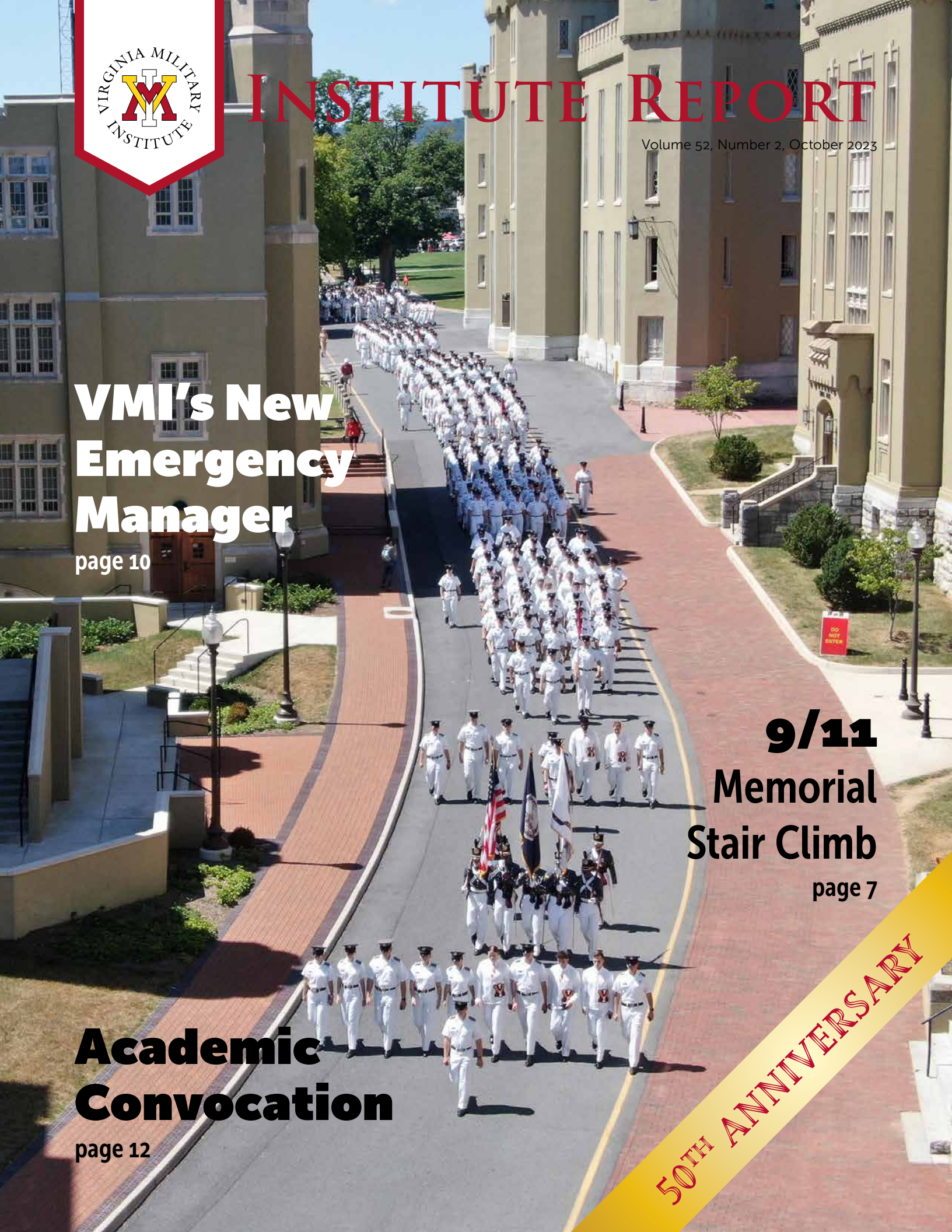
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50TH ANNIVERSARY



Brig. Gen. Robert "Bob" L. Green '67

Brig. Gen. Robert "Bob" L. Green '67 passed away Sept. 10 at the age of 78 in Williamsburg, Virginia. Green retired from VMI in 2016 after more than 20 years of service to the Institute.

After graduating from VMI with a civil engineering degree, Green served in Vietnam with the U.S. Army, earned his master's degree in civil engineering from University of Virginia, and went on to be president of the architectural and engineering firm Wiley|Wilson. At VMI, he was briefly an assistant professor of engineering, and then later joined the commandant's office in 1997. His most visible accomplishments occurred during his time as deputy superintendent for finance, administration, and support. This includes the construction of Third Barracks and the Corps Physical Training Facility. Green also oversaw renovations of Crozet Hall, Nichols Engineering Building, Maury-Brooke Hall, Mallory Hall, Cormack Hall, Cocke Hall, and the transformative development of the training facilities on North Post.

