

Profiles in Leadership: Pete Alvarez '79

- By Cadet Andrew Weston '24

Leadership is an aspect of the Virginia Military Institute's foundation that has culminated in countless alumni, such as George C. Marshall, who have exhibited this quality, recognized all the way to the national stage. There is no doubt that VMI's expertise in molding citizen soldiers comes to define the legacy of the Institute serving the nation and the communities of the United States. One such alumni, Mr. Pete Alvarez, VMI Class of 1979, has built upon this legacy by earning the Career Intelligence Medal, one of the Central Intelligence Agency's highest awards for career service. His career of service and achievement would come to be defined by his lessons learned throughout his career, and especially those during his time attending VMI. What lessons can the Corps of Cadets learn from Mr. Alvarez's exceptional career? What held him to live by the slogan "You may be whatever you resolve to be"?

Mr. Alvarez was familiar with the military and VMI growing up. With his father serving in the Army, Mr. Alvarez soon came face-to-face with the Institute at the age of eleven, while his father, a senior instructor in the Army ROTC detachment, taught cadets and future platoon leaders of his experiences in the Vietnam War. Inspired by the uniforms and mystique of VMI, Mr. Alvarez knew he would forge his own path in the United States military just like his father, unaware that his aspirations would land him right back at VMI in the years to come. Constantly moving all his life, Mr. Alvarez soon found himself applying to the United States Military Academy from the Panama Canal Zone, which at the time was still a US territory. While he was not accepted, he still maintained a desire to serve, so, like many cadets, he decided on a military school that was able to offer much more: the Virginia Military Institute.

Leaving his family in another part of the world and entering as a minority, Mr. Alvarez matriculated in 1975, facing more challenges than some of his Brother Rats. However, he entered with experience many did not have, including the ability to adapt by virtue of being a military brat. Always being the new kid at school allowed him to hit the ground running, whether he liked it or not. With no roots and a general overview of the ratline from childhood, Mr. Alvarez adjusted to reality and tested his resilience during the ratline. Soon, Mr. Alvarez would break out, and go on to

lead future rats as an Echo Company ranker, achieving the ranks of Echo Company 1st Sergeant and Platoon Leader. Besides learning to "run for the rack," Mr. Alvarez also wanted to try the different flavors VMI had to offer. He learned many lessons while acting as the president for the International Students Society and working on The Bomb staff, as well as being the managing editor of his class's Ring Figure magazine. Mr. Alvarez reflected that all of these things were done because he wanted them to remind him of what he did after he left.

In terms of how Mr. Alvarez would come to serve his country, his idea was to become an Army aviator, looking to VMI's aviation program with the University of Virginia with high aspirations. Just as he had done before attending VMI, he was forced to adapt when the aviation program was canceled before he could even get a taste. With this, Mr. Alvarez changed course once again, leading him to resolve to become an intelligence officer. Upon graduating from VMI with a degree in history, Mr. Alvarez was a different man. VMI prepared him for the future by imbedding self-confidence, pride in his resilience, clarity in action, resolve for his future, and humility in his life. All of these would come to define his career. Mr. Alvarez was recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) upon graduating from Fort McClellan's Military Police Officer Basic Course.

Mr. Alvarez would make great strides in his career serving the intelligence community of the United States. After four years serving in the United States Army Reserves and National Guard as a military police officer and then a counterintelligence officer, he would transition to the Naval Reserves as an Air Intelligence Officer. Here, he would find a new passion for intelligence work for the next 12 years. He served as a watch analyst in the Pentagon's National Military Joint Intelligence Center, the Intelligence Plot for the Chief of Naval Operations, and the order-of-battle cell at the Atlantic Command in Norfolk. Mr. Alvarez recalled fondly his three-year tour with VFP-206, the Navy's last RF-8G photo reconnaissance squadron that included a deployment aboard the USS Eisenhower in 1985.

However, Mr. Alvarez would come to retire from the military after his distinguished service with very little transition adjustments. Working for the CIA while also serving as a military reservist blended his national security



Alvarez with BRs – Class of '79 BRs Bob Morris, Frank Jester, Eric Schwarz with Mr. Alvarez at a retirement with a picture of scuba diving at Guantanamo Bay Cuba. Photo Courtesy of the CIA

work with support for the warfighter. Highlights from his CIA career include a tour as the Deputy National Intelligence Officer for Conventional Military Issues where he coordinated Intelligence Community assessments on global military issues. He then served as a Presidential Daily Briefer, compiling daily, high-level all source information and analysis of national security issues and delivering it to top policymakers including the Vice President of the United States as well as the Top Four leaders at the Pentagon. His last assignment would be to the Sherman Kent School for Intelligence Analysis as an instructor and course director. Here, his work in the CIA and his lessons from his history major at VMI would be used to influence the legacy of CIA analysis after 9/11, designing and leading a program strengthening analytical capabilities for the future.

This is who Mr. Alvarez was, what he did. These are not what he wishes to pass onto the corps, however. There was a reason Mr. Alvarez was awarded the Career Intelligence Medal upon his retirement, and it was the lessons of leadership and perseverance he learned throughout his time at VMI, and his career.

