



INSTITUTE REPORT

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50TH ANNIVERSARY



Olmsted Program Takes Cadets to Vietnam

By Marianne Hause

Eight 1st Class commissioning cadets, along with their faculty leadership team, Lt. Col. Jochen Arndt, Col. M. Houston Johnson V, and Col. David Gray, toured the Socialist Republic of Vietnam during spring furlough as part of the Olmsted Foundation's Undergraduate Program which offers substantial funds for overseas travel and cultural immersion opportunities to senior military college students. The fully funded trip was co-sponsored by VMI's Department of History, the John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History & Strategic Analysis, and the Center for Leadership and Ethics. Assistance was provided by the Office of Global Education. Cadets were chosen through a rigorous application process based on their GPA, ROTC ranking, a written essay, and personal interview.

According to Arndt, the Olmsted Foundation's mission for their undergraduate program is to "provide future military officers their first overseas experience in a non-English speaking country, with exposure to a national perspective, and a focus on the role of U.S. policy in the region. That is our mission too. Prior to this trip, only two of the cadets in our group had ever traveled to another country, and one had never flown in an airplane," he said.

Initially, the leadership team chose to visit the country of Turkey, but changed their plans when unrest flared up in the Middle East last October. "We had to commit to a trip and put down



Cadets gather on an overlook at Ha Long Bay.—Photo courtesy of Col. M. Houston Johnson V.

non-refundable deposits by early December, so we decided to be prudent and return to Vietnam, which we visited in 2019. It's a place where we know the cadets would receive a good experience. It is culturally, meteorologically, and linguistically foreign, giving cadets a challenge to deal with those differences. Vietnam provides this experience like no other country. It is extraordinarily different," said Arndt.

In years past, cadet groups have gone to Germany, Poland, Israel, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and last year to Japan.

The cadets prepared for the trip in the early part of the year by ensuring their passports were in order, getting recommended immunizations, learning safe travel practices, and attending lectures and reading seminars on Vietnamese history, politics, and national security. A rough itinerary was planned by leadership, but cadets provided proposals for additional stops, and were responsible for arranging them.

The group made the Old Quarter in Hanoi, an area known for its numerous attractions, rich cuisine, and round-the-clock activity, their base of operation. They explored the city of Hanoi where they saw the Temple of Literature, the oldest university in Vietnam; watched a water puppet show at Thang Long Theatre; and visited the U.S. Embassy where they met with Col. Thomas Bouchillon, defense attaché, who provided a briefing on U.S.-Vietnamese relations. They toured Hoa Lo Prison Museum, commonly known as the "Hanoi Hilton," where American POWs—including John McCain—were confined during the Vietnam War. They embarked on a two-day cruise to Ha Long Bay, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Site, popular with tourists for its emerald water and thousands of towering limestone islands. Barbara Keating '24 shared that a highlight of the trip for her was visiting a pearl farm in the middle of Ha Long Bay. "We could see oysters in nets, people extracting the pearls from the oysters, and others valuating the pearls," she said.



Cadets bike along the Sông Sào Khê River in Ninh Binh.—Photo courtesy of Col. M. Houston Johnson V.

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INSTITUTE REPORT

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Kelly Nye

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On the cover: Josh Cheung '24 presents his Honors Week thesis in Scott Shipp Hall March 19.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

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Norment Honored for Decades of Service

By Marianne Hause

VMI honored former Virginia Sen. Thomas K. Norment Jr. '68 with a parade April 26. The recognition was for 30 years of service to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Norment took review of the Corps of Cadets, along with Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, superintendent.

Following the parade, a reception was held in Preston Library where many of Norment's brother rats, friends, and family members were in attendance to show their support.

Wins read and presented Norment with a resolution from the Board of Visitors in which they expressed their deepest gratitude to him. Norment accepted the recognition humbly and appreciatively, stating, "This is an extraordinary thing. I am thankful to have been a vessel moving through the legislative process. We've done a lot, but I didn't do it alone. This legacy belongs to the Class of 1968." He encouraged his fellow alumni to continue supporting Wins. "He has served with dignity. I'm incredibly proud of him and I will keep on helping him however I can."

Norment graduated from VMI with a degree in English. He attended law school at the College of William and Mary, graduating with a Juris Doctorate in 1973. Following service in local government



Sen. Thomas K. Norment Jr. '68 takes review of the parade with Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

on the James City County Board of Supervisors, Norment began in the Virginia Senate in 1992.

During his tenure, Norment served as both the majority leader and minority leader, co-chair of the Senate Finance Committee and chair of its Education and Capital Outlay subcommittees, and chair of the Senate Courts of Justice Committee.

A stalwart advocate for higher education in the General Assembly, Norment patroned countless budget amendments on behalf of VMI, to include additional faculty and staff

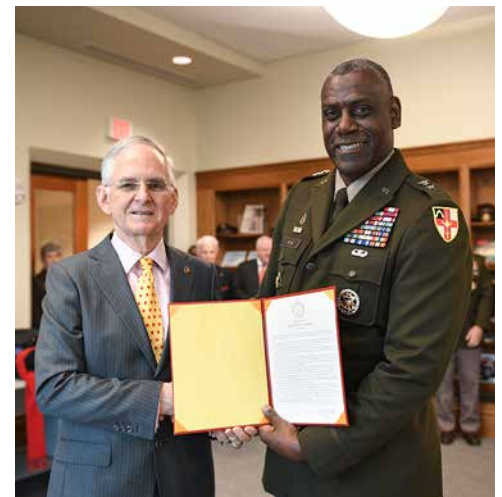
positions, compensation increases, academic program enhancements, academic support positions, and additional funding for the unique military programs.

While Norment was in office, VMI embarked upon a significant capital improvement plan funded largely with state funds appropriated by the General Assembly. This capital plan included such notable projects as Third Barracks construction, Old and New Barracks renovation, the Military and Leadership Field Training Grounds construction, Maury-Brooke Hall renovation, Scott Shipp Hall renovation, and construction of the Corps Physical Training Facility and Aquatic Center.

Continued on next page



The Corps of Cadets honors Sen. Thomas K. Norment '68 with a parade April 26.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 presents Sen. Thomas K. Norment Jr. '68 with a resolution recognizing his decades of support to VMI.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Notable recognition from VMI includes being honored with the VMI Foundation's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, in 2007 for his exemplary dedication to the Institute and its mission. He was also the graduation speaker for the Class of 2012.

Norment welcomed cadets visiting the General Assembly at every opportunity and encouraged them in their cadetship as they work toward a commitment to commissioning and public service. It was a highlight for cadets to have an opportunity to interact with him and hear his frank and practical advice and perspectives.

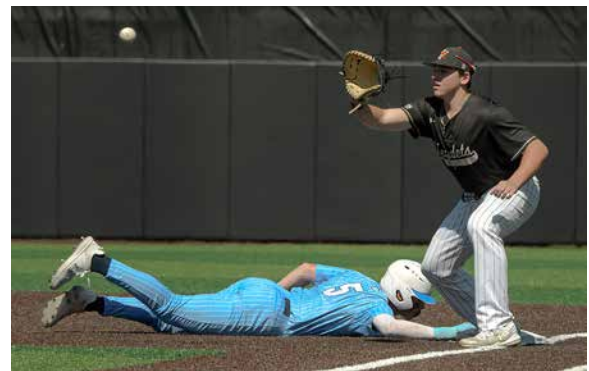
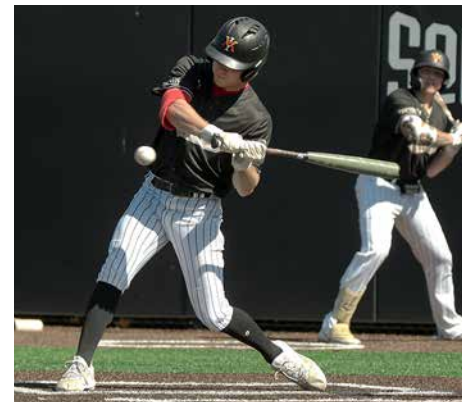
The Board of Visitors further recognized Norment's service to the Institute by naming a meeting room as the Thomas K. Norment '68 Room within the planned Moody Hall renovation. 🌟



Before the parade, Sen. Thomas K. Norment '68 shakes hands with brother rats and others on the Parade Ground.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

Lamore Field Dedicated

During the three-game series against The Citadel, the baseball team, along with leadership and special guests, recognized Michael Lamore '85 and dedicated Lamore Field at Gray-Minor Stadium. The all-weather AstroTurf field with new drainage system, larger dugouts, and updated bullpens were completed prior to the 2024 season. For VMI, Lamore ranks third all-time in on-base percentage and fourth in batting average. During the ceremony April 20, he was presented with a framed photo of the field, along with a home plate signed by the team; Sam Roberts, head coach; and Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, superintendent. Lamore's wife, Susan, threw the first pitch, with Lamore as catcher. The Keydets won the series 2-1.—Photos courtesy of Brian McWalters/Road Win Photos.



