

Open Public Comment letter to:

Virginia Military Institute
Board of Visitors
May 2024 Meeting

May 2, 2024

Dear Members of the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) Board of Visitors (BOV),

We respectfully submit this letter to become part of the permanent public record, and request that you take appropriate action regarding the identified issues with the responsible Institute Officials and the VMI Alumni Agency's (VMI AA's) officers and employees.

For the reasons stated herein, we respectfully request the three-minute time-slot the BOV secretary gave our representative to speak during the May 3, 2024 public comment period be used as three minutes of silence in honor of and respect to Mr. Peter K. McCrary, VMI Class of 1956.

Peter McCrary, VMI '56, loved VMI literally until his dying moment. His grandfather, father, two sons, and grandson are VMI graduates. Throughout his life, Pete gave generously of his time, talents and treasures to VMI and his fellow alumni. We believe the narrative provided below, supported by the substantial accompanying documentation, proves he was not treated with the dignity or respect every VMI alumnus deserves by the Institute's or VMI Alumni Association's officials. More seriously, Institute officials, some members of the BOV and members of the VMI Alumni Association were not ethical, honest, and or acting with integrity in their dealings with him.

The attached documents providing evidence, highlights the issue. Much of it is in Pete's own words that, although ignored in life, we ask you to now respectfully consider, since his passing. As assembled and summarized in this correspondence, we expect you will review them in detail in the accompanying documentation.

In May 2021, the Class of '56 asked Pete to chair their 65th reunion committee. As a central part of the reunion event, a Memorial Service was to be held in Memorial Hall on VMI to honor all deceased class members. In support of this effort, Pete requested assistance from the VMI Alumni Association or the VMI Administration to have someone livestream the event. VMI, together with VMI Alumni Association, refused any support. When Pete found an alumnus to live-stream and record the Memorial Service, these same officials deliberately sought to prevent it from happening. They stated that the alumnus who volunteered to do the live-stream was not "sanctioned" by VMI or the VMI Alumni Association, so it would not be allowed. Additionally, Mr. Wyatt of the VMI Administration stated live streaming would not be supported or facilitated, in part, because the logistics requirements (a table, an internet connection, and a VMI employee to set up the table, etc.) were too burdensome. VMI told Pete the Institute only supports "VMI sponsored" events, indicating the reunion and memorial service were not sponsored events. Pete approached the VMI Alumni Association and VMI leadership, including the BOV President on the issue, but was ignored. VMI and the VMI Alumni Association deliberately sought to impede and censor the activities in other ways. This, included, but was not limited to, interference with cadets on *The Cadet* newspaper staff servings as volunteers because *The Cadet* was not "sanctioned" by VMI. It was only after Pete refused to give up on honoring his deceased Brother Rats and sought to contact the entire BOV, that VMI and the VMI Alumni Association suddenly changed course and allowed the live-streaming to occur. In their approval, they added the condition that nothing during their reunion, except the Memorial Service, could be live-streamed.

After the Memorial Service, the VMI Alumni Association refused to help create a DVD of the service for the widows of deceased classmates, Brother Rats and others in '56 who were not able to attend in person or watch the service on-line. After using his own money and support from other alumni to create the DVD himself, Pete asked the VMI Alumni Association to assist in disseminating it to all BRs, widows, and families in '56, as well as all Class Agents who may be interested by mailing his letter announcing the availability of the Memorial Service DVD to their classes. In response, Mr. Brashears (Alumni Association Chief Operating Officer (COO) stated: *"I will decide how best we can accommodate your request and let you know the plan. You need to understand that there may be some limitations. I will explain those as they are encountered."*

Then Mr. Brashears rewrote Pete's letter to his own Brother Rats, put it on VMI Alumni Association Letterhead, and gave full credit to [the] *"effort from many folks, we were able to livestream ..."* The VMI Alumni Association not only sought to take full credit for the event, but omitted any reference to those who actually helped in the production and live-streaming activity. This VMI AA letter created a false impression that the VMI Alumni Agencies did the work to make the memorial service viewable by those unable to attend. In his request for VMI Alumni Association assistance in the distribution of the Memorial Service recording, Mr. Brashears attempted to censor Pete's giving credit to *The Cadet* newspaper and its cadet staff for their assistance. According to Mr. Brashears, this censoring was based on what he stated is the VMI Alumni Association and VMI's official position that *The Cadet*, in Mr. Brashears' words, is *"not a sanctioned organization by the VMI Alumni Association, nor the Institute and I cannot give the impression that it is."*

Pete requested the letter be corrected to give credit to *The Cadet* newspaper and its staff. Mr. Brashears refused. Pete asked for a mailing list of his BRs so he could complete the task properly himself. Mr. Brashears responded he would only do so if the Class of '56 Class Agent signed a release noting and acknowledging that Pete will use that information *"for the right reasons,"* but never specified what those were. The list was never provided. Through his own efforts, and support from other alumni, Pete created his own list, which he then emailed, and wrote a regular letter to those for which he had no email. This effort was all at his own expense. He undertook that effort, in his late eighties and living on a limited, fixed income. Pete eventually distributed almost 100 DVDs. In response, widows called him, in tears, to thank him for his efforts.

Pete contacted the Superintendent, the VMI BOV and the VMI Alumni Association leadership for help with his issues throughout this process. Not one entity responded in any manner. He requested a meeting with the leadership. Again, no one responded. The VMI Administration and the VMI Alumni Association made false and misleading statements regarding their role in his efforts, and then actively worked to prevent Pete's correspondence from reaching the BOV. Sadly, what did reach the BOV went unanswered.

A link to the Memorial Service video is with the other supporting material to this letter. We ask you to watch it to see if you feel it inappropriate for dissemination to VMI alumni and Pete's BRs.

What was so objectionable that VMI and the Alumni Association felt so obsessively compelled to interfere and transform a solemn celebration of VMI and the Brother Rat spirit into such a negative experience for alumni who, like Pete, may never live to visit VMI or gather again?

SEE ENCLOSURE 1 OF ALL DOCUMENTS AND THE VIDEO LINK

As a result of this negative experience, Pete began looking deeper into how the Alumni Association and VMI were changing. As a result, he dedicated his remaining time, talents and financial assets to help efforts ongoing to restore Alumni Association member's voting rights, while promoting free speech and viewpoint diversity for all alumni. This included attempts to enable all alumni to reach out to one another and provide alternative viewpoints on the issues facing VMI so the VMI Community could form their

own opinions regarding what is happening at VMI from a perspective not tainted by potential bias from the VMI Alumni Association.