Firstly, despite debate swirling around post this past year, Mr. Alvarez never held feelings of contempt for the Institute even when he experienced forms of persecution. Mr. Alvarez said: "I dealt with it the best I could and knew to suck it up most of the time." But he also stressed the importance of knowing the point where sucking it up is not

necessary. Whenever Mr. Alvarez felt a harassing individual had gone too far, he used the VMI chain of command and the individual was disciplined to his satisfaction, more times than not. The point being stressed in Mr. Alvarez's experience is yes, there will be people who look down upon you for the way you are, that is life and sometimes we must learn to take it. Yet, Mr. Alvarez wants every cadet to know that there is a threshold where someone's inappropriate actions are unwarranted. During those times it is important to use the proper means to deal with these persecutions.

Going through the Institute taught Mr. Alvarez the importance of being flexible with your leadership style, for there is more than one way to lead. As a ranker, Mr. Alvarez had a hand in molding ratlines, directing, and teaching the rats each year. Yet, it was the distinct difference between directing and teaching that influenced Alvarez the most. Occasionally, whether during his ratline or after, Mr. Alvarez saw some members of cadre focusing too much on directing, yelling, being aggressive, that rats did not learn anything by contempt for them. This was not leadership to Mr. Alvarez and motivated him to be a better cadre member for the rats. Mr. Alvarez recognized there was a time to be stern and direct rats, but more often was the time to be firm and teach rats to become better. Leadership is more than just criticism; it is about constructive criticism.

As a second classman and the 1st



Alvarez Family at the CIA Wall of Honor wife Charolitte (L) and Daughter Gabriela Photo Courtesy of the CIA



Alvarez Retirement Ceremony Awards - Career Intelligence medal with flag flown over CAI HQ before retirement and certificate signed by Gen. Petraus. Photo Courtesy of the CIA

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Sergeant for Echo Company, Mr. Alvarez found dealing with the old corps required a different form of leadership. Mr. Alvarez recalls that during his time at VMI, the 1st Sergeant oversaw the guard roster that some upperclassmen were unhappy to fill. When a First would come to him upset to be on guard, Mr. Alvarez would sit him down and explain: “look, this is my job, and this is your responsibility.” As many leaders do, Mr. Alvarez found that explaining the why to others is important for them to accept your authority and leadership. Some Firsts were not content with Mr. Alvarez and would approach their brother rat company commander to avoid duty, only to hear the same thing Mr. Alvarez explained to them. As a leader, you also must know your job and its responsibilities well. Leadership is being able to persuade others to respect the authority of your responsibilities. If not, you risk making unnecessary enemies, something Mr. Alvarez learned you may have to face in the future.

Collaborating with others is a level of leadership as well. Mr. Alvarez learned this through his efforts as President in the International Students Society (ISS) and beyond VMI. At VMI, Mr. Alvarez worked with students from across the world with different perspectives and experiences. Transitioning between the Army, Naval Reserves, and the CIA, Mr. Alvarez supervised teams of analysts working together to compose intelligence reports for policy makers. Learning to be a leader is knowing how to work well with others with different objectives, perspectives, experiences, because you cannot be a leader, or if you are not a leader do your job well, without collaboration.

Advising the upper levels of policy making as an intelligence officer taught Mr. Alvarez to not only build upon his lessons learned at VMI but also develop new ones. One he learned was about providing intelligence directly to key decision makers. Mr. Alvarez’s responsibility was briefing these officials who had very little time and patience for unsubstantiated assessments. Here Mr. Alvarez learned the value of communication. As Mr. Alvarez put it: “It was never how much you knew, it was how well you could convey what they needed to know.” Cadets should learn the value of quality over quantity in expressing themselves, because you may find yourself wasting someone’s time and your own if you are not concise and clear.

At the Sherman Kent School for Intelligence Analysis, Mr. Alvarez took his experiences in leadership during his career to teach future CIA analysts, and

now VMI cadets. Coming into the Kent School as an instructor, Mr. Alvarez put his teaching and persuasion skills to the test with each class of aspiring analysts. He found that younger students were easier to teach because they were eager about the course and integrating within the analytic culture. Yet, older students, sometimes retired military officers starting a second career, proved often troublesome in class. It was difficult, but Mr. Alvarez eventually could persuade these students that just because they had prior military experience did not mean they had the experience required to be a CIA analyst. This is something VMI always tries to teach, and which cadets should always remember: No matter your background, accomplishments, or experiences you will not know everything. Keep an open mind and be willing to learn from others.

Mr. Alvarez was always willing to share his personal experiences as an analyst with his students to impart lessons learned throughout a three-decade career. For example, he once was relating experiences to explain how the intelligence community gets a bad reputation for its failures because outsiders do not appreciate the complexity of predicting the future with often limited, ambiguous, and contradictory information. One student chimed into the discussion saying “Wow. You’ve had a lot of failures.” To which Mr. Alvarez quickly replied: “Yeah, and so will you.” The student was taken aback because she, like many students and cadets, thought she was invincible because of her youth. This is what both students and cadets must realize: we will undoubtedly make mistakes and should prepare to learn from them to avoid repeating past mistakes. Mr. Alvarez’s advice is simple: “Learn from past mistakes. If you make mistakes, make new ones, and then learn from those.”

