



Founded in 1839, Virginia Military Institute is the nation's first state-supported military college. VMI is part of the state-supported system of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The governor appoints the Board of Visitors, the Institute's governing body. The superintendent is the chief executive officer.

U.S. News & World Report has ranked VMI among the nation's top undergraduate public liberal arts colleges since 2001. *Georgetown University Study* ranks VMI Number 1 for Return on Investment among liberal arts colleges nationwide.

HISTORY OF VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

On Nov. 11, 1839, 23 young Virginians were mustered into the service of the state and, in a falling snow, the first cadet sentry – John B. Strange of Scottsville, Va. – took his post. Today the duty of walking guard duty is the oldest tradition of the Institute, a tradition experienced by every cadet.

Col. J.T.L. Preston, a lawyer in Lexington and one of the founders of VMI, declared that the Institute's unique program would produce "fair specimens of citizen-soldiers," and this observation has been substantiated by the service of VMI graduates in peace and war. Professor (later Maj. Gen.) Francis H. Smith, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, was the first superintendent of VMI. During his 50-year tenure, the Corps increased in size, the curriculum broadened, and the faculty grew. The first president of the Board of Visitors was Col. Claudius Crozet, a graduate of Ecole Polytechnique in Paris and former faculty member at West Point who was the state engineer of Virginia at the time of his election to the board.

In 1851, Thomas J. Jackson joined the faculty, serving until the outbreak of the Civil War. During that war he became a general of the Confederate forces and earned the name "Stonewall" Jackson. He is considered one of the greatest commanders in military history. On May 15, 1863, the Corps of Cadets escorted Jackson's remains to his grave in Lexington. Just before the Battle of Chancellorsville, in which he died, Jackson, after surveying the field and seeing so many VMI men around him in key positions, spoke the oft-quoted words: "The Institute will be heard from today."

With the outbreak of the war, the Cadet Corps trained recruits for the Confederate Army in Richmond. The Corps was later reconstituted at the Institute to supply officers for the Southern armies. The Cadet Corps was called into active service 15 times in the Valley of Virginia during the next four years.

On May 15, 1864, the VMI Cadet Corps was engaged in pitched battle at New Market, winning credit for helping turn the tide in favor of the Confederate forces. Ten cadets were killed and 47 wounded. Six of the dead are buried on the VMI grounds. The Corps of Cadets pays tribute to the courage and valor of the New Market Cadets in formal ceremonies held at the Institute yearly on May 15. The event remains the only time in American history in which the entire student body of an American college fought in battle as a unit.

The Institute was shelled and burned on June 12, 1864, by Union forces. The strenuous efforts of Smith and dedicated members of the faculty allowed the Institute to reopen on Oct. 17, 1865.

By the early 1900's the Corps had grown to 700 strong. The bachelor of art degree was first awarded in 1912, replacing the older degree of "graduate." During World War I, cadets practiced building trenches where Foster Stadium is now located. More than 1,400 alumni served in the military during that war. The 1930s was a decade of growth with the addition of a new engineering building and main library.

World War II brought accelerated academic programs, allowing cadets to graduate early, and VMI was the site for

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INSTITUTE OFFICERS

Superintendent

Major General Cedric T. Wins, U.S. Army (Ret.)

Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of Faculty

Brigadier General Robert W. Moreschi, Virginia Militia

Deputy Superintendent for Finance, Administration & Support

Brigadier General Dallas B. Clark, Virginia Militia

Chief of Staff

Lieutenant Colonel John M. Young, Virginia Militia

Commandant of Cadets

Colonel Adrian T. Bogart III, U.S. Army (Ret.)

Director of Information Technology

Colonel Wes Robinson, Virginia Militia

Interim Director of Intercollegiate Athletics

Jim Miller

special federally operated training programs. More than 4,000 alumni answered the call to service between 1941 and 1945.

With the return of veterans wishing to complete their education as new cadets under the GI Bill, it was necessary to enlarge the Barracks in 1948. The athletic program benefited from the growth of the Corps with an undefeated football season in 1957. In 1977, Keydet Basketball advanced to the NCAA Eastern Regional Finals.

The Cadet Corps has grown in size and diversity since the first 23 Virginians became cadets in 1839. In 1857 admission was expanded to any resident of the United States. The first African American cadets graduated in 1971. Women first entered the Corps in 1997. Today women comprise about 13 percent of the 1,700-member cadet Corps.

The devoted service of the 14 Superintendents who have followed Smith has enabled the Institute to strengthen its position as a uniquely valuable source of honorable and dedicated citizen-soldiers for the Commonwealth and the nation. Among VMI graduates are General of the Army George C. Marshall, Class of 1901, the World War II Army Chief of Staff, architect of the Marshall Plan and Nobel Peace Prize winner; and Jonathan M. Daniels, Class of 1961, murdered during the Civil Rights struggles of the 1960s and named a Lesser Saint of the Episcopal Church for his sacrifice.

Early in VMI history, Colonel Preston declared that the Institute's unique program would produce "fair specimens of citizen-soldiers," and this observation has been substantiated by the service of VMI graduates in peace and war. Since the Institute was founded, VMI alumni have fought in every war involving the United States, starting with the Mexican War just four years after VMI graduated its first class.

VMI alumni continue to serve their nation with hundreds having achieved the rank of General or Flag officer in the Armed Forces of the United States and several foreign countries, most notably Thailand and the Republic of China. During World Wars I and II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, over 300 alumni gave the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country, and two alumni were killed during Operation Desert Storm. Two VMI alumni were among those killed on September 11, 2001 in the terrorist attacks on America and 12 alumni have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

VMI is proud of its uniquely rigorous and constantly evolving system of education, and its earned reputation as one of America's premier institutions of higher education. Our mission of producing leaders — educated men and women of unimpeachable character and absolute integrity — remains our clear focus today and for the future.

VMI SUPERINTENDENTS

Maj. Gen Francis H. Smith, 1839-1889
Brig Gen. Scott Shipp, 1890-1907
Lt. Gen. Edward W. Nichols, 1907-1924
Brig. Gen. William H. Cocke, 1924-1929
Maj. Gen. John A. Lejeune, 1929-1937
Lt. Gen. Charles E. Kilbourne, 1937-1946
Lt. Gen. Richard J. Marshall, 1946-1952
Maj. Gen. William H. Milton Jr., 1952-1960
Lt. Gen. George R.E. Shell, 1960-1971
Lt. Gen. Richard L. Irby, 1971-1981
Gen. Sam S. Walker, 1981-1988
Maj. Gen. John W. Knapp, 1989-1995
Maj Gen. Josiah Bunting III,, 1995-2002
Gen. J. H. Binford Peay III, 2003-2021
Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins, 2021-present

MEDAL OF HONOR WINNERS

Clarence E. Sutton, 1890
Charles E. Kilbourne, 1894
Cary D. Langhorne, 1894
Aldolphus Staton, 1899
William P. Upshur, 1902
Richard E. Byrd Jr., 1908
Edward R. Schowalter Jr., 1951

RHODES SCHOLARS

Samuel W. Washington Jr., 1921
Henry H. Cooke, 1921
John W. Pendleton, 1928
Robert Q. Marston, 1944
William B. Adams, 1947
George W. Hardy III, 1954
Lee D. Badgett, 1961
Josiah Bunting III, 1963
Robert C. Randolph, 1967
Michael N. E. Lokale, 2003
Gregory E. Lippiatt, 2009

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