He led the Institute support operation consisting of more than 200 employees, providing management and daily oversight of administrative,



Brig. Gen. Robert "Bob" L. Green '67

finance, construction, engineering, contracting, food, human resources, transportation, medical, auxiliary, security, and safety operations. Under his management of the VMI museum system, it grew to include three facilities. Green also supervised VMI's engagement with state legislators, nurturing strong support for VMI through periods of economic uncertainty, and contributing to the development of legislation across many areas touching higher education.

He and his wife Carole, who worked in the Alumni Association for 15 years, have remained steadfast supporters of the Institute. Carole was part of the VMI Assimilation Committee as the Institute prepared for women to attend. She has remained a strong advocate for the women of VMI.

Lt. Gen. Charles Dominy

Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Charles Dominy, a member of the VMI Board of Visitors, passed away Sept. 1 at the age of 83.

Dominy joined the Board of Visitors in the summer of 2016.

He served as government affairs consultant for IAP Worldwide Services, Inc. Prior to joining IAP as vice president of government affairs, he managed the Washington, D.C. Government Affairs office for the Halliburton Company, as well as Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR), its engineering, construction, and industrial business segment. He joined Halliburton after a distinguished 33-year career in the U.S. Army.

Dominy was directly involved in growing the government business of KBR, which became the Army's largest defense contractor. He advised on mergers and acquisitions, business development, marketing, and overall strategy.



Lt. Gen. Charles Dominy

During his years of military service, Dominy served as director of the Army staff. He acted on behalf of, and coordinated the activities of all agencies reporting to, the Army Chief of Staff. Prior to that assignment, he served as chief of legislative liaison for all Army activities related to the U.S. Congress, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Missouri River Engineer Division, executive to the Secretary of the Army, and commander of the U.S. Army Savannah Engineer District.

Dominy's awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (with Oak Leaf Cluster), the Bronze Star (with Oak Leaf Cluster), three Air Medals, the Meritorious Service Medal (with Four Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Commendation Medal with "V" Device (with Oak Leaf Cluster), the Parachutist Badge, the Ranger Tab, and the Army Staff Identification Badge.

Dominy graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1962. He earned a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Illinois, as well as degrees from Emory University, the U.S. Army War College, and the U.S. Army Command & General Staff College.

Dominy will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. ❀

INSTITUTE REPORT

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Director Col. Bill Wyatt
Editor Lt. Col. Michelle Ellwood
Assistant Editor Kelly Nye
Designer Robbin Youngblood
Institute Report Staff
Marianne Hause
H. Lockwood McLaughlin
Andrew Partridge '24
Lexie West
Back Cover Photo
Andrew Partridge '24

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Career opportunities are available across post. Learn more about faculty, staff, and hourly career opportunities at www.vmi.edu/jobs.




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On the cover: The Corps of Cadets marches to Foster Stadium for the first home football game of the season on Sept. 2.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

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VMI Again Ranked Highly by U.S. News and World Report

By Lt. Col. Michelle Ellwood

VMI retained its high placing among the nation's best colleges, according to the 2024 Best Colleges Rankings released Sept. 18 by U.S. News and World Report.

Among public liberal arts colleges, the Institute ranked No. 4 only behind the United States Naval Academy, the United States Air Force Academy, and the United States Military Academy. VMI was ranked No. 63 among more than 200 national liberal arts colleges, up from No. 70 last year.

Unlike many other publications that issue college rankings, U.S. News also ranks certain programs found at numerous colleges and universities. This year, VMI ranked 30th out of more than 270 institutions nationwide that have an accredited engineering program but do not grant a doctoral degree. The Institute's undergraduate computer science program was also recognized in this year's rankings.

This year, the method to establish the rankings underwent changes, including eliminating some factors that had been used for years, and

adding new factors. More focus was placed on outcomes, including first-generation graduation rates and performance. ✪



Dr. Tanjina Afrin teaches a civil engineering class on the first day of classes in the Nichols Engineering Building.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

2023–24 New and Promoted Faculty

VMI announced the promotion and granting of tenure to several faculty members, and introduced new members of the faculty for this academic year.

Promoted: _____

- » **Biology**—Col. Ashleigh Smythe—Promoted from associate professor to professor.
- » **Chemistry**—Col. Daniel Harrison '05—Promoted from associate professor to professor.
- » **Human Performance and Wellness**—Lt. Col. Dan Baur—Promoted from assistant professor to associate professor.
- » **International Studies**—Dr. Vera Heuer—Promoted from associate professor to professor.
- » **Modern Languages**—Col. Abbey Carrico—Promoted from associate professor to professor; Col. Jeff Kendrick—Promoted from associate professor to professor.

Promoted, with tenure: _____

- » **Biology**—Lt. Col. Mary Beth Manjerovic—Promoted from assistant professor to associate professor, with tenure.
- » **Civil and Environmental Engineering**—Dr. Tanjina Afrin—Promoted from assistant professor to associate professor, with tenure.