The parting advice Mr. Alvarez has to offer goes to incoming rats, upperclassmen, and alumni is this: “Take the long view.” As a rat, during hellweek doing morning runs with his M14 or during his sweat parties, there came moments where Mr. Alvarez thought he could not last another minute. In the end, he persevered, and no matter what you go through you will survive too. How Mr. Alvarez survived was remembering those words in Jackson Arch: “You may be whatever you resolve to be.” Alvarez resolved to be an intelligence officer and more, and with clear ambition he learned that he could always make it if he just held on a little longer. Find what you resolve to be, look to the future, and do not get stuck worrying.



VMI First Class photo

Photo from Pete Alvarez



Brother Rats at the CIA seal



Alvarez with Former Secdef John Hamre

Photo courtesy of the CIA



Mr. Alvarez and his wife at the Nathan Hale Statue outside entrance to CIA HQ

Photo courtesy CIA

Letter from the Class of 2024 General Committee



- Class of '24 General Committee

Photo by Cadet A.K. Heidepriem '24

2024,
The time has finally come, we've done our time, and now we've earned the reward: The Ring! Each of us have dug deep to persevere to this moment, and we've seen others fail and falter, unable to make it to this momentous occasion in our cadetships. This is something to

celebrate. Let the accomplishment of the ring serve as a reminder of how hard we've worked to get here and let us harden like the metal rings to finish our cadetships with all of the effort that we have.

Great work, RAH '24!

Ring Figure Schedule

- By The Cadet Staff

With the chaotic anticipation of Ring Figure, there are a multitude of events to be aware of. In order to mitigate the confusion of all attending guests, you'll find a brief summary of the events of the momentous weekend below:

Event: Class Supper

Date: 17 November 2022

Time: 1830-2000

Description: The Class of 2024 will come together to receive their Combat Rings and enjoy a joyous dinner with the men and women they have prospered beside for 2 years.

Event: Family Brunch

Date: 18 November 2022

Time: 1030-1145

Description: Families and friends will have the opportunity to join their Cadets in a 'Five-Star' meal provided by Crozet Hall. Crozet staff will pull out all the stops, so make sure to enjoy it.

Event: Ring Figure Presentation

Date: 18 November 2022

Time: 1300-1500

Description: Once again, the Class of 2024 will be rewarded for their accomplishments and publicly receive their formal rings in view of their families and friends in Cameron Hall. Ring Figure is this year!

Event: Ring Blessing

Date: 18 November 2022

Time: 1520-1630

Description: Should they choose, the Class of '24 will have the opportunity to bless their Ring by a member of their chosen religion in JM Hall.

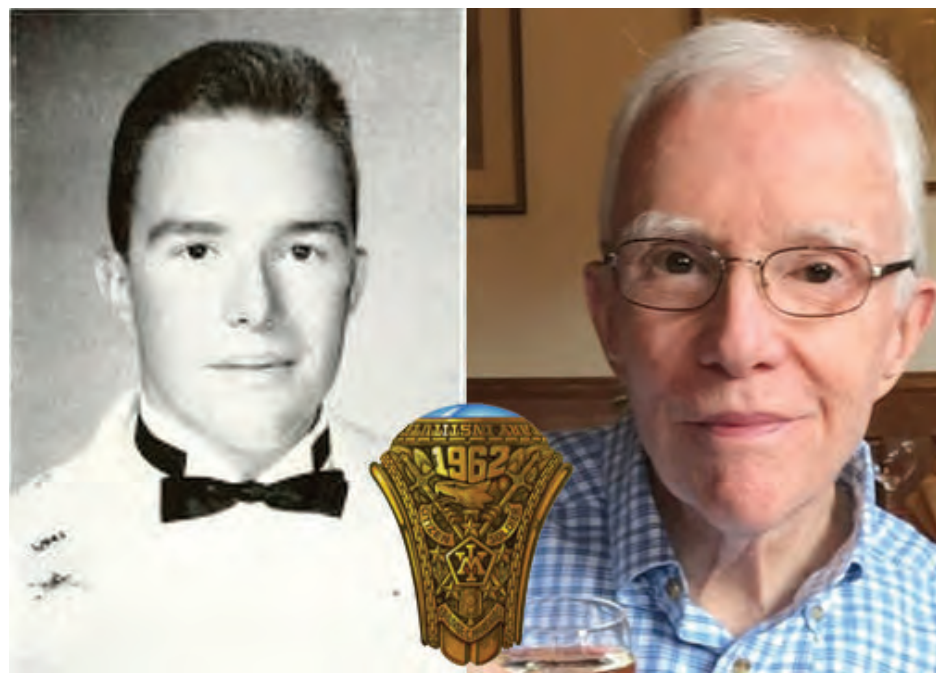
Event: Ring Figure Ball

Date: 18 November 2022

Time: 1900-2200

Description: To end the night, the 2/C will have the opportunity to spend the evening celebrating with their Brother Rats, families, friends, and dates.

