



INSTITUTE REPORT

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Furness Named VMI's 16th Superintendent

By VMI Staff

The Board of Visitors appointed retired U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. David Furness '87 as the Institute's 16th superintendent, the chief executive officer, starting mid-September.

Retired Col. Jamie Inman '86, president of the board stated, "Lieutenant General Furness distinguished himself among a strong field of candidates. His impeccable military record, passion for the VMI experience and proven record advancing the mission of complex organizations make him the right person to lead the Institute in this next chapter of its history."

Furness was humbled by the appointment. "My selection as the 16th superintendent of VMI is the highest professional honor of my lifetime. Lynda and I are thrilled to be heading back to Lexington," he said. "I have benefited immeasurably from my VMI education and the leadership experience it afforded me. I am indebted to the Institute for molding me into the man I am today, and it is an immense honor to give back and serve the VMI community as superintendent."

Originally from Columbus, Ohio, Furness graduated summa cum laude from VMI with a degree in history. He attained the rank of first captain and regimental commander, the highest-ranking position a cadet can earn. He commissioned into the Marine Corps, where he served for 36 years before retiring in 2023.

Throughout his distinguished career he has served in a variety of command and staff positions in both the operating forces and support functions. As a lieutenant he served as a platoon commander; as a captain and major he served in the 1st Marine Division as the commanding officer of Company K, and the operations officer of the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines. As a lieutenant colonel, he again served in the 1st Marine division as the G3 Plans officer, deputy G-3, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, then as the executive officer of the 1st Marine Regiment. As a colonel he commanded the 1st Marine Regiment.

As legislative assistant to the commandant of the Marine Corps from 2013 to 2017, he served as liaison between the Marine Corps and both chambers of congress, advocating for funding while



Lt. Gen. David Furness '87

navigating the new Budget Control Act. A lifelong learner and proponent of education, Furness created curriculum and delivered training to organizations of up to 17,000, led a flagship professional military education program, and pioneered a two-year Master of Public Policy program with George Mason University in Fairfax.

From 2017 to 2018, he served as the senior U.S. military officer on the African continent for Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa, focused on counterterrorism, regional security, and strategic relations development across 11 nations. He introduced process improvements which brought \$2 million in monthly savings and elevated aircraft utilization rates to 90% which delivered another \$12.78 million in savings.

From 2018 to 2020, he was commanding general of the 2nd Marine division, leading a combined organization of 17,000, and held global responsibility for supporting operations in Indo-Pacific, European, African, Middle Eastern, and South American regions. He managed over \$2 billion in assets and executed the largest Marine Corps training exercise in over 40 years. He also pioneered a peer-to-peer personal counseling program that reduced suicide and suicide attempts by 66% in just 18 months.

As a three-star general, he served as deputy commandant for plans, policy, and operations at the Marine Corps headquarters in the Pentagon from 2020 to 2023, synchronizing operations and the global deployment of 200,000 active-duty and reserve Marines across 17 countries and 24 time zones.

Most recently he has been employed by J.A. Green & Company, a bipartisan government relations firm, as executive vice president of defense programs.

Furness holds two master's degrees. One in military studies from the Marine Corps University at Quantico, and the second in national security and strategic studies from the National Defense University in Washington, D.C.

His personal decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device, Combat Action Ribbon, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

To learn more about his arrival to post and events coming up, visit www.vmi.edu. 🌿



Lt. Gen. David Furness '87 addresses faculty and staff members during a candidate open house in Moody Hall Aug. 12. —VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

INSTITUTE REPORT

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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: Members of cadre slow march into New Barracks surrounded by this year's matriculants, Aug. 16.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

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For the most accurate information and event updates, please visit www.vmi.edu.

Additional photos are available on Flickr.

Join the “Moementum”

New Mascot Logo Merchandise at Refreshed VMI Bookstore

By VMI and VMI Athletics Staff

VMI Athletics unveiled a new visual identity for the VMI Keydets community with the rollout of an official VMI logo featuring Moe the Kangaroo, an official Keydets wordmark and an exclusive font. To accomplish this venture, VMI Athletics partnered with Old Hat Creative along with

cadets, alumni, coaches, and staff.

“The VMI spirit is alive and well! Moe the Kangaroo, our mascot and Keydets, our nickname, make us unique,” said Jamaal Walton '07, athletics director. “We wanted to provide the VMI community with some **Moementum**. Our VMI spider logo will always be our number one, but now we have additional elements that will only enhance our rich and storied brand. I look forward to seeing cadets, faculty, staff, coaches, alumni,



The new mascot logo displays various aspects of cadet life.—Image courtesy of VMI Athletics.



T-shirts with Moe's new image are prominently displayed in the VMI Bookstore.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

spouses, and fans wearing the apparel and showing their VMI pride!”

The primary Moe mascot logo features several elements that encapsulate what it means to be a VMI Keydet. A closer look at the primary logo reveals:

- » Moe is wearing academic stars to recognize that all cadets should strive for academic excellence.
- » Moe serves as symbol to athletics and embodies the lyrics of the “VMI Spirit,” with the battle cry “never, never die.”
- » As a leader, Moe is determined, focused, and unwavering. Facing to the right, Moe symbolizes forward momentum and progress. There is a belief “kangaroos can’t walk backwards.” As a mascot, the kangaroo is not ordinary. At VMI we “Don’t do ordinary.”
- » The chevrons represent the military environment that every cadet experiences while

on post. This environment teaches honor, discipline, accountability, and pride. It also pays respect to the brave men and women who serve in the U.S. armed forces and those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

- » The red 11s represent when VMI was founded, Nov. 11, 1839.
- » The primary Keydets wordmark highlights the school colors of red, white, and yellow. The typeface features notches that symbolize the many buildings around post, while the slight arch on the wordmark represents the many arches found on post.
- » The secondary, full-body logo features Moe in coatee with white ducks - every cadet wears a coatee.

