VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

The Institute Report

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Andrew Young Receives Daniels Award

By Sherri Tombarge
Special Correspondent

Andrew Young, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and top aide to Martin Luther King Jr. during the American Civil Rights movement, received the second Jonathan Myrick Daniels '61 Humanitarian Award in a public ceremony held in Cameron Hall on March 23.

The award recognizes individuals who have made significant personal sacrifices to protect or improve the lives of others. Young was also honored in a parade following the presentation of the award.

"[Young] was very involved in the Civil Rights movement, he is an ordained minister, and has worked his entire life in humanitarian efforts," said Col. Michael Strickler '71, executive assistant to the superintendent and secretary to the Board of Visitors. "I think he's the perfect choice."

Giving the invocation at the presentation ceremony was retired Episcopal priest the Rev. John Jordan '51 of Virginia Beach. The Rev. Judy Upham of Binghamton, N.Y., who was with Daniels at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., and worked with Daniels in Alabama encouraging voter registration, gave the benediction.

Daniels, valedictorian of the VMI Class of 1961, was arrested during that voter registration drive. He was shot and killed while pushing African American teenager Ruby Sales out of danger shortly after he had been released from jail.

Sales, who now lives in Washington, D.C., attended the ceremony, as did Richard Morrisroe of East Chicago, Ind. Morrisroe was critically injured during the same incident while pushing black teenager Joyce Bailey to safety.

Superintendent Gen. J. H. Binford Peay III '62 introduced Ambassador Young, and G. Gilmer Minor III, '63, presented the award, a replica in bronze of "Virginia Mourning Her Dead" on a black marble base. He also presented Young with a $25,000 honorarium to be donated to a nonprofit organization of Young's choice.

A native of New Orleans, Young earned a bachelor of divinity degree from Hartford Theological Seminary in 1955, became an ordained minister, and worked on drives to register Black voters. Named executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1964, Young was with King when he was shot in 1968. Young was Georgia's first African-American congressman since Reconstruction and served until 1977, when he resigned when he was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to be ambassador to the United Nations. He served as mayor of Atlanta during the 1980s and was co-chairman of the committee that brought the 1996 Summer Olympics to Atlanta.

Young is a founding principal and the chairman of GoodWorks International, which helps form strategic partnerships between global corporations and local decision makers in the emerging markets of Africa and the Caribbean. He has headed numerous missions to Africa and speaks and attends conferences on global affairs. He serves on the boards of directors of numerous businesses and organizations, including Atlanta Falcons, Cox Communications, The Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change and the United Nations Foundation.

Taifi Named 'Man of Year' by Moroccan Publication

By Wendy Lovell
Special Correspondent

Dr. Mohamed Taifi, instructor of Arabic and French at VMI, was honored last December by the Moroccan national newspaper *Imazighen* as its man of the year.

"I was very happy to be recognized by *Imazighen* for the work I've done in the field of education, as well as representing Morocco in different parts of the world," said Taifi. "I also am honored to be

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Editor Raises Level of Foreign Policy Discussion at VMI

By Wendy Lovell
Special Correspondent

Talking about world affairs is nothing new for senior international studies majors at the Virginia Military Institute unless, of course, they're discussing them with one of the nation's leading foreign policy journalists.

Dr. Fareed Zakaria, editor of *Newsweek International* and host of PBS' *Foreign Exchange*, spoke with more than 50 cadets during an informal, question-and-answer session following his speech to the entire Corps of Cadets on Feb. 16. His public talk entitled "China's Rise: the World's Biggest Story," was part of the Institute's Distinguished Speaker Series.

Dr. Fareed Zakaria elaborates on foreign policy issues with Cadet Blair Zaremba '07 during a question-and-answer session with cadets. – VMI Photo by Kevin Remington.

Zakaria told the VMI community that advances in broadband and the Internet are changing the way people around the world do business and communicate, and China is taking advantage of this change to expand its economy and global position of power.

"For nearly 30 years, China has experienced economic growth of 10 percent each year," said Zakaria. "It's a monumental shift that's caused a fundamental change in the world, and at the end of the day science and technology are ways to produce such economic growth."

Zakaria cited WalMart as a perfect example of how China affects U.S. businesses. Of the company's 6,000 suppliers, he said 5,000 are based in China. Also, the number of Chinese students who are becoming engineers is growing rapidly while in the United States the number is decreasing.

"China faces obstacles in moving from one of the richest countries in the world to the richest, but it's possible," he said. "The Chinese challenge is a unique one for the U.S. How can we stay competitive economically and technologically? We can't shut the world out. China is a military and political challenge, also, because we don't have a good sense of their intentions."

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'Man of Year'

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Dr. Taifi listens to cadets in one of his classes. – File photo.

teaching here at VMI."

Taifi and his wife, Khadija Bentouhami, began teaching Arabic at VMI in 2002, and their course load has grown quickly to nine courses between them this academic year.

During his career in education, Taifi has taught French language and literature at the post graduate level at Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah University in Fez, Morocco; and was a visiting professor at the University of Paris-Sorbonne; director of doctoral research at the Hassan II University in Casablanca, Morocco; and dean of the faculty at Mohammed I University in Oujda, Morocco. He has published more than 40 articles; one novel, *La source enragée*; and a monograph on the African novel in French, *Le Refus ambigu*.

Taifi is president of the Association des Facultés et Etablissements de Lettres et Sciences Humaines (AFELSH) of Francophone universities, a member of many organizations in higher education, as well as a permanent representative of Morocco to state assemblies in Québec and Ottawa, Canada; Paris and Avignon, France; Dakar, Senegal; Neutchatel, Switzerland; Bucharest, Romania; Beirut, Lebanon; Abidjan, Ivory Coast; Cotonou, Benin; Libreville, Gabon; and Baton Rouge, La.

The French Republic awarded him the Palmes Academiques for a lifetime of service to literature, education and the French language and culture.

The Institute Report

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Former Quarterback, Congressman Speaks to Cadets

By Wendy Lovell
Special Correspondent

Former Oklahoma Congressman J.C. Watts Jr. - VMI Photo by Kevin Remington.

Former Oklahoma Congressman J.C. Watts Jr. drew upon his experience as an athlete and politician to share his thoughts on leadership and to challenge the Institute's 1,300-member Corps of Cadets to help set a vision for the nation to follow.

In his speech on March 9, the last in this year's Distinguished Speakers Series, Watts said the nation has moved away from the model of the World War II generation that focused on hard work, sacrifice, and commitment. He warned the cadets that the United States is facing serious challenges and needs its political leaders to look beyond the next election and on to the next generation.

"It's easy to believe that America is falling apart," he said. "We've become so politically correct that we've lost our convictions. The ideologies of 'anything goes' and 'character doesn't matter' are wrong."

A former minister, Watts stressed the importance of faith as a part of the solution.

"Let's not make the mistakes of raising taxes and cutting benefits, defining marriage outside of one man and one woman, not defending ourselves in a time of war, and taking God out of the public square," he said. "When evil people say they are going to do evil things to the United States, we need a leader who will take them seriously. Everything rises and falls on leadership."

