



INSTITUTE REPORT

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

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Wins Named Interim Superintendent

By Amy Goetz

On the evening of Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2020, Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 donned his uniform and headed to Cameron Hall to address the Corps of Cadets as the interim superintendent of VMI. The significance of this action did not escape Wins. While he carries himself with a settled focus "on the things at hand," he is circumspect as he considers the first time he stepped foot on post, some 39 years ago.

In the fall of 1981, Wins was, as he describes himself, "a lean, tall, pretty decent basketball player" from Maryland, who had been recruited to play Division I basketball by both the Naval Academy and VMI. He would be the first in the Wins family to attend college. He decided

to turn down the U.S. Naval Academy's offer—"A career in the military didn't interest me." Immediately afterward, his father had a talk with him.

"I'll never forget it. He sat me down and said 'I've got to tell you, I was really, really stunned when you turned down an opportunity to go to Navy. But what I want you to understand, is these guys at VMI, they have been talking to you and recruiting you since you started your senior season. They have offered you a full-ride scholarship, so more than anything else, that's an indication to me they have plans for you. If I were you, I would



Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85

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Peay Resigns After 17 Years

By Mary Price

Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, superintendent since 2003, resigned Monday, Oct. 26, at the request of Governor Ralph Northam '81 and legislative leaders days after they promised an independent, third-party review of the Institute's "culture, policies, practices, and equity in disciplinary procedures" with regard to the treatment of Black cadets on post.

William "Bill" Boland '73, chair of the VMI Board of Visitors, has pledged the Institute's full cooperation with the ongoing review.

In his letter of resignation to Mr. Boland, Peay wrote that he was informed



Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62

Friday, Oct. 23, by the governor's chief of staff that Northam and certain legislative leaders had lost confidence in his leadership as superintendent.

"It has been the honor of my life to be the superintendent of VMI for over 17 years," Peay wrote. "I always have and always will love the Institute, all of our cadets, alumni, and the entire VMI family. Pamela [Peay] and I pass on our best wishes for the future and will be cheering you on with great admiration and fondness as your work

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Academic Support Services Achieve Virtual Success

By Mary Price

Like every other aspect of life at VMI, academic support services have had to figure out the COVID-19 environment this fall. Largely, this has meant finding ways to offer personalized services in an online-only format.

“Everything’s being done virtually, but we’re still trying to keep all of the services we’ve always offered,” noted Lt. Col. Denise Young, director of the Miller Academic Center (MAC), which helps cadets achieve academic success.

This fall, the MAC has offered its usual full complement of group study sessions, which are organized for cadets in a particular class and led by a cadet who’s successfully completed that class—and sometimes a faculty member as well. Some of the group study sessions are offered via Zoom and others via Microsoft Teams, with the choice made by the group leader.

The MAC has also introduced a new concept this fall: academic coaching. This service, Young explained, is aimed at cadets who may be having trouble with the skills that undergird college academics, such as time management and making a study plan for the week. There are five academic coaches, all cadets from a wide variety of majors, who are paired with a small number of cadets needing help.

“This allows them to have that one-on-one support and someone to hold them accountable if they need someone to check in a little bit more often,” said Young.

Most often, she added, cadets receive guidance from a peer better than they would from someone significantly older than themselves—thus it’s a wise idea to have cadets who are strong academically help others who may be struggling.

Young reported that while the number of cadets getting help from the MAC was down early in the semester, that number was rising by early November.

“Part of it is getting cadets to understand that this is going to be the way for a while,” she commented, referring to the online learning environment. “I’m pleased with our numbers because we’re getting to the point that this is familiar and cadets are growing more comfortable with it.”

At the Writing Center, cadets have also been adapting to virtual sessions with helpers, known there as consultants. Lt. Col. Steve Knepper, the Writing Center’s interim director, praised those consultants, a mix of cadets and professional writers, as “absolutely cadet-centered and enthusiastic and adaptable” in their transition to an online environment.



Cadets in History 103 gather virtually for a group study session, joined by Dr. Qingfei Yin and Maj. Liz Schroepfer.—Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Denise Young.

Thankfully, he noted, the software platform the Writing Center uses, WCONLINE, has a built-in online consultation feature, and it also integrates with Zoom.

“Both of them allow you to share a paper,” Knepper explained. “The nice thing about Zoom is that it has a true screen share feature, so it makes it really easy to switch between an assignment sheet and an essay draft.”

To access the Writing Center’s services, cadets make appointments online, and can do so at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming for ideas to polishing a final draft.

All of the Writing Center’s consultants are trained to assist cadets without violating VMI’s work for grade policy.

Not being able to walk in for help hasn’t kept cadets from seeking out the Writing Center’s services. Knepper said that appointments have been “steady” in number this fall, with cadets looking to improve their writing mostly in the humanities, but also in the social sciences and sometimes the hard sciences as well, in which lab reports are a staple.

Cadets have responded so well to the Writing Center’s online platform that Knepper may recommend keeping online appointments as an option even after the pandemic ends, especially on evenings and Sunday afternoons.

“It doesn’t seem to hurt to give cadets more options,” he commented.

At the Open Math Lab (OML), also known as the Mathematics Education Resource Center (MERC), Capt. Kristi Brown, tutor supervisor, says that while the number of cadets seeking assistance this fall has dropped somewhat, the quality of the interactions seems to have risen.

Brown thinks this is likely connected to the online environment, in which cadets are forced to pay attention constantly. When Brown is tutoring a cadet, she uses a tablet with a stylus so she can “write” on the cadet’s paper.

“I basically have them talk me through what I should write, and I’ll write what they tell me to write,” she explained.

“Honestly, they have to focus more on what they’re writing, what they’re saying,” she continued. “They have to be more precise because they have to communicate it to someone else who is then trying to help them.”

Col. Troy Siemers, director of the OML, thinks that the number of cadets seeking help might be down because cadets can now schedule a Zoom session directly with the professor who teaches their class rather than come to the OML. He’s been interacting with cadets in this manner himself, sometimes in the evenings and on weekends.

