

WOMEN AT
VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

DEFINE YOURSELF.





WOMEN AT VMI

Women come to Virginia Military Institute to discover what their ideals – strength, courage, integrity, perseverance, compassion, competence – really mean and to turn those ideals into action.

Coming to VMI means embracing the ideal of the citizen-soldier and finding your own way to serve and to succeed. That ideal has defined cadets since VMI's founding as an all-male military college in 1839. More than a century and a half later, in 1997, women matriculated next to men, becoming part of the first class to include women. Those first women were true pioneers. They set an example for determination, grace, grit, and excellence that helped redefine the meaning of the citizen-soldier.

Today, women make up approximately 13 percent of the Corps of Cadets. They are pivotal members of the Corps – they hold leadership positions, play NCAA and club sports, pursue internships, and conduct original research. In short, they excel in every aspect of the VMI experience.

You could be one of those women. How will you define yourself at VMI?





ALYSSA FORD

"The Rat Line taught me more than
how to follow; it taught me how to lead."

EARN YOUR PLACE.

We at VMI like to say that the Corps of Cadets levels the playing field. But in a corps that's almost 90 percent male, can a woman ever get ahead?

Everyone is always watching you, watching for you to make mistakes, watching to see if you uphold the standards – but everyone is always watching everyone else, too.

In the barracks, you'll room with several women on a floor – called a "stoop" – with the rest of your class. You don't make your bed, you put it away each morning in a room with nothing on the walls except the Honor Code. You'll have very little privacy.

You'll be challenged to measure up – physically, mentally, emotionally. But at VMI, you don't go it alone. If you "fall out" on a run, someone else will fall out with you, and it's likely to be one of the guys – because of course there's more of them – and that's OK. They're Brother Rats, and at VMI, no one finishes anything alone.

In the morning you'll hurry to reveille, in proper uniform – you'll look like everyone else, but appearances are not how you impress people around here anyway. At VMI it's how you lead and how you follow, the quality of your character and the quality of your work, that impresses.

You'll earn your place. One day at a time. And with your Brother Rats, you'll mark your achievements. The field is level. What will you do?







SEIZE OPPORTUNITY.

At VMI, you declare your major when you apply, and from the beginning you're in classes with professors you'll be working with throughout your cadetship, classes that often have as few as 11 other students in them. This means that from the beginning you're getting to know the faculty you'll be working with and becoming aware of the many opportunities to explore your field of study.

You could be like Kim Gragg, who translated al-Qaida documents during an internship at Marine Corps University, part of her national security minor. Or Emma Nobile, who worked with two physics professors on a Summer Undergraduate Research project on thin films. Or Killian Buckley, who spent a month in Morocco living with a host family while taking classes in Arabic. Or Alyssa Ford, a biology major who spent a summer studying birdsong in the field and then completed an independent study learning to make study skins for the department's natural history museum. Or Harper Niver, who did research during two summers at North Carolina State University and was accepted to Michigan State University's College of Osteopathic Medicine.

The list goes on.

Women at VMI are challenged to distinguish themselves.

Opposite: Simone Jimenez was offered and accepted a position as a corporate analyst with JPMorgan Chase prior to graduation.





DISCOVER YOUR STRENGTH. LITERALLY.

When you enter VMI, you enter the Rat Line. Upper-class cadets called “cadre” will be telling you what to do every minute of every day at first. There will be lots of guys yelling at you. And a few girls. You’ll look to your Brother Rats – male and female – for support. And you’ll offer your support in return.

The Rat Line introduces you to the mental and physical challenges of VMI. It starts with an intense week of workouts – several a day. Later, as an upper-class cadet, you will be required to take PE and participate in physical training at least twice every week. Time management will be your key to survival because every hour of every academic day is scheduled.

You’ll learn to study when you can and train when you’re tired. You’ll learn to concentrate amid chaos and to do things right because it’s the right way to do them. You’ll learn that to achieve more, you have to find more in yourself. Where you’re strong, you’ll learn to focus that strength, and where you’re weak, you’ll learn to be strong.