The '24 Ring Committee, VMI '62, and the Cadet Foundation Uphold the Brother Rat Spirit



Sam Clement '62

Photo by VMI Archives and Clement Family

- By The Cadet Staff

Recently, *The Cadet* was made aware that there were members of the Class of 2024 who were unable to pay the fees of their Class Rings. Concerned with the possibility of the Cadets not receiving their rings, the organization reached out to the Chairman of the Ring Committee, Cadet Bryson Minear '24. It was due to the efforts of the entire '24 Ring Figure Committee paired with the Class of '62, that \$11,000 in funds was provided to the Cadets who required assistance. This act was an extraordinary demonstration of the Brother Rat spirit that is essential to life at VMI and one that allowed these Cadets the opportunity to receive their Ring with the rest of their class. The Brother Rat spirit is core to the VMI ethos and has been what's made the Virginia Military

Institute (VMI) a place of honor since 1839. What makes it unique, is how the VMI Family, consisting of alumni, Cadets and parents come together in times of one another's need. And this example of the BR spirit is no exception.

In 1966, according to one alumnus, the cost for a pre-paid class ring was \$64.00. Upon receiving their rings in November 1966 each cadet received a \$4.00 rebate. Even accounting for the rise in gold prices, the base Josten's cost for the minimum 10K, 28 DWT weight ring at \$1,359.00 is a heavy price to pay. Raise the Ring's dimensions to 18K in 44 DWT weight and the price soars to a minimum of \$3,638.00. With VMI tuition at \$38,588 for in-state Cadets and skyrocketing to \$60,396.00 for out-of-

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Air Force Commissions

- By The Cadet Staff

Air Force Commissions

Earlier this year, VMI Cadets commissioning into the United States Air Force received their AFSC (Air Force Special Codes). These 1st Classmen have worked tirelessly throughout their cadetship to compete for the opportunity to serve in their specific community. On behalf of *The Cadet*, I would like to congratulate the following Cadets on their success here at VMI and wish them good luck in their future with the United States Air Force!

Aircraft Maintenance:

1/C Jason Lerner

Civil Engineers:

1/C Jack Cross

1/C Isaiah Umpa

Combat Systems Officers (CSO):

1/C William Cameron

1/C Rory Groat

1/C Noelle Heilpern

1/C Isaac Kisling

Cybersecurity Operations:

1/C Thomas Champion

1/C Connor Holland

Developmental Engineers:

1/C Heather Crum

1/C Binh Tran



Force Support:

1/C Tralani Simpson

Intelligence:

1/C Sibi Bagavathy

1/C Fatoumata Diallo

Pilots:

1/C Philip Argauer

1/C Wesley Barbara

1/C Dylan Jacobik

Remotely Piloted Aircraft:

1/C Alan Arnesen

1/C Christopher Jannell

Security Forces:

1/C Cassidy Dufour

Space Operations:

1/C Josephine Freeman

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The VMI Ethics Team Earns a Spot at Nationals

- By Cadet Gabriele Woodward '24

This past weekend, the VMI Ethics Team competed at the 2022 Mid-Atlantic Regional IEB Competition at the University of Georgia-Gainesville. The team consisted of CIC Harris Burton '23, ACIC Riley Shultz '24, James Ellison '23, Spencer Greaney '23, Gabi Woodward '24, and Riley Malone '2-5. Guiding the team were Col. Patrick Looney and Dr. Duncan Richter, who accompanied the team to their competition and even participated as a judge.

After several months of intense preparation, a 3-hour delayed flight due to Hurricane Nicole, and several more hours of driving, the team was finally ready to go head-to-head against some of the best teams in the region. On 12 November 2022, the team arrived bright and early and would not leave the conference center until the sun had left the sky. During this time, the cadets were involved in 4 rounds of intense debate

and conversation regarding 8 different cases of ethical dilemma. Each one differed in its difficulty, issue addressed, and possible solutions. However, the team persevered and ended with 2 wins, 1 loss, and 1 tie against Coastal Carolina University, Augusta University, University of North Carolina, and Georgia State University, respectively.

It seems their hard work paid off, for the team earned a spot in the Semi-Finals rounds for the first time in VMI History. They went head-to-head against the University of Mississippi, but fell short and lost by only a few points. Regardless, the team proved themselves well and will be traveling to Oregon to challenge the best teams in the Nation. However, it is important to recognize that this would not have been possible without Cadets Ellison and Greaney's constant boosting of morale. All in all, the team has much to be proud of and is expected to continue to be a tough challenger in the future. After all, they have won more matches than their football team.



Photo by Cadet Gabi Woodward '24

(From left to right) Cadets Riley Shultz '24, Harris Burton '23, Riley Malone '2-5, James Ellison '23, Spencer Greaney '23, and Gabi Woodward '24 at the competition. Not Pictured: Dr. Duncan Richter.

