

WOMEN AT

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

DEFINE YOURSELF.





WOMEN AT VMI

Women come to Virginia Military Institute to further refine their strength, courage, integrity, perseverance, compassion, and competence. Through their cadetship, each develops and strengthens their personal and professional ideals and virtues.

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 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 14% of the Corps of Cadets. They are pivotal members of the Corps – they hold leadership positions, play NCAA and club sports, work internships, conduct original research, and pursue commission in the armed forces. 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?



JOCELYN ARTMAN '22

"The first time I stepped on post, I instantly knew that I needed to be here. It was kind of like a gut feeling - this is where I felt like I belonged the most. The bonds that are created here at VMI are like no other."



EARN YOUR PLACE.

We at VMI like to say that the Corps of Cadets levels the playing field. But in a Corps that's right at 86% male, can a woman ever get ahead?

Everyone is watching to see if you uphold the standards – and though it may seem that all eyes are on you, upholding the standards and giving 100 percent applies to every member of the Corps.

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 be challenged to meet VMI's rigorous standards – physically, mentally, emotionally. But at VMI, you don't go at it alone. If you "fall out" on a run, someone else will fall out with you – and that's okay. 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. 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?





BECKMAN



SEIZE OPPORTUNITY.

At VMI, you declare your major when you apply. From the beginning, you're in classes with professors you'll be working with throughout your cadetship, in classes that many times have an average of 11 other cadets in them. This means that 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 Kaylee Brennan '23 who, as an English major, did independent fieldwork to create a guide for cadets who plan on attending law school after they graduate. Or Miyah Boyd '20 who spanned the disciplines of computer science, psychology, and electrical and computer engineering on a Summer Undergraduate Research Institute (SURI) project by designing and creating an electronic robot companion for people with autism and social anxiety disorder. Or Annika Tice '19 who was the first female cadet elected to the Honor Court at VMI - a high peer honor - and awarded a spot in the Fulbright U.S. Student Program.

The list goes on.

Women at VMI are challenged to distinguish themselves.

Opposite: Maggie Beckman '23 was the S5 captain, the cadet in charge of Corps public relations, her 1st Class year. Beckman did not come from a military family nor did she commission into the U.S. Armed Forces, but she knew after visiting VMI that the Institute was the right place for her.

"It's such a unique experience, and that's what's so cool about it. I could go anywhere else, but I couldn't get the experience I'm getting here. I've learned a lot about myself - what I'm capable of."





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 yelling. 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 a new cadet, you will be required to take physical education (PE) and participate in physical training (PT) at least twice every week. Time management will be your key to success 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 with precision. 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.

"VMI has taught me to be persistent in anything I do and never give up on anything I am passionate about. A crucial lesson that everyone takes away from this place is to be accepting of challenges. A true VMI cadet focuses on solutions in the face of adversity and moves forward with courage and positivity."

– Marilyn Cardenas-Paredes '21



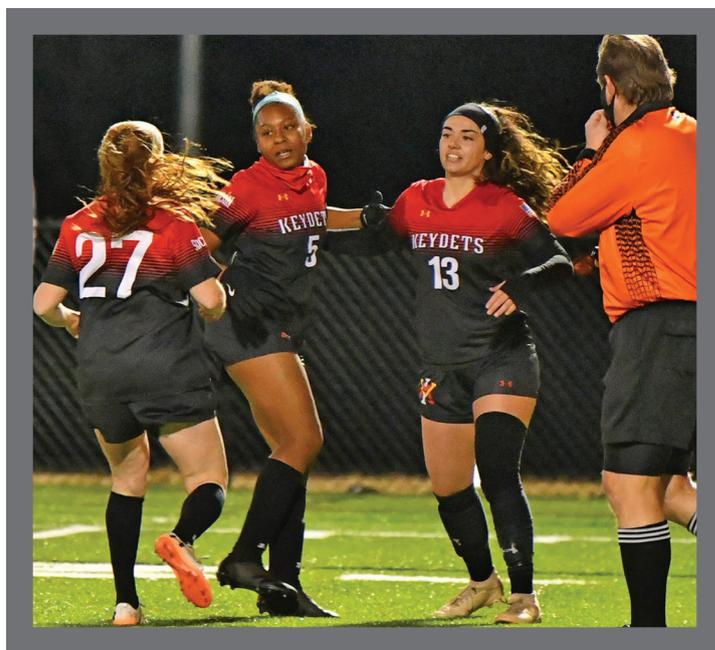
JOIN A TEAM.

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 a myriad of opportunities to make these goals your own.

Women have the opportunity to compete at the highest level within NCAA Division I athletics including cross country, rifle, soccer, swimming and diving, water polo, and track and field.

When it comes to club sports, 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, Space 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 the Corps.