Moe merchandise is available in the VMI Bookstore. In mid-July, Barnes & Noble College assumed management of all course materials, as well as the retail and online operations of the VMI Bookstore. Barnes & Noble College brings extensive experience and a national reputation for excellence, currently operating more than 1,160 physical and virtual campus bookstores across the U.S. The refreshed VMI Bookstore will offer a wider selection of apparel, gifts, supplies, and more—available in store, online, or via mobile app. 🌿



Merchandise featuring the new Moe logo is available at the VMI Bookstore.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

POST BRIEFS

Money Magazine Ranking

VMI was rated a 4.5-star college in Money magazine's Best Colleges in America list for 2025. Money assigns colleges a rating on a five-star scale, with five stars being the best. More than 700 colleges were scored based on factors in three main categories: quality, affordability, and student

outcomes. Money reports that VMI graduates' typical early career earnings are \$77,340. The full Best Colleges list, along with the methodology, can be found at www.money.com/bestcolleges.

Veterans Poetry Contest

Virginia's poet laureate, Mattie Quesenberry Smith, Ph.D., instructor in the Department of English, Rhetoric and Humanistic Studies, in partnership with the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, the Friends of Handley Regional Library System, the Peninsula Patriots, the Poetry Society of Virginia, the Richmond Public Library, the Visual Arts Center of Richmond, and the Williamsburg Regional Library, has launched "Perseverance and Resilience," a project that supports veterans' health and well-being through poetry.

The project involves regional workshops in which veterans will explore ways they have persevered and found resilience in challenging times.

The project also incorporates a veterans' poetry contest; the design, production, and installation of the contest winner's poem on a broadside in facilities serving veterans throughout the state; an anthology of poems collected from the contest finalists and selected entrants; and two public celebrations dedicated to the participating veterans, their families, and the workshop facilitators. All veterans of the U.S. military are eligible to submit up to three poems which address veterans' experiences with perseverance and resilience during active duty and/or throughout their re-entry into civilian life.

Bulger-Barnett Initiated into Prestigious Order

Col. Kathleen Bulger-Barnett, professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, was initiated into the Order of José Martí, one of Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society's highest honors, for her outstanding service and loyal support for its ideals.

Bulger-Barnett, who has a doctorate in Spanish from the University of Kentucky with a specialization in Spanish Golden Age literature, taught Spanish courses at VMI for 36 years.

With 637 chapters nationwide, Sigma Delta Pi is the largest foreign language collegiate honor society in the U.S. and a member of the Association of College Honor Societies, the nation's only certifying agency for college and university honor societies. VMI has its own active chapter of Sigma Delta Pi that was founded in 1983. ✱

Plymouth Pipe and Drum

The Plymouth Fife and Drum Corps, an all-youth band from Plymouth, Michigan, performed 18th and 19th century fife and drum music, while demonstrating marching and color guard maneuvers, July 12 on the Parade Ground.

Founded in 1971, the corps wears 1783 period replica uniforms of George Washington's Life Guards, and carry replica 18th century period muskets and sabers. VMI alumnus, Dr. Rodney Daniels '99, current vice president and equipment manager for the corps, has been involved for seven years and has three children who are members.

Additional information about the Plymouth Fife and Drum Corps may be found at <https://pfdc.us>.—
Photo courtesy of the Plymouth Fife and Drum Corps.





Cadre Week

Members of cadre returned to post Aug. 9 and 10 to prepare for the incoming rats. Training included practice parades, uniform inspections, and information briefs from leadership across numerous departments.—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye and H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Cadets Embark on Offshore Sailing Adventure

By Marianne Hause

Over the summer, four cadets completed the U.S. Naval Academy's (USNA) Command and Seamanship Training Squadron (CSTS), culminating with a 10-day offshore sailing training cruise to Oyster Bay, New York, aboard one of three Navy 44 training sailboats: the Fearless, the Invincible, and the Warrior. CSTS is a month-long program that includes classroom instruction on safety and navigation, and hands-on learning on the Navy 44. Upon embarking on the sailing trip, the cadets were fully integrated into crews that included experienced skippers and executive officers, USNA midshipmen, and West Point cadets, for a total of 10 people on each vessel.

Cmdr. Chip Barber, assistant commandant, was instrumental in offering the program to VMI cadets. Barber served in the Navy for 24 years, including two tours at the USNA, where he was director of sailing. He developed and ran the CSTS for many years. "This is the fourth summer our cadets have been involved in the program. They are carefully screened and are selected based on their grades and temperament. CSTS is the best Naval ROTC learning experience in the field. It is a life-changing event. These are not just a bunch of teenagers having fun, it is a meaningful leadership experience," he said.

Miikka Kritzer '28, a mechanical engineering major from St. Petersburg, Florida, who plans on commissioning into the Navy, stated that the close quarters aboard the Invincible often got cramped. "There were not enough bunks for everyone to sleep at the same time, so we 'hot-bunked.' While five people were on watch duty up on deck, the other five were catching as many 'zees' as they could." In describing his favorite picture-perfect



Sophia Heinlein '28 and Adam Brinkley '27 relax aboard the Warrior.—Photo courtesy of Adam Brinkley '27.