Even after he was diagnosed with cancer and entered hospice, the VMI Alumni Association took punitive action against him that included banning him from participating in VMI Alumni Association facilitated events (to include alumni reunions), forbidding him from entering Moody Hall, removing him the VMI Alumni Association's roll of VMI graduates, and more. When his son called Mr. Ed Johnson, the new VMI Alumni Association COO to make him aware of Pete's condition and request the opportunity to resolve the differences "alumnus to alumnus," Mr. Johnson replied, "That's too bad. Have your father read the letter we sent him." When Pete, though an attorney he was compelled to hire, requested the matter be settled by an impartial arbitrator who would review both sides and decide an appropriate outcome, the VMI Alumni Association refused, stating, in part, "[the Alumni Association] Board bears no burden of proof" for the allegations against you. There is much more to these events that an impartial inquiry would have uncovered. The VMI Alumni Association already provided the BOV and thousands of alumni their false and/or misleading version, so why agree to an impartial evaluation of the facts that would undoubtedly uncover the truth in contrast to its own recounting of what transpired, leading to the admonishment and punishment of Pete and several other alumni. The VMI Alumni Association published that they offered to lift Pete's punishment "on certain criteria,, the basis of which was for him to admit guilt. The letter from VMI Alumni Association President, Mr. Anthony Moore, to the entire Class of '56 trivialized Pete's terminal condition, stating Pete's son "mentioned your brother rat's poor health and age." Most egregious, the letter stated Pete's son "made a passionate plea on your brother rat's behalf **while admitting to the misconduct we identified**" [emphasis added]. That final statement, confirmed by Pete himself just prior to his death, **is that the VMI Alumni Association's statement regarding his admitting to misconduct is completely false and the farthest thing from the truth.**

On January 24, 2024, Pete wrote the following to an alumnus after reading Mr. Moore's letter, "The letter falsely claims that Peter Mason McCrary (Pete's son) wrote his letter (to the VMI Alumni Association) and that it was meant to also be on my behalf. **NOT SO.**" [emphasis added] Pete's lawyer conveyed that, and Pete's emphatic denial of any wrongdoing to the VMI Alumni Association. To this day, they continue to distribute these false and/or misleading statements.

Just so you know, Pete saw the VMI Alumni Association letter and sent his email upon returning home from the hospital **where he was given approximately two weeks to live.** He died on February 8, 2024, but remained engaged in trying to clear his name even from his deathbed. Pete's death did not end the VMI administration and the Alumni Association's vindictiveness.

ALL MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE THOUGH PETE MCCRARY'S LAWYER

Various alumni working with cadets and the VMI Band Director, requested a bagpiper to play "Amazing Grace" in the VMI Memorial Gardens so they could make and distribute a video to honor Pete, the night he died. Despite full support from the VMI Band Director and Cadets, VMI intervened and Col. Bogart (VMI's Commandant of Cadets), with approval from the VMI Administration, directed the Band Director not to provide any such recording to the alumnus designated to lead the effort for the family and the Class of '56. The group eventually acquired what they deemed pertinent from a previous project's recordings, and produced the video anyway without the assistance of the VMI Administration. When Pete's wife, who is suffering from dementia, saw the video, she was brought to tears.

The Alumni Association then intervened.

The Class of '56 Class Agent passed away over Thanksgiving 2023, so, on February 20, 2024, Pete's Brother Rat, Jack Prizzi '56, contacted Mr. Ed Johnson. He made a simple request for a copy of the

current Class of '56 contact list so he could notify Pete's Brother Rats and the widows of his passing. As an alternative, he suggested the VMI Alumni Association could send Mr. Prizzi's note to the class instead. Mr. Johnson eventually agreed to send the note and provided an example of what would be sent. Mr. Prizzi's note (attached) contained a link to the video, inviting his Brother Rats to "[Please watch the tribute to Pete at this link and if you have any memories to share, please send them to: \[info@cadetnewspaper.org\]\(mailto:info@cadetnewspaper.org\) so they \[the cadets\] can include them in a tribute for the newspaper he so loved. \[https://youtu.be/iIM_DyRof2M\]\(https://youtu.be/iIM_DyRof2M\)."](#)

After several days of Alumni Association "staffing," of the note written by Mr. Prizzi, Mr. Johnson refused to include the email address and YouTube link "for security reasons." Mr. Prizzi offered to replace *The Cadet* email with his own, stating, "Let's not lose sight of the mission here. I want my BRs to be notified by me, a BR, of Pete's passing." Mr. Johnson continued refusing to include the bagpiping memorial video link stating "we only send links to videos that are hosted directly by the VMI Alumni Agencies or VMI," expressing security concerns that the link could "direct people to nefarious websites." Mr. Prizzi relented in order to have the message sent, but continued to press Mr. Johnson for the specific security issues he claimed existed. Mr. Prizzi noted the sample obituary that Mr. Johnson provided included links to a site not hosted by at the VMI or VMI Alumni Association. He also noted the link to the memorial service was on YouTube, just as Pete's tribute was. Mr. Johnson changed his story to state the Alumni Association only links to "official obituaries and live streams of memorial services from churches or funeral homes."

The security concern, according to Mr. Johnson was: "This was not the case for the link you provided. Additionally, in that link is a solicitation to subscribe, that organization is not affiliated with VMI or VMIAA. Therefore, we will not send that to our alumni and widows."

We ask that you please review the video link we provide below. It does not contain any solicitation to subscribe or ask for any monies; Mr. Johnson's statement is false. The "organization" hosting the video is The Cadet Foundation and *The Cadet* newspaper, both of which the Institute and the Alumni Association continue to target. Ironically, the obituary in the example Mr. Johnson sent Mr. Prizzi contains a solicitation to donate to the VMI Alumni Agencies.

Mr. Prizzi confronted Mr. Johnson with these facts in an email on March 8, 2024 stating, in part, "It has become clear to me that the standards of the VMI AA range from none at all, [to] arbitrary to just capricious and abject censorship. All of our email exchanges and the bad conduct of the AA could have been avoided had you provided the email addresses of my BRs. Also, I asked that the notice of Pete McCrary's passing not be edited. You tried to assure me that the AA edited only for punctuation and grammar. Not so!" Mr. Prizzi subsequently brought his issues to the attention of the Alumni Agencies President. To date neither has responded.

In one final example, the message the Alumni Association sent to the '56 BRs and widows deliberately used a fictitious email address created in Mr. Prizzi's name on the Alumni Association Servers ("Jack A. Prizzi '56 jacomodue@vmiaa.org") without his knowledge or consent. Mr. Prizzi only noticed this after emailing several alumni who used the "reply" option and had their emails rejected as undeliverable to an unknown address **at the VMI Alumni Association**. Mr. Prizzi tested this himself and received a rejection.

These activities are known as "email fraud" and "email spoofing." They are a crime in some states but are universally considered dishonorable and unethical.

Did the Alumni Association create the email address to prevent people from contacting me by replying to the email they received?

Please follow this link and watch the video VMI refused to distribute to the Class of '56, using the lies that the link raised “security concerns,” “it solicit funds,” and connected to a “nefarious” website:

https://youtu.be/iIM_DyRof2M

We initially asked that the video be played during today’s Public Comment period. Mr. Wyatt, the BOV Secretary, declined, stating “we cannot connect an unknown disk to a computer connected to the VMI network,” but graciously offered, “to circulate a link to that video on a trusted video hosting website (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.) prior to the meeting.”

Why is YouTube secure and acceptable as a “trusted video hosting website” by VMI, the public and for the VMI AA that hosts its own self-promotion and fundraising videos there, but unsafe and “nefarious” for a one-minute and thirty-second tribute to an honorable VMI alumnus’s life as part of the upcoming BOV meeting?

Collectively, this is the depth of VMI’s and the VMI AA’s unethical, dishonest and vindictiveness toward alumni in general, and Pete McCrary specifically.

Why would any reasonable person support such an organization and an Institute that condones such actions? Is this the “standard” for the Alumni Agencies, VMI Administration, and the BOV, and a reflection of the quality of graduates VMI now produces?