- » **English, Rhetoric, and Humanistic Studies**—Lt. Col. Stephanie Hodde—Promoted from assistant professor to associate professor, with tenure.

New Full-Time Faculty: _____

- » **Computer and Information Sciences**—Dr. Sam Park, assistant professor, Amish Parikh, instructor.
- » **Economics and Business**—Maj. Spencer Palmer, assistant professor.
- » **History**—Maj. Bryant Etheridge, assistant professor, Dr. Erin Holmes, visiting assistant professor, Dr. Alex Paul, visiting assistant professor.
- » **International Studies**—Dr. Salih Yasun, assistant professor
- » **Mechanical Engineering**—Dr. Md Kamrul Hasan, assistant professor.
- » **Army ROTC**—Sgt. 1st Class Danielle Ogburn, Sgt. 1st Class Larry Aviles, Capt. Maurice Dawson, Capt. Megan Taylor, Capt. Pauline Johnson, Staff Sgt. Vivian Sighrablunt, Capt. William Wallace.
- » **Air Force ROTC**—Lt. Col. Cary Wilson, Maj. Chandler Moore, Tech. Sgt. Clifford Lunsford, Capt. Jared Crosby, Maj. Nicholas Cooper.
- » **Naval ROTC**—Gunnery Sgt. Claude Henderson, 1st Lt. Phillip Haly.
- » **Cyber Defense Laboratory**—Nathan Dransfield.

Continued on next page

- » **Career Services**—Katie Maher.
- » **Preston Library**—Jane Bartley, Karen Centeno-Casillas.

- » **Biology**—Emily Pody '19.
- » **Civil and Environmental Engineering**—Donald Martin '13.
- » **English, Rhetoric, and Humanistic Studies**—Mary Price, Dr. Luke McNulty.
- » **International Studies**—Kassandra Layne
- » **Physics**—Dr. William Cameron. ✪

New Adjunct/Part-Time Faculty: _____

- » **Applied Math**—Elizabeth Clement.



Men's Soccer Victorious at Corps Game

The Corps of Cadets marched to North Post for supper to attend the men's soccer program's Corps Game Sept. 19 as the Keydets competed against Radford. The game was scoreless until Kyle Grant '27 kicked the ball in the goal with just under four minutes to play. The game ended 1-0, with goal keeper Dylan Holbach '26 holding on to the ball in Radford's last attempt to score. Holbach began the season as a team manager, but made eight saves in his first career start. This victory is VMI's first over a Division I opponent since the 2014 season. Head coach Nick Regan, in his second year at VMI, was nearly speechless, only able to describe the evening as "an unbelievable story."—*VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin and courtesy of VMI Athletics.*



Cadets Represent NATO Members in Simulation

By Marianne Hause

A model NATO simulation was held Sept. 7, where 32 cadets spent the day representing the various NATO member countries and solving a problem through negotiations. The event was hosted by the Department of International Studies and Political Science in collaboration with NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT) headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia.

NATO is the shortened name for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, an intergovernmental military alliance between 31 member states—29 European and two North American. Sweden is in the process of becoming the 32nd member. NATO's fundamental goal is to safeguard the Allies' freedom and security by political and military means. NATO remains the principal security instrument of the transatlantic community and expression of its common democratic values.

Four staff members from ACT were in attendance and played crucial roles in the model: secretary general, who moderated the event; assistant secretary general; chairman of military committee; and scenario manager. ACT conceived the true-to-life scenario for the cadets to discuss, and will take the same scenario to other colleges and universities around the world.

According to Maj. Tim Passmore, assistant professor of international studies, the scenario regarded African countries—who are not members of NATO—and the threat of terrorism on that continent. "The rapid re-emergence and strengthening of terrorist groups in Africa poses a political, economic, and social threat to NATO members. Therefore, the question the cadets considered was, 'Should NATO politically and militarily engage in fighting terrorism in Africa?'" he said.

Julie Freitas '25, an international studies major, who represented the country of Germany said, "From this experience, I learned so



Thirty-two cadets represent member countries at the model NATO simulation in Moody Hall.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

much by participating in group discussions. Although preparation is key to succeeding, those kinds of discussions bring up different points of view which caused me to think differently. That honestly surprised me." Freitas is from Richmond.

Luke Rose '24, also an international studies major who represented Norway said, "The NATO model event was a great opportunity to work with my peers to solve real-world problems. The event challenged us to a tough situation and taught us a lot about the process of NATO. I enjoyed working alongside my classmates to come up with a solution. It was great to see the effort and commitment of everyone who took part in the event." Rose is from Virginia Beach.