“You Won!”

Paralympic Athlete Inspires Cadets

By Marianne Hause

On Sept. 7, 2012, retired U.S. Navy Lt. Brad Snyder won a gold medal for the men’s 400-meter freestyle in swimming at the Paralympic Games in London. While he enjoyed hearing the cheers of the crowd, standing on the podium as he received his medal, and hearing “The Star-Spangled Banner” play as the American flag was raised, he couldn’t help but reflect on the significance of that day. It was exactly one year earlier that Snyder lost his vision in a blast from an improvised explosive device (IED) in Afghanistan.

Snyder recently shared his journey from the battlefield in Afghanistan to the winner’s podium as the final speaker of the Courageous Leadership Speaker Series, presented by the Center for Leadership and Ethics (CLE). Col. David Gray, director of the CLE, introduced Snyder, noting that he epitomizes this year’s theme of “Adapting to Complex Situations.” Snyder’s engaging narrative captivated his audience of cadets, staff, faculty, and members of the community, including school-aged swimmers and their parents.

Snyder grew up in suburban Florida and was recruited as a high school senior to swim for the United States Naval Academy (USNA) swim team. He was a member of the first group of midshipmen to arrive in Annapolis after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Snyder graduated in 2006 with a degree in naval architecture, and commissioned into the Navy as an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) officer.

He originally wanted to become a Navy SEAL, but changed his mind during his junior year when he met an officer in the EOD community. “I had given a lot of thought considering my unique strength, and realized it was aquatic competence. I was exceptionally good in water. So, I looked for a career that would allow me to exploit that strength. The EOD community is remarkable, with an incredible skill set and excellent training. We embed with everyone, including Navy SEALs and Army Rangers. We’re prideful that we’re the priority brand as far as explosive mitigation is concerned. I also liked that my mission wasn’t to kill anyone, but to protect people by removing these explosive hazards,” he explained.

He deployed to Iraq in the fall of 2008. “By the time I got there, it seemed like all the fighting was done, so instead of doing a lot of EOD response, we worked with Iraqi army bomb disposal and the municipal police on how to respond to IEDs.

After six months in Iraq, Snyder returned to the United States. To his delight, his second deployment was with a SEAL team in Kandahar, Afghanistan. It was his job to advise the ground force commander on how to avoid any potential explosive hazard, or to mitigate that hazard. As the summer progressed and the weather warmed up, fighting increased. The Taliban knew they were at a disadvantage, so they started using IEDs everywhere. “There were IEDs on rooftops, there were IEDs built into the walls of houses, there were IEDs in dead cows, there were IEDs on pathways. If you landed a helicopter somewhere, you could bet there would be an IED there the next time. I conferred with my partner, Adam, on the safest way to get our assault team from point A to point B, given the



Brad Snyder shares his story with a riveted audience in the Hall of Valor March 12.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

IED threat. We decided the safest way was for us to walk in front of the patrol with a metal detector,” said Snyder. He and Adam cleared miles and miles of terrain, mission after mission throughout that summer and into that fall, trying to keep their assault team safe.

On Sept. 7, 2011, Snyder’s platoon started a routine mission in the Panjwai Valley.

He led them into their target village, and quickly observed that no one was there. From a radio transmission, they learned there were 12 Taliban fighters in the area who knew that an American force had landed, and they were intent on mounting an attack on them by pushing them into an area they had previously booby-trapped with IEDs. “Not wanting to see our adversary get the advantage, we thought we’d beat them to the punch. We took out our maps and triangulated the radio transmissions to where we thought they were, and planned to ‘move to contact.’ Getting around the terrain in that area was very difficult, and people like me make it even more difficult because we live by the adage, ‘The path of least resistance is almost always booby-trapped.’ So, we’re very unpopular with Navy SEALs and special forces, because we choose the most arduous way to patrol: Over mounds, over fences, never on the paths, never over bridges, always the hardest possible way because that’s actually the safest possible way,” he explained. Snyder watched from halfway back in their patrol as Adam delicately led their platoon with a metal detector. They soon encountered a ‘choke point,’ an area where that terrain dictates where they must go, and a great place to be booby-trapped. “There was a 10-foot wall surrounding a giant field on the other side, and there was one area of the wall that had been previously blown out by another attack. It was the only way we could safely get around the wall. So, I watched Adam clear up to the rubble, dexterously shimmy to his left, and disappear behind the wall. I watched three SEALs precisely follow Adam’s tracks and disappear behind the wall. I watched a few other people do the same thing. I got

Continued on next page

distracted for a moment when all of a sudden, BOOM! A giant black flume shot up into the air,” recalled Snyder. He feared that Adam had stepped on an IED, was badly hurt, and needed assistance. Snyder wanted to rush to his friend to help him, but being well-trained, he knew that running up, trying to be a hero, and possibly stumbling upon another IED was the worst thing he could do, so he waited to make an assessment. He decided to clear a pathway for medics to get to any casualties. He reached the other side of the wall, and the dust from the blast settled. He was elated to see Adam standing and shrugging his shoulders, signaling his confusion to Snyder. Neither one understood what happened, but soon discovered that the first Afghan in the patrol did not precisely follow the SEALs’ footsteps, instead he decided to take a short-cut across a footbridge. “Remember what I said, the path of least resistance is almost always booby-trapped, and there was a 40-pound IED buried in that improvised footbridge. That Afghan got kicked forward 15 feet, and the Afghan behind him lost both legs. We needed to get them out as quickly as possible, as the 12 Taliban fighters now knew exactly where we were, and we were sitting ducks for a counterattack,” Snyder declared.

It took Snyder and two SEALs 10 minutes to pick up the first casualty and bring him to where a medevac helicopter could land. Snyder quickly ran to the back of the patrol to get a stretcher to carry the second casualty. He grabbed the stretcher, ran to the front of the patrol, jumped over the ravine and...silence. Snyder had stepped on a secondary IED a meter away from the first.

“I woke up and could barely see out of my left eye. I could see my hands, and behind my hands I could see my boots. What I didn’t see was any blood or any damage. Nothing appeared to be wrong, which didn’t make any sense to me. I knew I had just been blown up. How could I be okay? I must be dead. Time was suspended, and I was alone with my thoughts. I thought about my life. At 27 years old, I was proud of the life I had lived. I was proud to have died as part of this rare, amazing brotherhood of warriors. I was proud of offering my life and sacrifice for our liberty.

“I was sad that I wouldn’t be able to say goodbye to my mom or my family, but I thought they’d be proud of how I lived. I felt my grandfather, my hero and World War II veteran. I thought he was coming to take me across, but then something else happened. All of a sudden my right ear started to ring very badly, and behind the ringing I heard Adam calling to me. I wasn’t dead.

“When Adam found me I grabbed him by his armor and asked, ‘How bad is it?’

“He said, ‘Brad, I’m not gonna lie to you. Your face looks pretty messed up, but the rest of you looks fine.’”

Adam and a medic picked Snyder up and helped him walk to the helicopter, which flew him to a hospital in Kandahar, where he spent 12 hours in surgery. Once he was medically stable, he was rushed to an Air Force base in Germany where he spent another nine hours in surgery, then on to Walter Reed Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. On the fifth day at Walter Reed, the surgeons talked to him about a final surgery and told him, “If this surgery is a success, you’ll get back some of your vision,” which didn’t make sense to Snyder because he hadn’t realized he was blind. “Up to that moment, I didn’t understand that I wasn’t seeing with my eyes. I had been seeing with my mind. Spoiler alert—that last surgery was not a success. I have no light perception on either side,” he revealed.

Snyder shared with his audience that at that moment, he had two choices. “I could dwell on all the things I’d never be able to do as a blind person, or I could realize how lucky I was to still be alive. I was

given a second chance in a way that many others were not. When I came back to the U.S., I wasn’t in a coffin. I came back on a gurney with two arms and two legs that worked, and an endless set of opportunities. I made a commitment in that hospital room that blindness wasn’t going to be anything that confined me or redefined me. I was going to make the most of my life.”

Snyder soon received a call from the military outreach coordinator for the United States Association of Blind Athletes, who told him that he gets wounded veterans into sports as a function of their rehab. He went on to say that it

was a Paralympic year, and he could get Snyder entered into a swim meet in Colorado Springs to qualify for the Paralympic Games.

Snyder qualified at the meet, and began training with Brian Loeffler, head coach of the swimming program at Loyola University in Maryland. Within a matter of months, Snyder improved his swimming time and became a member of Team U.S.A. for the Paralympic Games in London, where he competed in seven events, including the 400-meter freestyle on the first anniversary of the IED blast. As Snyder finished that race, he heard the cheers of the crowd, but being blind, he couldn’t see the results on the jumbotron, so he waited patiently in the water. “Finally, all the competitors finished, and a whistle was blown. At that point my coach could legally talk to me. He said two words I’ll never forget, ‘You won!’”