“The numbers might be down, but so what?” he commented. “If it’s two or three times the quality, it balances out.” 🌸

INSTITUTE REPORT

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Header photo on page 1 by	Kelly Nye

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The VMI COVID-19 information portal is available at www.vmi.edu/COVID.

Peay *continued from page 1*

continues to serve the nation so well.”

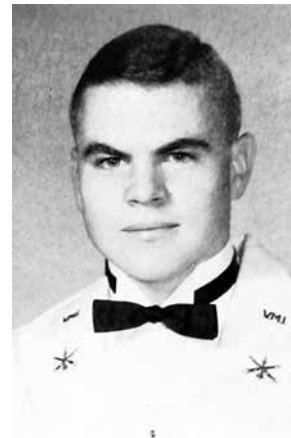
Brig. Gen. Robert “Bob” Moreschi, deputy superintendent for academics and dean of the faculty, was named acting superintendent temporarily as the VMI Board of Visitors began its search for a new superintendent. Moreschi is a 16-year veteran of the VMI faculty who served as the head of the Department of Economics and Business from 2013 to 2018.

On Nov. 3, Moreschi wrote a letter to the VMI family in which he expressed his willingness to work with all concerned to lead the Institute forward. “I believe we can and will come out of this a stronger and better institution, where VMI traditions and values are securely in place, but where there is a fully equitable atmosphere for all cadets, faculty, and staff,” Moreschi wrote.

In a statement issued Oct. 26, Boland praised Peay as a “great American, patriot, and hero.” He added that Peay “has profoundly changed our school for the better in all respects. General Peay and his wife Pamela serve as a model of dedicated service to our nation and the Commonwealth.”

Peay’s 17-year tenure as superintendent, which began on July 1, 2003, was the third longest in VMI’s 181-year history. The Institute’s longest-serving superintendent was its first, Maj. Gen. Francis H. Smith, who served for 50 years during the 19th century. The second-longest serving superintendent was Brig. Gen. Scott Shipp, who followed Smith as superintendent, serving from Jan. 1, 1890, to June 30, 1907.

Under Peay’s leadership, the Corps of Cadets grew to 1,700, and the academic



Peay graduated from VMI with a degree in civil engineering.—*Photo courtesy of VMI Archives.*

program underwent a significant expansion. The Department of Computer and Information Sciences split off from the Department of Applied Mathematics, and minors were added in national security, cybersecurity, exercise science, and more. Concentrations, which allow cadets to specialize in a particular area of a discipline, were also greatly expanded.

Construction was perhaps the most visible legacy of Peay’s time as superintendent.

In accordance with Vision 2039, his plan to prepare VMI for its role in educating 21st century leaders in time for its bicentennial in 2039, the Institute has seen a number of construction and renovation projects completed.

Among them were the building of Third Barracks and a new Lejeune Hall; Marshall Hall, home to the VMI Center for Leadership and Ethics; and the Corps Physical Training Facility, one of the largest indoor track facilities on the East Coast.

In addition, major renovations have transformed Kilbourne Hall, Mallory Hall, and Maury-Brooke Hall, while renovations are currently ongoing to both Scott Shipp Hall and Preston Library.

Athletic facilities have also been upgraded, with both Foster Stadium, home to the Keydet football team, and Gray-Minor Stadium, home to the Institute’s baseball team, undergoing significant improvements. Cormack Hall and Cocke Hall were also renovated to better serve



Peay served as 2nd Battalion commander during his cadetship.—*Photo courtesy of VMI Archives.*

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Psychology Cadets Study Veterans' Mental Health

By Mary Price

Two cadets majoring in psychology are studying data collected about combat veterans, with the goal of understanding how post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), post-traumatic growth, and depressive symptoms correlate with location of deployment, branch of military service, and quality of leadership.

Guided by Maj. Michael LaRocca, assistant professor of psychology, Erin Kozlowski '22 and Lexi Woodward '22 began their independent study earlier this semester, using data on 130 veterans that LaRocca had collected while in graduate school at the University of Alabama.

A U.S. Military Academy graduate whose service in the U.S. Army included a combat deployment to Iraq in 2005, LaRocca found himself drawn to working with veterans in graduate school, with a special interest in how leadership affected their experiences. The veterans he interviewed came from all



Lexi Woodward '22 and Erin Kozlowski '22 conduct research on the mental health of combat veterans.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

branches of the service and all of the recent conflicts abroad.

"There's so much rich data in there that there's opportunities for cadets here to explore how leadership correlates with psychological well-being," LaRocca stated.

In late October, Kozlowski and Woodward presented their research at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference of Undergraduate

effort and time that it takes to put together a conference presentation on research," she commented. Woodward added that the experience was also beneficial because both she and Kozlowski are interested in graduate study in psychology, and presenting research findings is part of work toward a master's or doctorate in the field.

The PowerPoint the two cadets created showcased a number of their findings so far, including the fact that Army and Navy service members were more likely to have combat experience than service members from other branches. Another finding correlated branch of service with post-deployment mental health.

"We found significant correlation between the Army and Navy in terms of combat experience and post-traumatic growth," said Woodward. "Members of the Air Force were more likely to experience feelings of hopelessness and sadness."

LaRocca, though, was quick to stress that no one should draw any broad conclusions about branch of service and mental health based on this research alone, as his data was drawn from a limited sample size.

Scholarship (MARCUS), which was held online due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"I'm very glad that Lexi and I had the opportunity to present at the MARCUS conference because it was my first virtual conference, and it was rewarding to see our hard work come together to create an interesting and relevant poster," Kozlowski wrote in an email.

Woodward also felt that the presentation was a valuable learning experience.