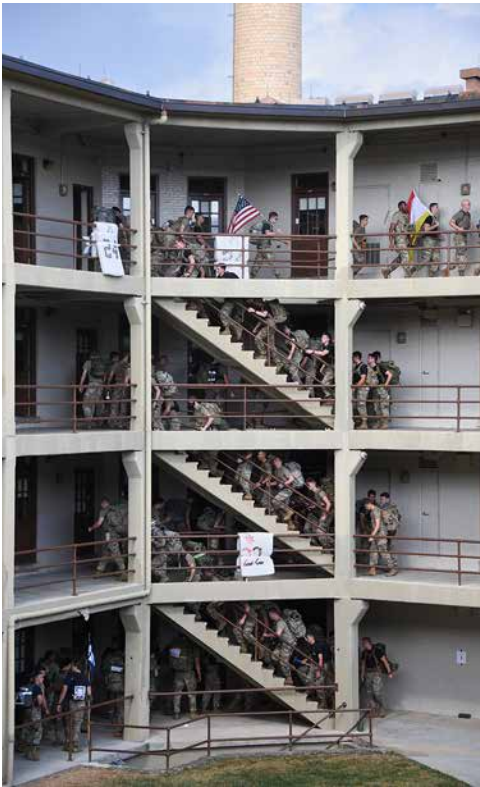
Passmore plans to repeat the event annually, and to develop a collaboration between VMI and NATO. ✪



Cadets at the NATO simulation consider the question: 'Should NATO engage politically and militarily in fighting terrorism in Africa.'—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



The Allied Command Transformation staff serve crucial roles at the model NATO Sept. 7.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



9/11 Stair Climb

The Corps of Cadets honored those who perished in the 9/11 terrorist attacks by climbing 110 stories in barracks, replicating the number of stairs first responders at the World Trade Center climbed during the rescue attempt, and in memory of those who lost their lives that day. Each cadet taped the name of a 9/11 victim on the back of their rucks, including two VMI alumni who perished, Lt. Cmdr. David Williams '91, and Charles Mathers '62.

Before the climb began, Institute chaplain, Col. John P. Casper '04 shared with the Corps, his experience being a 20-year-old 3rd Class cadet on Sept. 11, 2001. Some cadets took turns carrying a piece of glass recovered from the rubble of the Twin Towers, as well as an American flag recovered from ground zero.

Paul Murray '24, regimental executive officer, was in charge of the climb. At the completion of the climb, the Rat Mass received their shoulder boards.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



50 Years of the Institute Report: Construction

By Marianne Hause

To celebrate the Institute Report's 50th anniversary, milestones, unique news features, and program enhancements covered throughout the five decades are being highlighted in each issue of the IR during the 2023–24 academic year. This issue features a small selection of the construction and renovations featured in the publication.

For history buffs who want to test their memories, trivia questions follow the article. Answers are found on the inside of the back cover.

1974—The Old VMI Hospital received a new roof.

1975—The Archer House, one of the structures singled out for special mention by the National Park Service, underwent extensive renovation made possible by a grant from the descendants of a VMI cadet who died in the Battle of New Market.

1979—Groundbreaking for Cameron Hall.

1980—The Science Building was rededicated as Carroll Hall, after Col. Robert “Doc” P. Carroll during Homecoming weekend. Carroll retired in 1968 after 40 years as a faculty member, 18 of those years he was head of the biology department.

1984—A new obstacle course was erected in VMI's Woods Creek area. Roanoke-based U.S. Marine Corps Reservists of Co. B, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion, 4th Marine Division had the expertise and needed weekend field training opportunities, and VMI had the need.

1986—A new 400-meter, 8-lane track with jump runways was constructed in Alumni Memorial Field over the summer, at a cost of \$185,500.

1987—“Stono,” the 1818 mansion which overlooks the Maury River, was purchased by the VMI Foundation. The house was built and owned by John Jordan, one of Rockbridge County's most illustrious 19th century citizens and the builder of the early VMI barracks.

The Pendleton-Coles House, now home to the Office of Admissions, was moved to make way for the construction of Maury-Brooke Hall. The home was originally built in 1867.

1992—The Cocke Hall pool, which was losing between 1,000 to 2,000 gallons of water per day, received new plumbing, piping, drains, a new feed-water circulation system, a new heating and ventilation system, and a marbleite surface.

1993—Building began on the Barracks Phase IV project including the construction of a 13,633 square foot, four story, infill building



The Pendleton-Coles House, now home to the Office of Admissions, is moved to make way for the construction of Maury-Brooke Hall.—Photo courtesy of VMI Archives.

between Richardson Hall and the Heating Plant. The new building would house the pressing shop, tailor shop, a computer study lab, and laundry pick-up.

1994—Cadets and faculty members helped build the “Kids Playce” playground in Lexington. Two civil engineering cadets designed replicas of the VMI Barracks façade and the Washington Hall façade at W&L for a senior thesis project and independent research.

2008—Third Barracks was dedicated.

2009—Marshall Hall was dedicated.

2011—North Post projects were completed including the new rifle range, three drill fields, four tennis courts, an entrance road, and parking lot.

