

# Virginia Military Institute Style Guide

## GENERAL:

- Remember your target audience (prospective cadets, alumni, parents, visitors, etc.).
- Keep your message simple and consistent.
- Use the active voice.
- Remember the 5 W's and the H – who, what, why, when, where, and how
- This style guide supplements and modifies the Associated Press Stylebook. It is intended to provide consistency of style in publications – including the Institute Web site – developed for or that can be expected to be used by the general public. It is not intended to dictate style for internal documents.

## CAPITALIZATION:

<i>VMI</i>	When using the abbreviation of Virginia Military Institute, do not use periods (VMI). Do use not "the" before the abbreviation VMI.
<i>Institute</i>	Always capitalize "Institute" when it refers to VMI. When using the phrase "the Institute" or "the Virginia Military Institute," do not capitalize the word "the."
<i>Corps of Cadets</i>	Always capitalize the "Corps of Cadets" or "Corps."
<i>Barracks</i>	When using the specific name of the barracks, VMI Barracks or Barracks, capitalize. Use lower-case when barracks is used in general terms (barracks life). Always use upper case when referring to "Old Barracks," "New Barracks," or "Third Barracks," as these are specific names.
<i>Rat Line</i>	Always use two capitalized words, since this refers to the "line" the rats must walk. One is "in" the Rat Line, not "on" the Rat Line.
<i>dyke, rat, cadet</i>	Use lower-case except when used as a specific name, title, or form of address. "Rat" should not be used in an official sense – use "4th Class cadet."

\*Rat Smith is from Montana.

- \*The rat year is a very strenuous period.
- \*Cadet Smith is the dyke of a 4th Class cadet.

While VMI cadets are of course college students, they are always referred to as "cadets."

*Post*

Follow rules for barracks: the Virginia Military Institute Post when used as the specific name, but use lower-case when used in general terms (i.e., "on-post housing," "located on post").

*Curricula*

The only curricula to be capitalized are English, Spanish, French, or German.

*Departments*

When referring to a specific department, capitalize the name of the department.

- \*Department of Physics and Astronomy
- \*Office of Cadet Affairs

If you are making a general reference to departments, however, use lower-case.

- \*The mechanical and civil engineering departments

*Faculty and Staff Rank*

Most faculty members and some staff members hold two forms of rank: military rank and academic or professional rank.

**Military rank** is indicated using Associated Press standards (see Military Ranks in the section on Abbreviations on page 6), and not the administrative abbreviations used by individual Services. This is in keeping with the doctrine prescribed by the Defense Information School. In the first mention of a faculty member holding military rank, always use the abbreviation for the military rank before the name and capitalize it. When using military rank without the last name, spell out the rank and always lower case.

**Academic rank** is lower case when used as an identification, and upper case when used as a title. Academic rank is always spelled out in text; however, it

may be abbreviated in a tabular display.

In first subsequent use of the name of a faculty member holding a doctorate, "Dr." may be used as a title. In all later use, address by the last name only.

**Professional rank** usage follows that of academic rank. Generally, this refers to directors, associate directors, and assistant directors of administrative offices. Professional rank is always spelled out in text; however, it may be abbreviated in a tabular display.

Ranks used within a quotation are always spelled out.

\*Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III, VMI superintendent

\*Lt. Col. Ralph N. Smith, associate professor of civil engineering

\*Col. Samuel K. Jones, professor of biology

\*Dr. Smith

\*The cadet said, "The Colonel Jones is a professor."

### *Cadet Rank*

It is always appropriate to use the word "cadet" as a title for a cadet. When used before the name, the title is uppercase; when used after, it is lower case.

At times, it is important to indicate the rank a cadet holds within the Corps of Cadets. In these cases, follow the usage for faculty and staff:

\*Cadet Smith is a cadet captain.

\*Cadet Captain F. H. Smith is a history major.

\*Cadet Henry A. Clark is a 1st Class cadet at Virginia Military Institute.

## **VMI-SPECIFIC TERMS**

### *Cadet Units*

The Corps is organized as a regiment, but is always referred to as "the Corps" or the "the Corps of Cadets." The First Captain, however, is the "Regimental Commander" and not the "Corps Commander."

"Corps" is always spelled with an "s" in both singular and plural forms. In the plural form, the "s" is not silent.

\*Both the VMI and The Citadel Corps (pronounced like "cores") marched in the parade.

When referring to the battalions, capitalize when a specific battalion is indicated. Use an Arabic numeral to indicate a specific battalion. (1st Battalion, *not* First Battalion.)

\*Cadet Captain Smith commands the 2nd Battalion.

\*Each battalion is commanded by a cadet captain.

\*When referring to companies, follow a similar usage. Do *not* use phonetic spellings (i.e., Delta Company) or cadet slang (i.e., F-Troop). The correct usage is Company A, *not* A Company. (If a person being quoted says A Company or Delta Company, quote it as it is said.)

\*Cadet Jones is a member of Company D.

\*Each battalion is composed of four companies.

### *Parades*

Technically, most VMI “parades” are military reviews. There is no such thing as a "review parade." The term "parade" can be used for public discussion. Parades are held on the “Parade Ground.” It is capitalized when used as a specific term (see Barracks and unit names). It is most emphatically neither a "deck" nor a "field."

## **PUNCTUATION:**

### *Classes*

Use commas when the VMI class is completely spelled out.