Kate Taylor ’24, member of the women’s swimming and diving team at VMI, said, “Lieutenant Snyder’s words painted a picture in my head. He has found a life of abundance in his new normal, along with limitless opportunities. I felt called to action by the way he fervently equips himself with a sense of gratitude, vowing to treat each day like a gift. He urged us to recognize the duty we have in selfless



Brad Snyder answers a cadet’s question about his experiences competing in the Paralympics.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

34th Environment Virginia Brings More Than 500

By Marianne Hause

The 34th annual Environment Virginia Symposium was held April 9–11. The event, organized and co-hosted by the Center for Leadership & Ethics (CLE), attracted 550 attendees from state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, higher education, and the private sector. Col. Dave Gray, director of the CLE, served as master of ceremony for the event.

According to Justin Spears, conference operations coordinator for the CLE, a conference app was fully implemented this year to aid and enhance the symposium experience for those in attendance. “I’m pleased that 320 attendees downloaded the app. We tested it and used it partially last year, but this year we are using it to its fullest capacity. We are able to communicate information on event scheduling, speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, and hotel shuttle information. We can even send out push notifications for announcements. It has been tremendously useful,” he said.

Topics discussed at this year’s breakout sessions included the wetlands, community flood preparedness, the benefits of oysters, safe wildlife corridors, climate resilience, solar power, septic solutions, urban and suburban landscaping, transportation planning, working with sovereign tribes and underserved communities, combating invasive fish and plants, the health of the Chesapeake Bay, and more.

The agency directors panel was moderated by Bettina Ring, Virginia director of The Nature Conservancy, and featured five state government officials from the conference’s co-hosting agencies: Matthew Wells, director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Mike Rolband, director of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Ryan Brown, executive director of the Department of Wildlife Resources



Margaret L. “Peggy” Sanner, flanked by last year’s winner, Laura McKay and Lt. Col. Kim Connolly, accepts the Erchul Environmental Leadership Award.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

(DWR); Jamie Green, commissioner of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC), and Rob Farrell, director of the Department of Forestry (DoF).

Wells wants to expand access to outdoor recreation, open new parks, provide additional park amenities, and ensure the parks are safe and well maintained. Improving water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, and mitigating high-risk dams are high priority projects for his department. He is also striving to be as inclusive as possible to all people groups. “We seek a diversity of opinions. We have recently hired a director of cultural resources, who has done a great job reaching out to the Tribal Nations,” he stated. He added that 60% of flood funds go to low income areas, and that the parks

department has ongoing educational programs to teach families about nature and how to fully enjoy the outdoors.

Rolband good-naturedly shared that most people do not like regulators, which is his primary job. “The DEQ regulates land, air, and water. I think it’s really fun and interesting. We have the cleanest air, the cleanest water, and the cleanest land that I have seen in my entire adult life. If you look at all the statistics, the reason our citizens can hunt and fish is because the regulatory programs have worked in Virginia. We have resources that are unsurpassed since the 1970s. Back then if you swam in the Potomac River, there was

a chance you would get seriously sick, but now the water is amazing. You can go fishing there, and thoroughly enjoy it.” he said.

Brown stated that his department works hard to engage all people groups. “One simple rule is to be intentional. We reach out to people where they are, and strive to build relationships.”

Farrell echoed his favorite mantra from previous years’ conferences, “Trees are

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Ryan Brown addresses the assembly during the agency directors panel.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

the answer. Whatever the problem is, trees are the solution.” He emphasized the importance of planting trees and building community support for trees and community understanding of the benefits of trees. “Our urban community folks are really focused on building the community infrastructure. The worst thing we can do is come into a community and say, ‘Hi, we’re from the government. Here’s your tree. Good luck.’ We have to help communities understand how trees and nature can help them. Increasing the urban tree canopy is good for people’s health and the economy,” he said.

Green quipped that he loves oysters even more than Farrell loves trees, and reported on the success of the oyster industry. “Forty years ago, oysters were on the brink of extinction because of parasites. Now the population is extremely healthy. Building oyster reef habitats improves water quality, and is the equivalent of planting trees for air quality. Oyster reefs attract more wading birds, more fish, shrimp, and seahorses. It is a huge economic benefit for recreational fishing,” he said.

Gov. Glenn Youngkin gave the keynote speech Wednesday evening. He reflected on the natural heritage, the natural wonders, and the many blessings in the Commonwealth of Virginia that should be preserved and treasured. “It is in fact a responsibility that falls to all of us, from the deepest valleys to the heights of our tallest mountains, across our coastal plains, and through our wild lands. We collectively must work together to steward, preserve, and protect our most precious resources and ensure that those blessings are there for future generations,” he declared.

Youngkin went on to say that economic development and preserving nature is not an either/or situation, but rather a both/and moment. “We can use our natural resources to further benefit Virginia economically, all while doing so transparently.” He spoke about all that his administration has achieved over the last two years. “From the coast to the mountains, we have awarded nearly \$120 million in funding to help communities address flood resiliency through the Community Flood Preparedness Fund. We also launched the Resilient Virginia Revolving Fund to help provide nonfederal matching for federal resilient grants. It’s amazing what we can achieve when we



Gov. Glenn Youngkin thanks conference participants for their commitment to protecting Virginia’s natural heritage during his keynote speech in Marshall Hall.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

work together and take ideas and turn them into actions.”

He reported multiple achievements among state agencies. The DEQ has improved agency permitting process time by 40%; the DWR has made the outdoors more accessible by opening more than 30,000 acres of public and private lands for outdoor recreation, and was named State Fish and Wildlife Agency of the Year by the Congressional Sportsman Foundation; \$2.4 million was spent to support tree planting efforts across the commonwealth; and civic communities, local governments, tribal organizations, nonprofit organizations, neighborhood associations public educational institutions, state agencies, and volunteer groups were all engaged on over 100 projects. He stated that the Chesapeake Bay holds a very important part of his attention and continues to be a priority.

He concluded by expressing his appreciation to those assembled. “I can go on and on about the incredible progress that has been in motion over the past year, as I just barely touched the surface. Clearly there is a lot ahead of us. If I could express one simple sentiment to all of you tonight, it is thank you for your commitment, your passion, and your love of this work, for protecting Virginia so that future generations might come to enjoy it, and for instilling

in them the importance of stewardship of our blessings, and to pass them on to the next generations.”

The closing plenary speaker of the conference was Adam Ortiz, regional administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mid-Atlantic region. Prior to working at the EPA, he was director of the Montgomery County Maryland Department of Environmental Protection, where he launched programs boosting recycling, curbside compost collection, building energy efficiency standards, and ecological targeting to watershed restoration projects. Before that, he was director of the Department of Environment for Prince George’s County, Maryland. He also served in the Maryland governor’s office and at the U.S. Department of Labor. As mayor of Edmondston, Maryland for three terms, he spearheaded the state’s first complete “Green Street” that captures and filters stormwater runoff, and prevents chronic flooding.

A meaningful part of the annual symposium is the announcement of the winner of the Erchul Environmental Leadership Award. This year’s winner is Margaret L. “Peggy” Sanner, former Virginia executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF). The award recognizes a Virginian who has made significant individual efforts

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Adam Ortiz gives the closing speech for Environment Virginia in Gillis Theater.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Four Inspirational Retirees Recognized

By Marianne Hause

A hallmark of VMI is cadets marching in parades. Whether on post, in a Christmas parade, or in a presidential or gubernatorial inaugural parade, marching cadets are always a favorite to spectators, and can evoke feelings of pride, patriotism, and valor. One particular parade that brings out mixed emotions of melancholy and celebration though, is the annual retirement parade for staff and faculty members. This year, four longstanding employees were honored at the parade and joined Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, superintendent, in taking review.



Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 is joined by Col. James Coale, Col. John Brodie, Col. Richard Rowe, and Col. Jon-Michael Hardin in taking review of the Retirement Parade.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

They were Col. John Brodie, director of music; Col. James Coale, professor and head of the Department of Human Performance and Wellness (HPW); Col. Jon-Michael Hardin, professor and head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering (ME); and Col. Richard Rowe, professor of biology and director of research for the VMI Research Laboratories.

Regardless of the occasion, a VMI parade would not be complete without the Regimental Band playing marches and beating a cadence, and for the past 36 years, the face, personality, and anchor of the Regimental Band, has been the highly recognizable and animated Brodie.

Brodie, a trumpet player, earned his bachelor's degree in music education from West Chester State College (now known as West

Chester University) in Pennsylvania, then moved to Granada, Colorado, where he taught high school for two years. He served in the Marine Corps from 1983–1988 as a member of the Commandant's Own Drum and Bugle Corps, while simultaneously earning a master's degree from Catholic University in Washington, D.C., where he also studied with Adel Sanchez, principal trumpet with the National Symphony Orchestra.

Brodie arrived at VMI in July 1988, and could be found anywhere and anytime any of the musical groups under his direction—including the Commanders Jazz Band, the Institute Brass Ensemble, the Herald Trumpets and Drummers, the Cadet Buglers, the Concert Band, and the Glee Club—performed. He has taken the groups all over the world to perform including New Orleans; Chicago; Washington, D.C.; Savannah; California; Florida; Hawaii; Puerto Rico; France; Germany; the Czech Republic; New Zealand; Dubai; Morocco; England; Portugal, and Russia.