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

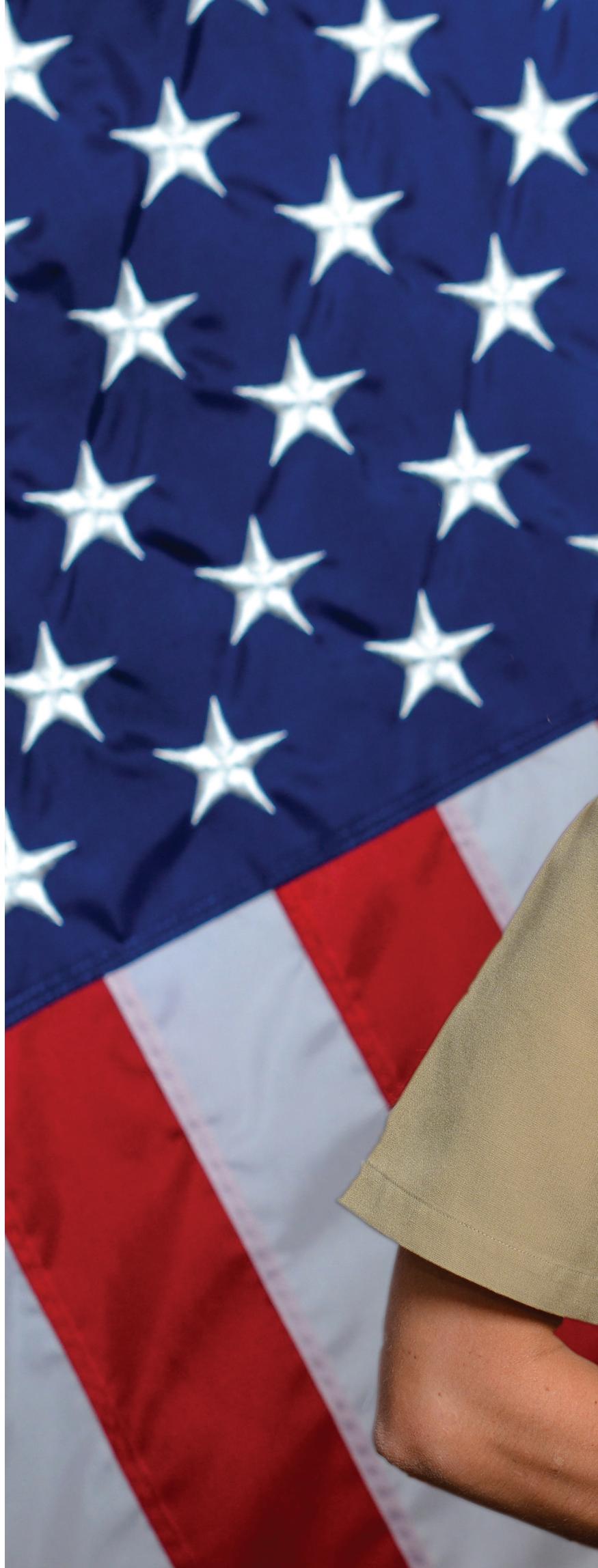
CIVILIAN

Women who join the 50% of graduating cadets beginning their careers in the civilian world step into that world with a kind of confidence that flourishes from their experiences at VMI.

At VMI, they learn the discipline to do something until 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 appreciation of diversity and 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 project, leadership in the class system – they learn how to coordinate with others and lead with assurance.

“VMI taught me how to be a leader and what it takes to serve in the United States military. Through Naval ROTC, I am pursuing my dream of becoming a Naval EOD officer.”

– Ensign Anna Armfield '21





ARMFIELD



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GET INVOLVED.

Pursuing your education is not just about studying and taking tests, writing papers, and getting good 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 serving – and the opportunities abound.

Madeleine Berry '22 made the most of her VMI experience, excelling in the pool as a member of the women's polo team, in ROTC, and as an emergency medical technician (EMT). Madeleine's decision to pursue the summer training at VMI and become a cadet EMT led to her becoming the S4 EMT Chief for the 2021-2022 academic year where she oversaw the entire emergency management services (EMS) agency at VMI. Madeleine and the cadet EMTs provided support at Institute events, NCAA games, club sports, ROTC training, Rat Line training, and more. Many cadets are motivated to become EMTs by a desire to serve their fellow cadets and the local community.

Anyone can join VMI service projects. This is also true of cadet clubs, such as Building BRIDGES, which offers a multitude of off-post service opportunities. Members of Building BRIDGES help build houses for the Rockbridge chapter of Habitat for Humanity and volunteer with Project Horizon, a local organization dedicated to preventing domestic violence and helping victims. Never swung a hammer or answered the phone on a crisis line? No problem – Building BRIDGES will make sure you get the training you need.

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.

"VMI has shown me how much I am truly capable of. I never imagined that I'd be in this kind of leadership position today. But that is what VMI does - it forces us to reach our potential even if we don't see it."

– Cadet Madeleine Berry '22



BUILD LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS.

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

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 their 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.

*Left to right: Talli Tarring '24, Madison Hornig '24, Maxine Gray Barth '24,
Joyce Ellis '24, Nina Otto '24, and Jillian Hall '24.*



ENSURE YOUR FUTURE.