SEE ENCLOSURE 2

You may assert this not the business of the BOV distinct from the VMI Alumni Association, but we respectfully reject that VMI, the VMI Alumni Association, and the BOV are independent entities and that neither VMI nor the BOV has authority or standing to be involved in Alumni Agency actions. The facts of this situation, and others almost too numerous to mention, prove otherwise. The BOV and the Superintendent himself have specific obligations regarding alumni issues.

According to the BOV bylaws, The Board appoints the Superintendent, whose duties described in the By-laws under Article II, Section 1, state he has “**primary responsibility** for the establishment and maintenance of proper relationships with the alumni of the Institute” [emphasis added]. The BOV is responsible to ensure the Superintendent complies. The Board is required to remain transparent in its actions and operate openly.

Although our original intent was to have a representative present these comments in person and play the video during the allotted three minutes, you now only allow live public comments once a year and the speaker must be physically present in Lexington to participate, which, unfortunately in this instance, is not possible. In the past, one could speak to the Board virtually. Your start of public comments at 8:00am on a Saturday morning requires anyone not in Lexington to travel in the early hours of the day or absorb the cost of a local hotel just to talk for just three minutes, after which you will not even entertain a response or ask questions to amplify or clarify stated points.

Is this fair, equitable, or in the spirit of caring for what members of the VMI family have to say in such circumstances? Does it reflect basic human decency?

The VMI *Code of Ethics* requires members of the VMI community “to conduct themselves ethically, honestly, and with integrity in all dealings.” Most applicable to this situation, “VMI is committed to the principle of treating each community member with respect and dignity.”

We respectfully offer the BOV has an obligation to act in this matter.

What has VMI, the Alumni Association, and the BOV become such that those in power can treat a dying man in this way simply to advance their personal animosities towards a fellow alumnus or a group of alumni who simply desire that their voices be heard? It begs the question "What has VMI become?"

As you review these materials and ponder these questions, we ask the BOV to:

1. Use the three-minute Public Comment requested on our behalf **in respectful silence for Pete's life**. During that time, consider what it feels like to be lying on your deathbed, or sitting next to the deathbed of a loved one, with the final moments of life spent in needless, yet intentionally inflicted, emotional pain.
2. Not to hide discussion of this matter in another "closed session" or in another secretive meeting amongst yourselves and the Alumni Agencies, where only one side of the story is presented. Have that "difficult conversation" with the current VMI Administration and Alumni Agencies leadership in an open forum so all interested parties have insight as to what actually transpired regarding this and other related issues.
3. Take appropriate measures to ensure these actions cease, don't repeat, and that those responsible are held accountable.

The collective activities of VMI Administration and Alumni Association officials, at the highest levels, literally ruined the last days and minutes of a great man's life. He warranted better treatment just from his being a fellow VMI graduate, even more so because of his and his family's legacy and decades of unwavering support to the Institute. He still deserves justice. Will you, through your actions, provide it now?

Will the only silence that comes of this be that you again ignore it?

Respectfully submitted on behalf of ourselves and a growing group of concerned alumni and others,

Johnathan Krause '21, Jack Prizzi '56, Sal Vitale '61, William Respass '61, Ron Stelmasczyk '74, Gene Rice '74, John Williams '74, Tim Cordle '79, John Arthur '79, Mike Staso '79, Robert Morris '79, Ken Herlinger '85, Tracy Porter '87

ENCLOSURE 1

SEE DOCUMENTS FOLLOWING

Class of 1956 65th Reunion Memorial Service video link
for review:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9aWIDoNjSc>

March 8, 2022

Ms. Coke Stewart
Deputy Attorney General for Health, Education, and Social Services
Office of the Commonwealth Attorney General
202 North Ninth Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Michael C. Westfall, State Inspector General
Office of the State Inspector General
P. O. Box 1151
Richmond, Virginia 22218

Dear Ms. Stewart and Mr. Westfall:

In the fall of last year the Virginia Military Institute's graduating Class of 1956 held their 65th-year reunion in Lexington which was hosted by the VMI administration and the VMI Alumni Agencies (VMI AA). I was the Chairman of the Reunion Committee. By last September [of the] 288 matriculates (by tradition they are the Brother Rat (BR) class) – 132 had died (48 within the last 5 yrs), leaving only 156 surviving. Of these, 18 attended the reunion along with 4 widows and 15 guests.

Our Reunion Committee determined that the premier event of the reunion would be a Memorial Service honoring our deceased BRs and to "live-stream" the service to the internet so that BRs not attending could virtually "participate" by viewing the service online in "real time." While arranging for the Memorial Service with the VMI AA and the VMI Chaplain's Office – I learned that cadets on the staff of *The Cadet* newspaper and a VMI alumnus (Robert Morris '79) had the equipment and expertise to record and uplink the service to the internet in "real time."

However, upon learning that our committee would accept the assistance of Mr. Morris, the cadets involved with *The Cadet* newspaper, and The Cadet Foundation (for the live-streaming), we were told by Mr. Thomas Brashears (VMI AA Chief Operating Officer) that "Unfortunately we are not going to be able to accommodate [the live-streaming]." Later Col. William Wyatt (VMI Communications Director) stated "Requests for live streaming cannot be facilitated or supported at this time ..."

We knew that [those statements] were factually false! Before and after our Reunion, officials at VMI and the VMI AA continued their acts of deliberate censorship, violations of the First Amendment and other unethical acts – which continued in the weeks following our reunion in early October and, as shown in how they attempted to cover up these actions, to this day ...

VMI officials, including Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins (VMI Superintendent), Thomas Watjen '76 (President of VMI Board of Visitors (BOV)), Lt. Col. Kevin Ryan (Secretary to the VMI BOV and VMI Executive Officer to the Superintendent), Col. William Wyatt (VMI Communications Director), and Mr. Thomas Brashears (VMI AA Chief Operating Officer) – have attempted to impede my rights to bring these facts before the BOV or had knowledge of such actions. The attached documentation provides factual, documented evidence regarding the events described above.

On January 27, 2022, I sent the VMI BOV a package containing envelopes (individually addressed to each BOV member) containing the information in Attachment #3 and a DVD of our Memorial Service. FedEx confirmed the package was delivery at 12:49 PM on Friday, January 28 -- in time for delivery to the members before the end of their meeting (noon on Saturday, January 29 (Attachment #2, Pg 2/9)).

In the letter of explanation to Col. Ryan accompanying the package I requested, as is my right under Virginia Law governing BOV operations and the VMI By-Laws, that the packets be given to each BOV

Ms. Coke Stewart
Mr. Michael C. Westfall
March 8, 2022
Page 2

member at the meeting. I asked Col. Ryan, as the Secretary to the BOV, that he provide each BOV member their copy prior to the meeting -- or, if that was not possible, then at the meeting itself (Attachment #2, Pg 1/9).

Each envelop contained a cover letter to the members (Attachment #3, Pg 1/20) and the documented evidence regarding my complaints (Attachment #3, Pgs 2-20/20). According to my understanding of Virginia code covering BOV operations, the BOV by-Laws, and the notice for the BOV Meeting published by VMI, these documents were to be distributed to the BOV and also placed into the public record (for the BOV).