Brodie, who grew up in Chicago playing ice hockey, brought his love for the sport to VMI and established the ice hockey club. The team practices at the sports complex in Roanoke, and

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Band Company alumni gather in Memorial Garden to celebrate the retirement of Col. John Brodie.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



Col. John Brodie is congratulated by cadets following the retirement parade.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

competes in the Blue Ridge Hockey Association/American Collegiate Hockey Association.

While directing music at VMI, Brodie earned his doctorate from Catholic University. The Board of Directors of the VMI Alumni Association Inc. named him an honorary alumnus of the Institute in 2008. The Institute honored him with a Distinguished Service Award in 1991, the VMI Achievement Medal in 1999, and Faculty Mentor Awards in 2004 and 2005. He was given Honorary Brother Rat status by the Class of 1992.

Brodie shared that being at VMI has been a great experience. "The cadets have kept me young. They are full of enthusiasm. Whenever I suggest something new, they are keen to give it a try."

Band Company Commander, Annie Townsend '24 stated that Brodie is the glue that holds Band Company together. "He is always encouraging, optimistic, and has taught us that persistence and passion will get us a long way. He will be greatly missed, but his legacy will live on through the lives of many cadets—past, present, and future."

Col. Adrian T. Bogart III '81, commandant to the Corps of Cadets and Brodie's commanding officer, agreed with Townsend. "John Brodie is a legend, and he will be missed," he said.

Ryan Hayes O'Connor '24, regimental drum major, said, "Colonel Brodie has demonstrated his love for the band and the Institute, as well as his passion for music throughout his many years of service. The lessons I have learned from him are unmatched and the experiences I have enjoyed with him will live with me for the rest of my life."

Coinciding with the retirement parade was a reunion of nearly 225 Band Company members, who, along with their family members, cheered the Regimental and Pipe Bands throughout the parade, and greeted Brodie with their well wishes and congratulations following the parade. Local musician, friend, and fellow trumpeter, Peter Del Vecchio, composed the pass-in-review march played by the Regimental Band during the parade, especially for the occasion and titled it simply, "Col. Brodie's March."

Brodie's wife, Sarah wanted to honor her husband upon his retirement,



Col. Jon-Michael Hardin takes note of his medal as he is honored during the retirement parade April 20.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

and recently established the Col. John A. Brodie Band Scholarship.

Brodie plans to spend his retirement volunteering at the UVA University Hospital mentoring cancer patients. He also wants to start a prison music program. He will also spend time visiting his four children and sailing.

Coale, who had just graduated with a bachelor's degree from Springfield

College in Massachusetts, was hired as an interim instructor in the Department of Physical Education in 1979. Coale knew little about VMI or Lexington before he arrived on post, and had planned to move back to New England after his short-term employment. One year turned into two however, and when another faculty member accepted a position at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Coale was offered a permanent position.

Coale, who played football in college, had always wanted to coach. He had developed an interest in the fledgling science of strength and conditioning (S&C) after meeting Bill Starr, who coached for the Baltimore Colts, and who is credited for helping create and promote S&C. Coale offered to work with the VMI football team on a volunteer basis, and the football coach, who had not yet been sold on the value of S&C, reluctantly agreed.

Coale's work with the football team was so successful, that by 1982 the S&C program was serving all NCAA athletes on all VMI

teams. He recalled working with the basketball team when Wins was playing. "Major General Wins was a very talented player with a strong work ethic. I also remember many of the other players on that team, and as a group they all worked hard, which made it a very enjoyable experience for me," he said.

In the years that followed, Coale was instrumental in expanding curriculum offerings, and improving the athletic experience for cadets. In 1992, he brought in a nutrition consultant to evaluate the food service in Crozet Hall, which led to converting the family style of dining to cafeteria style, allowing cadets more choices and quantity of food.



Col. James Coale receives a medal from Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 at the retirement parade for his years of service.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

See Retirees Recognized, page 22



Spring FTX

Cadets completed spring field training exercises (FTX) April 5–9. Commissioning cadets spent time on and off post. Army ROTC spent the weekend training at the Goshen Boy Scout Camp, while Naval ROTC Marines stayed at Sadler Farm in Rockbridge County for training. Air Force ROTC invited other schools to utilize VMI's obstacle courses and the Leadership Reaction Course. Navy ROTC cadets trained at Smith Mountain Lake and in Norfolk, while the Coast Guard AUP traveled to Loudon County for training. Non-commissioning cadets participated in community service activities in the Lexington area, including Habitat for Humanity, and a timber framers project in Buena Vista.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin and Rhita Daniel.

Olmsted Program continued from page 2

The group visited the rural family home of their tour guide in the small farming town of Ninh Binh, where they helped prepare a meal. Zachary Wallace '24 described the experience, “We walked a mile through small streets and arrived at the house, where our guide’s in-laws were busy working around the house to prep for lunch. They met us with smiles, and without speaking a shared language, put us to work helping make lunch. I was in a group that cut and cleaned banana leaves to be used as plates; cleaned and dried lettuce and herbs; as well as place heaping piles of pork, duck, chicken, and greens onto the banana leaf platter. Without understanding the language, I learned traditional Vietnamese techniques.”

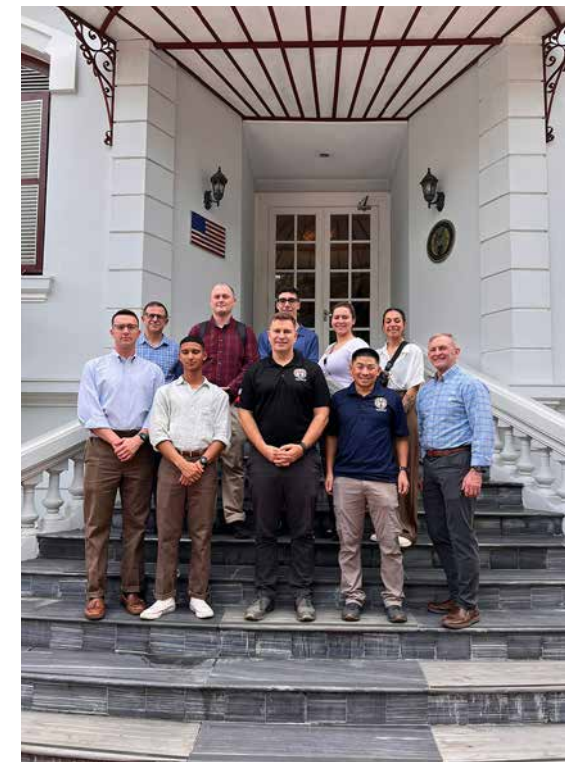
Johnson agreed that preparing a meal with a Vietnamese family was a wonderful way for the cadets to learn their way of life. “The trip offered cadets wonderful opportunities to immerse themselves in Vietnamese culture, learn about the United States’ engagement with the region, reflect on what the Vietnamese call the “American War,” and discuss contemporary geopolitical and national security issues. Cadets threw themselves into the program,” he said.

One poignant moment Jacob Clift '24 experienced was when he left a generous tip to a pregnant vendor from whom he bought souvenirs in Hanoi. “The tip moved her to tears. This heartfelt exchange taught me a profound

lesson about the Vietnamese people. They show deep appreciation and demonstrate immense gratitude for even the smallest gestures. Each encounter during my journey served to deepen my admiration for the country and its resilient people,” he shared.

Gray was pleased the Olmsted trip successfully achieved its mission. “In Hanoi, the cadets quickly adjusted to the frenetic motor scooter traffic on the streets, visited many historical and cultural sites, and learned to navigate in the city’s markets without the guide’s help,” he said.

Plans for next year’s trip begin immediately. The destination country has not yet been decided, but Turkey is still being considered. 🌟



Members of the VMI contingent, along with their tour guide, visit the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi.—Photo courtesy of Col. M. Houston Johnson V.

Seniors Present Theses During Honors Week

By Marianne Hause

First Class honor students presented their research during Honors Week, held March 13–22, celebrating the 22nd anniversary of the program. Topics ranged from psychedelic drug therapy on betta fish, to crime in Richmond, to the ethics of drones, to asking if God is a vegetarian. Most research took at least 18 months to complete and may continue with upcoming cadets.

Gabriella Handford '24, a biology major, presented her honors research thesis, "Effect of Psychedelic Drug Therapy on Male Betta Spondens Aggression as Compared to Traditional Pharmaceuticals."

According to Handford, a psychedelic drug activates the serotonin receptor (a "docking port" for serotonin molecules) and changes the perception of reality and consciousness.

