



# INSTITUTE REPORT

Volume 53, Number 6, March 2025

## Breakout Class of 2028

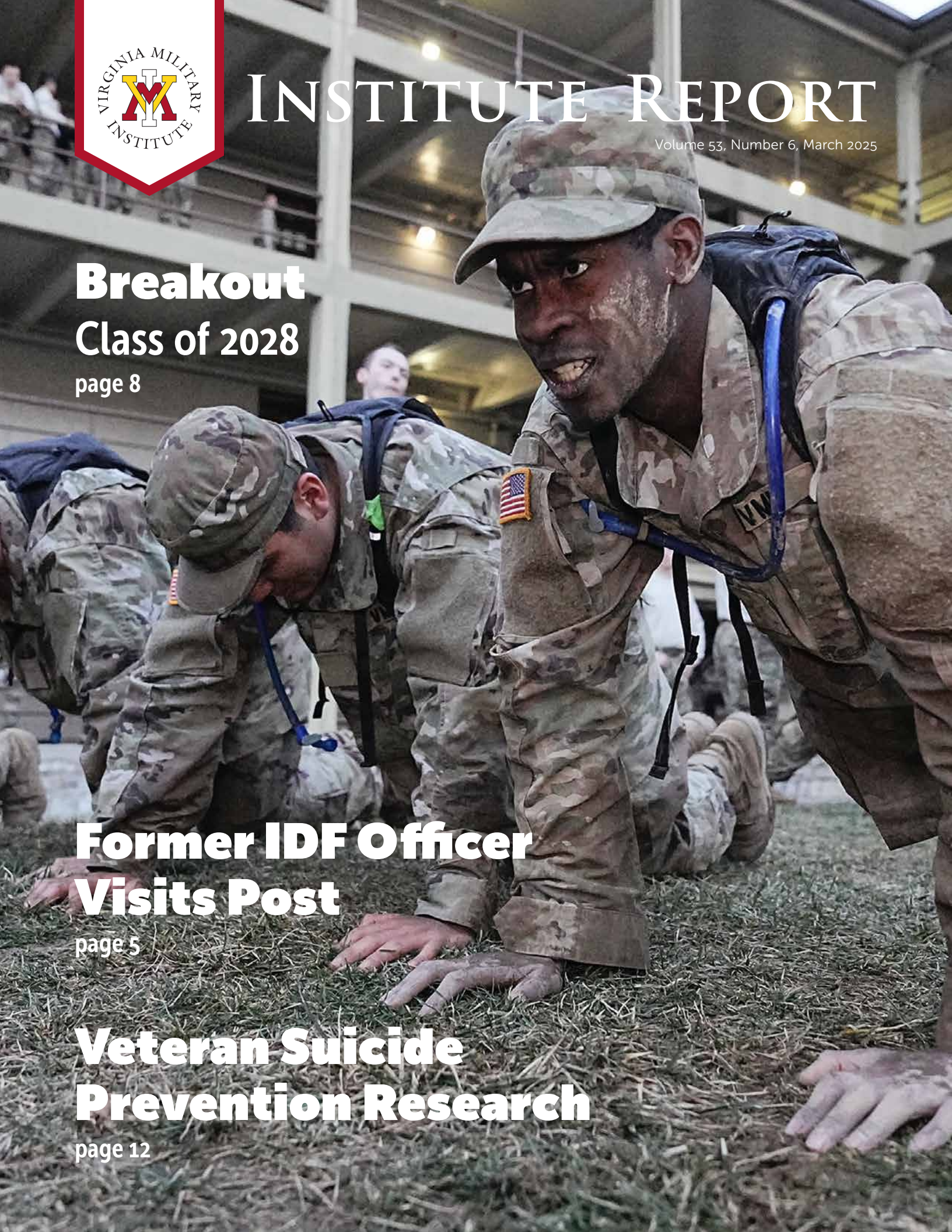
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# Preston Library Leads Virginia with New System

By Marianne Hause

Preston Library has been chosen to be the first institution in Virginia to implement FOLIO, a new integrated library system (ILS), to track items owned, orders made, bills paid, and patrons who have borrowed. FOLIO is comprised of apps, which allow the library to customize and optimize workflows and systems including circulation, acquisitions, cataloging, digital

resources management, administration, analytics, and tasks.

“With the adoption of FOLIO, Preston Library will be able to better manage its digital collections and make them easier to search and discover. FOLIO is a state-of-the-art system, which will allow the library to operate more efficiently. Users will not notice a change, as the appearance of the

search window on the website will remain the same. We decided to go with FOLIO because it is a more modern and better integrated solution than what we have currently,” said Col. Pongracz Sennyey, director of Preston Library.