Adam Brinkley '27 (right) stands watch with other crew members of the Warrior.—Photo courtesy of Adam Brinkley '27.

moment of the trip, Kritzer shared, "When we arrived in New York City, I had just woken up, climbed up on deck, and saw the city for the first time. It was breathtaking."

Sophia Heinlein '28, a civil engineering major from Fredericksburg, Virginia, agreed. "Sailing the Warrior to New York City was both a once in a lifetime adventure and a test in discipline and leadership. We worked together in tight spaces, and at times rough and stressful conditions. Still, the stressful moments made it all the more rewarding when we arrived in New York, and sailed past Lady Liberty backed by a beautiful sunset. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in CSTS."

Adam Brinkley '27, an English major from Midlothian, Virginia, wanted to learn to sail since he was 14 years old. "CSTS made that dream become a reality. The trip allowed me to grow as a leader by learning the importance of trusting your team and relying on them in times of need. My favorite part of the trip was toward the end when we anchored in the Sassafra River, and I spent one last day with my crewmates aboard the Warrior. In four short weeks our crew of 10 went from complete strangers to an unstoppable team. Because of the motivation and dedication of each member, we won a mini sailing race against the Fearless and the Invincible," he said.

Retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Paul Brier '81 served as a sailing instructor and skipper of the Fearless. "This world-class opportunity for VMI cadets was made possible through the longstanding leadership of Chip Barber, who is considered an offshore sailing superstar. I wish it had been available when I was a cadet. I'm very proud of how the cadets conducted themselves, and rose to the challenges of the intense work that is involved in sailing. They forged friendships with people they may not have otherwise met, and developed leadership skills that will last a lifetime." ❀

VMI Welcomes New Class of Rats

Matriculants Embrace Hardships Over Comfort

By Marianne Hause

Matriculation Day was held Saturday, Aug. 16, beginning the Rat Line for the new academic year. Even the weather—which had been unpredictable throughout the week—predictably offered a humid day of oppressive temperatures. This year marks the 186th year of the Institute. Since 1839, VMI has produced educated and honorable citizen-leaders, with a global reputation for academic excellence.

The day began with a fair in Cocke Hall where the students and their families were able to meet with VMI coaches and clubs, local churches, banks, restaurants, and other community organizations. Various other VMI agencies were also present, including the chaplain's office, VMI police, and auxiliary services. In Cameron Hall, the rats were measured for their uniforms and



Hayden Talbott '27, Zack Scott '89, Grayson Talbott '29, and Jason Talbott celebrate Grayson's matriculation into VMI Aug. 16.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

issued their athletic wear. In the Corps Physical Training Facility, they completed admission paperwork, were given opportunities to meet and talk with department faculty members, and as their last act as an ordinary teenager, signed the Matriculation Book, adding their names to the long list of all those who have come before them in committing to not doing ordinary. Throughout the morning, barracks were teeming with family members assisting their students moving into their rooms and meeting their roommates.

In the afternoon, the Chaplain's Prayer, an optional non-denominational prayer session for matriculants and their families, was held in Memorial Hall, followed by the superintendent's welcome in Cameron Hall.

Acting Superintendent Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99 welcomed the incoming matriculants and their families, telling them this date is one they will always remember, and thanking them for choosing an experience that will be formative in their development. "Embrace VMI's Honor Code, internalize what it means to live an honorable life, apply that principle in your life every day. You came to VMI to succeed. Work together, develop, and come together as a class. These are the beginning workings of the notorious VMI bonds. You are all now part of VMI." To the parents and guardians, Clark said,



Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99, acting superintendent, welcomes matriculant families in Cameron Hall.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

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"You've entrusted us with your remarkable sons and daughters. We are honored. They have chosen to join us, and we are committed to helping them succeed. Deciding to attend VMI is a family decision, and while it brings concern, we know that you also feel immeasurable pride. So, to all of you, welcome to the VMI family. This will be one of the most memorable and satisfying seasons of your life. We wish each of you the very best and look forward to your many successes in the years ahead."

Col. Lawrence Havird '90, commandant, also addressed the rats. He told them they are taking on a unique challenge in their college experience, embracing hardship while finding the best version of themselves. "The next month will be mentally and physically challenging for you. You will be tested like never before. You will at times feel isolated and alone in the Rat Line journey. When you enter this mental space of despair, reflect on why you came to VMI. Look toward those around you in helping you build a path forward. Your brother rats are here to support you. Rally alongside to navigate this challenge together. My advice for meeting these challenges is simple: Educate yourself and focus on what the standard of performance is and give your best effort toward achieving that standard each day," he instructed.

With cheers, applause, warm embraces, congratulatory pats on backs, and a few tears, the rats bid goodbye to their families, and formed up with their companies for the first time. They then held up their right hands and took their oath. Led by Regimental Commander Devin Auzenne '26, the rats marched from Cameron Hall onto Main Street, up Letcher Avenue, through Marshall Arch, and into New Barracks where they fell into formation. The arch gates were closed and locked, physically and symbolically separating the matriculants from the world they left behind in order to begin a new chapter in their lives. As parents and other onlookers craned their necks to catch a glimpse past the guards and the iron pickets of the gate, the rats met their cadre—a group of cadets holding rank in each company, and chosen based on performance and ability to serve as instructors for the Rat Mass—who welcomed them to VMI in their own unique fashion.

