

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)
NUMBER 36)

26 September 2023

VMI Memorial, Commemorative Plaque, and Statue Policy

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish standard procedures and guidelines for the design and placement of commemorative plaques and statues on the VMI Post as well as providing a review and approval process for these memorials, perpetual or living (such as trees).

Preamble: The Committee is charged with ensuring that all memorialization requests are carefully evaluated. Only those meeting established criteria are recommended for approval. Memorial Gardens will remain the focal point for recognizing alumni who have died in the service of their country. Similar care must be taken when evaluating commemorative proposals for inside buildings and other locations around Post. Mindful to avoid the undesirable proliferation of plaques, monuments, and other forms of recognition, the Committee must review proposals in the context of lasting merit and contribution to the environment of the Post.

Scope: This policy will apply to all memorials, commemorative plaques, and statues located at VMI.

1. **Procedure:** Requests for memorials, (including living memorials), commemorative plaques or statues will be forwarded to the Chief of Staff. Upon receiving a request, the Chief of Staff will forward it to the Memorials Committee for review. The Committee will recommend action to the Chief of Staff. Its recommendation will include location and guidelines for the design. The Physical Plant will be responsible for ordering and installing approved plaques.
2. **Location:** Plaques may be placed in Memorial Gardens, inside VMI buildings, on benches or by living memorials. Because of the historic nature of VMI buildings or their designation as National Landmark Buildings, no plaques may be placed on their exterior walls, except as indicated in Section 7.
3. Requests for commemoration must include the following information:
 - a. Biographical information of the person being commemorated
 - b. Reason for commemoration (service to VMI, service to the Cadet Corps, etc.)
 - c. A design concept that complies with GO 42 and is approved by the director of Communications & Marketing
 - d. Requested location
 - e. Sponsor's information, including contact information and connection to the person being commemorated
 - f. Source of funds
4. The criteria for placing memorial plaques on the south-facing walls of Memorial Garden are as follows:
 - a. The honoree must be an alumnus/alumna who has either died while enrolled in the Corps of Cadets or died of combat-connected causes while serving on active duty with the armed forces of the United States. With the Superintendent's concurrence, an alumnus/alumna who has died while on active duty with the armed forces of a nation closely allied with the United States can also be honored with a plaque.
 - b. A plaque commemorating an individual person may not exceed 150 square inches.
 - c. The size of a plaque commemorating a group will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - d. The plaque must be a bas relief in cast bronze, tastefully designed, and suitably patinized.

5. The criteria for placing commemorative plaques inside of VMI buildings are as follows:
 - a. The dimensions of the plaque will be determined by the limitations of the proposed location.
 - b. The plaque must be a bas relief in cast bronze or other suitable material, tastefully designed, and suitably patinized.
 - c. Commemorative plaques will honor those who have:
 - i. Provided exemplary service to the Corps of Cadets, as determined by the Superintendent. Examples of exemplary service may include longevity of service, administrative or supervisory support, or financial support.
 - ii. Performed a significant act or actions that exemplify the concept of the VMI Citizen-Soldier.
6. The criteria for placing commemorative plaques on benches or by living memorials are as follows:
 - a. The dimensions of the plaque will be determined by the limitations of the proposed location.
 - b. The plaque must be a bas relief in cast bronze or other suitable material, tastefully designed, and suitably patinized.
 - c. Commemorative plaques will honor those who have:
 - i. Provided exemplary service to the Corps of Cadets or the Institute, as determined by the Superintendent. Examples of exemplary service may include longevity of service, administrative or supervisory support, or financial support.
 - ii. Performed a significant act or actions that exemplify the concept of the VMI Citizen-Soldier.
 - d. Living memorials will be limited to new trees, as approved by the Chief of Staff or Superintendent with input from the Physical Plant. A small plaque meeting the same criteria in 6a-b above to be placed at the base of the tree is permitted. Memorials should not be placed on existing trees.
7. The criteria for placing "War Memorial" plaques on or inside Barracks Arches will be controlled by VMI with recommendations by the Memorials Committee. The purpose of these plaques will be to recognize those alumni who have died in combat while in the service of their country. The approval for the naming of buildings, hallways or other main structures will reside solely with the Superintendent. The Superintendent will consult with the Board of Visitors and the Alumni Agencies, as appropriate.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT:

John M. Young
Colonel, Virginia Militia
Chief of Staff

DIST: E, Cadets
OPR: CoS