Interior and exterior enhancements were made to Shell Hall including new flooring, new paint, electronic door locks, sound attenuation, new ceiling tile and storage compartments for band instruments.

A \$5.1 million renovation project began on the Health Center building, temporarily moving the infirmary to Third Barracks.

2012—A group of 80 volunteers, students and instructors came together to work on the timber framers' pavilion at the North Post Training area.

Four houses on Letcher Avenue that housed admissions, human resources and protocol received new roofs and exterior paint.

2013—Funding was approved for both phases of the \$122



The North Post entrance starts to take shape in 200





In late 2008, work continues in the post exchange and Third Barracks.—VMI File Photo by Kevin Remington.

million Corps Physical Training Facilities project that included construction of an indoor training facility and renovation of Cocke Hall and Cormack Hall.

Memorial Hall roof received a new finish, extending its life while restoring its historical appearance to resemble aged copper.

2014—The Knights of Pythias building, erected in the mid-1920s was moved from the foot of Diamond Hill to its new location on Main Street to make room for the Corps Physical Training Facility. It took 2 ½ hours to move the 350-ton building.

2015—Renovations to Cormack Hall were completed, marking a major milestone in the Corps Physical Training Facilities project.

2016—A three-arched memorial was built alongside Scott Shipp Hall in Memorial Garden to honor those who served the Institute. It was designed to complement the Spirit of Youth statue located on the opposite end of the garden.

Cormack and Cocke Halls were rededicated after major renovations as part of the Corps Physical Training Facilities project.

2017—The Corps Physical Training Facility (CPTF) opened to its full capability after more than two years of construction. The track team christened it well, with both the men's and women's squads earning victories over The Citadel.



8.—VMI File Photo by B.R. Floyd.



The groundbreaking for Cameron Hall takes place in July 1979.—Photo Courtesy of VMI Archives.



The construction of Marshall Hall and the courtyard progress in June 2008.—VMI File Photo by Kevin Remington.

Crozet Hall got a new floor and Cameron Hall got a new roof.

2019—A newly renovated structures lab, allowing more space for research and projects for the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, was opened in the Nichols Engineering Building annex.

The press box overlooking Foster Stadium underwent a \$1.7 million renovation and expansion, allowing instant replay capability, which is a Southern Conference requirement. Built-in camera platforms were added to the roof, and additional interior square footage allows space for coaches, who oversee the game and make calls from a high vantage point.

2020—A ribbon cutting was held in Preston Library, which was nearing the end of a \$19.2 million renovation, including a variety of study seating options, consistent Wi-Fi access throughout the building, expanded VMI archives, and a fire sprinkler system.

2021—A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the Aquatic Center, officially known as Phase III of the Corps Physical Training Facility.

VMI Police moved into their new headquarters on Letcher Avenue. The construction of \$5.6 million building, 11,000 square foot building took 1½ years.

2022—A ribbon cutting was held at Scott Shipp Hall celebrating

the completion of a five-year planning, design, and construction effort totaling \$43 million. The project included a 28,000-square foot expansion, and a complete renovation of the previously existing 68,000-square foot space.

The planning and design phase of a new building to be located adjacent to Marshall Hall was announced. The building will be known as Peay Hall, named after Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, and will house space for VMI's leadership programs as well as the VMI museum.

A \$2.9 million renovation project was completed on the Superintendent's Quarters, including a new HVAC system, sewer and water lines, electrical

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VMI Welcomes New Emergency Manager

By Marianne Hause

Retired Army National Guard Col. Paul Kastner has joined VMI as the new Director of Emergency Management, following the retirement of the former director, James L. “Jay” Williams Jr. ’83.

Kastner, who has nearly 40 years of experience working in both the military and private sector, most recently served as the chief of emergency response at the Pentagon. He was responsible for protecting the Pentagon, and all the associated facilities against chemical, biological, or radiological weapons, as well as high explosives. “The Pentagon is the most prestigious military headquarters in the world—bar none—and what we did had to be perfect. My staff always used to hear me say, ‘good enough for government work does not cut it here,’” he stated.

Kastner received his bachelor’s degree in American history from Washington & Lee University, and is very familiar with Lexington. His parents, who fell in love with the area while visiting him at W&L, bought a 50-acre cattle farm in Rockbridge County when they retired. “My parents are aging, and it was my intention to retire this year and move here to take care of them and the farm. I realized that perhaps there may be more I want to do with my time, so I looked on the VMI website for job opportunities. I saw this position posted and had an ‘eureka moment’—this is what I do,” he declared.

Though the Pentagon is quite different than VMI, Kastner explained that the fundamental preparation and planning for emergencies is basically the same. “Thinking scenarios through, making plans, and exercising those plans in advance is essential. That’s always been my training methodology, so when the bad day happens, we’re prepared,” he said.