The Class of 2024 Leads Staffing for a Successful Institute Society Dinner



Some of the Institute Society Dinner volunteers, from left to right: William Torres '24, David Clements '24, John Lightfoot IV '24, Dylan Palmer '24, Cole Cathcart '24, Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, Dr. John D. Anthony '62, Miles Johnson '24, Noah McHugh '24, Zhenhong Tan '24, Tanner Nelson '24, Jack McCown '24, and Mark Shelton '24. Photo by Cadet Staff

- By Cadet Dylan Palmer '24

Founders Day festivities continued into a rainy evening for members of the Institute Society. The VMI Foundation hosted the annual Institute Society Dinner on the night of November 11th in Marshall Hall's Hall of Valor. Guests heard remarks from GEN J.H. Binford Peay III '62, superintendent emeritus, and MAJ GEN. Cedric T. Wins '85, superintendent. The event was a success, and the volunteering cadets ensured that the event went on without a hitch.

Cadet Cole Cathcart, the Class of 2024 General Committee President, organized cadet volunteers to assist staff in waiting tables, and carrying out valet and coat check services for the guests. Three cadets volunteered to head each of these operations: Jake Kleinschuster '24, Cadet-in-Charge of Valet Parking, Noah McHugh '24, Cadet-in-Charge of Wait Staff, and Dylan Palmer '24, Cadet-in-Charge of Coat Check.

As guests arrived on Post, they were graciously greeted by cadets. Following this, the valets carefully parked their vehicles and escorting cadets assisted with the rainy weather by offering an umbrella and comfortable conversation. As the guests approached the doors of Marshal Hall, they were once again greeted by doormen, who held open the doors and provided brief instructions to later be met by Coat Check. Lastly, they would be ushered into the Hall of Valor to mingle with other guests and Cadets, while yet other Cadets served their tables. Every step of the way, VMI Cadets across all classes happily served the honored guests of the Institute Society.

It is important to note, that Cadet volunteers were served leftover prepared meals from the dinner, meaning that almost every volunteer got their fill of pizza, dessert, steak and mashed potatoes!

In the final events of the night, guests

The Marine Corps and Navy Birthday Ball



2/C MIDN Justin Faught '24 with Capt. Mark Reaser, AMOI for Marine Corps ROTC. Photo by 2/C MIDN Connor Carroll '24.

- By Cadet Patrick Sexton '24

The Marine Corps Ball was held on Friday, November 4th in celebration of the Navy and Marine Corps' 248th and 247th birthdays respectively. The celebration was held at the Evans Dining Hall, that was generously provided by Washington and Lee University. 1/C and 2/C VMI Midshipmen, as well as many VWIL (Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership) and Mary Baldwin cadets, were invited to join in the celebration. In addition to the Cadets, the Navy and

Marine Corps ROTC staff, several VMI alumni who served or are still serving in the Navy and Marine Corps, and several members of the Commandant Staff appeared to celebrate the two branches and welcome the distinguished guest of Honor, Major General William J. Bowers.

The ceremony was very professional and grandiose, but not without the proper and extensive preparation needed to make it so. A select group of VMI's 2/C Midshipmen had

GEN Peay Receives New Market Medal on Founder's Day

- By The Cadet staff

This Founder's Day, Friday November 11, 2022, after a long delay and a great deal of strong "never say die!" advocacy led by the VMI Class of '62 and their supporters, GEN J.H. Binford Peay III '62, superintendent emeritus of the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), received the New Market Medal.

The award comes after the Board of Visitors (BOV) voted unanimously to award him with VMI's highest honor. The board approved the award based on how GEN Peay's "commitment and leadership to the Institute exhibited throughout his cadetship, his exemplary military service, and time as superintendent made him a clear choice and deserving of this recognition."

According to VMI's Press release and the words of Tom Watjen '76, president of the VMI Board of Visitors, "A lifetime of service, highlighted by a compassionate leadership style and a vision for growth and improvement, General Peay has impacted generations of individuals and thousands of cadets. His life serves as a powerful reminder to our cadets and the community of the impact of the VMI experience. It's an honor to present him with the New Market Medal. His legacy will live on at the Institute."

Alongside his Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering, Peay was a recipient of the prestigious Society of Cincinnati Medal at his graduation in 1962. His time at VMI saw heavy involvement within the Corps as a quarterback of the Keydet football team, a member of the Honor Court, and a battalion commander. GEN Peay continued his success at VMI as an alum, commissioning as a second lieutenant of Field Artillery in 1962 with initial assignments in Germany and Fort Carson, Colorado. He served as aide-de-camp to the Commanding General, 5th Infantry Division, and two tours in Vietnam. GEN Peay also commanded the 101st Airborne Division in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in the Persian Gulf. As a Lieutenant General he was the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, and Senior Army Member, United States Military Committee from June 1991 until March 1993. Peay was promoted to General on March 26, 1993 and appointed as the Army's twenty-fourth Vice Chief of Staff. He retired as Commander in Chief, United States Central Command in 1997, serving a total of 35 years. He holds a master's degree from George Washington University, and is also a graduate of the United States Army Command and General Staff College and the United States Army War College. He was the Institute's 14th superintendent for 7 years from 2003-2020, making him the third-longest serving superintendent. He was also the primary force behind VMI's Vision 2039, a strategic plan to improve the physical aspects of VMI while continuing to support the growth of Cadets.