The new system will go live summer 2025. 🌸



## CEE Celebrates National Engineers Week

The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) conducted launching tests with a replica 14<sup>th</sup> century counterweight trebuchet on the Parade Ground Feb. 17-20 in celebration of National Engineers Week (Feb 16-22).

Cadets in the Fundamentals of Civil Engineering course used the trebuchet to throw objects of varying weights to determine the accuracy and efficiency of the trebuchet as part of their class on medieval and modern demolitions.—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye.



# INSTITUTE REPORT

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The Institute Report, VMI's news magazine, publishes eight issues during each academic year. Inquiries, suggestions, news items, and address changes should be directed to Editor, Institute Report, VMI Communications and Marketing, Lexington, VA 24450-0304; 540-464-7207; or [VMIREport@vmi.edu](mailto:VMIREport@vmi.edu).  
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On the cover: Rats complete the last physical challenges of Breakout in barracks Feb. 10.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

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Additional photos are available on Flickr.

# BOV Votes to Let Wins' Contract Expire

The VMI Board of Visitors (BOV) made the decision at the Feb. 28 board meeting to not renew the contract of Superintendent Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, with a vote of 10 to 6. He will continue to serve through the end of his contract, June 30.

The BOV has the responsibility of oversight and selection of the Institute's superintendent and has appointed two members, Col. James P. Inman '86 and C. Ernest Edgar IV '87, as co-chairs of an ad hoc Superintendent Search Committee to develop and evaluate the criteria for VMI's next superintendent. The committee will include other members of the BOV as well as

advisory members representing the faculty and alumni. The search committee will engage with an executive search firm and will conduct a national search. Once the firm is selected, cadets, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and members of the community will have the opportunity to provide input on VMI's next superintendent. More information will be provided to the VMI community once available.

A future Institute Report will pay tribute to Wins' years of service and accomplishments while at VMI. ✱



Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 greets a cadet before a parade on post last November. –VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



## Daniels Wreath Ceremony

March 4 was a day of remembrance as the Institute commemorated Jonathan Daniels '61. The 4<sup>th</sup> Class cadets viewed the film, "Here I Am, Send Me: The Story of Jonathan Daniels" in Gillis Theater. Later, a wreath laying ceremony was held in the Daniels Courtyard. Col. Ley Havird '90, commandant, gave a brief speech of Daniels' selfless service, followed by a prayer offered by Col. John Casper '04, Institute chaplain, and the playing of "Amazing Grace" by bagpiper Alden Rhodes '26.

In August 1965, 60 years ago, Daniels pushed Ruby Sales, a Black teenager, to the ground as Tom Coleman, a construction worker and part-time deputy sheriff, aimed his gun at her. He saved her life, but the shotgun blast killed Daniels instantly. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "One of the most heroic Christian deeds of which I have heard in my entire ministry was performed by Jonathan Daniels." –VMI Photos by Kelly Nye.



# Former IDF Officer Brings Message of Hope

By Marianne Hause

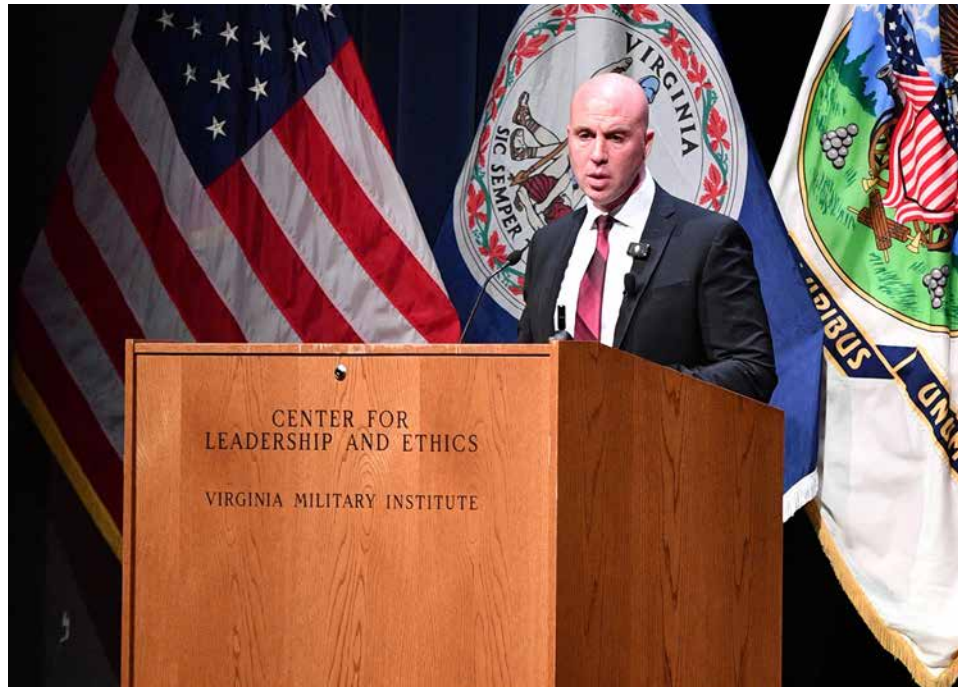
Benjamin Anthony, co-founder and chief executive officer of the MirYam Institute, a U.S. based, 501(c)(3), nonprofit established as a forum for leading Israeli experts of diverse and varied perspectives, spoke at VMI Feb. 17 as part of the Center for Leadership and Ethics's (CLE) Courageous Leadership speaker series. According to Col. David Gray, executive director of the CLE, this year's leadership theme is "Paradigm Shifts." During Anthony's presentation, he revealed many paradigm shifts throughout his life.