"This experience was incredibly eye opening because it allowed us to see exactly the kind of

Lanier Appointed to BOV

E. Sean Lanier '94 is the newest member of VMI's Board of Visitors, having been appointed Nov. 13 to a four-year term by Governor Ralph Northam '81. Lanier, a 24-year U.S. Army veteran, is the founder and executive director of Resolve Solutions Inc., an Alexandria, Virginia, nonprofit that provides financial and educational college preparatory support to underserved populations. In addition to a bachelor's degree in history from VMI, Lanier holds a master of science in business, supply chain management and logistics, from the University of Kansas.—Photo courtesy of E. Sean Lanier '94.



Continued on next page

“The findings are preliminary,” he stated. “We can’t make any causal conclusions. We have to interpret with caution.”

Besides, there’s much yet to explore in this particular data set. “The strongest findings are things like how less effective leadership was associated with post-deployment symptoms,” said LaRocca. In the spring semester, Kozlowski and Woodward plan to delve more deeply into how the various subscales, or characteristics, of

leadership influence followers’ mental health post-deployment.

LaRocca, meanwhile, finds that his interest in the impact of quality leadership dovetails nicely with a class he’s currently teaching, Leadership in Organizations. He likes to draw from his experiences as a cadet at West Point, and also as an officer in the Army.

“Leaders shape the self-concept and the well-being of followers,” he commented.

“Leaders have a tremendous responsibility to be not only tactically proficient, but also psychologically minded.”

As they pore over the data, Kozlowski and Woodward are likewise aware that their work might help prevent problems down the road.

“We hope that our research could influence the military to help with mental health for their veterans—enhance the awareness of it,” said Kozlowski. ❁

Cadet Studies Impact of Leadership

Kevin Yang '21 isn't someone to shrink from a challenge—after all, how many cadets in the Institute Honors program would choose to write their honors thesis in a field outside their major?

Yang, an electrical and computer engineering major, is writing his honors thesis on combat veterans’ experience of transformational leadership, and how those experiences can help them move forward with life once their military service is complete.

It’s an area of study he found in the spring semester, when he took Leadership in Organizations with Maj. Michael LaRocca, assistant professor of psychology, and learned about his research.

LaRocca, a U.S. Military Academy graduate, collected data on combat veterans and their leadership experiences while in graduate school.

The leadership class piqued Yang’s interest enough for him to wonder if he might be allowed to step outside his major for his thesis.

“A lot of cadets feel confined to their major, and I talked to Col. [Rob] McDonald about it,” said Yang. With the blessing of McDonald, who directs the Institute Honors program, Yang began his work.

“Since we go to VMI, with the military aspect of it, I wanted to research something with psychology in the military, since I’m [not commissioning] myself,” Yang commented.

He’s seeking a deeper understanding of how leaders affect their followers’ post-traumatic growth.

“In my project, I’m controlling for the subscales [characteristics] of transformational leadership and the relationship between combat

experiences and personal strength,” said Yang. Yang is particularly interested in the will of combat veterans to overcome traumas, and how leadership might play a role in that.

“How strongly do [veterans] feel they can overcome those traumas and move on in life?” Yang asked.

The concept of transformational leadership is key. “Transformational leadership is a leadership style in which it’s not just delegation or everything is clear-cut,” Yang stated. “Usually the leader finds a higher

purpose or goal that pushes their followers to motivate or inspire their followers.”

Yang has also been studying how combat experience relates to post-traumatic growth, with surprising results.

“Lower to mid-range exposure [to combat] actually gave higher rates of post-traumatic growth,” he said. “That was interesting because I’d thought the higher the exposure, the higher the post-traumatic growth.”

Yang will continue to analyze the combat-personal growth link, including the role of transformational leadership. For example, he is interested in whether combat-related post-traumatic growth is strengthened when leadership is

more effective.

Even though he’s not commissioning, Yang can see how his study might benefit him down the road. He’s already received a job offer from Newport News Shipbuilding, but he’s keeping his options open for now.

“If I do work for Newport News [Shipbuilding], the majority of the workers portside or down at the water dock, they’re all veterans,” he commented. “Now I’m not just an engineer, their manager. I can go down there and build rapport.”

— Mary Price



Kevin Yang '21

Ethics Bowl Teams Represent VMI Well

By Mary Price

Two teams of cadets competed Friday, Nov. 6 and Saturday, Nov. 7, in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl hosted by the University of North Georgia. The competition, which was held in a virtual format this year, challenged participants to respond to a variety of ethical and social issues, including mandatory masks and racial profiling, protests and property destruction, and evictions and foreclosures in the time of COVID-19. Eighteen teams from 13 schools participated in this year's competition.

Team A, coached by Dr. Duncan Richter, professor of philosophy, won two rounds and lost two. "Our best results ever were won two, lost one, tied one (that was about three years ago)," Richter wrote in an email. "So for Team A to win two and lose two was our second best-ever result." Richter added that the judges had very high marks for the professionalism among Team A members and their use of data and examples to bolster their cases.

"It was an absolute pleasure getting to lead both competition teams for the past two months," Ben Ashmore '21 wrote in an email. "We are normally at a disadvantage when coming to face the schools in the Mid-Atlantic—due to the amount of time they are able to put into their preparation—but both of our teams competed with a lot of grit and earned their place."

Ashmore added that the teams were made up of a



Travis Ropella '23 and Sean Whearty '22 compete in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl Nov. 6.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

Marks. "It was a great experience. I feel like we learned a lot from seeing how other teams debated and what styles and approaches they used."

Team B lost all four rounds, although Richter pointed out that members of that team wound up competing against the teams that

finished first and second in the competition, Sante Fe College and Meredith College. "They had a very tough draw," Richter commented.