On February 12, I emailed Col. Ryan, specifically asking that he "confirm the date and approximate time that the envelopes were delivered to the members." (Attachment #2, Pg 3/9) . Col. Ryan did not respond to this request until almost two weeks later, after, as shown below, I contacted Gen. Wins and Mr. Watjen.

On February 20 I received confidential information from someone with direct knowledge of the BOV meeting that [some] member(s) had not received the packet. I also received information from another individual who obtained a copy of the full BOV public record under a FOIA that my correspondence was not included in that record either.

On February 21 after not receiving a response from Col. Ryan to my February 12 email, I wrote Gen. Wins and Mr. Watjen directly by mail to make them aware of the delivery issue with Col. Ryan and requested an investigation as to the status of my correspondence to the BOV members (Attachment #2, Pg 4/9). There has been no response from Gen. Wins or Mr. Watjen.

Except (perhaps) that on February 25, Col. Ryan informed me, by email that "all enclosed envelopes have been provided to each of the VMI Board of Visitors Members in totality" (Attachment #2, Pg 6/9). Since Col. Ryan evaded my request for the date and approximate time that the envelopes were delivered, I promptly asked him again to "let me know when the envelopes were delivered" (Attachment #2, Pg 6/9) . In his response, Lt. Col. Ryan continued to be evasive and simply replied ... "please rest assured the provided material was timely delivered" (Attachment #2, Pg 7/9) .

I promptly responded asking [him] ... "By timely delivered -- do you mean the same afternoon that they were received in your office? Were members of the BOV afforded the opportunity to review the materials during the several days of their meeting?" I also requested of him that, "If delivery was made by FedEx ... please provide confirmation of delivery for each member" (Attachment #2, Pg 7/9) .

On March 2 I received a telephone call from Col. Ryan with Mr. Wyatt also on the line. We discussed our Class of 1956's Reunion and the Memorial Service and some of the problems I encountered in opposition to the live-streaming of it. Col. Ryan offered to arrange for me to address the BOV at their next meeting. He also mentioned that the time allotted [for a public comment] would be about 3 minutes. Clearly an insufficient time to address these issues.

Also during the call I learned from Col. Ryan that he received my FedEx package on January 28 and that he had reviewed the contents of his envelope -- and also that Mr. Watjen was [that day] given his [envelope]. Although the BOV meeting continued until noon on Saturday, January 29 -- the other members were not provided their envelopes until later. I asked when, precisely, the packets were mailed or otherwise sent to the other BOV members. Neither Col. Ryan or Mr. Wyatt knew the date. However, Col. Ryan said he would get [the date] for me. To date -- nothing from Col. Ryan.

Subsequently, I received confidential information from someone who has direct contact with BOV members and another individual who obtained a copy of the full BOV public record of the BOV meeting -- and now have reason to believe that at least one BOV member's packet was postmarked February 15. This was 17 -- 18 days after they arrived in Col. Ryan's office.

Ms. Coke Stewart
Mr. Michael C. Westfall
March 8, 2022
Page 3

The only conclusion any reasonable person could make from these events is -- that after talking with Mr. Watjen and others in the VMI administration -- the deliberate decision was made not to provide my correspondence to the other members of BOV. Any reasonable person would also conclude that it was not until after I repeatedly pressed the VMI leadership for the status of my materials did Col. Ryan send my correspondence to the other members of the BOV while also deliberately not including it in the BOV public record. Given these recent deliberate acts of censorship and those encountered before and after our 65th Reunion I feel strongly that a formal investigation of these and all related actions is more than justified.

Those responsible for these acts have violated the time honored Honor Code at VMI, the BOV's by-laws and rules, and possibly Commonwealth of Virginia Statutes, and must be held accountable.

Thank you in advance for your attention to these matters

Yours very truly,.


Pete McCrary '56

PS -- I am aware that your first inclination may be to dismiss this as an "alumni issue" not within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth or the BOV. That is not the case. The evidence (set out here) of censorship, intimidation and the cover-up -- deeply involved, and continues to involve, the VMI administration working so closely with the VMI AA, to the point of giving them direction in some cases, and that there is effectively little separation between them.

Attachments:

- #2 Delivery History (Docs for BOV)
- #3 Reunion History (for BOV)
- #4 Memorial Service Program

cc Fellow VMI Alumni, members of the VMI Family, *The Cadet* newspaper, and the general public.

1a

Peter K. McCrary



eMail



Lt. Col. Kevin Ryan
Secretary to the BOV

Crystal Perry
Administrative Assistant

Board of Visitors
201 Smith Hall
Virginia Military Institute
Lexington, VA 24450

Dear Lt. Col. Ryan:

As is my right as an alumnus of the Virginia Military Institute, I am providing you packets to give to each BOV member at this coming session. I chose not to request time or to present these documents in public as they are in regard to a serious and sensitive issue that I feel the BOV should have the opportunity to review and resolve within our VMI Family.

As the Secretary, I ask only that you provide each BOV member their copy prior to the meeting -- or, if that's not possible, then at the meeting.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

In the Spirit,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter McCrary".

Peter K. McCrary '56
Chairman, Class of 1956's 65th Reunion Committee

January 27, 2022

#2



January 28, 2022

Dear Customer,

The following is the proof-of-delivery for tracking number: 289208188340

Delivery Information:

Status:	Delivered	Delivered To:	
Signed for by:	Signature on File	Delivery Location:	
Service type:	FedEx Ground		
Special Handling:			
			Lexington, VA,
		Delivery date:	Jan 28, 2022 12:49 

Shipping Information:

Tracking number:	289208188340	Ship Date:	Jan 27, 2022
		Weight:	5.4 LB/2.45 KG
Recipient:		Shipper:	
Lexington, VA, US,		Manassas, VA, US,	

Proof-of-delivery details appear below; however, no signature is available for this FedEx Ground shipment because a signature was not required.

Thank you for choosing FedEx

#3
My letter and FedEx package sent Jan 27 . .

From: Peter McCrARY [REDACTED]

To: ryanka@vmi.edu

Cc: perrycw@vmi.edu; vmi-bov@vmi.edu; tom@watjen.net; lchambers@tylerdevelopmentgroup.com; hfain@spottsfain.com; conradmhall@gmail.com; richard.hines@nelsonmullins.com; gussielord@hotmail.com; smarsh@marshandlegge.com; miller.davidlewis@gmail.com; gscott18@hotmail.com; randolph@knipp.com

Bcc: [REDACTED]

Date: Saturday, February 12, 2022, 10:51 AM EST

Lt. Col. Kevin Ryan
Secretary to the Board of Visitors
Virginia Military Institute
Lexington, Virginia 24450

Dear Col. Ryan,

While the BOV was meeting last January 27, by FedEx (#289208188340), I sent you a parcel containing envelopes addressed to each BOV member -- with a request

"... that you provide each BOV member their copy prior to the meeting -- or, if that's not possible, then at the meeting."

FedEx confirmed delivery to your office on the afternoon of January 28.

Identical envelopes were also provided to you and your administrative assistant -- each containing a DVD of the Memorial Service for our 48 deceased BRs held by the Class of 1956 at our 65th Reunion on October 5, 2021. Also included was a reprint of the Memorial Service program, a photo of the legacy cadets participating, and my remarks of events leading up to and after the service.

