

# Parents

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## A Word from the Parents Council

Dear Families,

On behalf of the Parents Council, we welcome you to Virginia Military Institute. *No Ordinary College. No Ordinary Life.*

We are thrilled you have chosen VMI, and we are confident that this will be a life-changing experience for you and your family! The Parents Council provides a forum for the interchange of ideas and information between parents, cadets, and Institute officials. As Council members, we understand that the transition to VMI is unparalleled, full of anticipation coupled with the challenges that exist in a Spartan environment. For your convenience,

our parent volunteers will be available to assist you during matriculation, open houses, Parents Weekend, and various sporting events.

The regimental staff has prepared this document to help in your transition. If Parents Council can assist, please contact us directly at [parentscouncil@vmi.edu](mailto:parentscouncil@vmi.edu). You may also follow the Parents Council on Facebook and Twitter. We look forward to seeing you on post soon!

Rah Virginia Mil!

Bill and Lisa Haiges  
Parents Council Co-Presidents  
Parents of Cadet Tyler Haiges, Class of 2021

## Parental Perspective and Support

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As the parents or guardians of a cadet, you can take pride and comfort in the VMI system. Even though it may be difficult to contact your rat by telephone, you can rest assured that we know where your cadet is at all times. Attendance is mandatory, and your cadet is concentrating on college work. Rats acclimate to VMI at different paces. Many rats have trouble in at least one area of VMI life (the Rat Line, academics, or the military). Fortunately, there are many people and resources available to help cadets overcome obstacles. There is no challenge your cadet may experience that others in the past have not faced equally, met, and overcome. As all cadets will learn, this is a team effort: they cannot make it through VMI alone.

A team of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) is paired with each company. These EMT teams supervise

all of the rat events. There are also two separate and equally important groups, known as the CEA and the OGA, which monitor all interactions between rats and other cadets. The Cadet Equality Association (CEA) monitors and investigates reports of discrimination of any kind and sexual harassment or misconduct, while the Officer of the Guard Association (OGA) is charged with enforcing the rules governing cadet-rat interactions and VMI's strict anti-hazing policy. Between our EMTs, CEAs, OGAs, faculty, and staff, you know your cadets are being well taken care of.

During your rat's first six months at VMI, your support will be vital. If you are able to attend football games and tailgate on the weekends, they will be grateful for your support. And for those who live out of state, don't worry, you can be assured that your rat will be picked up by another

family for support during this time. Cadets may or may not want to talk about their rat experience by telephone or during parental visits to post. Parents are likely either to hear about or to sense frustration and should be prepared simply to listen and be supportive. A modicum of parental sympathy mixed with expressions of firm confidence in the cadet's ability to handle the VMI system will probably be the best help during the cadet's first year.

Parents are advised not to worry if the Rat Line seems stressful; it is intended to be. If, however, your cadet's response is not within the range of what you would expect, please contact a VMI counselor for consultation at 540-464-7667 or the Infirmary after hours at 540-464-7218. You may also wish to refer to the Cadet Counseling website which offers guidance to parents in recognizing when a cadet may need professional help.

## Communicating with Your Son or Daughter During the Rat Line

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### Email

Email is the most effective way to communicate with cadets. Cadets are assigned email addresses at matriculation and they are required to check their email at least once a day. Rats in particular constantly check their email in hopes of hearing from friends and family. Be aware, however, that rats are not allowed to use their personal computers until after Cadre Week.

### Mail

A package from home is one of the best gifts a cadet can receive. Rats often feel they are alone in the world while at VMI. Letters and packages brighten their day. Each cadet is assigned a box at the Mail Room, which will be the mailing address throughout his or her years at VMI. An occasional package of food is most welcome by cadets and does wonders for morale. Frequent small packages are preferable as food storage space is limited and no refrigeration is available. Cadets can send letters and packages from the Mail Room via UPS or USPS. The Mail Room uses a postage meter and processes parcel post packages.

### Cards & Letters

Cadet (followed by name)  
Virginia Military Institute  
VMI Box 8XXXX (see prefixes)  
Lexington VA 24450-0304

### Packages

Cadet (*followed by name*)  
450 Burma Road  
Virginia Military Institute  
VMI Box 8XXXX (see prefixes)  
Lexington VA 24450-0304

### Prefixes

Use 800 prefix for two-digit box numbers (10 thru 99) example: VMI Box 10 IS 80010

Use 80 prefix for three-digit box numbers (100 thru 999) example: VMI Box 100 is 80100

Use 8 prefix for four-digit box numbers (1000 thru 2050) example: VMI Box 1000 IS 81000

### Telephone

Communicating with a rat can be quite difficult. Rats are not allowed to have cell phones in their rooms. Most rats will be able to keep their phone in their dyke's

room. However, cadets can still be reached by calling the Visitors Center. Messages left at the Visitors Center will be delivered by the cadet on duty within 20 minutes. Nonetheless, with the rigors and demands

of VMI life, there is no guarantee that the cadet will be present to receive the message. Cadets, and especially rats, are severely limited in the times they are permitted to use telephones.

## Visiting Your Cadet

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It is always nice to have visitors at school. Especially at VMI, providing support and visiting are important. There are several opportunities to visit your new rat throughout his or her early cadetship. Times will come within the first weeks when training is not scheduled, you can visit your new cadet at Lejeune Hall. Other times are during home football and basketball games, after a morning parade while tailgating on the Parade Ground, and on Sunday.

### Permits/Furloughs

Permits are “permission slips” approved by the commandant, and sometimes the dean, required to take part in events that are not routine or to miss regular activities (such as a formation or military duty). Permits are listed in the Blue Book, which contains all of VMI’s rules and regulations. Cadets receive the Blue Book at the beginning of each year. Cadets will know if they are eligible to use one permit or another by reading the Blue Book. Every rat will be made familiar with all of the permits that he/she can or cannot use, as well as how to use them. It is very important that you talk with your rat before making any plans for a visit or travel plans for returning home on furlough, because rats are very busy and are not usually let out early for furlough to accommodate travel plans.

### Sundays

Sundays are relaxed days for rats and cadets alike, as there is no formation in the morning, no classes, and no scheduled training. Many rats choose to get involved in local churches and faith groups and leave post to participate.

# Cheat Sheet

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With all of the new things happening and things to remember, use this sheet to keep all the pesky bits of info straight!!

- » Company \_\_\_\_\_
- » Room Number \_\_\_\_\_
- » Roommates
  - > \_\_\_\_\_
  - > \_\_\_\_\_
  - > \_\_\_\_\_
  - > \_\_\_\_\_
  - > \_\_\_\_\_
  - > \_\_\_\_\_
- » Academic Adviser \_\_\_\_\_
- » Mailbox Number \_\_\_\_\_
- » Dyke \_\_\_\_\_
- » My Rat's Email \_\_\_\_\_

## Imporant Dates

**New Market Weekend:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parents Weekend:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Football vs** \_\_\_\_\_

**Football vs** \_\_\_\_\_

**Football vs** \_\_\_\_\_

**Football vs** \_\_\_\_\_

**Football vs** \_\_\_\_\_

**Football vs** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thanksgiving Furlough:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Christmas Furlough:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Spring Furlough:** \_\_\_\_\_