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## A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Fellow Alumni,

This morning, I accepted the role of interim superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute. I take on this role with a strong sense of gratitude and humility. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve VMI at an important time in its history. I remember how small I felt when I first stepped foot on post as a rat. Everything that has happened between that day and this day seems like a blur of milestones met, mistakes made, and challenges overcome. When I consider each of those memories, I am reminded how much VMI came with me through every one of those experiences. I am humbled to have come full circle.

I know that many of you may have questions about the next steps for the Institute. Allow me to cover a few key items:

The safety of the Corps of Cadets and the excellence of their education within VMI's unique system is extremely important moving forward. Currently, COVID-19 numbers are low, and cadets are preparing to finish the semester in a strong position with virtual finals from home. Cadets head home on Nov. 20, and we look forward to their return for the spring semester Jan. 17-18. Classes will begin Jan. 21.

The independent investigation requested by the governor of Virginia is in its early stages. An RFP has been issued, and soon, the independent organization tasked to conduct the investigation will be chosen. It will complete the initial phase of the investigation by the end of the year and submit an interim report in February. Its final report will be submitted no later than June 1, 2021.

We welcome the investigation, because it allows us to set the record straight on many fronts and to better understand the experiences of all cadets. We will also have the opportunity to demonstrate the importance of VMI's unique method of education that calls forth leaders in our nation. We remain committed to a challenging but equitable experience for all.

In the meantime, VMI will continue to implement the plan set forth on July 29 to improve diversity, equality, and inclusion. Treating people with dignity and respect is an essential value of good leadership. As interim superintendent, I will be reporting to the Board of Visitors on its progress in January. This exceptionally detailed way forward – which touches on all aspects of life at VMI – will take some time to be completed, but I am sure its benefits will soon emerge.

Taking VMI forward will demand strong leadership. To that end, the Board of Visitors launched its search for our 15th superintendent Nov. 6. This task will be handled by the Superintendent Search Committee, chaired by Gene Scott '80. The committee consists of 13 members of the BOV, as well as Col. Emily Miller, a long-time member of our faculty; Tom Slater '66, former BOV president and alumni leader; and Samuel N. Stocks '90, president of the VMI Alumni Association.

Certainly, many highly qualified and experienced men and women with exceptional records of accomplishment and service will come forward as candidates for this prestigious job. The Board of Visitors, therefore, expects this important and careful process to last from five to seven months, which means that a new superintendent will be on post at the end of June 2021 and, thus, ready to lead the Institute into the new academic year. We will keep you informed as much as we can during this process.

In the course of accomplishing its mission of providing our country with the capable, purposeful, and above all, honorable citizen-soldiers for 181 years, the Institute had to make changes. Old buildings and facilities are renovated or repurposed, and new buildings are added—sometimes where other buildings once stood.

Over the same 181 years, however, the core of the VMI experience remains unchanged. The honor system underpins the development of the character of every cadet. The regimental system, the Rat Line, and Barracks life—which acquaint cadets with the basics of leadership, instill a sense of purpose, develop self-discipline and perseverance, and build a legendary camaraderie—have endured, as well.

It is my commitment to you that we will change what is necessary and safeguard what is necessary to preserve.

VMI has been able to occupy a remarkable place in American higher education because of the strong support and unfailing loyalty of its alumni. You have helped VMI achieve great things and endure many challenging times. Now more than ever, VMI needs alumni to maintain and strengthen their support for future generations of cadets. By moving forward together, we will ensure that VMI will become an ever more valuable asset to Virginia and our country.

Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Cedric T. Wins '85  
Major General, U.S. Army (Retired)

Interim Superintendent

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**Virginia Military Institute** | 319 Letcher Avenue, Lexington, VA 24450 US

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