In her experiments, Handford focused on the psychedelic drug, 251-NBOMe, in which very little research has been conducted. It was first made for research purposes in 2003, then began to be used for recreational purposes in 2010. "It's very potent, acts like LSD, and sometimes sold as LSD, which is dangerous because of the strong visual hallucinations it causes not usually associated with LSD, and more dangerous because there's a very thin threshold between a high dose and an overdose," she stated. She chose to use betta fish as her study subjects because they have the same serotonin receptors as humans. Additionally, betta fish are overly aggressive, providing better aggressive behavior to study, and aggression plays a role in some psychiatric disorders, such as bipolar mania and schizophrenia. Serotonin is associated with good moods, and high levels of serotonin are linked with low levels of aggression. Conversely, low levels of serotonin are responsible for depressive symptoms.

Handford's hypothesis in her research was "Bettas exposed to psychedelic drug therapy will be less aggressive than their untreated counterparts. Similarly, the bettas that underwent psychedelic therapy will have a similar aggression response to the fish that received traditional psychiatric medications."

In her experiments, Handford placed randomly selected male betta fish in clear

cups filled with water mixed with one of three different drugs: paroxetine (a traditional prescription medication used to treat depression by increasing the time serotonin spends in the synapse), clozapine (an FDA-approved antipsychotic used to treat schizophrenia), and 251-NBOMe. Additionally, some fish were placed in cups with a combination of paroxetine and clozapine, others in pure water, and still others in water mixed with methanol. Over the course of 22 days, she observed them in three behavioral tests: two aggression scenarios, (two fish—each in their own clear cup—facing each other), and one solo behavior. The fish were dosed with serotonin between aggression tests, their behaviors videoed, and the water preserved for later analysis.

Handford found that while not to the extent of the traditional serotonin drugs, the psychedelic drugs presented significant changes in behavior, and suggested that additional research should be conducted.

Handford is the daughter of Jennifer and Kevin Handford of Middleburg, Virginia. After graduation, she plans on entering a Ph.D. program.

Abigail Basener '24, an applied mathematics major, who also plans to pursue a Ph.D., addressed the problem of plagiarism in her honors thesis, "Detecting AI-Generated Writing vs. Student Writing."

Her research goals were to make a model to predict if writing is human or generated by a large language model (LLM), a computer program that learns and generates human-like language by finding patterns in the ways words go together and guess the next most likely words; to understand how the model works to gain insight into LLMs; and to better inform users of the pitfalls and strengths of LLMs and their detectors.

Basener explained that LLMs are trained on very large datasets, often the internet. "The important thing to know is a LLM looks at how language is put together, but it doesn't actually know anything. For example, it sees the words Delta and airlines often together, but it doesn't understand what Delta is or what an airline is."

The first thing Basener did in designing her model was to decide on a set of 21 features (how she talked to the model) to use.

"The idea is if I had an orange, and I asked you to tell me what type of fruit it was, you wouldn't tell me it's an orange, you'd look at the shape, the color, the size, characteristics like that," she explained. The features included the number of sentences per paragraph, words per paragraph, sentence length, and the number of occurrences of certain words and characters.

Basener used 2,000 entries of data to test her model: One thousand from human writing and 1,000 from artificial intelligence (AI) writing. She discovered that human writing contains more question marks than AI writing. AI prefers to use the word "however," and humans prefer to use the less formal word "but." Humans prefer to use the word "this" more often than AI, and human writing has shorter and longer sentences than AI, which prefers to use sentences of medium length. The more sentences in a paragraph, the greater the odds that the writing is AI generated.

Basener ran one of her own samples of writing through her model, along with the same sample she first ran through ChatGPT, an LLM that enables users to refine their writing to a desired length, format, style, level of detail, and language. Her model successfully recognized her writing as human and the ChatGPT version as AI.

She concluded by stating, "By using model analysis, we can better understand how detectors work." She also found that human writing tends to be more emotional and varied in structure. "An LLM does not recognize poetry, and cannot write poetry."

Basener, who is minoring in economics, is the daughter of Amber and William Basener of Advance Mills, Virginia. After graduation, she plans on pursuing a master's degree in machine learning, the study of the mathematics and computer science that goes into building AI, followed by a Ph.D.

Noland Griffith '24, an economics and business major, sought to discover if certain characteristics of a neighborhood affect crime in his honors thesis, "An Exploratory Analysis of Crime From Randomly Selected Neighborhoods in Richmond, Virginia."

Continued on next page

According to Griffith, there are different aspects of crime that affect life in neighborhoods in big cities. “In the 1970s, Chicago saw a huge increase in crime, which had a multitude of different effects on local neighborhoods. There was an inverse relationship between the price of homes and crime. Neighborhoods with more crime, saw a decrease in the cost of houses. Those who moved out of the high crime areas had higher education and higher income. In addition, those who experience fear of crime are associated with increased depression and lower physical activity,” said Griffith.

For his study, Griffith randomly selected 20 neighborhoods scattered throughout the City of Richmond, Virginia, chosen from the Richmond Police Department (RPD) website. The RPD has recorded all criminal reports by date and by street since 2000. Griffith chose to focus his study to the crime of assault in the year 2023. He looked at nine independent variables in the selected neighborhoods in 2023: single-family homes, multi-family homes, apartments, businesses, public pools, parks, school, and churches, then systematically collected data from the Richmond GeoHub website.

Of all the independent variables he examined, he was most surprised with the results of having schools and churches present in a neighborhood. “For each church present in the neighborhood, there was a correlation of 37.2 crimes, which is quite an odd thing to happen. When you think about churches, they usually have more civility, do charity work, and church people are usually nicer,” shared Griffith. He found a few studies that agreed with his findings. One study found that by offering shelter or



During Honors Week, Noland Griffith '24 analyzes crime in Richmond, Virginia.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

food, churches may attract individuals who commit crime. Another study indicated that because churches are only opened one day of the week, criminals are more inclined to visit the district. Griffith was quick to point out that churches do not cause crime, they are just correlated with crime. “I’m not saying that you shouldn’t put churches in areas. I think churches are beautiful structures. I’m religious. That’s why I found this so interesting,” he said. The presence of schools also correlated with higher crime rates.

Griffith concluded his presentation by stating that more research should be conducted because of the underreporting of certain crimes, which may have caused



Dylan Palmer '24 addresses the effects of drones on the modern battlefield.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

his total crime numbers to be inaccurate.

Griffith, who is minoring in applied mathematics, is the son of Katherine and Jonathan Griffith of Charleston, South Carolina. After graduation, he will commission into the U.S. Army.

Another cadet planning to commission into the Army, Dylan Palmer '24, who is a computer science major, studied the use of drones in his honors thesis, “Drone Countermeasures, Ethics, and Drones’ Effects on a Modern Battlefield.”

According to Palmer, the nature of unmanned systems inherently reduces the risk to operators conducting missions

during wartime. “Drones are put into combat situations because they can be operated remotely, and can execute missions without putting forward expensive human operators into very dangerous situations. Drones have the great advantage of being a cost effective and incredibly potent weapon in wartime. With the increase in technology and 3D printing, drones have become more lightweight and smaller. There has been a massive increase in the use of small drone airframes provided to soldiers, and can lift the omnipresent fog of war,” he said.

All drones can execute very powerful strikes, and reduce the risk of collateral damage because the weapon system also conducts its own reconnaissance. Just like any technology with their greater implementation, there are questions of legality, strategy, and ethics that must be answered.

The use of drones in the modern battlefield has grown to greater numbers never before seen, as in the Azerbaijani-Armenian war, the Russo-Ukrainian war, and the Israel-Hamas war. Palmer focused primarily on the Russo-Ukrainian war for his research. “The use of drones is a necessity for a conventional war to be conducted, but it is not a sufficient capability for achieving victory in a contemporary conflict. Drones can’t take territory on their own, but they can work with humans to take territory, neutralize combatants, and have a greater effect on the battlefield with less casualties,” he stated.

See Honors Week, page 18

50 Years of the Institute Report: Awards and Excellence

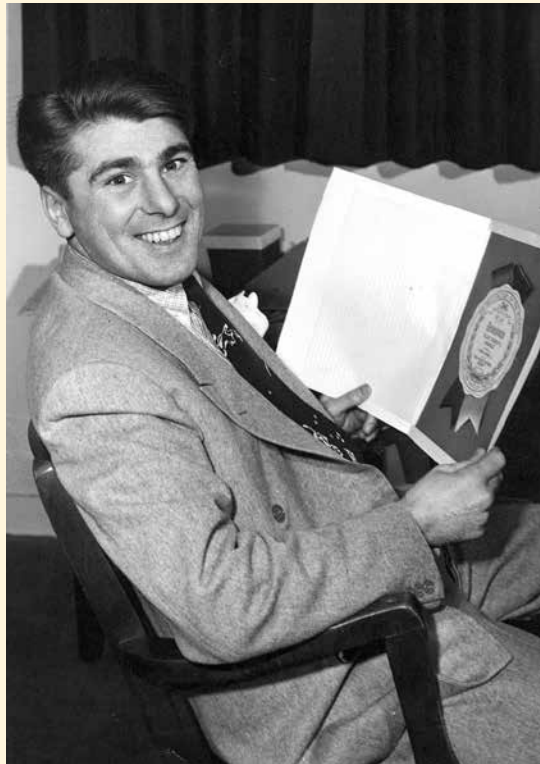
By Marianne Hause

The Institute Report officially turned 50 in December. To celebrate the anniversary, milestones, unique news features, and Institute enhancements covered throughout the five decades are being highlighted in each issue during the 2023–24 academic year. Stories of awards and excellence are being highlighted in this issue.

