

**GENERAL J. H. BINFORD PEAY, III
SUPERINTENDENT**

**Remarks
December Graduation
19 December 2018
JM Hall**

Good morning!

Graduating first classmen... faculty and staff... families and friends.

Welcome to the December 2018 Commencement exercise of the Virginia Military Institute. Whether the ceremony takes place on the traditional 16th day of May or in December, it is a proud occasion marking an important achievement on the road of life. However, there is one distinction to today's ceremony that perhaps needs mentioning. Whereas the May ceremony is held in Cameron Hall, this ceremony is being held in Jackson Memorial Hall, where VMI graduations were held for a hundred years before the Corps size became too large and had to be moved to Cocke Hall, later in outside ceremonies in front of Preston Library, and now in Cameron Hall. Your graduation, in this "historic" Jackson Memorial Hall, therefore, continues a long tradition.

Joining me on the stage today are:

- ✓ VMI Board of Visitors President, Mr. William Boland, VMI Class of 1973;
- ✓ Col Jamie Inman, VMI Class of 1986, VMI's Chief of Staff and this morning's graduation speaker;
- ✓ VMI Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty -- Brig. Gen. Robert Moreschi;
- ✓ VMI Deputy Superintendent for Finance, Administration and Support – Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark, VMI Class of 1999;
- ✓ VMI Registrar -- COL Janet Battaglia;
- ✓ VMI Institute Chaplain and Chaplain to the Corps of Cadets – COL Robert E. Phillips, Sr., VMI Class of 1987;

and

- ✓ VMI Associate Chaplain, Major John Casper, VMI Class of 2004.

Graduates: Let us begin this morning by thanking your parents, grandparents, guardians, and special friends who have guided and supported you as you navigated demanding years of studies and challenges as cadets at VMI and have brought you to this special day. Let's give them our sincere thanks.

Let me add my congratulations to those expressed by many others over these past few days. Having watched your progress since matriculation, knowing that you chose a harder path than most college students, please recognize that the entire VMI community is proud of you. From here, you will go forth, carrying the ideals of VMI, and I am confident that you will make your mark in the world and lead successful and happy lives. Stay in touch with your Brother Rats and with the Institute and return as often as you are able. I congratulate you and salute you; you have our very best wishes for the years ahead.

I now have the great pleasure of introducing your speaker for this special occasion..., Colonel James P. Inman, U.S. Army (Retired) and VMI's Chief of Staff.

Col. Inman serves as Chairman of the Institute Planning Committee, the most important and significant committee at the Institute...comprised of the two Deputy Superintendents, Commandant, Athletic Director and the Senior Vice Presidents, and functional staff leaders. This Committee addresses and coordinates all significant planning operations on Post for the present, and strategically into the future. In these challenging and rapidly changing times, a clear and responsive outlook on the future is essential to the success of the Institute, and Col. Inman and this committee supply that important perspective. In carrying out these extensive duties, he is also responsible for publishing and maintaining all general orders, special orders and memoranda, and formulating policy guidance and decisions. In other words, he is the man who keeps the wheels turning efficiently and effectively....and, importantly, he provides wise council and guidance to many.

Col. Inman graduated from VMI in 1986 with a BA degree in English. Upon graduation, he was commissioned in the United States Army as a Field Artillery Officer, where he had a distinguished career that included combat service in the First Gulf War during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and later in Afghanistan and in Iraq, where he was seriously wounded, while in battalion command. Other assignments include: Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Cadet Command that commissions all ROTC officers across the nation's many ROTC programs; Field Artillery Branch Chief in the Army's Human Resources Command that assigns and develops field artillery officers; Commander, 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, in the prestigious 101st Airborne Division; duty with the United States Military Delegation in Brussels Belgium; and, numerous other field artillery assignments as a company and field grade officer. Just before coming to VMI in 2013, and in his last assignment before

retiring, he was Commander of the complex, important and sensitive National Capitol Region Warrior Transition Brigade at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where he was responsible for all wounded, ill, and injured soldiers in the National Capitol Region.

In his Army career, Colonel Inman attended the U.S. Army Basic and Advanced Courses at Fort Sill Oklahoma, the Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, and the National War College in Washington, DC. He holds Masters Degrees in the Liberal Arts from Louisiana State University and in National Security Strategy from the National Defense University.

His awards include the Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters, Bronze Star with Oak leaf cluster, and the Purple Heart, among others.

Colonel Inman is married to the former Lori L. White of Kilbourne, Louisiana. They have two children: Beni and Eric. Proudly, Eric graduated from VMI in 2017, where he was president of the VMI Honor Court and a Company Commander in the Corps. Eric is currently serving in the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, New York, while Beni, a graduate of Liberty University and an Intensive Care Unit Nurse, resides in Fort Worth, Texas.

Please welcome a wonderful and consummate professional, a leader, a passionate believer in the Institute...and, a gentleman of the highest order...Colonel James Inman, VMI Chief of Staff and VMI Class of 1986.