Watts encouraged the cadets to help right these wrongs by serving as leaders in their future professions, the military, their communities and in their personal relationships.

Following the speech, Watts met with a group of about 30 psychology majors and honors students. His visit had a personal connection for Cadet Ian Foley '06, an Oklahoma native who welcomed him to the question-and-answer session. Foley's father played football with Watts at the University of Oklahoma and used sports as way to teach his son about self-control and leadership.

Watts explained to the group how the discipline, sacrifice and hard work he employed as a quarterback at Oklahoma and as a professional player in the Canadian Football League played a large role in his success as a congressman and now as a consultant in Washington, D.C.

"My childhood in rural Oklahoma and my athletic background have been more influential in my work as a politician than my party," said Watts, a Republican and chair of GOPAC, the political action committee that trains new candidates. "I'm more concerned about training leaders than training Republicans. As Abraham Lincoln said, 'He who serves his party best, serves his country first.' "

Watts is chairman of the J.C. Watts Companies, an international business and public affairs consulting firm. He co-founded and co-chairs the Coalition for AIDS Relief in Africa and serves on the board of the Corporate Council on Africa.

Alumni Polled for Summer Internship Opportunities

Courtesy of the Alumni Association

The Academic Affairs Committee of the Alumni Association is contacting alumni from all academic disciplines in an effort to identify research summer internships. Research at VMI is defined in its broadest sense, embracing both the application of professional expertise and critical investigation conducted according to traditional standards.

As more cadets become involved and as more departments at the Institute are requiring individual professional experience, there is a growing need for additional internship opportunities in the existing Summer Undergraduate Research Institute. The SURI is a program through which cadets and faculty mentors are supported in research projects by the Jackson-Hope Fund of the VMI Foundation and other funds. As always, it is difficult for cadets to find time during the normal academic year to carry out research projects.

Summer internships have always been an option for cadets seeking professional experience. A summer internship development information letter has been sent to the class agents for the Classes of 1965 to 1995 and to all chapter presidents.

Alumni who know of internship opportunities are asked to go to www.vmi.edu/internship and complete the on-line internship information form to assist the Institute in identifying more summer internship opportunities for cadets. The data obtained will go into a searchable internship database, and will be made available to academic departments and individual cadets.

If you don't have access to a computer or prefer to fill out your internship information form via fax or mail, please contact the Career Services Office by E-mail at careerservices@vmi.edu or by phone at (540) 464-7560.

Riester Tapped to Head Summer Transition Program

By Wendy Lovell
Special Correspondent

Capt. John E. "Ned" Riester Jr. '78 has been selected to direct VMI's Summer Transition Program (STP), July 5-29. STP is a voluntary program designed to improve the academic and physical fitness of incoming cadets.

"I think the program is a good opportunity for our cadets to prepare for life at VMI, and I'm looking forward to leading STP this summer," said Riester, who has taught civil and environmental engineering at VMI for 13 years and is the superintendent's representative to the Honor Court. "I typically spend part of the summer at a program in Colorado, but I'm looking forward to being in Lexington this year."

Currently 66 incoming cadets are enrolled in the program, but Riester expects that number to grow by the May 26 registration deadline. The program was not held last summer due to renovations in the barracks, but in recent history, about two-thirds of the incoming class has participated in STP.

Riester said the new cadets will take one course from the fields of chemistry, math, English, and history, allowing them to lighten their load during the 2006-07 academic year. They will have physical training three mornings a week and intramurals, two. STP participants are required to live in the barracks and eat in the mess hall, as well.

Blood Drive Award

The Camp Memorial Blood Center presented VMI with an award recognizing the high level of support provided by the VMI community through blood drives conducted in 2005. The Fort Knox-based blood center plays a key role in the Army's effort to provide from its own resources the blood requirements for all patients receiving care in its military medical treatment facilities. - VMI Photo.

Cadet Selected for German Exchange Program

By Wendy Lovell
Special Correspondent

VMI Cadet Joel Burger '06 of Warren, Ohio, has been selected to participate in the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals, a yearlong scholarship exchange program in Germany that begins in July.

At VMI, Burger is pursuing an international studies major with a minor in German and is interested in a career in government service with the U.S. State Department. During high school, he spent a year in Koblenz, Germany, through a Rotary Club exchange program, and he returned to Germany in 2004 through an exchange program with the German military academy Universität der Bundeswehr.

"I am very interested in international politics and foreign policy, and Germany's newly elected government differs a lot from that which it is replacing," said Burger. "I look forward to experiencing Germans' attitudes towards current politics. I can say from personal experience that living in a country gives you a completely different perspective on current events."

Burger is one of 75 Americans selected for the U.S. Department of State grant-supported cultural exchange that will involve two months of intensive study of the German language, four months of classroom instruction at a German university and a five-month professional internship. Burger's intent is to work with a German governmental agency such as the foreign ministry.

"This program will give Joel great experience learning and working in Germany, one of the most dynamic countries in the world," said Cmdr. Tim McElhannon, director of international programs. "His internship in Germany will be a huge asset to him in terms of the kinds of education and experience that the State Department is looking for, should he decided on a career as a diplomat. He will also be exposed to the German business sector, so if he decides to go into international business, he will have very valuable experience, too."

During Burger's exchange program in 2004, he began researching immigrants in Germany, a three-year research project the results of which he will present in April at the Western Anthropology and Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference at Santa Clara University in California and at the VMI Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Changes to Fall Calendar

By Lt. Col. Stewart MacInnis
Editor

The 2006-07 academic year is scheduled to begin Aug. 19 when the new Rat Class matriculates, followed on Aug. 27 with the return of the Old Corps.

The Institute's calendar, which officials start to develop three years in advance, will have changes from earlier drafts, said Col. Walter L. Chalkley '72, the chief of staff.

The fall Corps Trip will be the University of Richmond on Sept. 16, rather than to William and Mary the following weekend. The William and Mary game will occur at night, providing little opportunity for furloughs for cadets.

The Corps is scheduled to march in ceremonies Oct. 19 marking the 225th anniversary of the surrender of the British at Yorktown. Taking place at the Yorktown, the event will offer alumni in the eastern part of the state an opportunity to see the Corps on parade, Chalkley said.

The Fall FTX will be held Sept. 22-24, two weeks earlier than had previously been planned. The earlier date will increase the possibility of good weather during the exercises.

The Admissions Open House originally scheduled for Sept. 15-16 is being moved to Oct. 6-7. This was necessary due to the rescheduling of the Corps trip.

The football team will go to West Point on Oct. 7. There is a chance that a small contingent of cadets and the band will represent the Institute at the game, but, Chalkley said, the Corps will still be required to support the Admissions Open House.

Cadets Take Top Honors in Engineering Competition

By Wendy Lovell
Special Correspondent

Two teams of cadets representing the electrical and computer engineering department at VMI recently competed successfully with students from Virginia Tech in the 2006 Virginia Mountain Section of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) student papers contest.

Cadet Dennis Crump '06 placed first with a presentation entitled "Robot Navigation Control Through the Use of Fuzzy Sensors." Cadets John Lento '07 and Zachary Huson '07 tied for second place with their presentation, "I Will Walk Among You: Design and Implementation of a Leg for Use in a Radial Symmetric Octopedal Robot." The cadets earned certificates and cash awards.