Each year, VMI participates in MirYam's I-SAP (Israel Strategy & Policy) tour, designed for U.S. military cadets to travel throughout Israel to learn about the country, its place among the nations, and its relationship with the United States. Traveling to Israel was prohibitive last year because of the Israel-Hamas war. Instead, a trip to Poland was arranged for cadets to learn about the Nazi Final Solution and its malevolent execution during the Holocaust. It was during these annual trips, that VMI forged a friendship with Anthony.

His eloquent talk in Gillis Theater was the first in the speaker series and in the form of a moderated interview conducted by Gray. Anthony began by describing himself as a retired sergeant in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) who came out of retirement in order to participate in the Israel-Hamas war, and recently concluded his service inside the Gaza Strip. Through the work of the MirYam Institute, he has briefed members of the U.S. Congress and presidential administrations. To the cadets he said, "I make mention of those engagements because I want you to know that the greatest honor is having the occasion to address myself to you."

He thanked the cadets for the military service many will undertake after graduation, and encouraged them to cling and cleave toward something of substance when faced with life's challenges. For Anthony, that something of substance is "the good book."

"There is a phrase in Judaism that comes from the teachings of sages of our forefathers, 'In a place where there is no humanity, strive to be human.' You, in the course of your service, may find yourselves



Benjamin Anthony addresses his audience in Gillis Theater Feb. 17—VMI Photo by Jake Falcone '27.

facing dilemmas. Always be accountable to yourselves first and foremost, and if deployed to a place where you struggle to find humanity, strive always to be human."

Anthony shared that he was born and raised as an Orthodox Jew in Leeds, a city in England. He and three of his siblings commuted 2 ½ hours each way to the nearest Jewish High School located in Manchester. It was on one particular morning in 1994 that Anthony realized his first paradigm shift. He and his three brothers had stepped off the train to make their way to the school gates, when they saw seven men following them. The men began flinging rocks and taunting them for being Jewish. The boys immediately took up a defensive formation, with the oldest brother, Jonathan in front.

"We quickened our pace to try and place a gap between our pursuers when suddenly the leader of this gang launched an attack on Jonathan. It was absolutely brutal. He headbutted Jonathan, who was immediately rendered unconscious. Another gang member held Jonathan up, while others took turns beating him. My other brothers sought help in the neighborhood, but none was forthcoming. The gang released Jonathan and proceeded

to drop bricks, rocks, and bottles down on his head and abdomen. They stomped and kicked him. They got down on their knees and repeatedly pounded his head into the sidewalk.

"For far too long I stood by and did nothing, not because I was frozen by fear, but because I was suffering from two baseless presumptions: That these thugs would come to an understanding that enough was enough and nothing further could be justified; and that my brother was going to get up and turn this around. Neither one happened.

"It was only when I heard these thugs ordering one another not to stop until Jonathan was dead, that I threw myself over him. I was badly beaten as well, but didn't lose consciousness. At the end of the attack, I stood up, lifted my older brother up in my arms, carried him to the school gates, and I watched as an ambulance whisked him away to the nearest hospital. As a consequence of that attack, Jonathan had to undergo three liver transplants within one week, and a fourth in 2020. He married and became the father of two children, but has never known a day of good health since that

*Continued on next page*



Col. David Gray and Benjamin Anthony listen on the stage in Gillis Theater as a cadet in the audience asks a question.—VMI Photo by Jake Falcone '27.

attack. And that for me was the paradigm shift. My siblings and myself immediately ceased to know what it was to be a child. I also learned a lesson—which stayed with me during my military service and in all my life decisions—not to be the 14-year-old version of myself who waited to act. Be quick to assess and quick to act in a very decisive manner.”