I would appreciate it if you would confirm the date and approximate time that the envelopes were delivered to the members. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours very truly,

Peter K. McCrary '56
Chairman, Class of 1956's 65th Reunion Committee

#41
PETER K. MCCRARY
[REDACTED]

Phone [REDACTED]
eMail [REDACTED]

February 21, 2022

Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins '85
Superintendent
Virginia Military Institute
Lexington, VA 24450

Mr. Thomas Watjen '76
24 Dockside Lane Pmb 19
Key Largo, Florida 33037-5267

SUBJECT: Censorship, interference, and other violations of the First Amendment and Rights of members of the VMI Family.

Dear Maj. Gen. Wins and Mr. Watjen:

By the provisions of the Code of Virginia and the notice given by the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) Board of Visitors (BOV) for its meeting (27 to 29 January 2022), I was authorized to make or submit public comments to the VMI BOV for that meeting.

I submitted my comments to the VMI BOV in a package containing envelopes personally addressed by name to each BOV member. The package was sent by FedEx to Lt. Col. Kevin Ryan, Secretary to the BOV, and it was received in his office at 12:49 pm on January 28 (delivery signature on file with FedEx). The package contained a cover letter to Col. Ryan asking that [he] "... provide each BOV member their copy prior to the meeting -- or, if that's not possible, then at the meeting." In addition to the cover letter, Col. Ryan and his Administrative Assistant, Ms. Crystal Perry, were each also provided an envelope containing the same materials that the BOV members were to receive (*i.e.*, a DVD of the Class of 1956's 65th Reunion Memorial Service, a reprint of its Memorial Service program, a photo of the participating legacy cadets, and my commentary regarding the obstacles we encountered before and after our reunion last October).

By February 12, not having heard anything regarding delivery of my materials to the BOV members, I sent an email to Col. Ryan asking "... if [he] would confirm the date and approximate time that the envelopes were delivered to the members." To date I have not received a reply.

The obstacles (described in the materials submitted) represent an attempt by the VMI administration and the VMI Alumni Agencies to prevent our class from associating with persons associated with The Cadet Foundation and *The Cadet* newspaper – and [also] even the mention of [the newspaper's] name in correspondence with our brother rats. Such actions are violations of our constitutional rights of free speech and association. And to suppress and deliberately interfere with my right to submit comments to the BOV describing those events amounts to a further violation of my rights. If these acts were directed or condoned – and for which disciplinary actions is not taken now (by VMI or the BOV) for their occupancies, it will constitute official participation and approval of them. This would amount to a *coverup* of improper acts by staff members of VMI and perhaps others.

From the complete lack of response [from VMI] to confirm that my materials were delivered, I can only assume they have been intentionally censored by Col. Ryan, and willfully so. Or he intentionally delayed delivery until [the BOV] left VMI or discarded or destroyed the materials. Such censorship

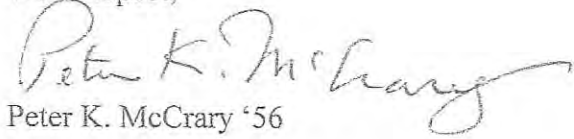
and related acts of intentional concealment, delivery delay or destruction of my correspondence is inexcusable.

I strongly suggest that the receipt and disposition of the materials that I delivered into the hands of Col. Ryan be fully investigated by a disinterested person to determine the status of my materials to include:

- a) their present status, including the person(s) presently having their possession;
- b) if they were delivered, the means and times for each delivery;
- c) the names of persons responsible for decisions made during the course of their disposition; and
- d) disciplinary or corrective action recommended and taken, if any.

I am making all documents available to the Commonwealth of Virginia leadership, the VMI Family, the public, and will engage any other agencies or organizations as may be available. Continued silence on the part of the VMI administration and the BOV would constitute acceptance of such behavior that members of the VMI Family should never condone or support, ... especially by silence.

With respect,



Peter K. McCrary '56

- cc Members of the VMI BOV
VMI Class Agents
VMI Alumni
Applicable Agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia
Public through the media and other outlets.

Enclosures

- Cover letter to Lt. Col Ryan, dated Jan 27, 2022
- FedEx "proof-of-delivery"
- Inside letter to VMI Board of Visitors, Dated Jan 26, 2022
- email Peter McCRARY to Col. Kevin Ryan (rvanka@vmi.edu) dated Feb 12, 2022

FW: My letter and FedEx package sent Jan 27 . .

#5

From: Ryan, Kevin A (ryanka@vmi.edu)

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Friday, February 25, 2022, 12:57 PM EST

Mr. McCrary '56,

Pursuant to your request, please know that your parcel was indeed received and that all enclosed envelopes have been provided to each of the VMI Board of Visitors Members in totality.

Most Respectfully, Kevin '01

LTC Kevin Ryan, CPA

Executive Officer to the

Superintendent &

Secretary, VMI Board of Visitors

#6

From: Peter McCRARY [REDACTED]

To: ryanka@vmi.edu

Date: Friday, February 25, 2022, 02:54 PM EST

Thank you, Col. Ryan.

Please let me know when the envelopes were delivered.

Respectfully,

Peter McCrary '56

RE: My letter and FedEx package sent Jan 27 . .

From: Ryan, Kevin A (ryanka@vmi.edu)

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Friday, February 25, 2022, 05:56 PM EST

Sir,

As confirmed, please rest assured the provided material was timely delivered.

My best wishes for the weekend.

V/R, Kevin '01

From: Peter McCrARY [REDACTED]

To: ryanka@vmi.edu

Date: Friday, February 25, 2022, 07:25 PM EST

Col. Ryan,

By timely delivered -- do you mean the same afternoon that they were received in your office? Were members of the BOV afforded the opportunity to review the materials during the several days of their meeting?

If there was some kind of unfortunate SNAFU -- and the envelopes had to be delivered by the United States Postal Service or by other means -- please let me know when they were placed in the hands of the delivery service and the expected time of receipt for each member.

If delivery was made by FedEx or other professional service please provide confirmation of delivery for each member. I need this information so that if there has been some mishap and one or more members have not yet received their materials, I want the opportunity to send them a replacement package.

Thank you, sir, for your cooperation.

Peter McCrary '56

9 Fw: My letter and FedEx package sent Jan 27 . .

From: Peter McCrARY [REDACTED]
To: tom@watjen.net; winsct@vmi.edu
Cc: ryanka@vmi.edu
Date: Saturday, February 26, 2022, 12:57 PM EST

Maj. Gen. Wins and Mr. Watjen:

Gentlemen:

It was my intention that both of you should have been provided copies (by "cc") of my email exchanges with Lt. Col. Ryan dated February 25, 2022, at 02:54 pm and 07:25 pm -- but were not.. To correct that error, I am forwarding that email string [to you] at this time.

Peter K. McCrary '56

8 ----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Peter McCrARY [REDACTED]
To: Ryan, Kevin A <ryanka@vmi.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 25, 2022, 07:25:07 PM EST
Subject: Re: My letter and FedEx package sent Jan 27 . .

Col. Ryan,

By timely delivered -- do you mean the same afternoon that they were received in your office? Were members of the BOV afforded the opportunity to review the materials during the several days of their meeting?