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

1974—Two 1st Class civil engineering majors were awarded first and second place in a technical paper competition sponsored by the Virginia Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Gary Lape '74 presented a paper titled "Soil Strength Versus Preconsolidation and Plasticity Parameters in Cohesive Soils," judged to be the best technical paper in the competition. Ronald Vigneault's '74 paper was titled, "Water Quality Aspects of Boating Activity at Marinas," which won second place.

1975—VMI was designated a Bicentennial Campus by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA). To qualify for the designation, VMI's Bicentennial Committee planned activities in three ARBA categories: "Heritage 1776," "Festival U.S.A.," and "Horizons '76." In the application, the committee explained that VMI was presenting public lectures on the American Revolution, planned a pamphlet on U.S. history which contained lectures, planned a symposium on "Changing Emphasis on Liberty and Equality in the U.S. Since 1776," established an Army ROTC colonial color guard, and loaned two 18th century French cannons to the Yorktown Victory Center.



John Monks '32, as pictured in 1938, was the playwright of "Brother Rat."—Photo courtesy of VMI Archives.

1987—Joellen Bland, director of VMI Theatre, won a \$2,000 award in the 1986 Festival of First Playwriting Competition sponsored by Sunset Center, the cultural center of the city of Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. Bland's winning script was an adaptation of the Dickens' novel, "A Tale of Two Cities," and featured a cast of 13 players portraying multiple roles.

A memorial to the late Gen. Walton Harris Walker, VMI Class of 1909, who commanded the U.S. Eighth Army, and who is credited with saving South Korea in the most critical period of the Korean War, was unveiled in South Korea on the premises of the Sheraton Walker Hill Hotel in the eastern section of Seoul.

1988—Michael Wright '88, a 1st Class cadet at the time, received both the local medal and the national bronze medal in the

William T. Hornaday Boy Scout Awards. He was the first to win the local medal in the central Virginia district in 15 years. The Hornaday award recognizes scout projects in conservation, both on a local level and national level. Wright started the project in 1979.

The VMI Fencing Club enjoyed one of its finest seasons when they finished sixth in the prestigious Middle Atlantic Collegiate Fencing Association tournament in Poughkeepsie, New York. They also tied with the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in the voting for the annual Franklin D. Jones Memorial Award, given to the team judged as having displayed the best sportsmanship.

Columbia Scholastic Press Association, which evaluates and recognizes college and university publications, gave its highest award to the VMI Ring Figure Magazine, published by the Class of 1988. The Medalist Award was given by the judges for special qualities characterized by a publication's personality, spirit, creative excellence, and overall achievement.

1989—John Monks '32, VMI valedictorian and class president, playwright, screen writer, movie director and producer, came



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back to VMI as a special guest for the VMI Theatre's production of "Brother Rat," the play he wrote with classmate Fred Finklehoffe '32, who died in 1977. The two collaborated in the spring of 1932 to write a play for their senior English thesis. The play was originally called "When the Roll is Called."

1993—The Regimental Band, directed by then-Maj. John Brodie, was awarded the Mendelson Plaque as the best in the military band category at the Mardi Gras Endymion Parade in New Orleans. It marked the fourth consecutive time the VMI unit, 80 members strong, had received the honor.

The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities presented VMI with its annual Mary Mason Anderson Award for past and current preservations of its buildings. VMI became only the second college to be honored in the 22-year history of the award, which is presented for an outstanding preservation effort on the part of a public or private preservation or civic group or individual.

The Virginia Delta Chapter of Tau Beta Pi, the national engineering society, erected and dedicated a monument in front of Preston Library. The monument is a brass replica of The Bent, the emblem of Tau Beta Pi, which represents a trestle of a structure.

2003—Maj. Charles Bott '96, assistant professor of civil engineering, received the prestigious Harrison Prescott Eddy Medal from the Water Environment Federation for an article he co-authored titled, "Investigating a Mechanistic Cause for Activated Sludge Deflocculation in Response to Shock Loads of Toxic Electrophilic Chemicals," originally published in the May/June 2002 issue of Water Environment Research.

2004—Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62 received the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award from the Heart of Virginia Boy Scout Council for his work in both Operation Desert Storm and Operation Desert Shield, where he commanded the 101st Army Airborne Division.

2011—All-American lacrosse midfielder/faceoff specialist, Stephen Robarge '12 broke the school



Jennifer Carroll Foy '03 is the first alumna to take a seat in the state legislature.—VMI File Photo by Ashlie Walter.

record with eight ground balls against Marist College.

2018—Jennifer Carroll Foy '03 made history by being the first alumna to take a seat in the state legislature.

Matthew Stann '22 traveled to Australia to compete in the International Triathlon Union world championships a few weeks after matriculating. He credited the time spent training in the Rat Line for conditioning him for the race. His father, John Stann '95, also competed in his own age group.

2020—Moe was named

the Southern Conference's most popular mascot.

Trivia Questions

1. Last spring, VMI Theatre director, Joellen Bland was recognized for how many years of service to the Institute?
2. Who starred in the movie version of "Brother Rat" in 1938?
3. The Endymion is largest Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans and the only one that rides to and through what large structure in the city?
4. What year did Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62 become an Eagle Scout?
5. Stephen Robarge '12 played professional lacrosse with which major league team?



Moe, recognized as the Southern Conference's most popular mascot in 2020, enters Foster Stadium with the band for a football game.—VMI File Photo by Kelly Nye.

Commercial drones have been used by both Russia and Ukraine during the conflict, introducing a new way of viewing air littoral, the airspace between ground forces and high-altitude fighters. Before the use of small drones, the only aircraft that flew in the air littoral were helicopters for air assault missions. “Now with the proliferation of drones in this airspace, it has created a minefield in the sky. It’s very hard to come for

runways to deploy military aircraft without drones being an issue. Drones have

been used to destroy aircraft on the ground, and helicopters and other low-flying aircraft are experiencing greater risk,” said Palmer.

There are three primary NATO categorizations of drones based on weight, payload capacity, and range of action: contact drones less than 150 kg; tactical drones from 150-600 kg; attack, strategic and operational drones over 600 kg. Common uses of drones in the Russo-Ukrainian and the Israel-Hamas wars are loitering and munitions. These drones conduct their own reconnaissance, can loiter in an area for a certain period of time, then are destroyed. They are packed with explosives, focused on taking out small targets as well as people as a massive morale hit to the enemy. They are commonly known as kamikaze or suicide drones.

With the proliferation of drones all across the world, there needs to be drone countermeasures. Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) are used to detect and/or disable unmanned aircraft. Palmer estimates there may be up to 1,000 of these systems currently in service. C-UAS use many different methods to detect, track, identify, and interdict drones, including radar, radio frequency, electro-optical, infrared, acoustic, laser, high power microwave, nets, and projectiles. Most C-UAS are limited in their range and abilities, so capabilities must be layered, which can be expensive.

With the implementation of almost any technology, ethics must be considered.



Gabriele Woodward '24 discusses the connection between media freedom and terrorist attacks.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

Should drones face the same legal scrutiny as any other conventional weapons? Palmer concluded, yes. While the technological advances of drones increase the probability of success and decrease the risk of collateral damage, total risk can never be eliminated. Drones have become a necessary feature of war, and change the way wars are fought.

Palmer is the son of Jewel and Bill Palmer of Mercersburg, Pennsylvania.

Gabriele Woodward '24, an international studies major minoring in national security, researched the connection between media freedom and terrorist attacks in her honors research thesis, “Media Freedom and its Correlation with the Frequency of Terrorism.”

Woodward found there is a symbiotic (mutually beneficial as well as detrimental) relationship between the news media and terrorist organizations. “Almost all scholars agree the relationship exists, but they disagree on how influential it is. Through exploitation, it thrives on sensationalism. Terrorist groups enjoy seeing their attacks in the media, and in turn, the media runs stories of the attacks to satisfy the craving for entertainment their viewership desires,” stated Woodward.

Woodward theorized that greater freedom in the media enhances or increases the number of terrorist attacks a country faces due to the symbiotic relationship between media organizations and terrorist groups.

She hypothesized, “If a country exhibits a higher level of freedom in the media, then they will experience a greater number of terrorist attacks.”

Before beginning her extensive research, Woodward considered several variables. The independent variable, which cannot be changed by other variables, was freedom of the press. The dependent variable, something that depends on other factors, was the number of violent terrorist attacks intended to induce fear and incite political change. Her control variables (anything held constant in a study to prevent it from interfering with the results) included state capacity (the ability of governments to effectively imple-

ment their policies and achieve their goals), regime type (method a government has chosen to wield its power), repression (government controlling its citizens by force), ethnic fractionalization (the variety of distinct cultural groups that exist in a country), and economic development (the measurement of a country’s overall standard of living).