Anthony wanted to move to Israel and serve in the IDF when he turned 18, but delayed the move since his brother was desperately unwell and he didn’t want to cause his mother any additional worry. Instead, he attended the University of Manchester where he became a student campaigner for Israel. He moved to Israel and joined the IDF after completing his education.

Anthony explained that in Israel, national service is mandated. Most men are drafted into the military for a period of three years, and women for two. A few serve the country in alternate ways.

“Wherever one serves, they end up leaving with their connections, and with their service well known. The first thing people are asked when they apply for a job is, ‘Where did you serve?’ Israelis grow up hearing their fathers and their mothers talking about the wars in which they fought and where they served. It’s really a passage from childhood to adulthood, another paradigm shift.”

The speaker shared his views on the Israel-Hamas war.

“Gaza has more than 400 miles of tunnels deliberately designed to launch terror against the State of Israel. The tunnels have their egress points in people’s homes, in children’s bedrooms. All of this was known, and Hamas cannot be allowed to constitute a threat to the state of Israel.

In order to do that, it needs to be robbed of its infrastructure. You have to pick a side, and it may not surprise you, I’m on team Israel.”

Anthony reported that Israel forewarned Gazan civilians multiple times and in various ways to evacuate the area before they began military action. “Cell phones were called and texted by the IDF to provide instructions. Hamas prevented the Gazans from moving into the humanitarian zones, because Hamas views the killing of its civilians as one of its war aims. We know that because every single one of the civilians of the Gaza Strip could have found shelter inside the 400 miles of tunnels

that Hamas built, but none of them were permitted to do so.”

He went on to explain an additional warning technique Israel uses called, “knock on roof.” “It’s where a very light munition is deployed from an aircraft to knock the top of multi-story buildings in order to provide a very clear warning to the Gazans that we really are about to enter that area, and this would be the moment for them to leave. I don’t know of any other military that does anything like that. In addition, we then send in ground forces who provide a similar level of opportunity for the Gazans to leave.”

After answering questions from cadets, Anthony concluded by addressing the many failed attempts to broker peace between Israel and the Palestinian people in Gaza, and showed a brief film produced in 2016, based on a paradigm shift of ideas. “Instead of a two-state solution, the new paradigm proposes a new state solution. By merging the Gaza strip with a repurposed portion of the Sinai Peninsula, a new independent state can be created for all Palestinians. Egypt and Israel would guarantee defense of the borders of the new state. Israel, willing Arab nations, and the international community could invest in the development of the new Palestinian state and Egypt as the donor state.” Anthony believes the plan is viable, bold, and the moment is right. ✨

## Recognizing the Women of VMI

The women of VMI were celebrated March 4, the week of International Women’s Day, in the Turman Room at Preston Library with coffee, cake, flowers, personal recognitions, and fellowship. The event, which hosted more than 70 people from across all areas of post, showcased accomplishments of women at VMI, including awards, grants, conferences, artwork, books, and personal highlights.—Photo courtesy of Col. Tinni Sen.



# Authors Visit Post

By Marianne Hause

Two authors, New York Times bestselling author, Ace Atkins, and Robert G. Parkinson, Ph.D., award winning historian of the American Revolution, visited post on separate occasions in February.

Atkins delighted his audience in Gillis Theater Feb. 12 with conversation and readings from his fictional literary works. A large contingent of cadets, many majoring in English, Rhetoric, and Humanistic Studies, as well as faculty, staff, and community members, were in attendance.

Atkins, who started his writing career as a crime beat reporter, read a few excerpts to the audience from his popular Quinn Colson series, which consists of 11 novels. Atkins described Colson, the hero of the series, as a former Army Ranger who returns home to Mississippi after serving in Afghanistan to find his native county overrun with corruption. "Quinn has a sense of honor and justice. Even when people tell him that it's not in his best interest to do the right thing or to stand up for what is right, he just can't help himself. To me, that's what makes him truly American," explained Atkins.

The Quinn Colson series is set in Mississippi, where Atkins himself resides. He labeled the Deep South as an exciting place about which to write. "Hypocrisy, dirty politicians, religious fundamentalism, I mean, we have it all. Trust me, I could walk into any coffee shop in Mississippi and come out after an hour with 10 novels," he quipped.

Atkins acquired a spark for reading as a young teenager when he discovered the James Bond novels by Ian Fleming. The spark ignited greater joy with works by Dashiell Hammett and Flannery O'Connor.

He considers the works of novelist and Nobel laureate, William Faulkner, who also lived in Mississippi, a huge source of inspiration.