Besides his extraordinary service to country and college, he also pursued a life of service in the civilian sector. Following his retirement from the Army GEN Peay became a director at United Defense Industries (UDI) in 1997 and after BAE Systems purchased UDI in 2005, he was appointed to the board of BAE's North American subsidiary, BAE Systems Inc. GEN Peay later resigned in June 2003 from his board position to assume the position of Superintendent of

the Virginia Military Institute, returning to his alma mater and ushering in a well-known period of great development for the Institute.

During his acceptance speech for the New Market Medal, GEN. Peay imparted his concerns and his hope for VMI's future while complimenting the importance of the Corps of Cadets to VMI.

General Peay ended his remarks with this following advice and commentary:

First stay in your niche. What does that mean? It means a military school delivering the very best undergraduate degree in the nation whose curriculum and degrees are largely scientific in nature, that produces citizen soldiers within a four year ROTC regiment. That regiment participated in by the full Corps that VMI continues to be categorized and lead as one of the few Senior Military Colleges in the nation, and a leader in the Association of Military Colleges and Schools in the United States, short name AMCUS.

Thus maintaining that national reputation that recruits men and women of the highest quality who want this very different and special education. Short term recently is "Don't Do Ordinary", which produces leaders for all professions. That all cadets undergo the same regiment that stresses commonality of purpose and always with honor.

That the "M" and VMI stands for military, and this descriptor should be enforced whether you're commissioning or non-commission with pride.

For you see, my recollection is that over 60 years, every time that we have diminished, which we have, the M, the military aspect, we unknowingly introduced undesired challenges that arose years later. That we keep the three legs of the school in balance academic, military, and athletics. And I like to say with academics first among equal. That we have the very best instructors in small classroom settings.

Second, continue VMI's history of being well managed at all levels. Academics today is big business and schools and campuses are posts, are cities with all their requirements and complexities. And VMI is a small undergraduate college. It is public in nature. Its operational budgets are all, are always going to be tight. It is high expenses associated with 24/7 training and its excellence programs at all levels. Hiring the right people that enjoy being involved in this special education and the VMI and the Lexington environments that know their professions have a superb work ethic. I think that should be mandatory.

A broad span of control with clear responsibilities, tightly controlled budgets, solid benefits, splendid instruction, and good work areas. And we have, and we should always have the best retirement system and that will offset budget and morale issues that by nature, by nature, will periodically occur.

That is VMI's record over 180 years.

Third. History and tradition are foundational to performance, moral, and reputation of good military commands. And VMI cannot divorce itself from its long history. Rather, it should build on its history, achievements, and well deserved reputation in peace and war.



GEN J. H. Binford Peay III '62

Photo by VMI

And by their very nature and structure military schools across this nation, many of them model after the United States Military Academy at West Point and the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia. Many of these hundred or so military colleges and schools embrace that culture and traditions, which are forced multipliers to building strong character values, courage, discipline, leadership, and the best of citizenship.

As Preston, one of our founders said, and we all had to memorize. VMI produces citizen soldiers for the nation in times of deepest peril.

Fourth, institutional autonomy. Historically, Virginia has been committed to institutional autonomy with distinctive schools. With distinctive and strong Board of Visitors and their oversight.

However, this valued approach despite the national, respected reputation of Virginia colleges is being challenged. Not explicitly, I would say, but effectively. Driven by increased cost, voices calling for sameness with more courses directed by the state as approved for transfer credit. With students in larger number graduating from colleges in shorter time. Well, you see the VMI system, as you know, does not fit this model.

With its principle four year leader and class programs, its mandatory ROTC and demanding degrees, requiring the very best of foundational classes that are not always found in transfer courses. We must watch that over time. Such centralization, even if unintended, and I think some of it is unintended, does not diminish the strengths of the VMI educational experience.

We have to get this right. Short term thinking on this matter could be tragic.

There are two others I hope to develop and pass on to the current administration in later months for consideration. I will go into them today. A VMI role in the reserves and an approach to the NCAA athletic challenge.

In 2011, the day before graduation, a number of recent commissioned second lieutenants ensigns and Class leaders, as they were completing their cadetships and graduating to new challenges and far different lives they experienced in the past four years. Asked me for my description of best leaders. I, after a moment and pausing, I stated, quote, 'great leaders have vision. Are competent in their daily duty and care deeply about people. They exhibit a style of quiet excellence with no ego. A strong work ethic and steadiness under pressure. Character, and honor. Love of country and service describe their drive and inner strength.' End quote. I hope the Peays were able to impart that

to this school, this Corps cadets.

I've always believe that VMI is a national treasure. You know, more than ever, the nation today needs VMI graduates. I firmly believe that history will judge this period, these two past decades, and our historic institution most favorable. Thank you again for this honor today eternally for your friendship, your support of these many.