Lento and Huson have submitted their paper for consideration in the student paper competition at SoutheastCon 2006, the regional IEEE conference, March 31-April 2 in Memphis. Crump is part of the VMI team that will compete in the hardware competition with its package-sorting, plane-loading robot. Cadets Jeffrey Gilmore '06, Gregory Stronko '06, Brian Yannetti '06, and Andrew Yeski '06 will compete with Crump.

Cadets Brian Corley '08, Jonathan Ostermann '08, and Taylor Schutze '08 will participate in the software competition, while Cadet Mario Capuozzo '09 will be representing VMI in the website competition.

The IEEE is a nonprofit, technical professional association in areas ranging from computer engineering, biomedical technology and telecommunications to electric power, aerospace and consumer electronics.

Defense Official Tours Post

Thomas F. Hall, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, tours post with Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62 and Dr. Lie-Ping Chang, a member of the board of visitors. A retired Navy rear admiral, Hall toured post during a two-day visit in late February. He is the principal staff assistant to the Secretary of Defense on all matters involving the 1.3 million members of the Reserve components of the U.S. Armed Forces. - VMI Photo by Kevin Remington.

Battle of New Market Reenactment Slated for May 20-21

By Scott Harris
New Market Battlefield

Some 2,000 Civil War re-enactors are expected to take part in the 142nd anniversary re-enactment of the Battle of New Market, May 20-21. The event, held at the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park, is the oldest battle re-enactment in the nation, and one of few held on the original site.

In addition to demonstrating Union and Confederate military tactics and camp activities, historical interpreters will portray civilian life during the Civil War era, including medical treatment, domestic crafts, and agricultural work.

''Put the boys in, and may God forgive me for the order.'' With these words, Confederate Gen. John C. Breckinridge ordered 257 cadets of the Virginia Military Institute into combat during the Battle of New Market on May 15, 1864. Overall, the Confederates suffered 531 casualties, compared to 841 for the Union force. Ten VMI cadets were killed or mortally wounded.

The New Market Battlefield State Historical Park is a National Historic Landmark administered by the Virginia Military Institute.

The re-enactment literally "starts with a bang" at 1 p.m. on Friday, May 19, with an artillery duel in the town of New Market. A Union battery positioned along Old Cross Road (Rt. 211) will exchange fire with Confederate guns on Shirley's Hill to the southwest. Both batteries will occupy positions similar to those taken at the start of the battle in 1864.

On Saturday, May 20, there will be living history presentations throughout the day on the battlefield and around the Bushong Farm. At noon, the Stonewall Brigade Band of Staunton, Va., will present a concert of Civil War music outside the Hall of Valor Museum. A Tactical Battle Re-enactment will take place Saturday at 2 p.m.

Activities continue on Sunday, May 21, with a Civil War-period church service and living history programs. The re-enactment of the Battle of New Market occurs at 1:30 p.m.

Re-enactors portray the VMI Corps of Cadets during a re-enactment of the Battle of New Market in 2001. – File photo.

M&R Productions, a Gettysburg-based company, is coordinating the reenactment. The event is sponsored in part by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.

Advance tickets for the reenactment are $10 for one day and $15 for two days. Advance tickets may be purchased in person at the Battlefield Park prior to May 19, or by mail, telephone, or e-mail until May 12. Tickets purchased at the gate will be $12 for one day and $20 for two days. Parking is free. For more information visit the park's website at http://www4.vmi.edu/museum/nm/index.html.

Editor Raises Level

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As for China, Zakaria noted that as the country grows economically, so have the expectations of its people. Its government faces the challenge of balancing its current political system with these rising expectations, and the future of China likely will play out in the middle class.

While the topic of China was a large focus of the Q-and-A session, Zakaria and the cadets also discussed U.S. politics, the war in Iraq and other foreign policy issues that are making headlines today.

"I was humbled and privileged to have the opportunity to learn from Dr. Zakaria," said Cadet Christopher Stolle, a 1st classman and international studies major. "He showed sincere interest in answering our questions and engendered a strong desire for me to learn more. The idea of the 21st century belonging to Asia is very interesting and alarming to me, and I think the sheer importance of what he talked about rates him as one of the better speakers we've had at VMI."

When asked how the United States can approach foreign relations with China successfully, Zakaria said the government must not repeat its past mistakes of disregarding intelligence.

"Thirty-five years ago we vastly over-exaggerated the threat posed by the Soviet Union; now Iraq has taken its place," he said. "When we looked at Iraq and the nature of its weapons program, there was no real debate over the issue. The UN inspectors were saying one thing and White House officials another. The political culture made it difficult for the Bush administration to listen and accept the truth."

Zakaria added that if the United States isn't careful, the same mistake could happen in how it approaches China.

"We need to look at the facts surrounding China and its military and conduct a real debate," he said. "Ignoring good information only skews the way we shape our military and political strategies."

Zakaria's participation in the Distinguished Speakers Series was sponsored by the H.B. Johnson Jr. '26 fund, which helps attract nationally and internationally known leaders in their fields to speak at the Institute.

Pros Provide New Cadets With Military Training

By Sherri Tombarge
Special Correspondent

They know how to make fire with just a battery and some steel wool.

Give them a piece of plastic and a few sticks, and they'll find and filter their own water.

Add a rain poncho to the mix, and they'll build a shelter from wind and rain.

They're new 4th classmen, and they're undergoing some serious survival training.

These cadets, having made it through the ratline and breakout, are now taking New Cadet Military Training, a program started in 2002 to ensure that military training at Virginia Military Institute covered more than what goes on Friday afternoons on the parade ground.

"People came to VMI and the only type of military training they did was marching and drilling," said Assistant Cadet in Charge of NCMT, Marine Corps Sgt. Brian Kerrebrock. "They'd never even fired a rifle before, ever."

The training has both classroom and military skills components. In the classroom, topics include land navigation, first aid, camouflage and concealment and primary marksmanship instruction for the M-16A2 rifle and the M9 pistol, said Kerrebrock. "Everybody will fire M16s and pistols."

A recent cold and windy Tuesday afternoon found the 4th class cadets gathered high on the rifle range for the military skills component, which would cover firecraft, food and water procurement and how to build improvised shelters. Cadets learned how to collect and filter water using the principles of condensation and how to build snares to catch animals as large as deer for food. They learned to build short-term shelters from plastic and sticks, but also saw a more elaborate shelter with considerable insulating qualities built of leaves, sticks and bark by Cadet Brittany Ray, who with Marine Corps Cpl. Patrick Gonzales is in charge of that area of military training.

"You're only limited by your imagination out here," commented Marine Corps Sgt. Shelby Sears, who with Marine Corps Cpl. Cody Garrett is in charge of food and water procurement training. "The more creative you can be, the less you focus on the fact that you're lost."

"It doesn't matter if you go into the military or not," said assistant cadet in charge Brian Kerrebrock. "You can take these skills anywhere."