Atkins has authored a total of 31 books including multiple true crime novels, as well as 10 books in the iconic Spenser franchise, begun by the late author, Robert B. Parker.

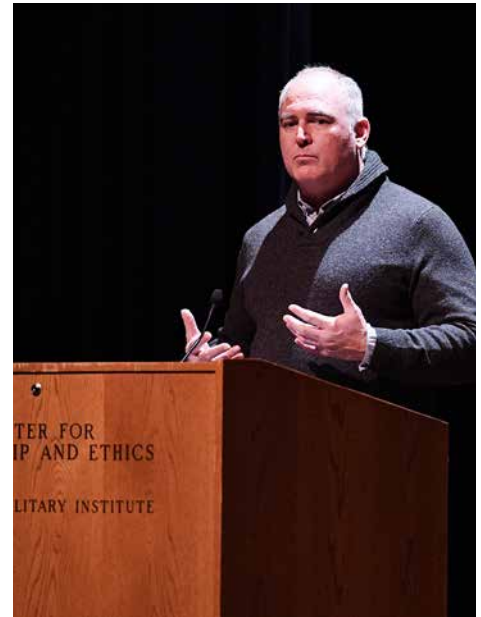
Atkins' appearance at VMI was sponsored by the Dean's Academic Speakers Program and the Department of English, Rhetoric, and Humanistic Studies.

Parkinson, author of "Heart of American Darkness: Bewilderment and Horror on the Early Frontier," captivated his audience in Moody Hall Feb. 19 as he shared the narrative and adventures of the real-life characters in his book.



Robert G. Parkinson, Ph.D. shares the story of Capt. Michael Cresap with cadets in Moody Hall Feb. 19.—VMI Photo by Jake Falcone '27.

Parkinson, who is a professor of history at Binghamton University in Binghamton, New York, energetically narrated the story of Capt. Michael Cresap, a frontiersman who was born in 1742 and died in 1775 at the young age of 33. Members of the Cresap family were directly and indirectly involved in multiple historic events in the 18<sup>th</sup> century including the establishment of the Mason-Dixon line, the boundary



Ace Atkins talks about his literary work in Gillis Theater Feb. 12.—VMI Photo by Jake Falcone '27.

between Maryland and Pennsylvania; the Seven Years' War, a global conflict involving Europe, North America, India, and the Caribbean; Pontiac's Rebellion, a conflict between Native American tribes and the British; and an internationally famous speech known as Logan's Lament, written by Chief Logan, a Mingo tribe leader, to Lord Dunmore, the governor of Virginia, after Logan's family was massacred.

Parkinson has held fellowships at the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture in Williamsburg, Virginia; the C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience in Chestertown, Maryland; the Library Company of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; the Rockefeller Library at Colonial Williamsburg; the Filson Historical Society in Louisville, Kentucky; the David Library of the American Revolution in Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania; the Clements Library at the University of Michigan; and the International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello. He received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Tennessee, and his doctorate from the University of Virginia.

The event was sponsored by the Dean's Academic Speakers Program and the Department of History. ❁



## Breakout

Scan the QR code for more photos.



Breakout took place Monday, Feb. 10, after many stayed up later than usual watching the Super Bowl the evening before. Cadre woke up the Rat Mass at 5 a.m. for training activities before breakfast, then they participated in a normal academic day.

Breakout activities resumed in the afternoon, including workout stations, a crawl across the Parade Ground, and stoop workouts. Col. Travis Homiak '95, the new VMI chief of staff, was the guest speaker at the Breakout dinner. The class also heard from Jay Hutt '78. The evening concluded with the first Old Yell for the Class of 2028—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin, Kelly Nye, and Jake Falcone '27.







March 2025

# VMI Hosts 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Commonwealth Cyber Fusion

By Marianne Hause

VMI hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Commonwealth Cyber Fusion and Virginia Cyber Cup Competition, a state-wide collegiate cyber security competition, February 21 and 22. The invitation-only event is for colleges that are National Security Agency (NSA) / Department of Homeland Security (DHS)-designated National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense. It was organized by the Center for Leadership and Ethics (CLE) as part of its strategic engagement initiatives, co-hosted by the Virginia Cyber Range and the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative.

VMI founded this cybersecurity event in 2017 at the suggestion of Bryce Bucklin '17, a computer science major, when the Commonwealth of Virginia sought to create a statewide cybersecurity competition. Sen. Mark Warner serves as honorary chairman.