This year's Rat Mass totals 469 and comes from 33 states and six foreign countries, with 62% from Virginia and 38% from out of state. Seventy-five are female, and 143 are recruited NCAA athletes. Forty-seven percent have selected a major in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines and 53% are majoring in the liberal arts.

Hayden Talbott '27, from Dillwyn, Virginia, is EMT team lead for Band Company and an athlete on the track team. Her younger brother, Grayson, is following in her footsteps by embracing the VMI challenge, and joining her in Band Company and on the track team. "We have always been close, so him joining me here will only increase that bond. He has a lot of people who will be looking out for him, and soon he will find where he fits at VMI. I'm excited to see firsthand the journey he will embark on. It is both the humbling and gratifying experiences that make the VMI journey what it is,

and I hope he embraces every second of it," she said.

Grayson, who will be a thrower on the track team and plans to learn how to play the bagpipes, feels blessed to be given the opportunity to join his sister. "Words cannot express my gratitude toward Coach Scott [director of cross country / track and field David "Zack" Scott '89] for allowing



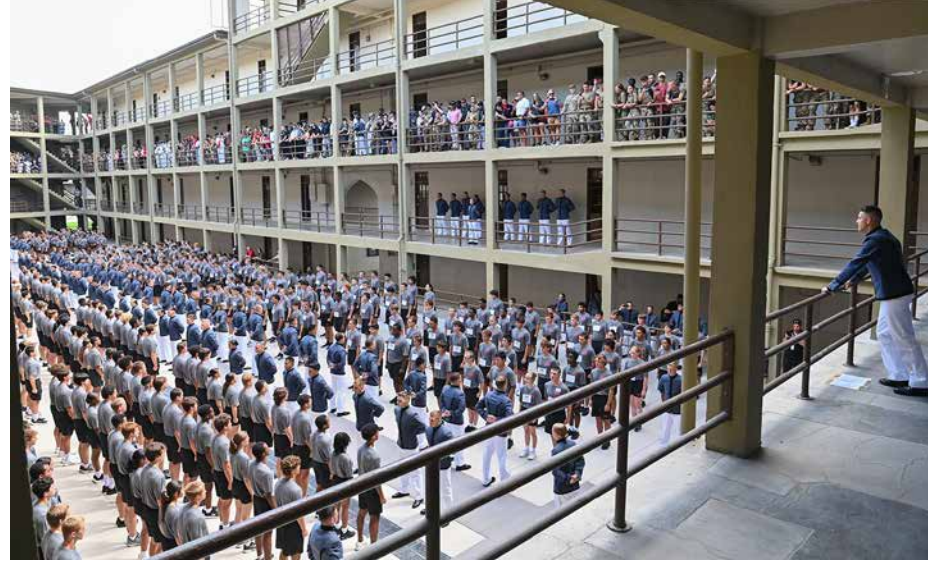
Grayson Talbott '29 gets his first rat haircut on Matriculation Day.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

me to continue my passion of throwing while learning from his knowledge and experience. As a member of the Pipe Band, I'll get to learn to play a beautiful and world-renowned instrument. I am excited for the challenges and development at VMI that will shape my future."

Scott recalled how Hayden actively sought out VMI. "With her proven success in JROTC, it was an obvious fit. Seeing the positive change in his sister, Grayson was inspired to explore the possibility of becoming a cadet-athlete at VMI as well. We're simply giving them the opportunity, and with their family's strong support, there's no telling what they might accomplish."

Details about events at VMI, including parades, guest speakers, and athletic competitions for the upcoming semester can be found at www.vmi.edu. ❁

For more photos see Matriculation Week, on page 10



Matriculation Week

On Aug. 16, matriculants arrived on post. Cadets, faculty, and staff assisted them as they registered for classes, received parts of their uniform, moved into barracks, and signed the Matriculation Book. Later in the afternoon, matriculants were called down by company during the Welcome Ceremony in Cameron Hall. After the ceremony, cadre marched the rats into barracks for the beginning of their training. The training continued through the week prior to classes starting. Additional photos can be found on the VMI Flickr account.—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye, H. Lockwood McLaughlin, and Jake Falcone '27.



VMI Brothers Volunteer on the 611

Labor of Loves Keeps Steam Locomotive Running

By Marianne Hause

Two brothers from Daleville, Virginia, toiled in the sultry, muggy summer heat doing filthy, exhausting work, all while having the time of their lives. Andrew Quesenberry '26 and his younger brother, Ryan '29, who matriculated as a VMI rat in August, spent their summer as volunteers at the Virginia Museum of Transportation (VMT) in Roanoke, doing maintenance work on the Norfolk & Western Class J #611, the iconic steam locomotive built locally in 1950.

Ever since the brothers can remember, they have been around tools, helping their father, Travis, himself a VMI alumnus from the Class of 1999, and their grandfather work on car engines and tinkering on other projects. They are both huge train enthusiasts, so it was a natural progression that they would find themselves performing a labor of love on the impressively massive locomotive.

Upon first setting sight on the 611, both young and old are instantly awestruck by the size. Affectionately referred to with feminine pronouns, she stands 16 feet high, is 109 feet long, and weighs 494,000 pounds. Despite her imposing proportions, she projects a charming and endearing personality. She is considered one of the most powerful and technologically advanced steam



The massive 611 looms behind Ryan '29 and Andrew Quesenberry '26.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

locomotives ever built, and is the only Class J remaining. She was named a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in 1984, and is the official steam engine of the commonwealth. She is considered an engineering marvel by many rail enthusiasts and historians.