At the firecraft station, supervised by cadet Jeff Butwell, cadets learned to make fires without lighters or matches using improvised methods such as igniting cotton balls soaked in petroleum jelly or touching a 9-volt battery to some fine steel wool. If the cadets are ever in a car wreck or a plane crash, said Air Force Staff Sgt. Sal Sferrazza, cadet in charge of military skills, they know to look for what they can take out of the wreckage that will start a fire.

All three military skills stations begin with a demonstration and teaching period, after which the 4th class cadets break into groups to hands-on practice with the techniques they've learned.

Approximately 40 cadets are involved in teaching the NCMT program. Many are in the reserves or served active duty in the U.S. military. "They have to have a specific knowledge of what they're teaching," said Sears.

Though the program is intended to provide training for 4th class cadets, the teaching cadets also profit from the experience. "It's a rewarding program," said Sears. "It helps us get better skills as instructors."

And for those planning a career in the military, public speaking about military matters in a military manner is "very, very important," said Sferrazza.

For the 4th class cadets, this training is also likely to prove very important. A planned spring FTX will take them to the Blue Ridge Mountains for a three-day excursion. Gesturing at the clothes on his body, Kerrebrock said, "It takes the rats out in this, nothing else." Almost, anyway. He said they do get to take a rain poncho, canteen, map and compass.

One upper class cadet will serve as guide for every eight 4th class cadets. "It's about 15 miles as the bird flies and it's all over rough terrain," he added.

So these survival skills will soon be put to good use. Sears concluded, "It's invaluable, what they learn here."

Cadet in charge of NCMT is Stephen Bartozack, and Sgt. Maj. Neel is faculty advisor.

Swimming and Diving Program Recognized for Northeast Championship Title Win

The VMI swimming and diving program received special recognition from the VMI superintendent for its Northeast Championship title won in late February.

Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62 presented head coach Bill Nicholson and the members of the swim program with a certificate of excellence in a ceremony held February 24.

The Keydets men's team won seven events on its way to taking the program's first-ever NEC Invitational title and first swimming conference championship in 41 years. VMI scored 999 points in the meet held in Landover, Md., from Feb. 16 through Feb. 18. VMI was followed by the team from St. Francis (N.Y.), which scored 629 points and Howard with 543 points.

Brenden Geoghagen '08 earned individual honors and was named the meet's Outstanding Diver.

VMI Swim Team members and athletic officials met with Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, Superintendent. – VMI photo.

"I am happy for all the swimmers on the team, they have worked very hard these past few years, and that hard work put them in a position to take this championship," Nicholson said. "Personally my goal from the first day I stepped on post was to bring a championship to VMI, and I am excited that it has been accomplished and that we are in a position to maybe bring home more titles."

Annual Giving Sets Strong Pace

By Scott Belliveau '83
Contributor

The current fiscal year still has roughly three and a half months to run, but all appearances are that VMI Annual Giving has an excellent chance to pass the record-setting mark of $4.7 million it posted last year.

Compared to the total of $2.6 million the three components of Annual Giving – the Foundation Fund, the Keydet Club Scholarship Fund, and the Athletic Operations Fund – raised by last March 1, the amount raised so far this year is $3,282,814, including $1,247,068 in the form of payment on pledges. This increase of more than $649,758 in donations translates into a percentage increase of roughly 25 percent.

Just as encouraging is the fact that all of the funds have made impressive gains so far in the 2006 fiscal year. The Foundation Fund's total as of March 1 is $1,521,180, including $515,140 in the form of payment on pledges. This figure represents an increase of more than $323,000 – or 27 percent – over the $1,197,615 raised by the beginning of last March 1.

The Keydet Club Scholarship Fund's receipts rose by almost $35,000, from $997,725 to $1,032,573, an increase of 3.5 percent. The biggest success story, however, belongs to the Athletic Operations Fund (AOF). Its donations soared by more than $291,000, from $437,716 to $729,061, an increase of 66.5 percent. For the entire 2005 fiscal year, the AOF raised $800,221.

Another figure that is important to the VMI Foundation and the VMI Keydet Club in regard to Annual Giving is that of alumni participation. All three funds enjoyed an increase in number of alumni donors this year. So far this year, the number of alumni taking part in the Foundation Fund has increased by 598, to 2,214. The Keydet Club Scholarship Fund received gifts from 125 more alumni, the number growing to 1,192. Again, however, the AOF is the fund that has scored the biggest gains. Its total of alumni donors rose from 305 to 423 – an increase of almost 38.7 percent.

With only a third of the fiscal year left, meeting last year's strong performance demands a robust performance from the funds from now until June 30. Just to meet last year's combined total, Annual Giving will need to raise approximately $1.5 million more.

VMI to Make Strong Showing at NCUR 2006

By Wendy Lovell
Special Correspondent

Although the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) will not be held in Lexington this year, the Virginia Military Institute will be well represented at the event, which will take place April 6-9 at the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

"With 27 cadets attending, we'll be one of the top schools in terms of representation," said Col. Jim Turner, professor of chemistry and biology, and program director of the office of undergraduate research. "It's exciting that our participation in NCUR has steadily increased over the past few years and that our students are so engaged in this type of academic exercise."

The research projects that will be presented at NCUR represent the work of cadets in the disciplines of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, computer science, math, modern languages, English and fine arts, economics and business, history, biology, chemistry, and psychology.

In an effort to prepare junior faculty members to mentor students in research, the Undergraduate Research Initiative is sending new faculty members Maj. Elena Andreeva and Maj. Barry Cobb from the history and economics and business departments, respectively, to the conference.

While in Asheville, Turner will meet with representatives of Big South Conference universities to plan their own undergraduate research conference in 2007.

NCUR will be held in California in 2007, prohibiting schools in the Big South Conference from sending many students; therefore, the conference among Big South universities will provide a cost-effective forum for undergraduate research, Turner said.

"We hope that a Big South event of this nature will become an annual event," he said. "It will build on our participation at NCUR and provide more opportunities for showcasing student research."

Turner added that the Institute will likely hold a contest to determine which cadet from each discipline will present at NCUR in 2007. A larger number of cadets will take part in the Big South event, which not only will give them an opportunity to present their research but also to give the regional conference a stronger start.

VMI Writers' Partnership Flourishes

By Wendy Lovell
Special Correspondent

You won't find Kurtis Davidson's name in the VMI directory, but he's on Post just about every day. When he's not teaching English, he's hard at work pursuing a writing career that includes publication in the *Backward City Review* and Watershed, as well as a piece that will appear in this summer's *Jabberwock Review*.

Davidson spoke at the recent Southern Voices Authors Conference in Birmingham, Ala., and the Association of Writers & Writing Programs' conference in Austin, Texas. He will be a fiction panelist at the Virginia Festival of the Book later this month in Charlottesville, too.

Davidson is the pen name of VMI English professors Lt. Col. Kurt Ayau and Lt. Col. David Rachels, a writing team that has enjoyed success both as Kurtis Davidson and as individual authors.

"I'd say that writing with Kurt is easier than writing alone – no writer's block," said Rachels. "If I get stuck, I can just hand off to Kurt. We get along extraordinarily well, but I can imagine that this sort of relationship would be a nightmare for many writers."