Wish you well. Farewell.

GEN Peay's awards and decorations include the Army Distinguished Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Silver Star, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with oak leaf clusters, the Bronze Star with three oak leaf clusters, and the Purple Heart. He has also received the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, several Air Medals, and the Army Commendation Medal. Additionally, he wore the Parachutist Badge, Ranger Tab, the Air Assault Badge, the Secretary of Defense Identification Badge, Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge, and the Army General Staff Identification Badge.

General Peay and his service record, both with the Army and in service to the Institute, are without a doubt impressive. Now, we are honored to have the opportunity to show our gratitude by presenting him the New Market Medal. Thank you for all you have done, GEN Peay. The Institute, and especially the Corps and *The Cadet*, wish you well going forward.

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The '24 Ring Committee and VMI '62 Uphold the Brother Rat Spirit

From A3

state cadets, the burden to afford the VMI experience has become difficult, if not crushing for some. Yet “the ring” remains the singular symbol of that experience and a cadet’s accomplishments. As such, the possibility of not receiving your ring is something that no cadet would wish on another.

To address this need, members of VMI '62 worked with The Cadet Foundation, the Class of '24 Ring Figure Committee, parents and other alumni/ae to ensure these Brother Rats keep their rings. Led by this year’s Ring Figure committee, enough money was raised to pay off all loans before Ring Figure!

Mr. Dan Prall '62 started the effort in honor of his roommate and Brother Rat Sam Clement '62 who passed away 11 August 2022 from complications arising from spinal surgery. Mr. Clement '62 himself had a hard road to VMI. His mother passed away when he was very young and his father, Navy Commodore Samuel Averett Clement Sr., passed away when Sam was only in the 6th grade after which he was adopted by his first cousin and moved to Winter Haven, Florida.

Sam returned to Virginia and earned his B.A. degree from the Virginia Military Institute, graduating with the highest honors in 1962 and where he was named Distinguished Military Student in his junior year. He was both the Editor-in-Chief of The Cadet and Chairman of the 1962 Ring Figure Committee. After graduation, Sam was commissioned in the Army and spent five years on active duty,

including a tour in Germany and Vietnam, earning a Bronze Star and separating as a Captain. He then studied Urban Planning at Cornell University before spending a number of years working for the City of Norfolk, Eastern Virginia Medical School, Virginia Health Care Association, and the Virginia Department of Health.

According to Mr. Clement’s Bomb, “Sam debuted at V.M.I knowing that he had made a wise choice from among the American Colleges and universities. (The fact that he became dubious of this initial choice is simply beside the point). The facts remain that Sam’s fine training and education during his younger formative years; his inherent ability to think clearly and concisely and his talent for mastery of any situation (except female) confronting him, have made him one of V.M.I’s better all-around cadets. From teaching engineers the use of slide rules to asterminding the publication of the school paper, one can see the fine shadow of talent that Sam casts. In it can be seen shades of an academically distinguished student, a fine journalist, a distinguished military student and a polished and outgoing individual, with a taste and a feel for the right things at the right time. Always cordial and keenly discerning. Sam has made himself what V.M.I likes to see in its men. He is and will continue to be an asset to his friends and society – even girls.”

Inspired by the initiators of the project, another group decided to take up a collection on their own. In spite of a

brief period of confusion, all funds needed were collected between the two efforts and passed to '24. Thus resulting in a full payoff of the loans. This work, initiated by The Cadet Foundation, Class of '62, and the initial group of dedicated parents led by the Burkes and the Porters whose Cadets are in the Class of '24, had a significant positive impact on both the Cadets in need and the entire Class of '24. Cadet Bryson Minear, Class of '24 Ring Figure Chair and his Ring Figure Committee coordinated the entire efforts. The Committee expressed its support and thanks saying:

On behalf of the great VMI Class of 2024, I would first like to say thank you to The Cadet Foundation, The Cadet newspaper and Mr. Dan Prall '62 for considering this opportunity. The Class is truly thankful for your support.

The few cadets who need the support are blessed for this chance to participate in Ring Figure because of your help. I want to give a special shout out to the class of 1962 for their support in our journey to wearing a VMI ring and hopefully one day entering the ranks of alumni far and wide. We're honored to carry on the legacy of your Brother Rat Sam Clement who was both the Editor-in-Chief of The Cadet and the Class of '61 Ring Figure Chairman. I also want to say that the class is honored to receive support from all alumni for our Ring Figure.

From the bottom of my heart, the Class of 2024 is one of the tightest classes on the hill currently and we are truly appreciative of all the help and support."

The Cadet remains proud of the Cadets and alumni of VMI who in all scenarios and struggles band together to assist however they can. Co Editor-in-Chief Cadet Russell Crouch '24 noted:

Being a part of The Cadet newspaper has been both a struggle and a privilege. Becoming the voice of the Corps is a goal that I continue to push the paper toward and comes with its privileges as well as responsibilities. A voice without action behind it is as useless as no voice at all. I hope that The Cadet newspaper can continue in its efforts to provide such a voice and to back Cadets through whatever means, regardless of the situation. It is always inspirational to see that others are like-minded and willing to uphold the values of service we have here at VMI. Thank you to all who were a part of this, your efforts never go unseen nor unappreciated."