Andrew shared that their interest in trains began when they were very young. Their father was in the military and often traveled away from home, so their mother, Sarah, searched out activities to keep the boys busy and entertained. “She would bring us to the transportation museum, and with every trip—and there were many—our interest in the 611 grew. When plans were announced that the 611 would be restored and running again, we were thrilled. We often returned to the museum to watch the progress of the restoration.”

Both Andrew and Ryan viewed their summer volunteer service on the locomotive as a dream come true. And they owe it in large part to Andrew's VMI uniform. “I was in Goshen

during the 611 fall excursions in 2023, and Scott Lindsay, chief mechanical officer for VMT, recognized me as a VMI cadet. He has an appreciation for the military and invited me to climb up into the cab and look around. A couple months later after the 611 returned to the museum, I went back to see her, and met with Scott. We started talking, and after I told him both my brother and I have mechanical

Continued on next page

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skills, he encouraged us to come work on the locomotive.”

Ryan refused to believe the opportunity was true until he arrived at the museum for his first day of work. “I’ll always remember arriving, meeting everybody, and being part of something bigger than myself. When this thing travels, she brings a crowd with her, and I’m proud to be part of the crew, and able to share my knowledge about her with others. She’s part of Roanoke’s history and Virginia’s history. Our job now is to keep her running, and help the younger generations stay interested.”

Andrew agreed. “When we see kids come and take pictures in front of the locomotive, as we did when we were children, it reminds us of why we’re working on her. We didn’t have the opportunity to see her running when we were younger, but



Ryan '29 and Andrew Quesenberry '26 clean the rods of the 611 locomotive.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

now that she is in operation again, we’re hopeful that when the kids see her traveling down the tracks and hear her whistle blow, it will spike their interest.”

Zac McGinnis, steam operations manager at VMT, was

appreciative of the two brothers being part of the 611 crew. “They fit in very well and brought with them the VMI standards of leadership and following directions. They were extremely helpful. For lack of better terms, it takes a whole army to keep this thing going. I equate it to the wheels on the steam locomotive. You got all the spokes, and every person is a spoke, making the wheels turn. Like Andrew and Ryan, I started out as a little kid loving this stuff. I’m lucky enough to be involved in a leadership position now, and am considered one of the old guys on the crew. I want to mentor these kids, like my mentors did for me, and pass the torch on to them.” McGinnis shared that the 611 has a bright future.

The Quesenberry brothers graduated from Lord Botetourt High School. At VMI, Andrew is majoring in international studies. He will graduate in May and will commission into the Army. Ryan is majoring in civil engineering. ❀



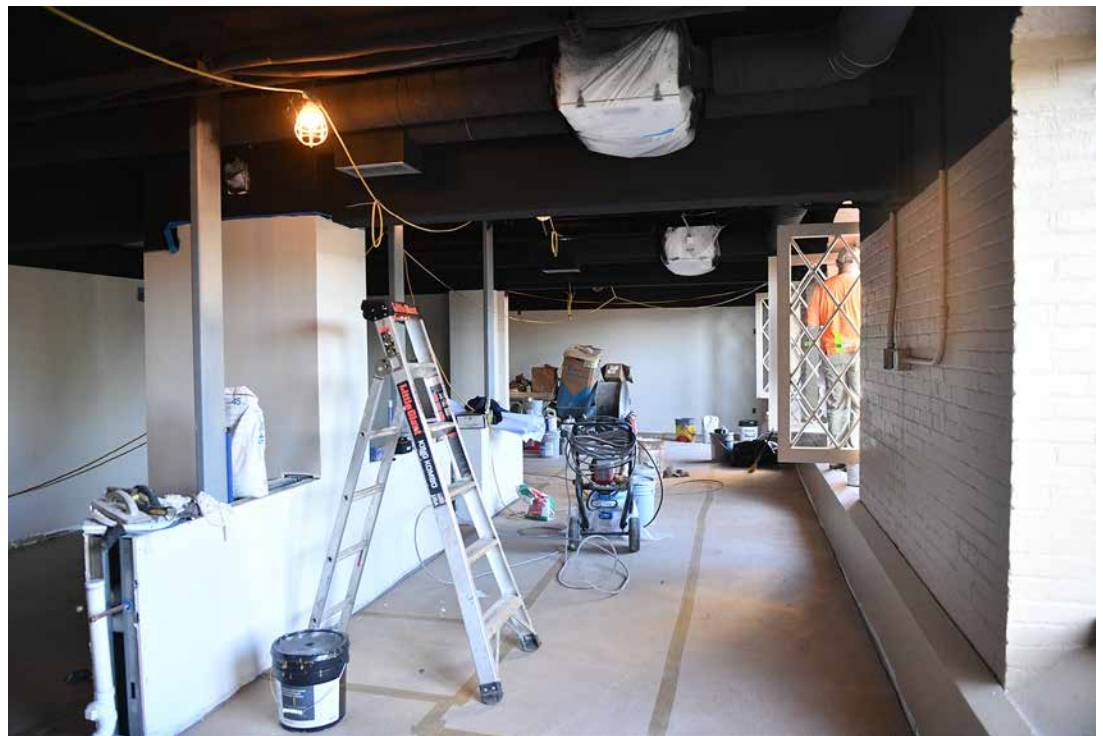
Travis Quesenberry '99 beams as his son, Ryan, signs the same Matriculation Book he did when he was a rat 30 years earlier.—VMI Photo by Marianne Hause.