He added that the only rule in their collaboration is absolute veto power.

"If one of us insists that something has to go, then it has to go," he said. "That's the one thing that each of us always has to trust the other one about, and it really speeds the writing process. Often, when you're working alone, it takes awhile to realize when you've made a bad choice; working with Kurt, I find out quickly and so does he."

To promote their partnership, Ayau and Rachels developed www.kurtisdavidson.com, a website that features links to some of their published stories, a chapter of their novel *What the Shadow Told Me*, a message board, reviews and downloads of readings. To drive traffic to the site and interest in their writing, Ayau and Rachels have printed cards that have been inserted in books in stores across the country.

"The cards are mysterious, playful, some say disquieting, but we think the novelty so appeals to people that they come to the site and register," said Ayau. "We've had people report card findings in about 20 states and even Germany and Aruba. We call putting the cards in books 'kurtising,' and we have a band of volunteers who crisscross the country kurtising for us."

Writing independently, Ayau had "Official Friend" published last summer in the *William and Mary Review*, and "Calling it Off" will appear in the *Red Cedar Review* this summer. "An Adulterous ABC" by Rachels appeared on the *Exquisite Corpse* website last summer and "Express Lane" in *The American Drivel Review* last fall. Rachel's "The Interpretations" will appear in the summer 2006 edition of *Bombay Gin*.

Public Health and Food Issues Course Attracts Cadets from Varied Disciplines

By Wendy Lovell
Special Correspondent

While Col. Jim Turner and Dr. Eileen Hinks' course on public health and food issues is focused on topics in chemistry and biology, it's causing quite a stir among students of history, psychology, and mechanical engineering, too.

"It's a class I look forward to attending because the subject material is interesting and has sparked my interest in issues that I have never thought or learned about," said Cadet Stuart Montgomery '08, a history major. "Both Col. Turner and Dr. Hinks challenge us to think, debate, and come to the answer while guiding us. Both are enthusiastic, and it rubs off on the class; they make us want to learn and research not only the topics but possible solutions."

Hinks said the backgrounds and perspectives of the non-science majors play into the class discussions and presentations, complementing the knowledge of their fellow classmates who are biology and chemistry majors.

"I'm thrilled with the makeup of the class and the variety of disciplines our students represent," said Hinks, a microbiologist who teaches chemistry at VMI. "I have found the history majors are the students who are the most interactive in class. Perhaps they think more about world or are more inclined to question or wonder."

There's a lot to wonder about in the new science elective. The students are learning about diseases that affect patients around the world and in the United States; food supply and food-borne illnesses; cardiovascular disease, obesity and diabetes; eating disorders; and foods as preventative treatments.

Hinks and Turner divided the class into pairs, and each team is responsible for researching a topic and presenting its findings to the class as a whole. In turn, the two professors supplement the students' research with their own expertise. The sources of information used in the class often come out of current journal articles, clinical studies and newspaper headlines. In lieu of a final exam, the students will present their research in a poster session later this spring.

"A number of our students have said it's one of the most enjoyable classes they've had," said Turner. "In many ways it's like a mini graduate level course because of the student participation. They do a lot of the education themselves, and the open atmosphere lends the class to much discussion; no one is reluctant to give his opinion."

Cadet Christopher Baker '06 brings an interesting perspective to the course because his family owns and operates two meat-packing plants and a small chain of Subway restaurants. He's shared his experiences to help dispel myths his classmates have about the industry and how the government monitors and reacts to breaches in protocol for food handling.

"I've been impressed by both the subject matter and the style in which this course is taught," said Baker, who is majoring in chemistry. "I believe that having students from other majors is a strength of the class. We scientists are notorious for thinking as scientists – we're all about data and numbers – so it's nice to see somebody apply creative thinking to a problem."

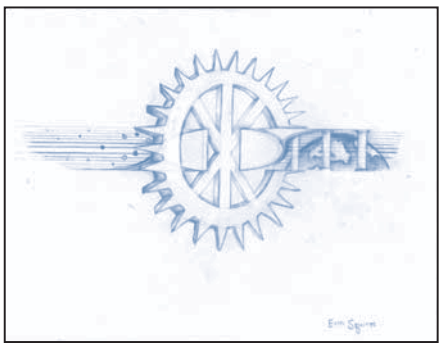
Montgomery agreed.

"The grouping of science and liberal arts majors has shown me the relevance and need for both parties to solve the world's rising and current health issues," he said. "The combination of majors and non-majors gives us all an opportunity to work together and learn from each other."

New Logo, Title Unveiled for Research Journal

By Wendy Lovell
Special Correspondent

The new VMI undergraduate research journal is another step closer to its debut with the selection of a logo and the title *New Horizons*.



Designed by Cadet Erin Squires '08, the logo features the solar system to represent the field of science; the gear, engineering; and the world, the humanities. Her design was one of five submitted in the logo contest.

Cadet Jared Gastrock '08 won the title contest, and "New Horizons" was one of 18 titles submitted. Both cadets won a $100 prize for work.

"We believe that 'New Horizons' synthesizes the multifaceted undergraduate research experience that reaches beyond the classroom, the traditional instructor-student relationship and the temporary gratification of a good grade to the fulfillment of discovery, publication and recognition among one's peers and future colleagues," said Lt. Col. Mary Ann Dellinger, editor of New Horizons.

An electronic version of *New Horizons* will go live in April with one paper from the fields of science, engineering and the humanities. A call for papers for the first publication will take place in May, as well as a call for a cover design. The first printed version of *New Horizons* will be distributed nationally to prospective cadets, alumni and other colleges and organizations dedicated to undergraduate research in April 2007.

Tent Big Enough for All Parents

By Sherri Tombarge, Special Correspondent

For the past three years, home football games at VMI have offered parents of rats a place to visit and ask questions. The Parents Council "tailgate" tent in front of Lejeune Hall has been the place to go to get food and drinks from barbecue to brownies and hot dogs to ham biscuits.

"The Parents Council Tent has evolved as a major gathering point for cadets, parents, alumni and, particularly, 'homeless' rats, in other words, rats from out of state, whose families may be too far away to travel in for the weekend," said Charles Upshaw, Parents Council co-president.

The Parents Council tent is a magnet for cadets and guests as well as parents. - Photo courtesy of Connie Upshaw.

The tent was originally purchased by Parents Council members Jim and Chris Camblos of Charlottesville, Va., parents of Lyle Camblos '99 and Mark Camblos '02, for tailgating with friends at VMI football games. It was specially made by a company owned by Russell B. "Happy" Hogshire '55 of Norfolk, with aluminum poles donated by Jim Camblos' friend, Kenny Fields, owner of Hill and Wood Funeral Home in Charlottesville.

After using the tent for two years, the Camblos family gave it to their friends, Connie and Dick Sylvester of Charlottesville, parents of Caleb Sylvester, the valedictorian of the class of 2002, and past Parents Council members. When Caleb Sylvester graduated, it was suggested by the Cambloses that the tent be donated to the Parents Council, where it was valued its size, usefulness and VMI colors, said Charles Upshaw.