Kastner stated that an emergency can be man-made or natural like floods, lightning strikes, and snowstorms. “A recent example of



Col. Paul Kastner

an emergency that effected VMI is the pandemic, COVID-19. An example of a man-made threat would be someone who unfortunately feels the need to act out in a violent way with a weapon or a vehicle. VMI has an open campus, which is a great thing. I love to see people coming here to walk their dogs, and stroll through post—but we want to maintain that—but it also provides access for someone who wants to do harm. Extreme events, though not very likely, have consequences that can be catastrophic, and therefore can’t be ignored,” he said.

According to Michael L. Marshall, VMI chief of police, the Office of Emergency Management is a critical division within the National Incident Management System and provides support in actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters. “Emergency Management and VMI police have supported each other on many different occasions during low-risk and high-risk situations on post. We’re very excited to work alongside Paul this academic year and for years to come,” he said.

Prior to working at the Pentagon, Kastner served in the Maryland National Guard.

“One of my initial responsibilities was commander of the 32nd Civil Support Team, which was a weapons of mass destruction response unit for homeland security. I was moved into a position where I served as the senior full-time National Guard officer for military operational support and domestic contingency operations at the Maryland Emergency Management Agency,” he said.

Kastner earned a master’s degree in Homeland Security Management from Towson University in Towson, Maryland.

Kastner’s wife, Amanda currently works as a librarian for Baltimore County, and is in the process of moving to Rockbridge County. The couple have four grown children, a Plott hound named Jessie, and a cat named Marco. ✨

Positive Outlook Shapes September BOV Meeting

By Col. Bill Wyatt

The Board of Visitors (BOV) began the 2023–24 academic year with a series of meetings providing updates in a number of areas key to the future of the Institute.

“It was clear from the information provided this week, there’s a lot of great work being done at VMI right now,” said Thomas R. Watjen ’76, president of the BOV. “From admissions to academics to finances, it’s clear that VMI’s unique educational experience is well-positioned to continue to deliver leaders of character to the commonwealth and the nation.”

The board had in-depth discussions on many topics important to the Institute.

Admissions: 491 rats matriculated on Aug. 19 surpassing the goal of 450 for the 2023–24 academic year and returning the size of the Rat Mass to historic norms. This class compares well to previous classes posting an average 3.61 high school grade point average. Virginians make up 57% of matriculants while 43% come from out of

Continued on next page

state including 38 states, the District of Columbia, and seven countries. Eighty-five percent of matriculants were male and 15% female.

VMI has joined the Common App for the 2023–24 admissions cycle. To date, VMI’s admissions funnel (prospects interested in VMI), applications started, and applications completed are already tracking well ahead of previous years. Recruitment goals for future years include 495 for fall 2024, 515 for fall 2025, 525 for fall 2026, and 550 for fall 2027. Admissions staff, with partners around post, alumni, and parents, continue to attend new cadet recruitment events to build interest in VMI.

Financial Aid: In an effort to attract more applicants with three- and four-year ROTC scholarships, VMI offered “Call to Duty” scholarships to cover qualified applicants’ room and board.

- » 262 individuals applied for the scholarships.
- » 125 were deemed qualified.
- » 81 Call to Duty scholarships were awarded.
- » 53% of awardees are out-of-state cadets.

While VMI has always attracted many cadets with ROTC scholarships, the Call to Duty scholarships helped to greatly increase the number of cadets with ROTC scholarships year over year. In fact, several cadets changed their decision to attend other senior military colleges and federal service academies in favor of VMI.

Budget: After reporting a possible budget shortfall at the April board meeting, VMI finished the fiscal year with an \$882,000 surplus. Higher than budgeted enrollment, increased private support, and coordinated and targeted savings helped the Institute to finish the fiscal year strong. The smaller than usual 2022 matriculating class will continue to have an adverse effect on the VMI budget

over the next three years, however, the 2022–23 budget performance has left the Institute in a much stronger position moving forward.

Cadet Newspaper: The BOV Executive Committee discussed the Institute’s relationship with the newspaper. Efforts are under way to address concerns expressed by the newspaper’s publisher about the Institute’s involvement with recent awards from the Virginia Press Association. The superintendent and dean of the faculty have begun a dialogue with cadet editors on building a productive relationship moving forward.

Strategic Plan: The BOV reviewed a new strategic plan titled “Forging 21st Century Leaders” that will chart the course for the Institute over the next 10 years. Board members had a healthy discussion about a number of objectives contained in the draft plan.

“Forging 21st Century Leaders” establishes five initiatives that will deliver on the Institute’s unique and vital mission and vision. The five initiatives include:

- » Prepare exceptional leaders.
- » Strengthen academic excellence.
- » Foster esprit de corps.
- » Recruit top cadets and boost success.
- » Deliver 21st century infrastructure.