Summer Construction Projects Bring Noticeable Upgrades to Post

By Lt. Col. Michelle Ellwood

As cadets returned to post, and as alumni and families visit during the academic year for various events, many construction projects from the summer are on full display. This includes the stone wall now complete on the south end of the Parade Ground and at the corner of VMI Parade as part of the Post-Wide Safety and Security Project. There are also several projects that took place that no one would easily notice, including roof replacements for post residents and drainage work at Memorial Hall, which are all positively impacting the day-to-day life and operation at the Institute.

Crews were active at barracks each week on several significant projects. The replacement of windows for both Old and New Barracks kicked off in May, with more than 160 windows being replaced in the front of New Barracks during the summer. This work will continue through fall of 2027.



The larger barbershop in barracks will be able to accommodate more cadets and allow for additional services.—VMI Photo by Jake Falcone '27.

The New Barracks courtyard was replaced with a new concrete slab, along with an improved drainage system to help prevent flooding and leaking into the spaces below.

Cadets will soon be sitting in the chairs of the new barbershop. The coin laundry operation and the barbershop swapped locations, allowing for more space and privacy for haircuts and additional cosmetology services. About 90% of the barbershop project was completed over the summer.

Visitors in Cameron Hall for sporting events or speaking engagements can enjoy the new video displays and updated sound system. Cameron Hall will be busy through the academic year with a number of special events. Other athletic facilities got upgrades, including a new state-of-the-art targetry system in the Kilbourne Hall rifle range, improved drainage and roof for the Foster Stadium game day locker rooms, and



Sunlight shines through replacement windows in New Barracks during the summer.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

Continued on next page

updated equipment for athlete treatments in the Clarkson-McKenna hydrotherapy room.

A remodel of the dishwashing area of Crozet Hall was completed in late August. Additional new equipment installed in Crozet includes a pulper—a machine that uses mechanical action to break down materials—to assist with food waste recycling, along with a new freezer and cooler.

Installation of security barriers is nearly complete at various entrances and roadways on post to enhance traffic safety and access control. The barriers, including drop arms, manual bollards, and retractable hydraulic barriers, should be fully operational following training for Physical Plant staff and VMI Police occurring in upcoming months. Installation also began for card readers on barracks doors and new security cameras, and a guard room remodel is scheduled for next semester. More information on all of these projects will be provided to the VMI community soon. 🐼



New security barriers have been placed on Letcher Avenue as part of the Post-Wide Safety and Security Project.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

Summer Theater

The VMI Community Theatre presented "Summer Showcase 2025," a medley of four comedic one-act plays including "Blind," by Gloria Calderón Kellett, featuring Emma Hawes and Tim Price, "Narrators," by Simon Henriques, showcasing Kevan Kavanaugh, Pete Farnham, Drew Hartless, and Laura Holt; "Who's on First?" by Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, starring Michael Brickler and Tom Oxendine; and "Need to Calm Down," by Eryn Davis, featuring Davis, Kristen Pace, and Emma Hawes.

The showcase was directed by Price, assisted by Hartless. Lighting and sound were provided by Joe Hawes.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Cadets Spend Summer Conducting Research

By Marianne Hause

The Summer Undergraduate Research Institute (SURI) program offers cadets opportunities to conduct in-depth research as the principal investigator, under the guidance of a faculty mentor for either a 5-week or a 10-week experience earning a scholarship and a room and board stipend. This summer, over 30 cadets participated in the program, including Anna Grace Adams '26, who is interested in combating the effects of drug and human trafficking originating out of Latin

American countries; John Paul Adams '27, who studied J.R.R. Tolkien's translation of the Old Testament book of Jonah for the Jerusalem Bible; and Colton Shirk '27, who conducted experiments to discover if certain music can enhance an athlete's performance.

Anna Grace, a history major minoring in Arabic, spent five weeks researching government documents and presidential correspondence between the United States and the countries of Columbia, Peru and Venezuela for her SURI project, "How did the American Perception of its Relationship with Latin American Nations Change Between 1919 and 1939?"

During the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt saw a need to improve relations with Latin American countries, so he initiated the Good Neighbor Policy, which emphasized cooperation, non-intervention, and mutual trade. Anna

Grace questioned the success of the program, and wondered if it actually caused more harm than good, laying the foundation for the many problems currently plaguing the countries it was targeted to benefit. She shared that the topic is applicable to what she may be doing in the future. "I hope to work for Child Protective Services or Homeland Security. I feel a calling to it. With any problem, you first need to understand the background. I want to better understand why the governments of these Latin American countries operate the way they do. I also want to understand the citizens' points of view at the grassroots level, and the environments in which they grew up. I will never be able to relate to them based on my personal experience."

Since most of the files she needed for her research have not yet been digitized and as of yet are unavailable on the internet, Anna Grace traveled to College Park, Maryland, and spent two

weeks at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) searching for manuscripts, articles, and correspondence necessary for her research. "There are millions of documents there. It was kind of a big scavenger hunt. Classified documents were unavailable to me. Of the declassified I was able to view, I was given strict instructions on how to photograph or scan them. I scanned one document at a time using a scanner connected to my laptop.



Anna Grace Adams '26 reads a letter she found at the National Archives and Records Administration addressed to the U.S. Secretary of State, dated December 1920.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

A lot of what I found—especially documents written during the Depression—the paper was so thin I could see through it and the ink had faded so scanning was difficult. It was quite the process."