Jim Glasscock, father of Jonathan Glasscock '06, coordinated the tent's use for the first home game in September of 2003. "They needed to develop 'idiot-proof' instructions on how to assemble it," said Connie Upshaw, Parents Council co-president.

A number of volunteers have helped assemble the tent and take it down for each home game, as well as train others to how to do it: Charlie and Jennifer Munn, parents of C.R. Munn '04; Glen and Vickie Tittermary, parents of Michael Tittermary '05; Charlie and Sue Ivins, parents of Curt Ivins '06; Mark Schaperjahn, father of Robyn Schaperjahn '06; Tom Moncure, father of Clark Moncure '06; Jim and Amy Steiner, parents of Kirk Steiner, '06; and the Upshaws, parents of Andrew Upshaw '06.

"Tom Moncure was able to find a huge trash bin with wheels to store the tent and poles and secure a place to keep the tent at Lejeune, so that we could easily get it to the parade ground for assembly," said Charles Upshaw.

Tailgate food and supplies were all donated this past year by parents of upperclassmen, especially '06 parents, mostly PC members. To help cover the cost of the food and supplies for next fall, the Parents Council Activities Committee expects to plan a fund-raiser or ask for small donations at the tent, said Connie Upshaw.

"It has 'ballooned' from talking to a handful of cadets and parents at a game to feeding over 200 cadets and family members," she said.

Governor Highlights Environment Virginia Agenda

Courtesy of conference organizers.

Governor Timothy Kaine will meet with more than 700 environmental professionals for the Environment Virginia Symposium. The conference, which runs from April 18 to 20, will bring together the public and private sectors to address Virginia's most urgent environmental issues; this year's theme is "Linking Economic and Environmental Health: It's Everybody's Business."

The governor is scheduled to attend a conference session on April 20.

"Virginia's environment is facing significant challenges," said conference coordinator Capt. Ron Erchul, professor of civil and environment engineering. "During a time when the environmental needs of the Commonwealth are greater than ever, the 2006 conference will give us a critical perspective on the environmental priorities of the Kaine administration."

Keynote speakers will include: Dr. Thomas E. Lovejoy, former U.S. director of the World Wildlife Fund and current president of the Heinz Center for Science, Economics and the Environment; William McDonough, winner of three U.S. presidential awards and former dean of the U.Va. School of Architecture; Preston Bryant, Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources; U.S. Rep. Bob Goodlatte, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee; and Thomas Chewning, executive vice president and chief financial officer of Dominion Resources. Also featured will be Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Robert S. Bloxom; the director of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, David K, Paylor; and the director of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Joseph H. Maroon

Topics range from "Chesapeake Bay Oysters: Contributions to the Health and Wealth of the Chesapeake Bay" to "Lessons Learned from Hurricane Katrina." More than 80 businesses, government agencies and nonprofits will provide exhibits.

New this year is the Student Environmental Leadership Summit. Guided by professional facilitators, 120 middle and high school students from around the state will discuss and address Virginia's "hottest" environmental topics. Their findings will be forwarded to the governor and secretary of natural resources. NASCAR great Ward Burton will also be on hand for the summit, discussing the environmental factors that go into running and maintaining automobiles.

Taiwanese Military Academy Visit

By Cmdr. Tim McElhannon
Contributor

A group of six Taiwanese cadets and one faculty member from the Republic of China Military Academy visited VMI in mid-February, part of a long-standing relationship between VMI and the Chinese Military Academy.

Every year a group of Taiwanese cadets visit VMI to learn about the unique academic, military and athletic aspects of a VMI education. During their visit this year the Taiwanese cadets lived in the Barracks and ate their meals in Crozet Hall. The cadets participated in classes and athletic events and were briefed by VMI cadets about the various operating structures of the Corps, such as the General Committee, Honor Court and others. The cadets also met Brig. Gen. Charles F. Brower IV, deputy superintendent and dean of the faculty, and received an extensive tour of the Post.

Brig. Gen. Charles F. Brower IV, deputy superintendent and dean of the faculty, meets with cadets from the Republic of China Military Academy. - VMI Photo by Kevin Remington.

VMI Cadet Han-Lung Jin, the senior Taiwanese cadet at VMI, hosted the cadets and gave them a detailed view of life at VMI from a cadet's perspective. He is one of 12 VMI cadets who are sent to VMI by the Republic of China Military Academy for four years to get a VMI education.

The Taiwanese cadets were particularly impressed with the discipline of daily life at VMI and the quality of the academics. The VMI cadets ensured that their Taiwanese friends got a true picture of the daily life of a VMI cadet. They even took a short visit off Post on Friday night to see the town and get a glimpse of small-town America.

Glee Club Honors Fallen Alumnus, Performs in New York

By Sherri Tombarge
Special Correspondent

A trip in March that included a tribute to fallen alumnus Ryan Doltz '00 marked the first tour outside Virginia since 2003 for the Virginia Military Institute Glee Club.

Cadets from all four classes performed an eclectic selection of music, including Mozart's "Alleluja," an arrangement of Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" and several patriotic pieces, under the direction of Col. John Brodie and accompanied by Betty Nichols, wife of the late Professor Lee L. Nichols '44. The female voices were specially featured in "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," while "Goodnight, Sweetheart" featured the male voices.

"The most exciting part of the trip for me was singing at Dover High School in Dover, N.J.," said first class cadet Berit Oftedahl, Glee Club operations officer. Army National Guard Sgt. Ryan Doltz '00, killed in Iraq on June 5, 2004, was a graduate of Dover High School, and his family has established a scholarship at VMI honoring him.

"The trip was a good experience because we got to reach out to the VMI community ... while exploring New York City,"
Berit Oftedahl, Glee Club Operations Officer

The school is 70 percent Hispanic, and Cadet Nohelia Martin '08 introduced one song, "Esto Les Digo," in Spanish. "That concert was probably the most fun," said cadet Terry Slack '06, "because the audience was really into it."

The club also performed at the Statue of Liberty on Liberty Island, N.Y., and on the quarterdeck of the *U.S.S. Intrepid*. VMI alumnus Bill Maurer '61, a park ranger, met the cadets at the Statue of Liberty. "[Mr. Maurer] seemed very excited to share his knowledge of the site with all the cadets. … He gave us a tour of the whole island and the inside of the statue after we sang our set for the touring public," said Oftedahl.

With Doltz family members and Dottie and Ken Iversen, parents of the late Col. Kurt Iversen'85, on board the *Intrepid*, the club sang "Shenandoah" in Iversen's memory.

Marine Author Inspires Cadets

By Captain Joe Garaux, USMC
Naval ROTC

Former Marine captain and author of *One Bullet Away: the Making of a Marine Officer* Nathaniel Fick was the Naval ROTC Semper Fidelis Society's guest speaker on Monday February 20.

Fick, currently a graduate student at Harvard University, took time away from his schedule to conduct a book signing and speech to the some 250 cadets present. He spoke for nearly an hour using photographs from his experiences as a reconnaissance platoon commander in Afghanistan and Iraq. The speech discussed several leadership issues and challenges Fick faced as his platoon engaged in sustained combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

While on a routine deployment with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Fick spoke of the events that took place on Sept. 11, 2001.