If there was some kind of unfortunate SNAFU -- and the envelopes had to be delivered by the United States Postal Service or by other means -- please let me know when they were placed in the hands of the delivery service and the expected time of receipt for each member.

If delivery was made by FedEx or other professional service please provide confirmation of delivery for each member. I need this information so that if there has been some mishap and one or more members have not yet received their materials, I want the opportunity to send them a replacement package.

Thank you, sir, for your cooperation.

Peter McCrary '56

7 On Friday, February 25, 2022, 05:56:33 PM EST, Ryan, Kevin A <ryanka@vmi.edu> wrote:

Sir,

As confirmed, please rest assured the provided material was timely delivered.

My best wishes for the weekend.

V/R, Kevin '01

#6
From: Peter McCRARY [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 25, 2022 2:54 PM
To: Ryan, Kevin A <ryanka@vmi.edu>
Subject: Re: My letter and FedEx package sent Jan 27 . .

Thank you, Col. Ryan.

Please let me know when the envelopes were delivered.

Respectfully,

Peter McCrary '56

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

#5
On Friday, February 25, 2022, 12:57 PM, Ryan, Kevin A <ryanka@vmi.edu> wrote:

Mr. McCrary '56,

Pursuant to your request, please know that your parcel was indeed received and that all enclosed envelopes have been provided to each of the VMI Board of Visitors Members in totality.

Most Respectfully, Kevin '01

LTC Kevin Ryan, CPA
Executive Officer to the
Superintendent &
Secretary, VMI Board of Visitors

Virginia Military Institute

757-353-8592 Mobile

540-464-7132 Office
ryanka@vmi.edu

#1b

Peter K. McCrary



Phone
eMail

OPEN LETTER

January 26, 2022

VMI Board of Visitors

Ladies and Gentlemen:

After careful consideration of the present situation I've decided to bring my concerns directly to your attention. Regardless of how you may feel about the serious issues before us, one point we can all agree on is the sanctity of the 1st amendment and that cadets and alumni should never be censored.

As you will see, this is going on now.

I am providing you a copy of the materials I sent, at personal expense, to every member of the Class of 1956 and others. I've included the DVD for you so that you can see for yourself what a great product was produced by cadets and the right alumni working together despite the obstacles placed before us.

I have no doubt that when you investigate this issue, as you should, you will be told different stories by the VMI administration and the VMI Alumni Association. They should not be your final word. There is detailed documentary and other evidence available to you from the parties involved that conclusively shows the truth in these matters.

I encourage you to take action as failure to do so would constitute approval for this behavior on the part of the BOV.

In the Spirit,

Peter K. McCrary '56
Chairman, Class of 1956's 65th Reunion Committee

VMI Class of 1956's 65th Reunion Committee
December 2021

Dear Brother Rats, widows, family members, and friends of the VMI Class of 1956,

As many of you may know, thru a combined effort from the Class of 1956's 65th Reunion Committee and invaluable support from several cadets and fellow alumni volunteers, the committee was able to live-stream and record the Memorial Service held in Jackson Memorial Hall on October 5th. Thanks to help from the VMI Chaplain, the Director of the VMI Regimental Band, and the Interim Director of Admissions, we were able to have a memorable and moving service in which there were five cadets (grandsons of Brother Rats) who gladly volunteered to participate in the ceremony. The event was also memorialized thanks to the help of Cadet Emily Liska, the Photo-Editor for *The Cadet* newspaper, who graciously gave her time to photograph the legacy cadets supporting us. Thanks to the volunteer support from Robert Morris '79 who live-streamed and recorded the event, your Reunion Committee is now able to provide you this memorial packet containing: 1) a DVD of the Memorial Service, 2) the beautiful photograph of six legacy cadets who participated in that wonderful service, and 3) a reprint of the Memorial Service program.

In our work to provide these to you I am sad to say the VMI Alumni Agencies, and in particular the VMI Alumni Association, let the Class of '56 down and dishonored the VMI Spirit and ethos. The attached OPEN Letter explains the events in detail.

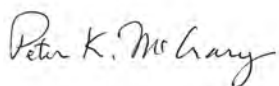
Fortunately, the cadets themselves, and supporting alumni who still believe in VMI, came forward in the form of The Cadet Foundation, an IRS approved 501(c)(3) (EIN 87-1333054) started by cadets and alumni with cadets on its Board of Directors. Where the Alumni Association failed and abandoned us, The Cadet Foundation covered all the up-front costs of making the DVDs, reprinting the programs, printing the photographs, and mailing all [of it] to our BRs, their widows, and families.

So that they may recover the costs of providing this memorial packet to you and, most importantly, continue to help alumni and cadets while funding the continued publication of *The Cadet* newspaper at VMI, **I am personally asking all members of '56 to use the form and self-addressed envelope enclosed to make a donation of at least \$25.00 to The Cadet Foundation.** You may also donate online at: <https://givebutter.com/Gw0jQW>.

The Cadet Foundation will receive all funds and remit only out-of-pocket expenses incurred to those persons providing services to make these shipments possible. The rest of the **substantial work involved** to create the video & DVD, coordinate and package the shipment has been provided **free-of-charge** by volunteers. Upon completion, the committee chairman, Peter K. McCrary, will mail an itemized accounting of funds received and disbursed by The Cadet Foundation, to those who request it. The accounting will including the total number of contributors (BRs and others), but not their identities.

I also ask that you remember The Cadet Foundation, **in place of** the Alumni Agencies, in your future giving so they may continue their important work in supporting us where our Alumni Association, unfortunately has failed us.

In the Spirit,



Peter McCrary '56 Chairman
Class of '56 Reunion Committee

Peter K. McCrary





OPEN LETTER

December 4, 2021

VMI Alumni Association Board of Directors
VMI Foundation Board of Trustees
VMI Board of Visitors

Copies to:

Class of 1956 Brother Rats, widows, families, and friends
All Alumni, Alumni Class Agents, Regional Directors, and Chapter Presidents
Editor, *The Cadet* newspaper
The Public

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is an OPEN LETTER to not only the VMI Family, but the public. I fully understand and accept the impact of this action. I did not come to this decision easily. It has been my observation that since the political and media attacks against VMI began members of the VMI Family often attempted to genuinely offer support VMI and the VMI AA in defending what is good and offering experience and assistance to help address areas where VMI can improve. And I have heard directly from other alumni that I trust, that in most cases there was no response or, worse, promises of corrective action were made but never fulfilled. Also that many alumni were dismissively categorized as “a small group of older, disgruntled alumni” by some in the VMI AA. As I recount in this letter I personally experienced these unconscionable actions and saw the impact they had on the Class of ’56. While many have chosen to remain anonymous, which is their right, or simply “walk away” from VMI in response to this situation, I made the decision to publically recount my experiences and call others who had the same or similar experiences to come forward and take action to both hold those responsible accountable and return the VMI AA to the mission of supporting alumni on which it was founded but has, in my mind, strayed from.

As the Chairman of the Class of 1956's 65th Reunion Committee, on November 8th, I sent a letter (as an email attachment) to the Alumni Association Board of Directors (C/O Samuel N. Stocks '90, Chairman), with copies to the Presidents of the VMI Keydet Club and the VMI Foundation, as well as the editorial board of *The Cadet* newspaper. A copy of that letter is enclosed.