Anna Grace was surprised to discover many of the documents she had hoped would be available to her don't exist at NARA. "They either were sent back to their country of origin, or had stayed in their countries' respective national libraries. They haven't been digitized either. These are papers that were cited in some of my secondary sources which I spent spring semester reading. I was not planning on studying the American perspective of the Good Neighbor Policy, because there's so much scholarship already on that. I really wanted to look at the Colombian and Peruvian perspectives, because not much research has been done on that.

Continued on next page

Now I know why. You can't base an argument if you don't have the evidence." She admitted that frustrated her, but conceded coming up against roadblocks is often part of the research process. "I'm just very grateful that I got to experience NARA as an undergrad. I was literally the youngest person in there by decades. Even the archivists told me the typical student conducting research there is in their last year of grad school or conducting work on their Ph.D."

Anna Grace's faculty mentor, Col. Houston Johnson V, head of the Department of History, agreed the SURI grant provided Anna Grace with a unique opportunity to travel to College Park to access archival materials held by NARA. "Her research into U.S.-Colombian relations has been tremendously enriched by her ability to look at original State Department records. It is extremely unusual for undergraduates to be able to conduct this type of research; I'm delighted Anna Grace has had the opportunity to have that experience, and to locate valuable sources that will ground her honors thesis."

Anna Grace plans to present her paper at the VMI Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS) during spring semester, and use it to lay the foundation for her Institute and departmental honors thesis.

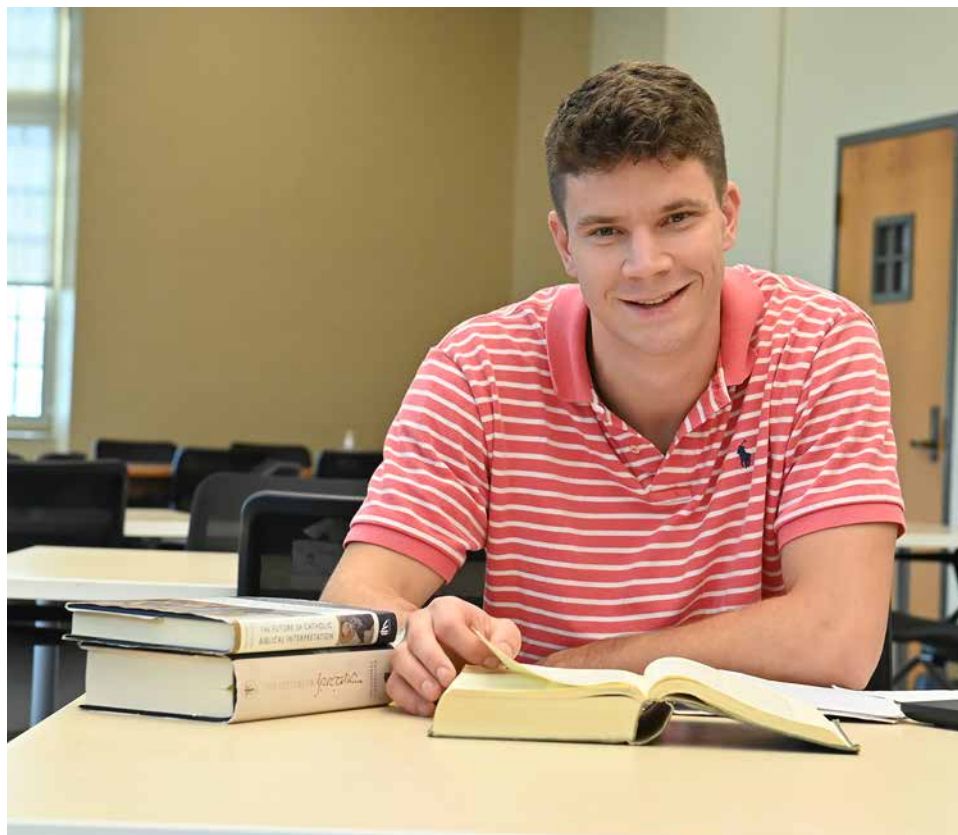
She serves as S7 captain for cadet life, responsible for general well-being and morale of the Corps of Cadets; and will commission into the Army following graduation.

John Paul—no relation to Anna Grace—is an English major minoring in French. He spent 10 weeks studying the background and significance of the Jerusalem Bible and the contribution of Tolkien, English writer famously known for his fictional works including, "The Hobbit" and "The Lord of the Rings," for his SURI project, "Scriptural Monster: A Study of Tolkien's Jonah."

The Jerusalem Bible, first published in 1956 as *La Bible de Jérusalem*, is a Roman Catholic translation of the Bible. Members of the Dominican Order at the École Biblique in Jerusalem, translated the original Hebrew and Greek texts of scripture into their native language of French. John Paul shared that an English priest had read the notes of the Dominicans and wanted to publish a similar translation in English but realized a lack of scholars fluent in the languages to be well equipped to translate the Scriptures from the original text. "That's where Tolkien fits in. The priest wanted Tolkien to be involved in the project because he knew of Tolkien's fame as a philologist [the study of literary texts and written records,] and as someone who translated 'Beowulf' and other old English works, who was a Latin and Greek scholar, and who knew French. He thought Tolkien would be a powerhouse for this Bible."