A VMI education is the perfect preparation for a successful career, military or civilian. Women at VMI get a real-world education facing real-world leadership challenges. They test their mettle. They find the limits of their comfort zone, 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. VMI graduates enjoy a 99% employment or graduate school admissions rate within six months of graduating from the Institute.

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.

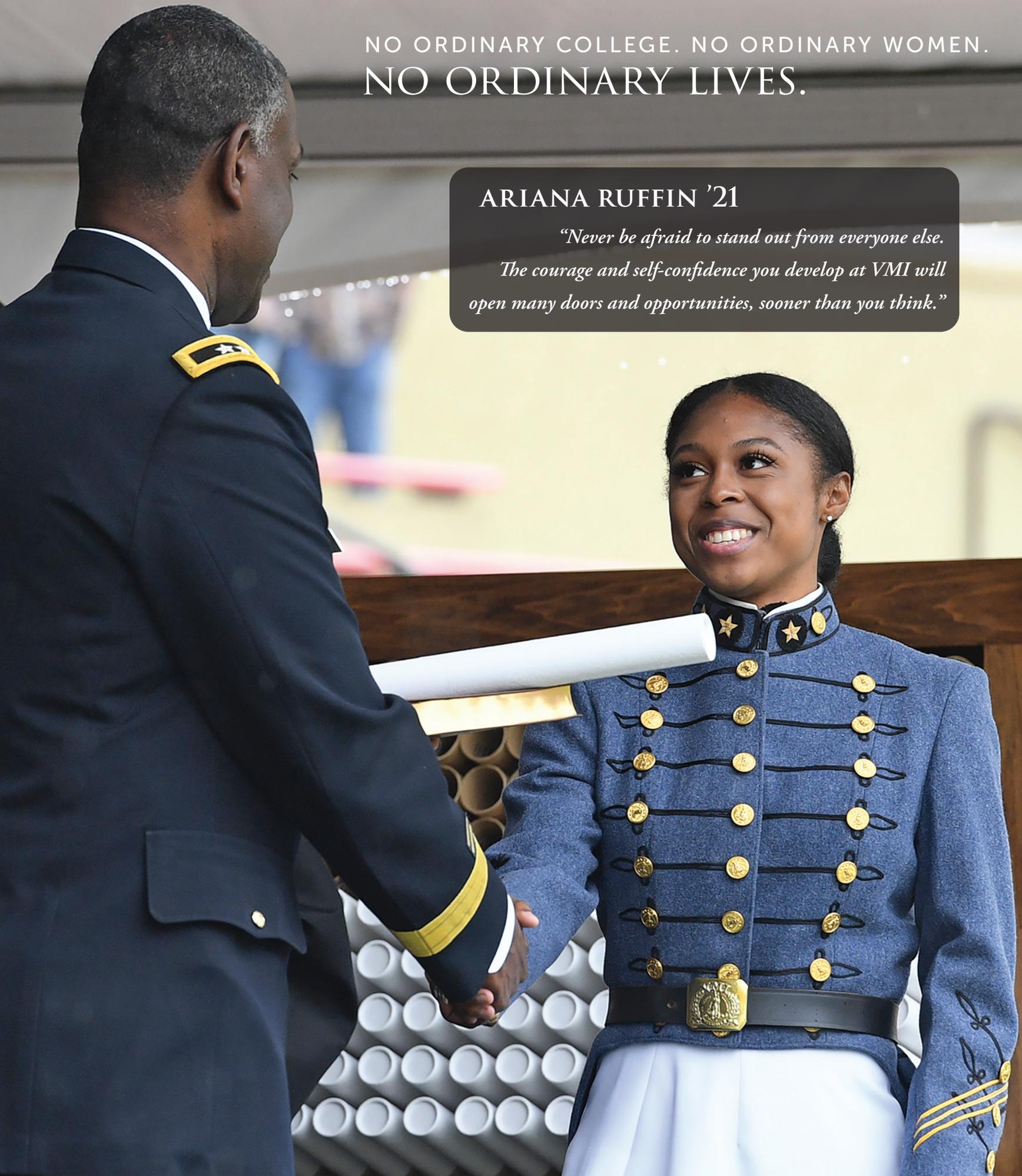
Opposite: Dr. Melissa S. Krawiec '01 was a member of the first ever co-ed class at VMI and is now the new Institute physician. After being unable to commission in the military due to health reasons, Krawiec completed her cadetship and went on to graduate from West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM). She then completed an internship at West Virginia University's Charleston Area Medical Center, and finished her family practice residency at the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine in Maine, where she continued to live and work for several years. In 2011, she joined the U.S. State Department as a regional medical officer (RMO), a foreign service job, where she traveled and worked in New Delhi, India, Washington D.C., and Warsaw, Poland, before accepting the Institute physician position back at VMI.

"I loved the Honor Code and everything a VMI education represented. I knew placement to medical school was over 90% for biology majors... I want to do my best for VMI, because they've done a lot for me."

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

ARIANA RUFFIN '21

*“Never be afraid to stand out from everyone else.
The courage and self-confidence you develop at VMI will
open many doors and opportunities, sooner than you think.”*



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