Participating this year were about 130 students with 30 of their faculty advisors representing 18 colleges in Virginia: Danville Community College, ECPI, George Mason University, George Washington University, Germanna Community College, James Madison University, Laurel Ridge Community College, Liberty University, Marymount University, Northern Virginia Community College, Radford University, Tidewater Community College, University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia State University, Virginia Tech, Virginia Western Community College, and VMI. Each college was allowed to bring six competing students along with two observer students.

VMI cadet competitors were Linh Ngo '25, Michael Poe '25, Raj Singh '25, Amber Strapponi '26, Trenton Watkins '26, and John



The winning team from James Madison University shares the stage with the Virginia Cyber Cup in Gillis Theater. –VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Stotler '27. Their faculty advisor was Amish Parikh, instructor in the Department of Computer and Information Sciences (CIS) and IT specialist/systems engineer in the Cyber Defense Laboratory. Parikh stated that the VMI team's technical cyber capabilities, team development, and cyber leadership skills have grown since he began coaching them three years ago. "The VMI CIS department teaches the cadets well to provide the much needed expertise to fill the highly competitive cyber workforce positions that are currently available for all industries," he said.

For Singh, a computer science major from Honolulu, Hawaii, this was the second year in a row he competed at the event, and he agrees with Parikh in seeing growth within the team. "It was great to see my peers improve on their skills and new members taking up the mantle for future competitions," he shared.

Activities included a keynote speech by Don Mills, principal cloud architect for Cisco; a job fair; a TechDuels team debate; and a faculty/industry round table discussion hosted by representatives from the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative.

James Madison University was the high scorer in the capture-the-flag-style competition in the four-year college division and winner of the Virginia Cyber Cup. George Mason University finished second and the University of Virginia came in third. For the community college division: Danville Community College was the winner, followed by Northern Virginia Community College in second, and Germanna Community College in third.

Lt. Col. Kim Connolly, assistant director of programs and conferences for the CLE, was proud to be part of the coordination of the event. "Our team does a great job organizing this and providing the Commonwealth of Virginia with this first-class cyber workforce development opportunity," she said. ✪



The VMI team displays their school spirit before competing for the Virginia Cyber Cup. –VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



## Midwinter Formal

Cocke Hall took on the feel of a winter ski lodge, including a ski lift, for the Midwinter Formal, Feb. 21 and 22. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class cadets danced to the music of The Significant Others on Friday night, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> and brand-new 4<sup>th</sup> Class cadets enjoyed their music on Saturday. —VMI Photos by Jake Falcone '27.



## Snow Blankets Post Several Times

In one of the snowiest winters in recent years in Lexington, cadets had plenty of opportunities to enjoy the wintry weather. When the Corps arrived back to post after winter furlough, snow and ice covered the ground, and it lasted longer than usual due to freezing temperatures. About a month later, Feb. 11, the day after Breakout, most of the area received just shy of a foot of snow. And then, a week after that, another few inches of snow fell. Physical Plant staff worked hard to keep sidewalks and roadways clear. —VMI Photos by Kelly Nye and Jake Falcone '27.



# Psychologists Research Veteran Suicide Prevention

By Marianne Hause

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 50,000 Americans die by suicide each year and about 20% of those decedents are military veterans. Col. Glenn Sullivan, associate professor, and Maj. Michael LaRocca, assistant professor in the Department of Psychology, are extremely concerned with those statistics, and have received a \$150,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Veterans Services to conduct research on veteran suicide prevention.

According to Sullivan and LaRocca, a wide range of risk factors have already been identified that contribute to the suicide rate for veterans. The two VMI psychologists chose to investigate four factors that have not received adequate attention from researchers. The four include the quality of leadership while on active duty; lack of access or substandard mental health care, or feeling pressured not to seek mental health care while on active duty; post-military occupational history; and exposure to suicide either while on active duty or among one's circle of veteran acquaintances.

LaRocca explained their research method.

"We created a survey using Qualtrics, a web-based software used by many social and behavioral scientists, and reached out to veterans and clinicians working with veterans through social media, informing them of our research and asking the veterans to participate. The response was incredible. We have data from 250 participants, from all branches of the military, including a good representative sample of female veterans. Most of them were enlisted personnel who served between four to six years, and are relatively

recent veterans, with an average of 10 years of civilian life behind them."

Sullivan, lead principal investigator, and LaRocca, co-lead principal investigator, come at the same subject from different perspectives. LaRocca, an Army combat veteran himself, is studying the leadership

"I try to hammer home in my classes that leaders really do make or break situations, and that effective leadership is more than just the short-term success of accomplishing a mission. It has a psychological impact. No matter how long veterans have been out of the military, they remember their leaders.

In particular, they remember how strongly their leaders impacted them, whether positively or negatively. Leaders don't need to be psychologists, but they can be psychologically informed and do things like teaching, coaching, mentoring, and encouraging their followers to ask for help."