The first model of data Woodward used to conduct her research had poorly defined variables, and caused her to come up with a result of a negative significant relationship. In order to correlate her hypothesis, she needed a positive significant relationship. She reevaluated her search criteria, changed the variables and expanded the timeframe of her search from 10 years to 47 years (from 1972 to 2019) and came up with a more promising second model which produced positive significant results.

“The most important part of my findings is that press freedom did indicate a significant and positive correlation with terrorism, which initially leads me to think that my theory was correct. So, from that we can deduce that reducing press freedom will reduce the frequency of terrorism in all regime types,” she said.

Woodward is the daughter of Aaron and Michelle Woodward of San Antonio, Texas. She plans on commissioning into the U.S. Navy as a surface warfare officer. Her first

Continued on next page

ship will be the USS Michael Murphy in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Josh Cheung '24, a cadet double majoring in English and biology, sought to answer the question, "Is God a Vegetarian?" in his thesis.

Cheung started to consider the question a few years ago when his father, a seminary student at the time, shared that one of his professors posed the question to his class when discussing the story of Cain and Abel. After much debate, one student pressed the professor on his opinion, to which he replied, "It doesn't matter what I think, this question isn't meant to be answered."

Despite what his father's professor said, Cheung did want the question answered, so he researched what other scholars had to say.

Cheung presented his findings through his own Christian Protestant perspective. He also shared that he is not a vegetarian. "I'm not here to push a vegetarian agenda, I'm not here to spread the Gospel. My goal here today is look in the Bible and see what God says about what we should eat. This is fundamental for everyone, regardless of religious background, because all of us eat food. No matter what you believe, I think there's probably something you can take away today," he said.

Cheung focused especially on the opening and closing books of the Bible. Genesis, the first book in the Bible, was referenced by Cheung to examine how God created the world and his original plan for humans. Genesis 1:27-29 reads, "Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.'" Cheung interpreted the passage that God created a world that's vegetarian. "It's obvious that God intended the world and everyone in it

to be vegetarian. And, of course, God can't be a hypocrite, so he must be a vegetarian himself," he stated.

However, Cheung pointed out that later in Genesis, sin entered the world, and Cain killed his brother Abel in a jealous rage. "Both of them gave offerings to God. Being a farmer, Cain offered fruit to God, while Abel, a shepherd, offered the best from his flock. God is very pleased with Abel's offering, and some people interpret this as God not being a vegetarian, since he clearly preferred meat." Cheung rejected that theory however, based on the descriptions of the offerings in the text. Instead, he interpreted



Josh Cheung '24 considers the question, "Is God a Vegetarian?" during his Honors Week presentation.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

the passage, that people should offer their best to God, whatever it is.

Cheung then delved further into Genesis with the story of Noah and the flood. "After the flood, Noah gets off the ark and God makes a covenant with him. God told Noah, 'Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, now I give you everything.' This is when everything changed. God gave humans permission to eat meat," he stated.

In his research, Cheung found some scholars argued that Noah had evolved into the greatest steward of God's creation. Only through Noah's efforts were the animals saved from the flood. Because the animals owed Noah their lives, he and his descendants gained authority over them, including the right to consume them. "Furthermore, as soon as Noah left the ark, he built an

altar and sacrificed burnt offerings of clean animals and clean birds to the Lord. Noah understood the value of animals better than anyone else, which made him the most responsible eater. He knew how much effort it took to care for everything he ate. God deemed humans worthy of eating meat, because of Noah's actions on the ark," said Cheung.

Moving to the Book of Revelation at the end of the Bible, Cheung pointed out that the book discusses the end of time, when all of God's people will live in a new Jerusalem, an absolute paradise, the way God intended for the world to be. The Tree of Life, which existed in the Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis, appears in the New Jerusalem, and yields 12 kinds of fruit. The return of this tree signifies humanity's return to a vegetarian diet. Cheung also referenced the Book of Isaiah in which God showed a vision to the prophet of what the end of the world would look like. "In the vision God said, 'The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.' It's clear that both ends of the Bible point toward the same vision of a vegetarian world. Neither humans nor animals will be eating any meat."

Cheung concluded that yes, God is a vegetarian. "I don't think God actually eats food, but metaphorically is a vegetarian because as we see in

Genesis and Revelation, God's perfect world is one without meat, where all of his creatures live harmoniously. But there's a caveat to this. Although God might be vegetarian, humans definitely are not. Nor do I think they should be. I think that if we eat meat responsibly, so we don't devour a species to extinction, then we have God's permission to eat whatever we want. We should be environmentally conscious and consider how we're treating and raising animals. Just because God gave us permission to eat meat, doesn't give us an excuse to ruin the environment and treat animals poorly."

Cheung is the son of Kenneth and Patricia Cheung of Brookfield, Connecticut. He will commission into the Army in the military intelligence branch. After his service, he plans on getting a law degree and pursue a career as a forensic attorney. 🌿

to improve the environment. Members of Virginia's environmental community nominate candidates who are judged based on their vision, expertise, commitment, integrity, communication skills, accomplishments, and diplomacy. The award is named for the late VMI professor Capt. Ronald A. Erchul, founder of the Environment Virginia Symposium.

Sanner retired last August after a successful career with the CBF focused on environmental law and policy. She played a pivotal role in advancing legislative and regulatory environmental policies including fencing cattle out of streams, banning phosphorus from lawn fertilizer, establishing a comprehensive nutrient trading program, and expanding tree cover. She has also been a leading advocate in the development and maturation of Virginia's clean water regulatory programs, including

improving and protecting wetland preservation and mitigation policies, advocating for effective implementation and enforcement of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, and ensuring stormwater, erosion and sediment control programs are backed by science. Sanner has led collaborative efforts to ensure historic levels of funding for state clean-water programs to reduce pollution from wastewater, stormwater, and agriculture. She was an active member of the VIRGINIAforever collaborative, providing leadership for increasing state funding for land conservation and water quality improvement. In addition, Sanner mentored numerous law students and interns, providing them with solid experience that led them to successful careers. She has made an indelible mark on the conservation of Virginia's waterways, in shaping environmental laws,

regulations, and policies, and in building solid partnerships.

Each year, Virginia Military Institute donates \$1,500 to a nonprofit environmental organization of the recipient's choice in their honor. Sanner has requested this donation be made to the Virginia office of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Other awards presented at the symposium are the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards, which recognize successful and innovative efforts that improve Virginia's environment. This year's gold medal winners are Cabinetworks Group, a Shenandoah Valley facility which implemented a solvent reclamation program, reducing emissions of volatile organic compounds by 42% and saving the facility up to \$10,000 each month; Church & Dwight

Continued on next page



Youngkin Visits with Cadets

Prior to speaking at the Environment Virginia Conference, Gov. Glenn Youngkin took review of the parade held on the afternoon of April 10. During the parade, he, as commander in chief, granted amnesty to the Corps of Cadets. He then spent time in barracks recognizing the cadets for the ways they inspire him in their cadetship and their future plans.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Co. Inc., who worked for nearly a decade to modify the manufacturing process of certain personal hygiene products, reducing the use of hundreds of thousands of pounds of ammonia and phosphorus products while reducing production costs by 65%; MYR Energy Services Inc., DESRI and Nevados, project partners who reduced the amount of land grading needed to install the Bartonsville Energy Facility, a solar installation, at the foot of the Appalachian Mountains in Frederick County; Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation, Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation, and Virginia Outdoors Foundation, for a 600-acre easement placed on Red Hill, the home of Patrick Henry, enhancing educational opportunities and preserving the land's ecological value; and RTX-Raytheon Sustainability, a major business unit within RTX, which has exemplified



Lt. Col. Kim Connolly introduces Melanie Davenport as the emcee for the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards in Marshall Hall. —VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

RTX's corporate sustainability through a broad range of projects that reduced the business unit's environmental impacts, including reductions in water use, waste generation and air pollutant emissions.

Silver medal winners are Capital Region Land Conservancy-New Market Heights Battlefield-Haskins Tract; Prince William County Department of Public Works & Micron Technology, Inc.-Neabsco

Creek Bandalong Litter Trap: Controlling Urban Stormwater Litter; Rappahannock Regional Solid Waste Management Board (R-Board)/Aquia Harbour Host Lions Club-Electronics Recycling Program; Tech 4 Troops-T4T Responsibly Recycling Environmental Program; and the Lee Family—Pierces Low Grounds, LLC.

Receiving bronze medal awards are The Drexel-Morrell Center-Belmead on the James, Inc.; Danville Utilities-Energy Efficiency Grant Program through the American Rescue Plan Act & Danville Utilities Home\$ave Rebate Program.

Receiving honorable mention is Fairfax Department of Public Works and Environmental Services-Solid Waste Management Program-I Recycle: Bus Shelter Ad Project; and University of Virginia-Facilities Management Fleet-Safe and Sustainable Driver Training Program.

