

COMMEMORATIONS AND MEMORIALS NAMING AND REVIEW COMMITTEE
Minutes of meeting held August 24, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 1054 in the Turman Room in Preston Library at VMI.

Attending were members of the committee:

Mr. Richard K. Hines V '66, Chair
CAD Dane Hamilton '22
Mr. Hugh M. Fain III '80
COL Keith Gibson '77
LTC Catharine Ingersoll
Mr. Lester Johnson '95
Mr. Anthony Moore '78
COL Kim C. Parker
Mr. S. Waite Rawls III '70 [via Teams]
Mr. Gene Scott '80

Also in attendance were:

Mr. Tom Watjen '76, President, VMI Board of Visitors
Mr. Conrad Hall '65, VMI Board of Visitors
Mr. Scot Marsh '81, VMI Board of Visitors
Mr. Charles E. Dominy, VMI Board of Visitors
MG Cedric T. Wins '85, Superintendent, VMI
BG Dallas B. Clark '99, Deputy Superintendent for Finance, Administration and Support, VMI
LTC Kevin Ryan '01, Office of the Superintendent, VMI
COL Bill Wyatt, Communications and Marketing, VMI

Introduction and Opening Remarks

Mr. Hines asked those present to introduce themselves briefly, after which he made short comments on the committee's responsibilities, especially the charge to ensure the VMI landscape is "inspirational and inviting." Mr. Hines also gave an overview of the work the committee has accomplished since its inception in October 2020.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Hines called on the committee to approve the minutes of the meeting that took place April 9, 2021. Mr. Fain so moved, and Mr. Scott seconded. The minutes were approved with no objections.

New Market Mural Interpretive Display

COL Gibson reported on his progress in researching design firms that produce interactive museum displays; he has been in contact with Cortina Productions and will be meeting with them to discuss possibilities for an interpretive station in the foyer of Memorial Hall that will contextualize the New Market mural. Pursuing such an interactive display is a first step as the committee continues to explore the question of the best location on Post for the mural's location. COL Gibson reported that

such a display might be ready to be installed in late Spring 2022, after the committee approves the content for the touchscreen and the chosen firm designs and manufactures the display.

New Market Mural Relocation

COL Gibson also reported on his work to determine if the painting *Charge of the New Market Cadets* is able to be relocated elsewhere on Post without incurring damage. To determine this, he has reached out to art conservation professionals and has met with the conservators at the Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk. COL Gibson also received recommendations for Gianfranco Pocobene Studio in Boston, a company that specializes in the conservation and restoration of paintings and murals. He anticipates bringing staff from Pocobene to Post to analyze the material status of the painting and provide recommendations.

Embossed "Stonewall Jackson" over Main Arch

COL Gibson noted that VMI has three options for the embossed name over the arch into Old Barracks. The first option, to cover the lettering with a new stone facing, is not recommended as the conservator he consulted said that would exacerbate the damage that already exists on the lintel. Another option is to remove the lintel and replace it, which is the most expensive option and should only be done if the lintel is damaged beyond its capacity to provide proper structural support to the entryway. The third possibility is to reface the stone, which would be the fastest and lowest-cost option. COL Gibson explained that after the letters of "Stonewall Jackson" are removed and the stone face smoothed, bronze letters spelling out "Virginia Military Institute" could be affixed. A sample of the lintel stone has been sent to a laboratory for further analysis, and COL Gibson reported that the architects and engineers he has consulted are exploring the various options and will be delivering a report with suggestions to the committee.

Plaque Contextualizing "You May Be..."

COL Gibson presented a mock-up of a plaque that will contextualize the statement "You May Be Whatever You Resolve To Be" that is located on second stoop inside the main archway to Old Barracks. The committee members made suggestions to the text of the plaque; once it is manufactured it will be hung in the archway.

Prioritizing the Remaining Inventory Items

Mr. Hines noted that it is the committee's responsibility to review every item on the Inventory document, but acknowledged that would be a complicated undertaking. In order to streamline this process, he proposed that each committee member review the Inventory individually and then provide a ranking for each item by the end of October. LTC Ingersoll will distribute a survey to the committee members in early October so they can sort each item into three categories: objects that should remain, objects about which more information is needed, and objects that should come down. It is Mr. Hines' plan that by the end of the 2021-2022 academic year, the committee will have assessed the entire Inventory of Confederate Iconography and made recommendations to the Board of Visitors accordingly.

Commemoration to Enslaved People

Mr. Hines noted that recently the Virginia General Assembly passed H.B. 1980, which mandates scholarships and memorials at state institutions of higher education that were once slaveholders. The bill affects Longwood University, Virginia Commonwealth University, William and Mary, University of Virginia, and VMI. The Assembly assigned SCHEV to coordinate the process; BG Clark explained that SCHEV is formalizing its guidance criteria and it will distribute the guidelines in the summer of 2022. COL Gibson noted that in the meantime he has been working with the History Department on compiling a list of enslaved and free Blacks at VMI prior to Emancipation and an additional list of Black employees at VMI from the 1870s to the present day.

Institute Awards

Mr. Hines observed that although this topic was on the agenda, it would be best to discuss the controversial awards while the committee works to prioritize the remaining Inventory items. LTC Ingersoll will distribute information about the awards when she sends out the survey in early October.

Daniels Courtyard

COL Gibson discussed improvements to Daniels Courtyard and Daniels Arch that will be taking place over the 2021-2022 academic year, in order to make the space more obvious and to allow it to function more effectively as an outdoor venue for meetings, speakers, and performances. He distributed images of the new design to the committee members. The committee also watched a moving YouTube video of alumna Tamara Ferguson '04 paying tribute to Jonathan Daniels '61 and his legacy as part of the annual Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage, held virtually this year on August 14.

20th and 21st Century VMI Leaders

In connection with the Committee's charge to assess naming opportunities growing out of the ranks of 20th and 21st Century graduates and/or leadership, COL Gibson discussed briefly his views on the subject, a topic that will continue to be reviewed by the Committee.

Adjournment

Mr. Hines then proposed a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Fain so moved, and Mr. Scott seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 1245.

Respectfully submitted,

LTC Catharine Ingersoll