Sullivan's scope of the research

the veterans received while in the military and how it affected them psychologically during their time in the service, as well as after they were discharged, and years beyond.

"In my experiences in the Army, and before that as a cadet at West Point, I was always struck by how impactful leaders are. Leaders who are positive and supportive can have a very protective effect on service members and maintain good morale. On the other side of that coin, leaders who are less supportive really miss opportunities to provide encouragement to their followers. Service members go through major stressors, particularly if they deploy, and quality leadership can be a buffer against stressors. My unit in Iraq experienced loss and psychological distress. That stuck with me and was part of the reason I became interested in psychology. I try to draw from my background as a combat veteran to help others overcome their distress."

LaRocca teaches leadership to VMI cadets, many of whom will be military officers.

includes post-military occupational history, lack of access to mental health care, and exposure to the suicide of others. He explained that regarding vocation, people who are at most risk are those who work with their hands.

"In our survey we asked the veterans what they did in the military. Were they in one of the military specialties, like the infantry or Cavalry Scout, in which they ended up after four years with some bad joints, bad knees, and back pain? Skills learned in the military don't always transfer to the civilian marketplace, so many veterans end up working in construction or other manual labor, which is even worse for joints and backs. Perhaps they were treated with opioid pain medication, and we know that chronic pain and opioid pain medication use are risk factors for suicide."

Sullivan stated that often veterans may deny being suicidal, yet have many risk factors.

"The overarching goal of our research is to help clinicians and hospitals who



Maj. Michael LaRocca and Col. Glenn Sullivan discuss their research on veteran suicide prevention.—VMI  
Photo by Kelly Nye.

*Continued on next page*

work with vets, and organizations like the Veterans Administration (VA) to better reach people who need them but aren't seeking their help. One reason veterans may not seek help is that the VA is only open during normal business hours when most people need to be at work. A simple thing like having evening and weekend hours would help significantly."

Col. James Gire, head of the Department of Psychology, is pleased to see members of his faculty seizing opportunities like this grant-supported project.

"Colonel Sullivan and Major LaRocca each add unique perspectives that make their collaboration greater than the sum of its parts. I think that their research will have a positive impact on the mental health of veterans, and that the cadets in their

classes will be fascinated by their findings," said Gire.

Though their data collection is complete, LaRocca and Sullivan continue to analyze the information. They plan to present their findings to conferences, the first one scheduled this spring at the Society for Personality Assessment conference in Denver. They hope to publish their research in peer-reviewed journals. ❁

## Alum Shares Research on Jordan

By Marianne Hause

Peter W. Moore '88, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Political Science at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, returned to his alma mater March 6 to share part of a manuscript he has been working on for several years titled, "Security Contra Development: U.S. Military Relations and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan."

Moore, who double majored in history and German while at VMI, shared with his audience that international studies was only a concentration when he was a cadet. "The faculty I had then were integral to my career, to helping me become interested in international politics. I don't think I would have graduated from VMI without that faculty support, and to see the Department of International Studies and Political Science today, and the depth of the faculty, it's amazing. From my perspective, this VMI as an educational institution, is far better than when I graduated, and it's an honor to see how it's developed. I'm very happy

to share this research with you tonight," he said.

Moore discussed the extraordinary level of Jordanian militarization since the 1980s and how it has shaped chronic economic crisis and social protest. Moore shared several ways in which the U.S. security relationship with Jordan has been integral to extending and deepening this security/development dilemma.

Moore has conducted research in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen, and the Gulf States. His work has been published in multiple journals including the Middle East Report, The International Journal of Middle East Studies, The Middle East Journal, and Middle East Law and Governance. He earned his master's degree from the School of Government and Foreign Affairs at the University of Virginia, and a doctorate in political science at McGill University in Montreal. Moore has held academic positions at Dartmouth College, Concordia University, University of Miami, and Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates.



Peter W. Moore '88, Ph.D., discusses the U.S.-Jordan security relationship March 6 in the Nichols Engineering Building auditorium.—VMI Photo by Jake Falcone '27.

In academic year 2021-22, he was the Visiting Kuwait Chair at the Paris School of International Affairs.