“The ‘Forging 21st Century Leaders’ draft strategic plan is a solid start to creating a roadmap for the future of the Institute. The plan in its current form remains true to VMI’s values and enhances the VMI experience for future classes of citizen-soldiers. I’m looking forward to the board’s suggestions to make the plan even stronger.” Watjen said. ✪

Construction *continued from page 9*

system, copper roof, gutters and downspouts, plaster work, fresh paint, and bathroom fixtures.

2023—The ribbon cutting and dedication of the Corps Physical Training Facility Phase III, the Aquatic Center was held. It contains an indoor 50-meter swimming pool which holds 800,000 gallons of water. It has two 1-meter springboards, two 3-meter springboards, and a 5-meter dive platform, plus seating for 570 spectators. The pool is large enough to be divided into three sections, making diving, water polo, and competitive swimming possible simultaneously.

Construction Trivia Questions.

1. What style architecture is the Superintendent’s Quarters?
2. Cameron Hall was dedicated in 1981. Who was it named for?
3. How much did the Pendleton-Coles House, which was moved in 1987, weigh?
4. What year was the Cocke Hall pool built?
5. Name the storm that caused the footbridge over South River on the Chessie Nature Trail to be washed away.



In 2014, the Knights of Pythias building moves to its new location along Main Street to make room for the Corps Physical Training Facility.—VMI File
Photo by Kelly Nye.

Futurist Remarks Kick Off 184th Academic Year

By Marianne Hause

The Academic Convocation ceremony was held Sept. 6 in Cameron Hall, opening the 184th academic year.

Brig. Gen. Robert Moreschi, dean of the faculty and deputy superintendent for academics, welcomed the Corps of Cadets, members of the academic board, other faculty, staff, and guests, and especially the Rat Mass to their first convocation, marking a moment to pause and celebrate a fresh start. He thanked the alumni and other benefactors for their generous support of VMI programs and initiatives. Moreschi also recognized the cadets distinguished in academic merit, as well as the many contributions of the faculty over the past academic year.



Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 welcomes Peter Leyden to VMI Sept. 6.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, superintendent, noted that the Institute has experienced many changes since its founding. "Teaching methods are modernized, our facilities are state-of-the-art, opportunities for cadets are expanding, and our daily schedule has evolved. However, it is also important to review our fundamentals and to stay focused on our true north. We know VMI is a school like no other and some things will never change. Those of course are our foundational principles that make our system of education unique: the Honor Code, our class and our regimental systems, and the physical demands that begin with the Rat Line. Our foundation has not changed from its inception. We are firmly rooted in a strong sense of honor and service in everything that we do. Cadets come here to learn in the classroom, but also to become leaders and commit to a life of honor and integrity. Our method of education is unique, and our expectations are high. These fundamental values have proven themselves to produce cadets who live a life of service rooted in civility," he said.

Wins added that VMI has a tradition of bringing in diverse groups of speakers from all walks of life. "One of the greatest ways to learn is to hear about the experiences of those who have gone before us. I challenge every cadet to take advantage of these valuable opportunities. Listen to the great leaders in our society, contemplate what they have to say, and apply those lessons learned to our daily lives." With that, he introduced the keynote speaker, Peter Leyden, a futurist, tech expert, and foresight advisor.

Leyden opened his talk by sharing a commonality with the cadets, that he attended a military academy during high school years, and credits his military upbringing for the leadership and public speaking skills that enable him to stand up in front of large groups all over the world.

In his talk titled, "The Transformation of Our World to 2050," Leyden speculates that there is a new era of human progress, that of an age of artificial intelligence (AI). "All through civilization's history, we had basically developed with our own muscle power, and the power of animals. Then in the Industrial Revolution, we figured out how to create mechanical machines and amplified our physical powers. But up until now, anything to do with intelligence, had to do with human brains. Now we have crossed a huge threshold into creating machines that can act intelligently, and we won't be going back," he said.

Leyden stated that governments and big companies have been wrestling with AI and developing it in cruder forms for a couple decades, but a new breakthrough allows nearly any human to talk in their own language to computers, and the artificial intelligence, and get back the answers they seek in that same language.

Leyden thinks that there are many positive things that could come out of the development of AI. "It looks probable that every worker in the country—if not in the world—is going to have a virtual assistant, and every K through 12 student will have an individual tutor which will amp up learning possibilities in ways that we never anticipated. AI might be able to make health care less expensive and provide personalized, constant health care monitoring," he said, but conceded that there are risks in the use of AI. "Any general purpose technology can be used for bad things too. Some of the negative things are going to have to do with defense, because there are going to be bad people using this technology for difficult things."

He continued by stating that the world is changing, and relying on his track record, he predicted that the world's challenge for the next 40 years is going to be around climate change. "Our energy system is rapidly moving to clean; our transportation is even faster moving to electric; our culture is pretty much getting more dominated by the millennial generation and Gen Z politics; progressive economics has a bigger role; and politics is now shifting from the Middle East to China and the rest of Asia, partly because the human populations

Continued on next page

there, but also because of the rise of China. Some people might feel things are falling to pieces and it's horrible, others may be energized about the future. I make the argument that many of these shifts actually bode well for progress, far from a gloom and doom future."