Though there were plans of Tolkien translating more books of the Bible, he only translated Jonah. According to John Paul, there

is no clear explanation why he started with Jonah. "He may have started with Jonah because it's short. He quickly drafted that one to send back to get approval for more translations. What I like about it is that it fits in really well with Tolkien's ethos, because it's a very mythical book of the Bible, and it's got a lot of fairy tale elements that Tolkien used in his essays and in his fiction."



John Paul Adams '27 researches J.R.R. Tolkien's translation of the Old Testament book of Jonah in Preston Library. —VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

John Paul shared that Tolkien had presented a copy of "The Lord of the Rings" to the editor of the Bible before he started translating. "The editor responded, 'This is wonderful. I wish we had a whole Bible written in this style.' Interestingly, the translation doesn't really use that style at all. It's a very literal one-for-one translation. He wanted to focus on the words themselves, because he wanted them to speak for themselves. He may have been worried that if he tried to be more literary rather than literal, that he would lose something in that translation. I think that plays into his ideas of allegory, which he did not like. He made it clear that his works of fiction were not allegorical, even though a lot of people claimed they were."

The English translation of the Jerusalem Bible was published in 1966.

John Paul's faculty mentor, Col. Steven Knepper, professor in the Department of English, Rhetoric, and Humanistic Studies, and the Bruce C. Gottwald Jr. '81 Chair for Academic Excellence, stated that John Paul's project makes a real contribution to Tolkien scholarship. "His close analysis of Tolkien's translation choices suggest that

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Tolkien emphasizes mercy as the major theme of Jonah, and John Paul shows how this resonates with the literary and theological vision of Tolkien's famous works about Middle-earth. To complete this project, he has had to draw on textual editing, literary analysis, biographical research, biblical studies, and theology. Since Tolkien was working from a French source text, John Paul also had to use his French language skills, and met with both Col. Abbey Carrico, head

increase in salivary A-Amylase enzyme, signaling an increase in epinephrine within the body.

A-Amylase is an enzyme that breaks down starch into simpler sugars, facilitating digestion. Epinephrine, also known as adrenaline, is produced naturally by the adrenal glands. It increases heart rate, and is a key part of the body's emergency fight-or-flight response to danger.

To test his hypotheses, Shirk recruited volunteers from the Corps of Cadets between the ages of 18 and 25, who have had at least three consecutive years of weightlifting training, and with no reported severe orthopedic or muscular injury within the last year to be his test subjects.

According to Shirk, subjects were tested on five separate dates. They were instructed to abstain from ingesting alcohol 12 hours prior to testing days; from caffeine and other stimulants six hours prior to testing; from eating large meals, sugary or acidic food and drink, and ingesting nicotine for 90 minutes prior to testing; and from any vigorous lower body exercise 48 hours prior to testing. "Upon arrival to the lab, subjects' weights were recorded, and each rinsed out their mouths thoroughly with water. Each test began with the subject completing a standard lower body warmup routine consisting of a hamstring



Aidan Carman '27 hands his salivary A-Amylase enzyme sample to Colton Shirk '27 as David Townsend '27 and Margaret Townsend '27 wait to be tested.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

of the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, and Col. Jeff Kendrick, director of the Office of Global Education, for guidance in this area. His project is a great example of interdisciplinary research in the humanities."

Like Anna Grace, John Paul plans to present his paper at the URS, and hopes to get it published in one of several possible academic journals including, *Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review*.

As an English major, John Paul's concentrations are philosophy, rhetoric and writing, and literary studies. He serves on VMI's Honor Court. Following graduation, he will commission into the Army.

Shirk, a biology major minoring in exercise science, researched the influence of music for his SURJ project, "Effects of Music Genre on Vertical Jump Power and Hand Grip Strength in Resistance Trained College Students."

Shirk proposed two hypotheses. The first: More aggressive, angry, arousing music genres such as heavy metal, will produce a greater ergogenic effect than sedating, soft, calming genres such as jazz, across songs with similar tempo in strength and power tests. The second: This increase in strength and power is mediated by an

stretch, quadriceps stretch, and two minutes jumping rope. They were exposed to one of five musical conditions—no music, heavy metal, rock, pop, or jazz—then performed vertical jump tests to assess lower body power, an isometric hand grip dynamometer test to assess upper body strength, then provided saliva samples to assess A-Amylase enzyme concentrations. They then rested for three minutes. They repeated the jump test, grip test, rest cycle two times. When the subjects completed testing for each condition, they took a survey to rate their familiarity with each of the four songs," he reported.

Shirk's faculty mentor, Col. Mike Krackow, professor in the Department of Human Performance and Wellness, shared that the research is very important. "Coaches and athletes are always looking for ways to improve their performance. If this study can show that specific music genres can improve strength and power, it can become a valuable resource as part of their training."

Following data analysis, Shirk found that his results were inconclusive. He plans to increase his sample size when he continues the research during the fall semester. 🌿



Summer Transition Program

Summer Transition Program (STP) participants were on post for several weeks, acclimating themselves to VMI. The incoming matriculants lived in barracks, took an academic course, and undertook rigorous physical fitness training. STP helps prepare students for the Rat Line.—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye and H. Lockwood McLaughlin.





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Army's 250th Birthday

A group of 49 cadets, along with VMI Army ROTC staff members, marched in the Army's 250th Birthday Parade in Washington, D.C., June 14, to commemorate the founding of the U.S. Army in 1775.

The parade highlighted the Army throughout the years, including the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the Global War on Terror, the Army of today, and the Army of the future, in which VMI was included.—Photos courtesy of DVIDS and VMI Army ROTC.