The event was sponsored by the Dean's Academic Speakers Program and the Department of International Studies and Political Science. ❁



## Taste of Soul

"A Taste of Soul" luncheon was held Feb. 20 in Crozet Hall. It was an opportunity for cadets, faculty, and staff to come together in fellowship, reflection, and celebration for Black History Month. Parkhurst Dining offered a wide variety of options, including catfish, collard greens, macaroni and cheese, and cornbread. Cadets had the chance to win prizes by participating in a trivia activity. The event was hosted by the Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion.—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Class Rank Announcements

Cadets gathered in Memorial Hall March 5 as the 1<sup>st</sup> Class rank announcements were made for the next academic year. The cadet captains for the 2025-26 academic year are Devin Auzenne, regimental commander; Mark Stann, regimental executive officer; Heaton Lawrence, chief of staff; Samantha Waters, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion commander; Kristopher Ruth, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion executive officer; Sarah Woosley, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion commander; Taylor Hill, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion executive officer; Anastasia Herrell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion commander; Dylan Apo, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion executive officer; Avan Johnson, S1 captain; Nolan Savard, S2 captain; Michael Ferrara, S3 captain; Ella Davenport, S4 captain; Andrew Flores, S5 captain; Amber Strapponi, S6 captain; Anna Grace Adams, S7 captain; John McWilliams, S8 captain; Cadee Hegarty, S9 captain; Seth Patterson, Alpha Company commander; Michael Hatfield, Bravo Company commander; Cadlee Jarvis, Charlie Company commander; Emma Thompson, Delta Company commander; Jonah Ibanez, Echo Company commander; Matthew Kleinschuster, Foxtrot Company commander; Kern Aughinbaugh, Golf Company commander; Sadie Smith, Hotel Company commander; Grant Rose, India Company commander; and Julia Ward, Band Company commander.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



## Spring Career Fair

Nearly 50 employers were in Marshall Hall Feb. 25 for the spring career fair. The event, which was rescheduled from earlier in February due to a snow storm, allowed cadets to meet with representatives from employers like Clark Nexsen, the U.S. Secret Service, Sorba Engineering, Virginia State Police, Southeastern Freight Lines, as well as several graduate school programs.—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye.



# Events Focus on Healthy Relationships

By Lt. Col. Michelle Ellwood

VMI honored Healthy Relationships Month, which is observed in February, with several activities emphasizing the importance of all types of relationships, including romantic, friendship, familial, and community. A weekly newsletter was sent out by the Office of the Inspector General and Title IX throughout the month with book recommendations, activity ideas for building relationships, and helpful external resources when facing difficult relationship challenges. Faculty and staff contributed to the activities by providing their own advice on healthy relationships, which was included in the newsletters and written on paper hearts that were hung around post. Preston Library had a book display with relevant books. The Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion along with Cadet Health and Wellness hosted Healthy Relationships Bingo and the Promaji Club hosted a Meet Cute event Feb. 5 for employees to share the stories of how they met their significant other. Additional healthy relationship events were held in Crozet Hall during meals, with one focusing on random acts of kindness.



One Love wristbands were available for anyone attending the Feb. 18 lacrosse game.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

The VMI lacrosse team held a healthy relationships workshop through the One Love Foundation, a nonprofit founded to honor the tragic death of UVA student Yeardeley Love and focused on ending relationship abuse. Mason Gustafson '25, a member of the team, received facilitator training through the organization and guided his team on identifying signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships. “The training covered everything you need so you feel confident in leading a workshop and teaching others about healthy relationships.

Then you get to choose a lesson that best fits what you want to teach, or what you think is best for your audience,” explained Gustafson. “We focused on the 10 signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships and talked about ways to help friends who may be in unhealthy relationships. By familiarizing others with the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships, it allows people to not only help themselves, but help others.”

The Feb. 18 lacrosse game against Hampton University was known as the One Love Game. The Cadet Counseling Center had a table with giveaways at the game. ❁



The Cadet Counseling Center hosts a table representing the One Love Foundation during the Feb. 18 lacrosse game on North Post.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



A display in Preston Library highlights relevant books for Healthy Relationships Month.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



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## Military Appreciation Sundays

The Keydet baseball team introduced Military Appreciation Sundays to the 2025 schedule. Keydets wear special camo jerseys to recognize VMI's storied military history at every Sunday home game.

The Keydets' Sunday home games are Feb. 16, March 2, March 9, March 30, April 6, and May 4. VMI will also wear the specialty jersey at War Memorial Stadium in Hampton when the Keydets face William & Mary in the Peninsula Classic April 30. At the home games, the honorary first pitches are thrown by leading military figures in the VMI community, including Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, Col. Travis Homiak '95, Col. Ryan Finn, Col. Ley Havird '90, Col. Joe Hansen, Col. Nichole Scott, and Sgt. Maj. Tom Sowers.

VMI will also recognize each of its seven Medal of Honor recipients. Special military appreciation videos are shown during the games and on VMI athletics social media.—Photos courtesy of VMI Athletics.