\*Thomas A. Smith, VMI Class of 2007

Do not use commas when numbers are omitted.

\*Thomas A. Smith '80 or Michael A. Jones Jr. '07

\*Use Arabic numerals to indicate the class of a current cadet, e.g.: 1st Class, 2nd Class, etc.

\*A cadet is referred to as a 1st Class cadet, not a 1st Classman. “Class” is capitalized, but cadet is not unless used as a title (1st Class Cadet John Jones).

### *Founders Day*

Do not use the apostrophe when referring to "Founders Day."

### *Parents Weekend*

Do not use the apostrophe when referring to "Parents Weekend."

## ABBREVIATIONS:

### *States*

Spell out the names of the 50 U.S. states when they stand alone in textual material. Although state names may be abbreviated to fit typographical requirements for tabular material, the following eight states are never abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, and Utah.

In tabular material, use the following abbreviations for the remaining 42 states and the jurisdictions. **When addressing envelopes, comply with the postal guidelines.**

Ala.	Ill.
Ariz.	Ind.
Ark.	Kan.
Calif.	Ky.
Colo.	La.
Conn.	Md.
Del.	Mass.
Fla.	Mich.
Ga.	Minn.
Miss.	S.C.
Mo.	S.D.
Mont.	Tenn.
Neb.	Vt.
Nev.	Va.
N.H.	Wash.
N.J.	W.Va.
N.M.	Wis.
N.Y.	Wyo.
N.C.	D.C. (District of Columbia)
N.D.	A.S. (American Samoa)
Okla.	MP (Northern Marianas Islands)
Ore.	GU (Guam)
Pa.	P.R. (Puerto Rico)
R.I.	V.I. (Virgin Islands)

Abbreviate United States when used as an adjective but not a noun.

### *Academic Ranks*

When used in a table, academic rank abbreviations are *Prof.*, *Assoc. Prof.*, *Asst. Prof.*, and *Instr.* Academic ranks are not

abbreviated in any other case.

*Professional Ranks*

When used in a table, professional rank abbreviations are *Dir.*, *Assoc. Dir.*, and *Asst. Dir.* Professional ranks are not abbreviated in any other case.

*Military Ranks*

Abbreviate ranks before a name.

**ARMY**

**Commissioned Officers**

General	Gen.
Lieutenant General	Lt. Gen.
Major General	Maj. Gen.
Brigadier General	Brig. Gen.
Colonel	Col.
Lieutenant Colonel	Lt. Col.
Major	Maj.
Captain	Capt.
First Lieutenant	1st Lt.
Second Lieutenant	2nd Lt.

**Warrant Officers**

Chief Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer
Warrant Officer	Warrant Officer

**Enlisted Personnel**

Sergeant Major of the Army	Sgt. Maj. of the Army
Command Sergeant Major	Command Sgt. Maj.
Sergeant Major	Sgt. Maj.
First Sergeant	1st Sgt.
Master Sergeant	Master Sgt.
Sergeant First Class	Sgt. 1st Class
Staff Sergeant	Staff Sgt.
Sergeant	Sgt.
Corporal	Cpl.
Specialist	Spc.
Private First Class	Pfc.
Private	Pvt.

**NAVY, COAST GUARD**

### **Commissioned Officers**

Admiral	Adm.
Vice Admiral	Vice Adm.
Rear Admiral Upper Half	Rear Adm.
Rear Admiral Lower Half	Rear Adm.
Captain	Capt.
Commander	Cmdr.
Lieutenant Commander	Lt. Cmdr.
Lieutenant	Lt.
Lieutenant Junior Grade	Lt. j.g.
Ensign	Ensign

### **Warrant Officers**

Chief Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer
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### **Enlisted Personnel**

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
Master Chief Petty Officer	Master Chief Petty Officer
Senior Chief Petty Officer	Senior Chief Petty Officer
Chief Petty Officer	Chief Petty Officer
Petty Officer First Class	Petty Officer 1st Class
Petty Officer Second Class	Petty Officer 2nd Class
Petty Officer Third Class	Petty Officer 3rd Class
Seaman	Seaman
Seaman Apprentice	Seaman Apprentice
Seaman Recruit	Seaman Recruit

### **MARINE CORPS**

Ranks and abbreviations for commissioned officers are the same as those in the Army. Warrant officer ratings follow the same system used in the Navy. There are no specialist ratings.

### **Enlisted Personnel**

Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps	Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps
Sergeant Major	Sgt. Maj.
Master Gunnery Sergeant	Master Gunnery Sgt.
First Sergeant	1st Sgt.
Master Sergeant	Master Sgt.
Gunnery Sergeant	Gunnery Sgt.

Staff Sergeant	Staff Sgt.
Sergeant	Sgt.
Corporal	Cpl.
Lance Corporal	Lance Cpl.
Private First Class	Pfc.
Private	Pvt.

### **AIR FORCE**

Ranks and abbreviations for commissioned officers are the same as those in the Army.

#### **Enlisted Personnel**

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force	Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force
Chief Master Sergeant	Chief Master Sgt.
Senior Master Sergeant	Senior Master Sgt.
Master Sergeant	Master Sgt.
Technical Sergeant	Tech. Sgt.
Staff Sergeant	Staff Sgt.
Senior Airman	Senior Airman
Airman First Class	Airman 1st Class
Airman	Airman
Airman Basic	Airman