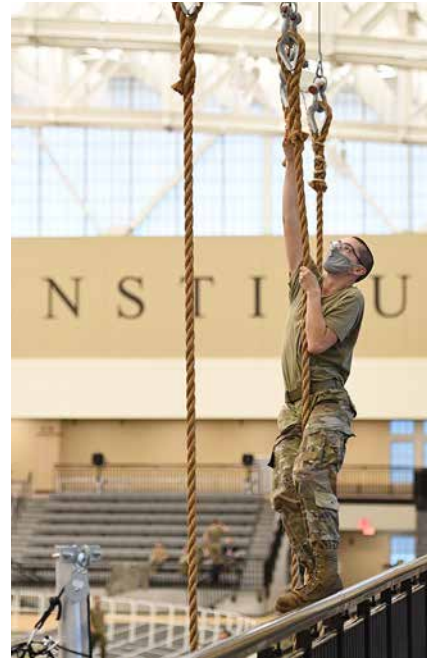
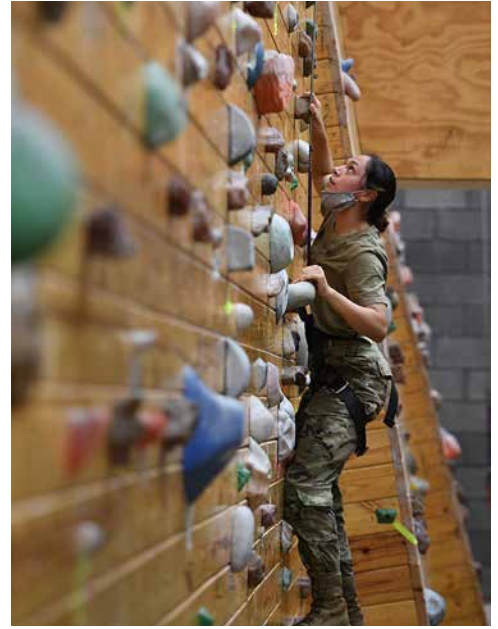
Ethics Bowl judges praised Team B as well, noting their excellent use of ethical theories to support viewpoints, collegiality, and effective responses to other teams' objections. Team B was coached by Col. Pat Looney, deputy director of the Center for Leadership and Ethics, and made up of Yavor Aleksiev '22, Chandler Dodge '23, LeAndrew Jefferson '21, Travis Ropella '23, and Sean Whearty '22. 🌟



LeAndrew Jefferson '21 competes in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl Nov. 6.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

Rat Olympics

Rat Olympics kicked off Founders Day for the Class of 2021 plus 3 on Nov. 11 in the Corps Physical Training Facility. The competition is the culmination of a 10-week physical education program. Company F received the Stockwell Cup—awarded to the company that works the hardest and displays the best attitude, named for the late Col. Bill Stockwell. Company BD won the Rat Olympics competition.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin



Ribbon Cuttings, Indoor Parade Mark 181 Years of VMI

By Mary Price

Despite rain on and off all day, Virginia Military Institute celebrated the 181st anniversary of the Institute's founding on Wednesday, Nov. 11, with ribbon cuttings for two projects designed to help secure VMI's future for the 21st century.

Invitees included Lexington Mayor Frank Friedman, members of the VMI Board of Visitors, and representatives of the various architectural firms and contractors that worked on the projects.

The first ribbon cutting was held at Preston Library, which is nearing the end of a \$19.2 million renovation, its first in almost 25 years. The renovated library offers a variety of study seating options for cadets, as well as consistent wi-fi access throughout the building, expanded VMI archives, and a fire sprinkler system.



Members of the Cadet Battery practice firing the howitzers on the Parade Ground the day before Founders Day.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

“We’ve made a library for the 21st century,” said Brig. Gen. Robert “Bob” Moreschi, acting superintendent. Libraries, he noted, have shifted over the years—in the past, learners had to go to the library physically, but now, with information available anywhere, consideration has to be given to how to attract library patrons. Modern libraries, he said, need to be warm and inviting places that encourage interaction with librarians, who are skilled in helping others sift through the vast amount of information available.

Moreschi described the newly renovated library, which was redone with cadet needs foremost in mind, as “an unbelievable improvement over what it was.”

Also speaking at the library ribbon cutting was Col. Keith Gibson ’77, director of the VMI Museum System, himself a library assistant as a cadet. In his remarks, Gibson talked about the library’s evolution from a small collection of books kept in barracks by a cadet



Brig. Gen. Robert “Bob” Moreschi, acting superintendent, accompanied by Regimental Commander Troy Smith ’21, takes review by passing the cadets as they stand in place in Cocke Hall.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Continued on next page

librarian to the 21st century learning facility it is today.

He also mentioned that Preston Library, which replaced the Institute's first stand-alone library, which stood where New Barracks is now, was dedicated on Founders Day 1939, exactly 81 years ago.

After the library ribbon cutting, a small ceremony was held in the library's Turman Room to celebrate the completion of the Post Infrastructure Project, a \$33.2 million undertaking designed to upgrade and modernize various aspects of the Institute's supporting infrastructure. Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99, deputy superintendent for finance, administration, and support, described it as "the invisible project ... so much of what this project encompasses is underground and therefore unseen."

One of the more immediate and visible components of the Post Infrastructure Project has been widening of the Anderson Drive bridge over Woods Creek, part of the Jordans Point entrance to



Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99 and Brig. Gen. Robert "Bob" Moreschi cut the ceremonial ribbon to celebrate the renovation of Preston Library Nov. 11.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

post. The one-lane bridge over Woods Creek has been replaced by a two-lane bridge, along with a sidewalk so baseball fans and others wishing to access North Post can walk down safely from the Marshall Hall parking lot.



Cadets play herald trumpets on the Parade Ground to signal the firing of the howitzers during the Founders Day ceremony.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Thanks to recent improvements, the Anderson Drive entrance will no longer be seen as VMI's back door, said Gibson. "More and more, people are going to be seeing [Jordans Point] as a conduit into post, as a preferred way of access," he stated. The commanding view of barracks that Anderson Drive provides, Gibson added, is in line with what barracks architect Alexander Jackson Davis envisioned: an imposing Gothic Revival structure set against the magnificence of the natural world.

Also as part of the Post Infrastructure Project, the steam plant located behind barracks underwent its first renovation in

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the needs of 21st century physical training and athletics.