"We were on liberty in Darwin, Australia, when the Towers fell," he said. "As we saw the footage being played over CNN every Marine immediately knew he had to get back to the ship ASAP. Every Marine did, and three days later we were preparing to be inserted into Taliban hideouts some 180 miles inside Afghanistan."

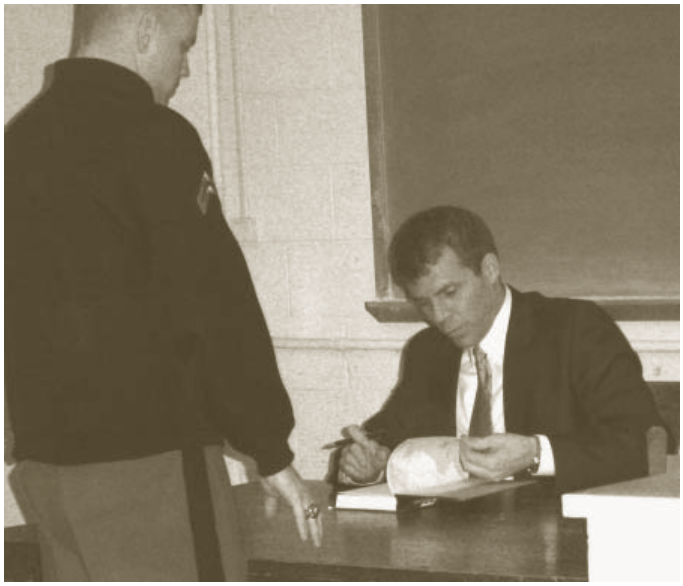
Pictures during this portion of the speech included surveillance footage taken by Fick's platoon of Osama Bin Laden's recently abandoned farm.

Later on in the speech Fick discussed his platoon's missions in Iraq. One of the photos included Jessica Lynch's destroyed HMMWV. Mr. Fick sternly pointed out the bloody hand prints on the hood of the vehicle.

"This business is very serious and the cost of your mistakes will be paid for in human life," he said.

Fick concluded his speech by applauding cadets aspiring to commission in the Armed Forces. "You are the future leaders of this great nation and your career choice will be most challenging, and yet most rewarding. My hat is off to you."

Following his speech a question and answer session was held for nearly 30 minutes. Fick's overall message to the cadet's was a positive one.



Former Marine Capt. Nathaniel Fick signs a copy of his book for a cadet. - Photo courtesy of Naval ROTC.

"Take care of your troops, never put them in harms way unnecessarily, always be willing to do what you ask of them," he said. "If the mission passes these two tests then you can execute it in good conscious. This is the metric I used when faced with dangerous and seemingly impossible missions and I am here to tell you it works. If the mission does not meet these two criteria then it is back to the drawing board."

Fick received a standing ovation.

His book can be purchased at the VMI Bookstore, and a portion of the proceeds benefits the Marine Corps Scholarship Fund dedicated to providing college money to children of Marines killed in action.

Army 'Gold Bars' On Post

By 2nd Lt. Aaron Wallace '05
Contributor

Reaching out to prospective VMI cadets creates a tough recruiting challenge. By using recent commissioned graduates, the VMI Army ROTC Department meets and exceeds this challenge.

Under the supervision of Maj. John Wranek '85, scholarship and enrollment officer, these newly commissioned officers use their own experiences to not only encourage students to come to VMI, but also to join Army ROTC and seek a commission in our nation's military. During this school year, the Army ROTC department employed four recently commissioned second lieutenants or "Gold Bars," all members of the Class of 2005 – Ben Melton, John Rerucha, Frank Dyson, and Aaron Wallace. Melton, Rerucha and Wallace were branched Infantry, while Dyson branched Field Artillery.

The Gold Bar Recruiter (GBR) is a newly commissioned second lieutenant who has been ordered to active duty for the purpose of assisting an Army ROTC Battalion with training and recruiting duties. Most of the GBR's time is spent on recruiting activities, working directly with the scholarship and enrollment officer. Initially, the GBR must become totally familiar with recruiting policies, procedures, benefits and obligations. Due to the numerous options available to prospects, the GBR must be very familiar with all of the options and the criteria required to join the program.

The Army ROTC Department selects GBR's from its top Army

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Wargaming, Simulation Club Gets Started This Spring

By Wendy Lovell
Special Correspondent

Maj. Ray Marsh '88 knows firsthand how stressful life can be for cadets at VMI. He also knows a thing or two about strategic planning and simulation from his experience in the Air Force.

Marsh has combined that knowledge to propose a wargaming and simulation club for any cadet that is designed to teach how to plan and think strategically while enjoying the experience in the process.

"This won't be a forum for cadets just to have a shoot 'em up between players," said Marsh. "They will need to develop tactics and strategies to use in game play. They also will develop a concept of operations much like you would do with a war plan and learn how to work as a team."

Maj. Ray Marsh examines a game to be used by the club. – VMI photo by Kevin Remington.

Marsh said nearly 70 cadets have expressed interest, and an initial meeting will be held in mid-April to get the club off the ground for next semester. Before anything can begin, the club must evaluate available equipment, select its leaders for next academic year, develop its operations orders, and examine software to be used in game play. Some gaming will probably begin in earnest next fall depending on cadet response, and Marsh's hope is to compete eventually with students at Michigan Technical University and other colleges with similar clubs.

"In addition to games like Modern Air Power: War Over Vietnam, Battlefield 2, and Empire Earth, we will pursue games with a focus on economic warfare, such as Diplomacy II, where our members will have to come up with civil solutions," said Marsh. "These games are structured to promote team work among cadets."

For more information on the wargaming and simulation club, contact Marsh at marshrw@vmi.edu or 464-7354.

'Gold Bars'

Continued from page 13

commissioned graduates, both active and reserve, who have several months between commissioning and the start of their basic officers leadership course. GBR's are given a chance to enhance their own leadership style and public speaking skills in addition to augmenting the recruiting efforts of the Army ROTC, VMI Admissions Office, and the Alumni Association.

Recently, these lieutenants have accomplished much for the Army ROTC Department and the Institute.

Rerucha visited nearly 20 Virginia high schools during his tour. Melton carried his efforts to Washington & Lee University and our neighboring states, traveling as far as Pittsburgh to attend the Western Pennsylvania Alumni New Cadet Recruiting (NCR) Reception. Dyson went to several local recruiting events such as the Salem College Fair, the Roanoke Alumni Chapter NCR Reception, and the NASCAR - Nextel Cup Race in Martinsville.

Accompanied by Sgt. Maj. Allen, Rerucha, Melton, and Dyson attended the Richmond NCR Reception. This was by far the largest Alumni Chapter recruiting event, hosting nearly 500 prospective cadets and families. Wallace attended the George C. Marshall/Potomac River Alumni Chapter NCR Reception in Fairfax, where attendance in recent years has rapidly increased. During Admissions Open Houses, Melton, Rerucha and Wallace gave outstanding presentations to high school prospects about ROTC and commissioned service in the United States Army.