Next year's Environment Virginia Symposium is scheduled for April 8-10 at VMI. 🌿

Theatre Spring Production

The VMI Community Theatre presented, "Night of January 16th," several times in mid-March with performances in Gillis Theater and in the Anderson Center at Kendal at Lexington. The play, written by Russian American author Ayn Rand, is a courtroom drama centered on the trial of a secretary accused of murdering her employer, who defrauded his company of millions of dollars to invest in the gold trade. Included in the cast from the Corps of Cadets were Luke Cockerham '26 as District Attorney Flint, Ian Coker '27 as John Hutchins, Carla Feaster '27 as Nancy Lee Faulkner, Alexander Moore '27 as Siegard Jungquist, Colin Nicassio '26 as Defense Lawyer Stevens, John Sullivan '25 as "Guts" Regan, Nicole Samella '26 as Jane Chandler, and Tori Wright '24 as Karen Andre. Rounding out the cast were community members, Clay Burch as Judge Heath, Linda Gorman as Magda Svenson, Drew Hartless as Elmer Sweeney, David Lusk as John Graham Whitfield, Tom Oxendine as Homer Van Fleet, and Melou Piegari as Dr. Kirkland. —VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Additionally, Crozet hours were expanded so cadets could graze-feed during the day to help meet nutritional requirements.

He was given the Distinguished Coaching Award in 2000, and by 2003, he was named head of the department. In 2005, he completely revised the boxing course to improve safety and enhance the learning experience for cadets, and in 2009, he oversaw the North Post renovation, allowing his department to continue to offer Rat Challenge. He served as onsite director for the College Orientation Workshop—a four-week summer educational enrichment program for male minority high school students held at VMI—from 1986 to 2018. In 2013, exercise science was added to the curriculum as a minor, which has been popular with cadets. Upon his recommendation, his department underwent a name change in 2022 from physical education to HPW, to better reflect the curriculum. He received his master's degree from James Madison University, and his doctorate from the University of Maryland.

Karen Moore, executive secretary in HPW, worked alongside Coale for over 20 years, and has considered him a friend as well as a boss. "I am grateful for all the support he has given me, and for his outstanding leadership," she said.

Coale's wife, Kathy, who works with Rockbridge Area Community Services as a prevention specialist, is retiring as well. They plan to stay in Lexington, where they both enjoy outdoor activities. They have three sons and four grandchildren whom they plan to visit often.

Hardin joined VMI as an assistant professor in ME in 1998 after attaining his doctorate in theoretical and applied mechanics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He later served as the head of the department, and worked with other faculty members to develop and implement a hands-on project focused curriculum. He also developed and implemented a significant joint undergraduate research program and a guaranteed graduate acceptance partnership with Virginia Commonwealth University. In 2011, he and his wife Patricia, associate director of the Office of Global Education and Project Global Officer (GO) at VMI, developed the engineering summer study abroad program, one of the first STEM study abroad programs, taking cadets to Berlin and Rome.

Hardin stated that he could not have had a more wonderful and challenging career. "In my 26 years as a faculty member, and 14 years as department head in the ME department, I have come to love VMI and its principles. I love the intelligence and steadfast



Col. Richard Rowe chats with alumni and cadets after the retirement parade.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

dedication of my colleagues and VMI family, but most of all, I love teaching cadets and seeing up close their tremendous personal and academic growth over their four years here. I too have grown so much during these 26 years, and I will carry many memories, and my love of the Institute in my heart for the rest of my life."

Rowe has worked at VMI for 33 years. He received his bachelor's degree from Ripon College in Wisconsin, his master's degree from Bowling Green

State University in Ohio, and his doctorate from Michigan State University. His area of specialization is vertebrate biology, and he taught courses in anatomy and vertebrate biology. He served as department head from 1997 through 2009, and served as director of research from 1994 through 2012. His research focused on two aspects of avian biology: nest defense behavior in tree swallows and the diversity of birds in Rockbridge County. He made significant impacts on the biology curriculum with the addition of courses in comparative morphology and developmental biology, and was directly responsible for growing the biology department from four members in 1991, to the current number of 18 faculty and staff members. He has received the Distinguished Teaching Award, the Wilbur S. Hinman Jr., VMI Class of 1926, Research Award on two occasions, the VMI Achievement Medal on four occasions, and has been the holder of the Bruce C. Gottwald Sr. '54 Chair for Academic Excellence for the past five years.

Though he has no concrete plans for retirement, Rowe will enjoy time at his cabin in the North Carolina mountains, do some hiking, and go on long-distance bicycle trips. He is an avid photographer of birds, and he will continue his work with the local bird club, and the Virginia Society of Ornithology.

Brig. Gen. Robert W. Moreschi, dean of the faculty and deputy superintendent for academics, views the retirement of the three academic faculty members with a mix of joy and sadness. "We recognize and salute Colonels Jimmy Coale, Dick Rowe, and Jon-Michael Hardin on their upcoming retirements from VMI. Collectively, they represent over 100 years of VMI experience and wisdom. Throughout their VMI careers, they each have demonstrated leadership in the academic program with a steady presence that will be sorely missed. Having served VMI, their academic departments, and countless numbers of cadets with unswerving dedication, we wish them health and happiness in their well-earned retirements." ❧

Paralympic Athlete *continued from page 7*

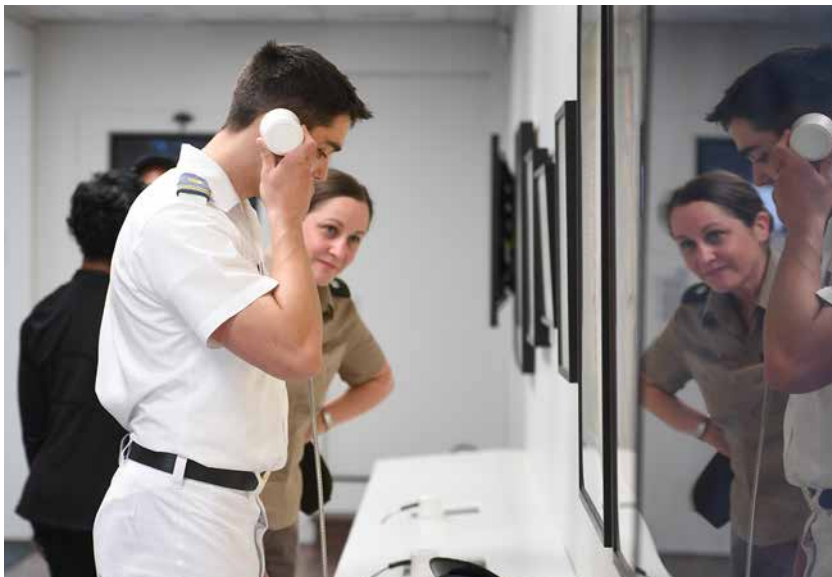
service to one another, and how we must harness the opportunities we have, out of respect for those who never can.”

Scott Thacker, VMI's head swimming coach, shared that Snyder met with both the men's and women's swim teams at the Aquatic Center earlier in the day. "It was an awesome experience for our team, and his talk was fantastic. Brad's energy is contagious, his love for country is profound, and his journey as a Paralympic athlete is inspiring," he said.

At USNA, Snyder currently serves as a fellow for the Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership. He is a leadership instructor for

future naval officers, and is pursuing a Ph.D. in public policy. He also serves as an athlete representative on the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee's board of directors, and is the advisory board chair for the Navy Special Operations Foundation. He lives in Maryland with his wife, Sarah, and daughter, Rooney.

Snyder's book, "Fire in My Eyes: An American Warrior's Journey from Being Blinded on the Battlefield to Gold Medal Victory," can be purchased on Amazon. His victorious race in London may be viewed on YouTube. ✪



VMFA Artmobile Comes to Post

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) brought its state-of-the-art Artmobile, "VMFA on the Road," to post April 24 through April 27. The exhibition, "Love, Laughter, Tears: An Artist's Guide to Emotions," features art from VMFA's permanent collection by artists such as Kiyoshi Saito, Stephen Shames, Gabriel Sunday Tenabe, Nell Blaine, and others. The Artmobile was open to the public, as well as hosted area school systems and several cadet classes. A reception to welcome the exhibit was held the evening of April 24 in the VMI Museum. —VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin and Kelly Nye.

Trivia Answers from Page 17

1. 45 years
2. Ronald Reagan and Jane Wyman
3. The Mercedes Benz Superdome
4. 1954
5. The Denver Outlaws



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Bands March in St. Patrick's Day Parade

The VMI Regimental Band and Pipe Band traveled to historic Savannah, Georgia, for the 200th anniversary of the nation's largest St. Patrick's Day parade March 16. The bands marched past 500,000 revelers, with 400 other entrants from around the nation along the 3.5-mile parade route. According to Col. John Brodie, director of music, this was the bands' third appearance in Savannah since 2005.—
Photos courtesy of Col. John Brodie.