Peay came to the superintendent's position after a lengthy and successful career in both private industry and the military. Immediately before coming to VMI in June 2003, Peay served as chairman, president, and CEO of Allied Research Corp., an international defense contractor.

By the time Peay retired from the U.S. Army in 1997, capping off a 35-year military career, he had reached the rank of four-star general, a rank that's been achieved by only seven individuals commissioning out of an ROTC program at a senior military college.

While on active duty, Peay's last two assignments were as vice chief of staff for the Army and commander in chief of the U.S. Central Command, with responsibility for 20 nations in the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia.

Prior to that, Peay's extensive combat experience included serving as the commanding general of the 101st Airborne during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He is also a Vietnam veteran whose military awards include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Army Distinguished Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Silver Star, and the Purple Heart.

Peay earned U.S. campaign ribbons for combat duty in Vietnam, (seven campaigns) and Saudi Arabia (three campaigns) and has received foreign awards from Vietnam, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.

A native of Richmond, Virginia, Peay grew up as the son of an alumnus, J.H.B. Peay Jr. '29. As a cadet, he majored in civil engineering, was a quarterback on the Keydet football team, and served on the Honor Court and as 2nd Battalion commander. At graduation, he was awarded the Society of the Cincinnati Medal, which recognizes a cadet known for efficiency of service and excellence of character.

Recognizing Peay's potential, his brother rats wrote in the 1962 yearbook, *The Bomb*, that Peay was "possessed of a driving spirit that surely will carry him to the top of his chosen field, whatever that may be."

The Peays are the parents of two sons, Jim Peay '98 and Ryan Peay '02. ❀



Peay Concludes 17

Serving as superintendent since... major renovations of many build... a civil engineering major and qua... sioning from VMI and retired at th... an ROTC program at a senior mil... and Brig. Gen. Scott Shipp.—VMI FI



7 Years at VMI

On July 1, 2003, Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62 celebrated many successes during his time at VMI, including the construction of Third Barracks, Marshall Hall, and the Corps Physical Training Facility. Peay, a quarterback of the Keydet football team while a cadet, served in the U.S. Army for 35 years after commissioning out of a military college. He was the Institute's third-longest serving superintendent after Maj. Gen. Francis H. Smith. Photos by Communications and Marketing.



Traffic Study Benefits Cadets—and the City

By Mary Price

Passers-by at several intersections in downtown Lexington on the morning of Tuesday, Oct. 20, might have been surprised to see cadets stationed there, seemingly just watching the cars go by.

Those observers would have had it half right: the cadets were there to watch the cars go by. But they were counting them as well, as part of a traffic impact analysis being conducted for the City of Lexington by Col. Wakeel Idewu's Transportation Design and Planning class. A traffic impact analysis evaluates the impact a planned change in the environment will have on vehicular traffic.

Idewu, professor of civil and environmental engineering, has cadets in this class conduct a traffic impact study each year. It's the kind of assignment, he noted, that they might encounter early in their careers as transportation engineers.

In 2018, Idewu's cadets conducted such a study in Bridgewater, and in 2019, in Buchanan. This year, with the COVID-19 pandemic limiting travel, Idewu found an assignment much closer to home, thanks to Washington and Lee University's proposed plan to turn West Washington Street into a campus gateway. Such a transformation would include building a new home for the university's offices of admission and financial aid at the intersection of Washington Street and Lee Avenue, among other projects.

"Because of all of the proposed construction that W&L has, the city has a slight concern that traffic might be affected," Idewu commented. "To what degree it'll be affected is the question we're trying to answer."

Cadets began their work via a Zoom call earlier in the semester with Lexington Mayor Frank Friedman. Once they



Michael Tomaso '21 and James Milstead '21 count cars at the intersection of Jefferson Street and Nelson Street in Lexington.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

had a sense of how Lexington's traffic control needs might change if W&L's plan is approved, it was time to head outside.

To get some numbers on the current traffic flow in Lexington, cadets were split up into pairs or small groups and assigned to count the cars coming through a particular intersection. The count took place early in the morning, from approximately 8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., but Idewu explained that enough is known

about how traffic grows throughout the day that a peak number for the afternoon can be predicted.

Back at Nichols Engineering Building, the cadets put the data they'd collected into a software program known as PTV Vissim, which is a kind of traffic simulation software with mathematical modeling as its basis.

"That computer program models everything as if it's real life," Idewu commented. "A lot of [Departments of Transportation] are using this software compared to others."

Cadets who participated in the traffic impact study expressed surprise at just how much traffic passes through Lexington intersections.

"It kind of opened my eyes as to how many cars go through Lexington in the morning," said Zachary Masri '21. It was interesting to see the lights actually work. They work on sensors. I didn't expect that."

Anna Armfield '21 plans to commission in the Navy, but she's interested in a career in transportation down the road, pun intended. "Last year, we took the basic transportation



Col. Wakeel Idewu advises Zachary Masri '21 and Samuel Lukanuski '21 as they study traffic in Lexington Oct. 20.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

Continued on next page

engineering class for civil engineering, and when I saw the transportation design class, it interested me—the design of intersections, and how going forward in the future, how we can make transportation more efficient and effective,” she stated.

John Duncan '21 had an assignment that was different from the others. “My job for today was to record the number of pedestrians

that walked by and their directions,” he stated. “It’s interesting to see not only the number of pedestrians, but the walking patterns of folks ... and turning percentages based off pedestrians, not necessarily traffic.”

Cadets in Idewu’s class plan to submit a written report of their findings to city officials by the end of the semester. ❁

‘Art Show’ Blends French Language, Culture

By Mary Price

Cadets in one of Lt. Col. Jeff Kendrick’s French courses have had a unique opportunity this semester, as they’ve studied the language through the medium of a role-playing game.