*“I was a dress-wearing girly girl, and still am.
Mastering VMI solidified my confidence in myself.”*

– Harper Niver



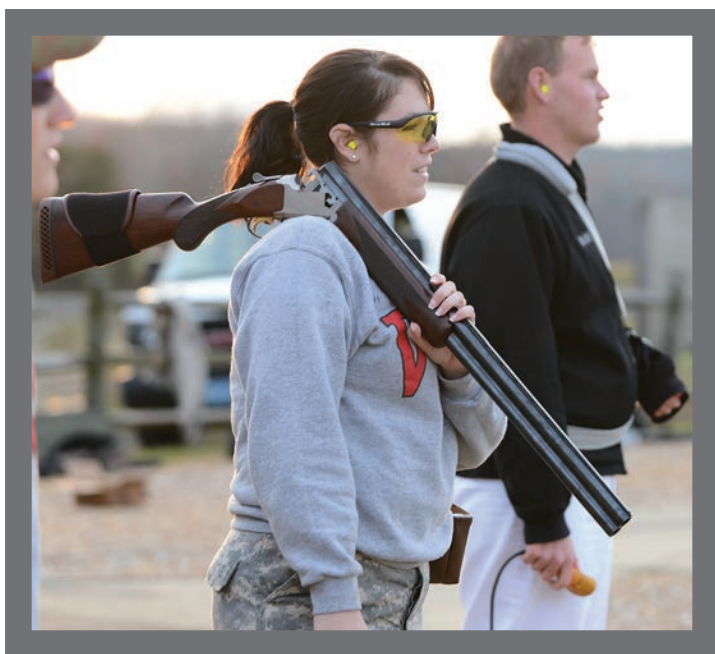
JOIN A TEAM.

Male and female cadets are encouraged to pursue fitness, to measure themselves in competition, and to work together with other cadets to achieve an objective. NCAA athletics and club sports offer myriad opportunities to make these goals your own.

Women on VMI's NCAA teams compete in Division I track and field and cross country, swim in the lanes or on the water polo team, play soccer, and shoot side by side with the men on the rifle team.

On the club sports side, VMI women have competed at nationals in triathlon and at the national and world level in powerlifting. They've run in the Boston Marathon. They field teams in volleyball and rugby and compete with the men in pistol, martial arts, and trap and skeet.

At VMI, women work out, women serve as team captains, women join with their teammates to achieve goals, and women win.



TRAIN TO LEAD.

MILITARY

Women who want to begin their careers with a commission in the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, or Coast Guard have an advantage if they start at VMI. And it's not just because, as a senior military college, VMI offers ROTC training that is second to none.

It's also because at VMI military training is a way of life. The Corps of Cadets forms up to salute the flag each morning at reveille and each evening at retreat. The corps polishes military bearing and displays it regularly in public, full-dress parades. And twice every week – and sometimes more – cadets do physical training, with their ROTC unit or with the Corps.

Cadets who commission from VMI routinely receive their top branch or occupational specialty selection.

CIVILIAN

Women who join the 50 percent of graduating cadets who begin their careers in the civilian world step into that world with a kind of confidence that's rare.

At VMI they learn the discipline to do it till it's right, whether it's preparing a room for inspection or handling a rifle with precision. They learn to treat people with respect through daily practice in military courtesies. And through leadership positions of many different kinds – rank in the cadet regiment or ROTC unit, lab assistant, captain of a team, cadet in charge of a club or a project – they learn how to coordinate with others and lead with assurance.

"I am convinced that without VMI and the AF [Air Force] ROTC department, I would not have achieved my dream of going to pilot training."
– Second Lt. Tiffany Haines









GET INVOLVED.

Pursuing your education is not just about studying and taking tests, writing papers and getting grades. It's also about finding ways. Finding ways to serve, for instance.