That letter was meant to bring to the attention of the Alumni Association (AA) leadership the unreasonable limitations, obstacles, and outright censorship that our class encountered while planning our reunion activities in coordination with the (AA) and to have them take immediate corrective action to stop and prevent recurrences of this behavior. In response to the letter, Mr. David Prasnicki telephoned me on October 9th – during which he offered to work with me and his colleague, Ms. Norma Robinson, so that we could set things right and complete all work with respect to our 65th reunion. Mr. Prasnicki said that he would speak to Mr. Brashears in that regard. We also discussed at length our reunion's reference to *The Cadet* newspaper and its status *vis-a-vis* the AA – with Mr. Prasnicki insisting that it [the newspaper] is not an AA “sanctioned organization” and they [the AA] cannot give the impression that it is.

With that limitation, I told him that we would complete our remaining reunion activities on our own without any help from the AA.

It was clear to all that the premier event of our reunion was the Memorial Service for our 48 BRs deceased since our 2016 reunion. The service might have been enjoyed by only our 35 reunion attendees (18 BRs, 4 widows, 13 guests) – but for the volunteered assistance of fellow alumnus, Robert Morris, '79 and especially cadet staff members of *The Cadet* newspaper – it was viewed by many more (263 at last count). With the live-stream provided by these volunteers, some were even able to view it in “real time,” feeling that they were a part of it. For me to participate and cooperate in the censorship of and failure to mention their contribution -- is unthinkable!

And it is especially galling knowing that the AA and its Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Thomas Brashears, continually threw up barriers and offered false excuses in an effort to prevent us from live-streaming the event to the internet – and then attempted to have the AA take all credit for its success. **[A detailed narrative of these unreasonable oppositions is enclosed.]** Equally reprehensible are Mr. Brashears' and the VMI AA's attempts, in coordination with VMI, against *The Cadet* newspaper that is literally a VMI Institution in and of itself. Such actions are an affront and threat against our God-given rights to freedoms of speech, association, and of the press – all GUARANTEED to us by our Constitution. These issues are much more important than whether the AA (or VMI administration) sanctions *The Cadet* – they are principles worth literally dying for. And many VMI alumni have done just that.

As of this date I am aware of no corrective action by Mr. Prasnicki or VMI AA in regard to Mr. Brashears or his actions. Nothing has been done to “set things right” and I am increasingly concerned that the Class of '56 is not alone in being abandoned by the VMI AA.

For this reason, I now take the unprecedented step of severing ties with VMI AA for this project and completing our reunion actions independently. In doing so, I am pleased to know that The Cadet Foundation, a 501c3 formed by cadets and alumni, has pledged the time of its volunteers, funds and other resources to assist us in promoting our Memorial Service and its aftermath. I encourage all alumni to consider this organization for support.

In closing, I urge that all receiving this letter to read the enclosures carefully, support The Cadet Foundation and then consider initiating a complete review of the VMI AA to include its leadership, processes, focus, and especially this dangerous precedent of censoring alumni and cadets participating in acquiring and practicing ethical journalism. We must return our VMI AA to its mission, as stated in its by-laws, to “organize the alumni of the Virginia Military Institute in one general body, so as to better keep alive the memories of VMI life, and by their united efforts to more efficiently aid in the promotion of the welfare of VMI, and the successful prosecution of its educational purposes in the future.” As you will see from the attached, the present leadership appears to have abandoned that mission in favor of implementing the desires of VMI's administrative staff rather than the VMI and [its] alumni.

Until such reasonable changes are made, I can no longer financially or otherwise support an organization that treats alumni in this manner, engages in censorship of alumni, and *The Cadet* newspaper -- and has otherwise strayed far from its core mission. I encourage my fellow alumni and all friends of VMI to do the same.

In the Spirit,


Peter K. McCrary '56

Chairman, Class of 1956's 65th Reunion Committee

Mr. Peter McCrary '56

Chairman, VMI Class of 1956 Reunion Committee

OPEN LETTER

TO: Alumni Agencies Board of Directors
C/O Samuel N. Stocks '90 – Chairman

CF: VMI Keydet Club President
VMI Foundation President
Editorial Board, *The Cadet* newspaper

Dear Sirs:

The purpose of this open letter is to notify you that as Chairman of the Class of 1956's 65th Reunion Committee I respectfully reject the unreasonable limitations and outright censorship imposed by the VMI Alumni Association on our request for the Association's assistance in promoting our Memorial Service for deceased Brother Rats and providing members of our Class a DVD copy of the Memorial Service we recently held at VMI. This letter is also to further protest how *The Cadet* newspaper, its cadet staff, and the Class of 1956 (and its Reunion Committee) have been and are presently [being] treated in this matter by Mr. Thomas Brashears, Chief Operation Officer (COO) of the VMI Alumni Association and by his interaction (supposedly on behalf of our Reunion Committee) with the VMI leadership in this matter.

I further request a meeting, not later than Close of Business (COB) Nov. 10, 2021 with you or your representative with decision-making authority to review the full details of this situation so that I may learn what corrective action the Association intends to take for itself and Mr. Thom Brashears.

The issues raised here are specifically with respect to Mr. Brashears and the VMI Alumni Association's leadership responsible for its day-to-day workings with VMI alumni. My dealings with Misses Corri Sensabaugh and Natalie Carpenter of the AA have been very good, until such time as Mr. Brashears intervened – asserting his authority and control.

Mr. Brashears' dealings with me on these issues regarding our Memorial Service, its live-streaming to the internet, and distribution of its recording – have been unprofessional to the point of rudeness and completely unreasonable. Especially considering that a memorial service has no controversial elements and "live-streaming" has become common during the social limitations imposed by COVID. Such behavior and actions as COO of the VMI Alumni Association run directly contrary to its best interests and those of the alumni it serves. I've spoken with a number of alumni across other classes and I am convinced that these issues must be brought before Board of Directors – and doing so serves the best interest of the VMI Family.

A summary of the issues that prompted this action include, but are not limited to:

- When Mr. Brashears learned that we planned to live-stream our memorial service for deceased BRs to the internet, he stated ... "*Unfortunately we are not going to be able to accommodate this.*" Following that he used his authority as the AA COO to deny our request and made every attempt to block us from moving forward.
- Mr. Brashears did not have time (from September 8 to 15) to respond to my attempts to work through his unilateral denial until I took the issue over-his-head (Mr. Marconi) and requested to speak to the Board of Visitors. After this he found time to speak with me.
- Then during my September 15 phone conversation with Mr. Brashears, he learned the identity of the alumnus (Col. (Ret) Robert Morris) who volunteered his expertise, equipment, and its operation to record the service and uplink it into the VMI existing internet network, and insisted that Robert Morris' participation would not be permitted – explaining that the individual had not been "*vetted*" by the VMI AA.
- Mr. Brashears, in cooperation with the VMI Communications office, informed me that our request is denied, explaining that ... "*Requests for live streaming cannot be facilitated or supported at this time. It involves coordination of internal components (tables, arrangements/approval of location, staff member with person/vendor during live shot, etc.) They currently only support VMI sponsored events via livestream.*"
- Only after – we volunteered to bring our own table, reminded Mr. Brashears that JM Hall was already

approved for our event, and questioned why VMI needed to supervise an alumnus who was literally doing nothing more than plugging his own cable into an internet wall outlet -- did Mr. Brashears responded that "After much work with the Institute There has been a change, I am glad to report. The Institute has now approved your request to have Bob Morris '79 provide a live stream of our memorial service. I assume this is only for the memorial service and no other function."