Kendrick, associate professor of modern languages and cultures, first heard of *Modernism vs. Traditionalism: Art in Paris, 1888–89*, when he read an article about it in an academic journal. Immediately, he realized that the game’s skillful blend of language and culture would provide a new avenue to increase fluency among second language learners.

Throughout the game, cadets play the roles of artists, critics, and art dealers during the Belle Époque, a late 19th century flowering of French cultural expression in many areas, including the visual arts. The game was originally written in English, with art history students as its target audience, but was later adapted for use in French classes.

“The idea is that [cadets] become members of the French Academy of Fine Arts in the late 19th century,” said Kendrick. Among the well-known artists active during that era were Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, and Georges Seurat.

Traditionally, Kendrick noted, language courses have a tendency to separate language from culture. As a stepping stone between beginner and upper-level French classes, the class in which cadets are playing the game—French 307, Intensive Review of French Grammar and Phonetics—provided the ideal place in which to unite the two.

“In this bridge course, we wanted to continue that idea and help cadets see that French grammar and phonetics is connected to French history and French culture and artistic expression,” Kendrick commented. “That’s kind of the idea behind the game.”

As a culminating exercise before VMI moved to online instruction Nov. 23, the 15 cadets in the class gave an “art show” in Kilbourne Hall Friday, Nov. 20, in which those playing the roles of

artists attempted to sell their works to buyers, who were represented by faculty members from a variety of departments. Those playing the roles of art critics and dealers advocated for the artists they favored.

To mimic the hierarchy established by the salon, the annual show put on in Paris by the Académie des Beaux-Arts, Kendrick made sure that some artists and

their supporters had more resources than others. Those associated with the Academy and invited to the salon were given multiple laptops, plus a projector, for showing their art to “buyers.”

Dealers were provided with one laptop each, and artists not associated with the Academy had no laptop and were kept outside the room set aside for Academy members, where they had to find creative ways to showcase their art, just as an artist without resources in any era might set up a street corner show.



Clark Jones '21, playing artist Gustave Moreau, shows Patricia Hardin, assistant director of International Programs, his work at the Nov. 20 art show in Kilbourne Hall.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

See Art Show, page 15

Retired Professor Honored for Tunnel Restoration

By Mary Price

On Friday, Nov. 20, the Blue Ridge Tunnel, a former railroad tunnel spanning Nelson and Augusta counties that's been turned into a greenway through a rails-to-trails project, opened to the public.

Few trail users will realize it, but the tunnel has two ties to VMI. Col. Claudius Crozet, a member of VMI's Board of Visitors in the 1840s, designed the structure, and recently retired Col. Gary Rogers, now professor emeritus of civil engineering, played a central role in the tunnel's transformation over the past two decades from a dark, wet, and scary place to what it will be very soon: a destination for families and lovers of the outdoors.

What's more, Nelson County, which now owns the tunnel, was recently honored with a national award, and Rogers and others who worked on the restoration project were



The west portal of the Blue Ridge Tunnel faces Augusta County.—Photo courtesy of Jack Looney.

likewise recognized. The Coalition for Recreational Trails (CRT), a group of national trails organizations, honored the Blue Ridge Tunnel in the construction and design category. Those who worked on the project were honored via a virtual ceremony Oct. 22 in lieu of the CRT's usual awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.

For Rogers, the award caps off more than three decades of involvement with the tunnel. He first visited the site when he was in graduate school at Virginia Tech in the late 1980s studying geotechnical engineering, and because his dissertation was on the stability of portals in rock, the Blue Ridge Tunnel provided an excellent case study.

In the spring of 1993, Rogers accepted a semester-long appointment as a guest lecturer at VMI.

Little did he know that he'd be hired full time that same year and stay for another 27 years, but that's exactly what happened. Col. Jim Groves, department chair at the time, encouraged field trips for civil engineering classes, and with that support, Rogers found himself back at the tunnel, this time with cadets in tow.

"The Crozet Tunnel was one of the field trips because we could talk about rock, and getting the cadets to go underground was not a hard task," Rogers recalled. "They loved it."

Like cavers, cadets going through the tunnel would come out cold, wet, and happy. The tunnel had several feet of water in it near the eastern end thanks to a



The east portal of the Blue Ridge Tunnel, once blocked by debris from Hurricane Camille, has since been opened.—Photo courtesy of Jack Looney.

Continued on next page

debris flow caused by Hurricane Camille in 1969. What's more, the interior wasn't even passable thanks to two massive concrete seals placed in the 1950s by a company that hoped to use the site to store pressurized gas. Cadets traversing the tunnel had to crawl through a pipe to bypass the blocked-off area.

By 2005, efforts to turn the tunnel into a rails-to-trails project had gathered steam, but safety concerns were paramount. That year and the next, Rogers prepared a 209-page feasibility report showing that, with proper attention to safety, and removal of the seals, the tunnel could be used by the public.

"Most of the tunnel is extremely stable," he noted. Much of it, he added, is lined with brick.

"The brick, after all of these years, is still in very good shape," Rogers commented.

As part of his work, Rogers visited other abandoned railroad tunnels, including one in Greenbrier County, West Virginia, and came to the conclusion that the Blue Ridge Tunnel was actually in much better condition than its counterparts.

"Both of those tunnels are in far worse shape and have a lot more stability problems than this one does," said Rogers.

Begun in 1849 as part of an effort to link railroads on the eastern and western sides of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the 4,273-foot-long tunnel was under construction for almost a decade before the first train ran through it in 1858. By 1944, though, locomotives were too wide to fit through the 16-foot tunnel, and

the structure was therefore abandoned after the railroad built a new, wider tunnel nearby.

"It becomes one of the oldest accessible public structures in the country," he noted. Rails-to-trails initiatives, he added, have been wildly popular across the country because railroad beds are mostly level, making them ideal for people of all ages and physical abilities. The occasional places where trains have to cross rivers and mountains make reworked railroad paths even more rewarding.

"People flock to the trestles and tunnels," Rogers commented. "There's not many."