At VMI, we prepare young women and men for civil life – for the responsibility of leading and of serving – and the opportunities abound.

Michaela Wright is one of the women who worked with VMI civil engineering and the timber framers to build structures to help the community – a pavilion at the pool and an addition for the domestic violence shelter, for example. And although Michaela was a civil engineering major, she didn't have to be. Anyone can join VMI service projects.

That's exactly how VMI's Keydets without Borders sends cadets – such as biology major Hannah Dickinson – to South America. First, the group brought clean water to a community; then in later trips the cadets installed an innovative, sustainable indoor plumbing system designed here at VMI. Academic major was no matter; if you were ready to serve and to learn you were in.

At VMI, you can participate in many programs, including the Shepherd poverty program and the student-run Nabors Service League. You can be a leader in the Character Counts program in local schools or work the bloodmobile, be a cadet EMT, lead VMI's cadet recycling effort, or assist with Special Olympics.

After all, an education is not just what you get. It's also what you give.

“Being a leader in timber framing has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've had at VMI – seeing the results of our projects and how they benefit and really touch other people.” – Michaela Wright



BUILD LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS.

When you complete the Rat Line at VMI – when you “Break Out” – you are accepted as a cadet in your class.

There is a closeness at VMI that is rare in American colleges. It starts in barracks, where cadets live during the entire four years of their cadetships. And it starts in the Rat Line, which no cadet completes on his or her own. To finish it, to make it all the way to the end, you rely on your classmates in ways that will surprise you and will solidify trust.

Much is shared among members of a class – the boredom of guard duty and penalty tours, intense preparation for parades and inspections, late-night study sessions, downtime in barracks. And when the celebrations come



– the ceremony to receive your class ring, for instance – you’ll find that the people you’re celebrating with, your Brother Rats, are the ones closest to you, who know life as you know it, who share your values.

Graduating cadets say it over and over again. What they’ll miss about VMI, what they’ll miss about living for so long so close together in such Spartan quarters, is the people. They miss being just a few steps away from close friendships. They say it’s like leaving family.

Roommates Emily Farsakian, Christine Knowling, Michaela Wright, and Amy Hardbower celebrate together after receiving their class rings, a milestone in their cadetships.



Mary Schriver '14
VMI Assistant
Director Admissions

Lara Tyler Chambers '03
Member
VMI Board of Visitors

Delegate Jennifer Carroll Foy '03
Virginia General Assembly

Capt. Elizabeth Moskowitz '10
Judge Advocate
U.S. Marine Corps

Elise Woodworth '07
President
Woodworth Enterprises

ENSURE YOUR FUTURE.

A VMI education is the perfect preparation for a successful career, military or civilian. Women are outnumbered here as in the military and in the corporate world. They get a real-world education facing real-world leadership challenges. They test their mettle, they find the limits of their comfort zones, and they step strong into the world outside.

Through rigorous academics, broad discussion of timely topics, physical challenges, consistent discipline, and an uncompromising honor code, the VMI experience shapes cadets, preparing them to excel in graduate school, in the military, and in the workplace.

Once you're out there, you'll find that VMI alumni don't forget one another. The Brother Rat ethos extends well beyond graduation. It offers internships and introductions, recommendations and connections. A foot in the door – and you'd be surprised how many doors out there have VMI alumni on the other side.

If you're looking for lifelong success, VMI is a great place to be from.

*“VMI taught me to appreciate the nuances and complexities in life. Now I know that change can be positively revolutionary. VMI gave me the strength to keep pushing boundaries.” – Capt. Elizabeth Moskowitz '10
Judge Advocate, U.S. Marine Corps*

NO ORDINARY COLLEGE. NO ORDINARY WOMEN.
NO ORDINARY LIVES.

ALLISON PARTIN

"I went in a different direction, and I will never regret it. I am 100 times more confident in who I am, and I am ready for wherever life takes me."



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