These officers also assisted the Army Instructors in several ways. Acting as the supervisor and host, Wallace coordinated both the annual February inspection visit to Fishburne Military School and their March training visit to VMI. Recently, Wallace has been closely working with W&L junior Paul-Devin Kuettner in the accelerated cadet commissioning training program. Cadet Kuettner will be the first cadet to successfully complete that program at VMI.

2nd Lt. Aaron Wallace '05, discusses Army ROTC options with Cadet Alex Oliver, '09. - Photo courtesy of Army ROTC.

Melton helped Master Sgt. James Perdue execute the physical training program for the Ranger Challenge Team. Dyson also assisted the Ranger Challenge team at the Brigade Competition where the VMI Teams placed first and fourth. Each of the GBR's also help supervise the Army cadets during morning physical fitness training and lab instruction.

The Gold Bar Recruiter adds a new perspective and energy to the Battalion because of their recent familiarity to high school, college and cadet life.

Marshall-New Market Battalion Holds Annual Dining Out

By Capt. Terri Dorn
Army ROTC, Contributor

The Army ROTC's Marshall-New Market Battalion held its first annual Dining Out on Feb. 17. In the past, this event was conducted as a Dining In. This year, it was opened to spouses and guests as an opportunity to introduce others to the Army's history, customs, and traditions.

The Dining Out was held at Evans Dining Hall on the campus of Washington and Lee University and was celebrated with approximately 300 cadre, cadets, and guests from Virginia Military Institute, Washington and Lee University, Mary Baldwin College, Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership, Southern Virginia University, and the surrounding community.

Cadet Kyle Schriefer '06, (right) welcomes Cadet Brian Nilles '09, Army ROTC Scholarship cadet, to the Dining Out during the official receiving line. - VMI Photo by Kevin Remington.

The history of the tradition began the early 18th century when the British Army incorporated the practice of formal dining into their regimental mess system. The close association between the British and American armies during the world wars led the U.S. Army to adopt formal dining occasions as a tradition of its own.

Presiding over the Dining Out was Col. Robert L. Suthard '79, professor of military science, and Cadet Kyle Schriefer '06, cadet battalion commander of the Marshall-New Market Battalion.

The honored guest and speaker was Brig. Gen. John D. Johnson '77, deputy director of strategy, plans and policy in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7. Brig. Gen. Johnson presented a serious message to the guests and future officers about the Army today. In his closing remarks, he stated, "You must retain your balance, retain flexibility, and condition yourselves and the units you lead to be adaptive and learning organizations."

Other honored guests included Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, superintendent; Maj. Gen. (retired) Thomas H. Tate'55; Maj. Gen. (retired) Stephen H. Sewell Jr. '60; Brig. Gen. (retired) Charles F. Brower IV. '69, deputy superintendent for academics and dean of faculty; Dr. Brenda Bryant, director of the Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership; Brig. Gen. (retired) Michael N. Bissell '61, commandant of VWIL Corps of Cadets; Col. James O. Tubbs, professor of aerospace studies; and Col. William R. Grace, professor of naval science.

Each member of the battalion and guest enjoyed the traditions of the Mess – a balance between strict rules of formality and good-natured rivalry. Guests observed and participated in numerous customs and traditions of the evening, which included the receiving line, posting of the colors, honoring of fallen comrades, and bugle calls. Providing entertainment for the evening was the VMI Glee Club, directed by Col. John A. Brodie, as they performed a medley of patriotic songs to complement the mood of the evening.

The evening ended with the playing, and singing, of the Army Song and the retiring of the colors. The mix of formal customs and courtesies with social camaraderie made the evening a great success.

Mid-Winter Formal: More Than a Formality

By Sherri Tombarge, Special Correspondent

The Midwinter Formal is, according to Mike Golike '07, Cadet Life sergeant, "a culmination of things, with its 'spirit' rather well captured in this year's toasts – to American servicemen, to VMI and to the Corps."

Made with sparkling cider in champagne flutes specially inscribed for the Feb. 18 event, the toasts were Golike's favorite addition to the formal. "The Corps responded to them with roaring approval," he said.

Golike served as cadet in charge of the event, with Cadet Life Sgt. Mike Lloyd '07 coordinating administrative aspects and Cadet Life Cpl. Gia Bichara '08 planning the decorations. Around 1,200 cadets and guests attended the Cocke Hall event, said Golike.

"The past two years have seen its popularity grow tremendously," said Golike. "I believe that much of the popularity is due to the increased formality of the event, the more time and money put into the decorations and the quality of the musicians that perform."

The formal is the only post-wide formal event during the spring semester and, as Cadet Thane Keller '07, who attended the event, said, "The privileges we get for going are great." Privileges were assigned according to class.

Cadets participated in the planning, set up, and supervision of the formal. "We had a lot of cadet help with putting up the decorations and cadets acting as car-park directors [and in other capacities] during the event itself," said Golike.

"The S-7 staff … offered two-for-one PT details to cadets … to help them with the event," said Keller.

"The highlight for me was the prize section," he added. Door prizes included a "bone-free" card, a free lunch with the commandant, buttons, and water bottles, said Keller. "I haven't ever won anything before, and they called my number. I picked up a book with pictures of the Institute, a good coffee table book," he said.

An after-event party was thrown by the first and second classes; it featured a band, bonfires and buses to shuttle cadets to and from their hotels. "No one was allowed to drive themselves…. This was all very well planned and well executed," said Golike.

"Dates like the formality of the event," said Golike. "And the military formality that VMI brings to the table is something unique and charming that other socials … just don't have."

Track and Field Lends a Hand in 'Read Across America'

By Joel Balthaser
Sports Information Assistant

Nearly 45 million people nationwide took part in the ninth annual National Education Association's (NEA) Read Across America Day on March 2. Close to home, members of the VMI track and field team visited Effinger Elementary School in Rockbridge County to do their part in promoting the great cause.

Cadet Ashley West reads to students at Effinger Elementary School.
- Photo courtesy of Sports Information.

"It was an honor to take part in Read Across America Day," said head cross country coach Paul Spangler. "It gave our cadets the opportunity to not only read to kids, but also to speak to them about the importance of education and obtaining good grades."

Cadets Matt Hyatt '09, Kelsey Stafford '09, and Ashley West '08 accompanied Spangler to Effinger Elementary School to take part in the event and to spend time reading to a group of young students. The kids attending were from kindergarten to the 5th grade, and enjoyed having the cadet-athletes there with them.

"Reading to the kids at Effinger was a great way to help out the community and hopefully teach how important and necessary reading is," said Hyatt. "I hope we were able to convince these kids how important being able to read – and do it well – will be in their education."

Read Across America was founded in 1997 by the NEA, and originally was a one-day event to celebrate the joy of reading. The day of the event was set for March 2 to commemorate the birthday of Dr. Seuss, the late children's-book author and artist beloved by millions. Today, however, the program has expanded from a one-day celebration to an everyday, nationwide initiative that promotes and motivates children to read.

Motivating children to read at a young age is something that the NEA strives to do through its programs, and is a building block in creating lifelong successful leaders. Research has shown that children who are motivated and spend more time reading do better in school.

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