To learn more about the Blue Ridge Tunnel, visit the Nelson County, Virginia website or the county's Facebook page. ✪

Art Show continued from page 13

Determining a winner in *Modernism vs. Traditionalism* isn't as easy as it is in checkers or *Monopoly*.

"Each character has specific victory objectives," Kendrick explained. Artists win when they sell their art, of course, and critics win when buyers choose the works of artists they favor. Sometimes, cadets must work together to accomplish the objectives for victory; other times, they have to compete with one another.

This aspect of the game, Kendrick realized as he planned for the class, fits well within VMI's adversarial system, in which cadets strive for individual accomplishment but also work with others to succeed.

"This kind of pedagogy fits perfectly within the VMI model," he commented.

Having taught French 307 multiple times since he joined the VMI faculty in 2013, Kendrick has seen the cadets' language skills grow more naturally this semester, most likely due to the game as backdrop.

"We've been working all this semester to develop a vocabulary to talk about art," he stated. "I wouldn't want to qualify [cadets' language development] as better, but I would say that there's a definite increase in interest."

Now, there's a natural incentive for cadets to get it right. Kendrick said they come to class thinking, "I've got to be able to pronounce this correctly in order to make my sale and express my artistic vision."



Lt. Col. Jeff Kendrick, Maj. Catharine Ingersoll, and Noah Lawing '21, playing the role of Academy President William-Adolphe Bouguereau, discuss the artist's work. —VMI Photo by Mary Price.

While the game is in progress, Kendrick moves to the back of the room to act as an observer, only intervening when cadets need his assistance.

"They're doing the learning and the teaching, and it's kind of cool to observe," he said. ✪



Class of '22 Ring Figure

The Class of 2022 celebrated Ring Figure Nov. 20-21 before cadets were sent home to finish the semester online. The traditional class supper was held Friday, Nov. 20, with William Taylor '22 receiving the Douglas Carter France III '71 Memorial Award for "excellent character, selflessness, graciousness, and enthusiasm." Prior to the supper, cadets received their combat rings in Jackson Memorial Hall. Cadets received their individualized rings in a ceremony in Cameron Hall Saturday, Nov. 21, with remarks provided by Gerald "Jerry" Acuff Jr. '71, father of Ryan Acuff '22. Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, interim superintendent, presented cadets with their rings. The class hopes to hold its Ring Figure ball and class social sometime during the spring semester.—VMI Photos by Stephen Hanes, H. Lockwood McLaughlin, and courtesy of Parker Davis '21.



Founders Day *continued from page 9*

three decades with the goal of increasing energy efficiency and allowing Physical Plant staff to operate the boilers with modern controls. In addition, a 250-kilowatt generator was added to provide a backup heat source for barracks and Crozet Hall in the event of an emergency, a new water line was put in, and the storm water management system was upgraded. In all, the Post Infrastructure Project has involved 211,000 hours of labor in the construction phase to date.

Later in the morning, a ribbon cutting was held for the VMI Police's new headquarters at the Letcher Avenue entrance to post. The \$5.6 million project to create a new home for the VMI Police, with nearly 11,000 square feet of space, has been under construction for approximately a year and a half, following demolition of the Bachelor Officer Quarters in the early summer of 2019.

The building itself has been built to withstand the 180-mile-per-hour winds of a Category 4 hurricane. Inside, there's bulletproof glass between staff and visitors, along with dedicated rooms for processing evidence and fingerprints. Upstairs, an emergency operations center (EOC) with a smart whiteboard and televisions for news broadcasts will be able to accommodate eight people working in it at once. The VMI Police are expected to move into the new building in early December.

"The best work that this building will do will be unknown to us," said Gibson of the post police building.

In the afternoon, due to inclement weather, select cadets participated in a review parade in Cocke Hall. Each company was represented by five cadets—one sergeant, two corporals, and two rats. Moreschi took review by passing the cadets as they stood in place. The Cadet Battery fired the howitzers from the Parade Ground, with herald trumpets accompanying them. ✪



Deputy superintendent for finance, administration, and support, Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99; Board of Visitors member, Scot Marsh '81; and acting superintendent Brig. Gen. Robert "Bob" Moreschi cut the ribbon to the VMI Police building Nov. 11.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



Troy Smith '21 calls the Corps to attention during a ceremony in Cocke Hall celebrating Founders Day.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

think real hard about what's being presented to you right now because I think it's a great opportunity." A phone call to Coach Charlie Schmaus '66 sealed the deal, and in August 1981, Wins arrived on post with the rest of the young men who would become the Class of 1985. Looking back, he realizes it was one of the most important decisions of his life and set him on course for a successful future.

Wins' mother was a big part of his decision as well. "What you do for the love of a mother is significant." He explains that his mother was proud he was taking on the challenges of the VMI system, squared away and in uniform, although she was not without her concerns as she got a glimpse of his introduction to the adversarial system when she and her husband left post on that Matriculation Day.

Following his first day as a cadet, Wins said his mind was in a bit of a haze from everything the system throws at you. At VMI, there is no obvious separation between you and your peers. "I realized I was surrounded by a bunch of other people who were probably in a similar haze. We were all going through this stuff together."

Wins remembered, "Very quickly and from the first day, the system begins to teach you about a life focused on teamwork and a willingness to support others, whether you know them or not."

"When they put me in my room with my three rat roommates, two were there with me and one was a football player who was at practice getting ready for the fall season. We were told by a cadre corporal to put away our belongings, everything folded and squared away and in its proper place, the whole nine yards. When we finished with our own items, the corporal said, 'Your brother rat is not here. You are responsible for the success of each other, and you are going to put away his stuff, too.'"

"So there I am folding the underwear and T-shirts of some guy I've never even met, making him a success. It turns out that this guy was Charles "Chuck" Rogerson '85. To this day, he and I and my other roommates, Darren Sawyer and Davis Estes, as well as several other classmates, remain extremely close. I mean, we're like brothers. And starting with the Rat Line, we've been there

to support each other through good times and bad times for our entire lives."