The Cadet Foundation, Class of '62, and the Foundation's growing group of supporters, together with The Cadet are looking forward to continuing the Ring Project and working directly with alumni and the Corps leadership on more such projects in meeting the Foundation's mission to bring the VMI Family together. To the Class of 2024, congratulations!

The Cadet Foundation is a 501c3 founded by alumni and cadets. It has no paid employees and is completely independent of VMI and the VMI Alumni agencies. For more information and to donate visit www.cadetnewspaper.org

The Marine Corps and Navy Birthday Ball

From A4

been working for the past month to perfect the marching of the saber team and the cake guard. On the saber team were 2/C MIDN Calin Green, Jack Janson, Ryan O'Connor, Adam Gild, Joshua Pointer, Sebastian Ramirez, and Tanner Nelson. The cake was marched out according to Marine Corps tradition by 2/C MIDN Jeffery Stober, Justin Faught, Travis Northam, and Luke Tarbox. The adjutant for the event was 2/C MIDN Miles Johnson and the Master

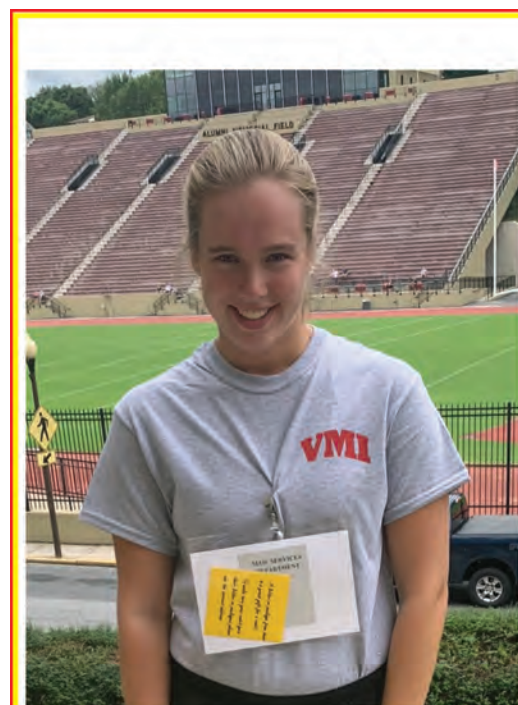
of Ceremonies was 2/C MIDN Addison Hagan, all of whom are Marine option Cadets. The VMI Color Staff ran the posting of the Colors and the VMI Brass Ensemble, led by Col. John Brodie, played for the ceremony. The increased involvement of Midshipmen in the ceremony provided an exceptional opportunity for these Cadets to contribute to the commemoration of their respective branches, and pay honors to the Navy and the Corps.

Following the posting of the colors and the ceremonial cake cutting,

Col. Travis L. Homiack, CO of the VMI NROTC Department, introduced the guest of honor, who then offered his own inspiring remarks. Afterwards, a video made by the Chief of Naval Operations and the Master Chief of the Navy was shown as they gave their birthday message. It was a message that is shared throughout the entirety of the Navy to demonstrate their appreciation for all sailors and thank them for their dedicated service. This was directly followed by the Marine Corps' birthday video, which included a tremendous example of

motivation from the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The video was well received and all were motivated to become Marines, even the current Navy option Midshipmen.

The night proceeded with an amazing dinner, several rounds of dancing, and wonderful conversation between all Midshipmen and esteemed guests. The Birthday Ball and its incredible celebration is always a highlight for the NROTC department and this year, it was one to remember.



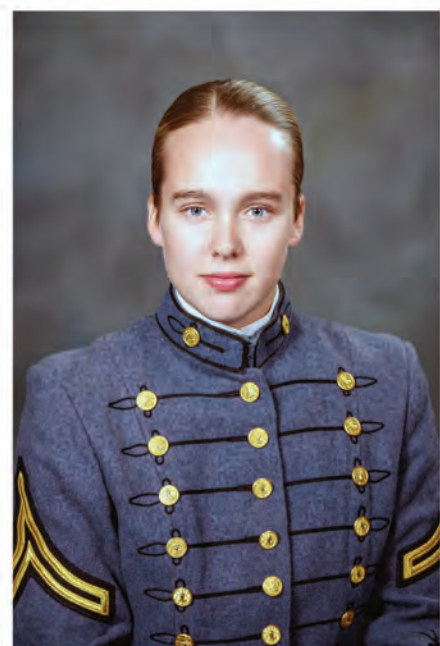
AK Heidepriem '24

You made it from Rat to Ring Figure!

We are So Proud of You and all that You have Accomplished!!

We Love You!!

Mom, Dad, William, Charlie, Pop Pop and Todd



Reserve your space for Breakout and other celebrations today!
Contact us at: info@cadetnewspaper.org