In addressing directly to cadets Leyden concluded, "We are looking into potentially another great age of progress, similar to what America has been through many times before. I think we're going to find by the end of the century, some kind of totally sustainable way that the world will operate.

You are entering the most fascinating and amazing 25 years that planet Earth has been through for a long time. You are going to live lives that will blow your mind, with the changes that are coming, and the possibilities that are out there. As you start this new year, keep in mind you are living some extraordinary history, and you will live some extraordinary lives,"

Leyden is founder of Reinvent Futures, where he serves as strategic adviser to senior leaders of organizations. He hosts both



Futurist Peter Leyden offers remarks Sept. 6, looking forward to what the world will be like in the coming decades.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

virtual and in-person events that bring together top innovators from diverse fields impacting the future. He co-authored two influential books on the future: "The Long Boom: A Vision For The Coming Age of Prosperity" and "What's Next?: Exploring the New Terrain for Business." He also writes online pieces including, "The Great Progression: 2025 to 2050," and is regularly interviewed by the media and podcasts.

Leyden was managing editor of WIRED magazine in the 1990s, and learned the futures business while working for Global Business Network. He spent a four-year cycle helping transition politics to the internet and served on Barack Obama's Technology and Media Advisory Committee during his 2008 presidential campaign.

Leyden started his career as a journalist, including working as a foreign correspondent in Asia for Newsweek magazine, and has traveled to more than 50 countries.

He graduated summa summa laude from Georgetown University in Washington D.C. and has two master's degrees from Columbia University in New York. 🌿

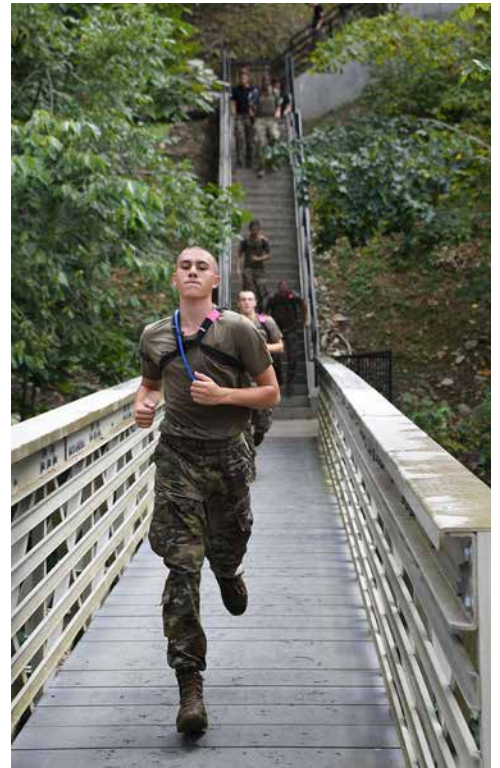


The Corps of Cadets kicks off the academic year with the Academic Convocation ceremony in Cameron Hall.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Rat Crucible

Matriculation Week culminated with Rat Crucible on Sunday, Aug. 27, which included training on the North Post obstacles and swimming in the Maury River to Jordan's Point. The event concluded with a march up Letcher Avenue and the rats' first Old Yell. —VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.





First Parade and Football Game

The Corps of Cadets marched in their first parade of the academic year on the morning of Saturday, Sept. 2. Later in the day, the Keydet football team, with Danny Rocco leading his first game as head coach of the Keydets, competed against the Davidson College Wildcats in their home opener. It was a tight game, with VMI trailing 7-6, but VMI scored a 25-yard touch-down with one minute to play to secure the victory, 12-7. Fans got a special treat before kickoff, as several members of All Veterans Group parachuted into Foster Stadium.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Trivia Answers from Page 11

1. Gothic Revival
2. Alumni brothers, Bruce B. Cameron Jr. '38 and Daniel D. Cameron '42
3. 360 tons
4. 1968
5. Hurricane Isabel in 2003



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The Constitution in Wartime

The 2023 Constitution Day commemoration, held Sept. 18 in Gillis Theater, focused on "The Constitution in Wartime." In acknowledgment of the 20th anniversary of the 2nd Iraq War, the discussion centered around how the U.S. Constitution has evolved and been challenged during wartime. In particular, the conversation focused on two constitutional issues that often arise during wars: executive power and civil liberties.

The guest speakers, noted experts in these subjects, were Chris Edelson, assistant professor in the Department of Government at American University, and Dr. Stewart Winger, associate professor in the Department of History at Illinois State University. After their remarks, a very engaging question and answer session took place.—*VMI Photos by Andrew Partridge '24.*