Wins believes VMI's unique education method, which includes the Rat Line, the regimental and class systems, and the highly revered Honor Code, all have the potential to allow young men and women a period of "intense self-discovery."

While at VMI, Wins changed his mind about military service and pursued a commission in the U.S. Army. The man who ini-



Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 addresses the Corps of Cadets in Cameron Hall Nov. 18. —VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

tially did not want a military career stayed in the Army for 34 years and retired as a two-star general. During three decades of service, Wins was often reminded of lessons he learned at VMI.

"I've been in situations during my Army career where things were occurring that really could have meant a soldier gets harmed or even killed. And in those moments, you as a leader aren't expected to collapse, fold, or shrink under pressure, in part, because my VMI experience taught me resolve. You have to demonstrate a confidence to the people around you that we will get through whatever challenge we are facing."

So why is it, during these challenging times that Wins is willing to leave his current life and return to the Institute? "I am forever grateful to VMI and the opportunity I got to earn a college degree and play Division I sports. And although while at VMI, I did not personally suffer from any racial animus, that may not be the experience

of every cadet. As a military college, we have a critical role to play in producing leaders who are prepared to work with, follow, and lead a very diverse population. Not every student enters VMI having experienced that diversity. As VMI prepares its leaders, we need to ensure they understand the complexities of the world and how women, men, people of color, people of different genders and other nationalities create the strength of what we can accomplish."

When it comes to tackling the current set of challenges the Institute faces, "I will go back to what I learned at VMI and have applied over my 34-year career: 'What is the right thing to do?' First and foremost, it is to continue the unique method and framework of the VMI experience and ensure it is executed consistent with fulfilling the Institute's mission and that we hold ourselves accountable when we aren't. If VMI has some blind spots that create inconsistency with preparing our young leaders for the diverse world they will face—a world where we treat our teammates with dignity and respect regardless of their race, sex, gender, or religious beliefs—a world that requires broad and diverse perspectives to remain strong—then we must own it and adjust."

"I believe without a doubt that VMI will get through this in fine fashion. I believe in the strength of its leadership, faculty, and staff. I believe in the continued support and advocacy of our alumni. And I believe in the young men and women who choose to come to VMI in order to immerse themselves in an environment that challenges them on every level and helps them learn and define who they are. I think VMI is going to come out of this better and stronger than ever before and continue to build on a legacy of success."

Wins is laser focused as he begins his new role as interim superintendent. "We must do the right things for the right reasons." He continued, "As interim superintendent, I will focus on what is best each and every day for the Corps of Cadets and VMI."

Continued on next page

Wins has heard from many alumni, family, and friends and he realizes the concern about VMI's mission and core principles being compromised by outside sources. However, he has the following message for those who care deeply about the Institute: "VMI alumni are some of the most generous alumni in the country. They appreciate what they got out of VMI, a great education, tools to thrive under pressure as leaders, and the lifelong friendships forged here. I ask that their generosity

continue to ensure generations of young men and women can follow and receive a similar education. The Institute needs your resolve now."

As Wins sits back and looks at his life, he muses, "Yes, I have come full circle from my first step on post to my return now and the blur of challenges met, lessons learned, and mountains climbed in between. If you would have asked me or my parents on Matriculation Day if I would return to the role of superintendent of VMI following a

rewarding and successful career in the U.S. Army, we all would have told you, 'No, no chance! No chance on God's green earth.'"

"I am humbled knowing the opportunities VMI gave me—a knuckleheaded kid from Hyattsville, Maryland—to be a first-generation college graduate in my family and to have the opportunity to come back as interim superintendent."

Wins and his wife, Cassandra, are the parents of two grown children, Asia and Matthew. ✪



Naval ROTC Celebrates Birthdays

Rear Adm. Matt Ott '92 and Brig. Gen. Dan Shipley '92 address Naval ROTC cadets in Jackson Memorial Hall Nov. 7. Ott reminded cadets that coming from VMI puts them, "a step above many." Shipley spoke of the strength and stability members of the military provide in times of uncertainty. The talk was followed by a birthday celebration for both the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy in Memorial Garden. —VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.





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Jackson Statue to Come Down

By Mary Price

The VMI Board of Visitors voted unanimously on Thursday, Oct. 29, to remove the statue of Confederate Lt. Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson from its place in front of barracks.

Cast in bronze by Sir Moses Ezekiel, a member of the VMI Class of 1866 who fought at the Battle of New Market on May 15, 1864, the life-size statue of Jackson had stood in that spot ever since it was placed there in 1912.

The Jackson statue is a replica of another that stands outside the state capitol in Charleston, West Virginia, Jackson’s home state. That statue, which was commissioned by the West Virginia chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, was erected in 1910 and still stands today, although calls for its removal have become louder over the past year.

A crowd of approximately 2,000 attended the June 19, 1912, dedication ceremony of VMI’s



The statue of Confederate Lt. Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson, depicting Jackson at the 1863 Battle of Chancellorsville, is the work of Sir Moses Ezekiel, VMI Class of 1866—VMI File Photo by Kelly Nye.

statue, including Jackson’s widow, Anna, and a number of Confederate veterans who had served under Jackson, some of whom had been cadets while he was teaching at the Institute. Giving a 60-plus-page speech that day was Col. Roger P. Chew, VMI Class of 1862, who had fought with Jackson’s army during the Valley Campaign.

The Jackson statue was the second sculpture by Ezekiel, a classically trained sculptor who trained in Berlin and Rome, to arrive at the Institute, as he also created *Virginia Mourning Her Dead*, the sculpture which is now in front of Nichols Engineering Building. That sculpture, an allegorical representation of the Commonwealth of Virginia despairing over her sons who had died at New Market, was placed in front of barracks when it arrived in 1903 and was moved to its current location when the Jackson statue arrived.

The timing of removal and new home for the Jackson statue had not been announced at the time of print for the December *Institute Report*. ❄

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