- Mr. Brashears never responded to my specific request for an explanation why VMI does not consider a memorial service at a class reunion -- a "VMI sponsored event"
- After the Memorial Service we asked Mr. Brashears to support promoting the dissemination of the DVD to all BRs, widows, and families in '56 as well as all Class Agents who may be interested by mailing (a letter drafted by me) announcing the availability of the DVD of the Memorial Service. In response Mr. Brashears insisted that "I will decide how best we can accommodate your request and let you know the plan. You need to understand that there may be some limitations. I will explain those as they are encountered."
- His rewrite (of my letter) written under the VMI AA letterhead -- gave credit to [the] "effort from many folks, we were able to livestream ..." -- omitting any reference to those who actually did the work to help in the production and live-streaming of our memorial service -- creating the false impression that the VMI AA did the work to make the memorial service viewable by those unable to attend and recording on DVD media.
- In our request for AA assistance in the distribution of the Memorial Service recording, Mr. Brashears attempted to censor our giving credit to *The Cadet* newspaper and its cadet staff for their assistance in its production. According to Mr. Brashears, this censoring was based on what he stated is the VMI Alumni Association and VMI's official position that *The Cadet*, in Mr. Brashears' words is "not a sanctioned organization by the VMI Alumni Association, nor the Institute and I cannot give the impression that it is." However, our Reunion Committee's simply giving credit where credit is due -- does not amount to a "sanction" by VMI or the VMI AA.
- When we requested the letter be corrected to give credit to *The Cadet* newspaper and its staff, Mr. Brashears refused.
- We then asked for a mailing list of our BRs so we could complete the task properly ourselves. Mr. Brashears responded he would only do so if our Class Agent signed a release noting and acknowledging that he will use that information for the *right reasons*. He never specified what those were.
- We learned that the VMI Class of '61 recently nominated Gen. Binford Peay for both an Alumni Association award and the NewMarket Medal asking other classes to endorse the nomination. We heard nothing of this from either the AA or Mr. Brashears.
- Mr. Brashears actions create the impression he and the VMI AA he leads are taking direction from VMI, a state college subject to political whims and pressures from political parties [in office], vice being the independent, objective voice looking out for Alumni.

In closing, I submit that Mr. Brashears' interactions with our 65th Reunion Committee have been unprofessional to the point of rudeness and completely unreasonable and, and as he is the Chief Operating Officer of the VMI AA, detrimental to its purposes and to all VMI alumni.

Given Mr. Brashears' actions, and the implied support of the AA (of which he is its COO) -- as the Chairman of Class of 1956's 65th Reunion Committee, I have decided we will now "go it alone" and will do our best to contact our BRs separately in order to provide them copies of the memorial service video, a reprint of the program, and photo of the legacy cadets. We will also "provide credit where credit is due" for those who assisted us as we do our best to reach as many BRs, wives and family members as possible without further obstruction or censorship from Mr. Brashears or the Alumni Association.

You do not have my permission to share this correspondence with Mr. Brashears and we do not desire to have any further contact with him on this matter. Unfortunately, he has broken our trust and we've lost confidence in his ability or desire to support us and our fellow alumni.

In the Spirit,

Peter McCrary '56
Class of 1956's 65th Reunion Committee Chairman

VMI Class of 1956's 65th Reunion

A Narrative of Significant Events in the Planning, Execution, and Post Reunion Activities by Peter K. McCrary, Reunion Committee Chairman

This narrative is presented as a time-line of significant events gathered from memory as confirmed with others who have direct knowledge of the events and records of emails, documents, and my recollections of conversations and events that occurred during the course of my service as chairman. Text within “quotation marks” indicates that it has been taken *verbatim* from email or other writings which are identified [as a minimum] by sender, recipient, date & time. Other recipients are only identified where required for clarity – and all recipients are *seldom* identified. Text within quotes is seldom the entire text of an email – and unquoted portions are sometimes paraphrased or left out as not relevant. My unredacted email records in these matters are being preserved. I stand ready to cooperate with recipients [of this narrative] that may have a legitimate need for copies of additional records that I may have.

My use of the pronoun “we” refers to myself and our committee or BRs collectively.

Preliminaries:

My duties as chairman began in late May 2021 after Betty Mann (BR Jim Mann’s widow) called me asking if I would help in getting a 65th reunion started. Learning that our Class Agent, Dick Smith, wouldn’t be doing it, I called the Alumni Association (AA) on May 25th and was introduced to Ms. Corri Sensabaugh. She would be my point-of-contact with the AA in planning for our reunion.

By July 19 we (Chaplain Phillips, BR Rocky Stone, myself) had designed a program for the memorial service and, with Corri’s help, a complete schedule of events for the reunion. Cover Letter, schedule, and draft memorial program were all mailed to BRs and widows.

Soon interest was shown regarding the independent student newspaper at VMI (*The Cadet*) covering the memorial service and the making of a video [of it] –

Email, Tuesday Aug 10, 2:48 pm

McCrary (PKM) > Col. Phillips, cc Sensabaugh (Corri), *The Cadet* newspaper

“There’s been some interest in having a video made of the Memorial Service. I hadn’t thought of that, but I think it’s a very good idea. Could you point me in the direction of an office or person in the VMI community that would have the skill and tech equipment to make such a video and reproduce it on a media that we could offer to those who may want it for a keepsake?”

By 3:30 pm Alumnus Robert Morris, ‘79, emailed me (**Email, Tuesday Aug 10, 3:26 pm**), identifying himself as the “*Alumni POC for The Cadet*” newspaper and offered to help with recording the memorial service explaining:

“We could use the equipment I have and the YouTube channel we have access to in order to ‘live-stream’ the memorial. It would be recorded at the same time. This tends to be higher quality both in transmission and recording.

“I will not charge for any of this as I am a volunteer for The Cadet, ...”

By return email, I accepted his offer ...

Email, Tuesday Aug 10, 10:18 pm

PKM > RM

“We hadn’t thought of a voice or video recording until a BR’s widow [from Florida] requested a copy of

the final program because she couldn't attend herself. And until you mentioned zoom or live streaming (I know nothing of either), those possibilities were not considered either. I think it would be appreciated by many who can't attend."

My email ended with "Thank you for your interest and willingness to help."

By August 19 we had identified two cadets who are grandsons of our Reunion Committee members and I notified Col. Phillips that we also had a volunteer to record the service –

Email, Thursday Aug 19, 12:06 pm

PKM > Col. Phillips, cc to cadet participants and RM

"We especially want to present a respectful and moving service for those attending. And it's possible that we could have a much wider 'virtual' attendance. Col. [Ret] Bob Morris, an alumni POC with 'The Cadet' publication has kindly offered his expertise and equipment so that the service may be recorded (video) and reproduced on media made available to any interested persons. And perhaps a 'live-streaming' of the service itself.

"I consider that producing the kind of memorial service that we have in mind is a challenge – especially to be kept within the strict 30-minute time limit. In order to meet this challenge I would like to schedule a meeting at VMI of the persons addressed in this email [participants] on Thursday, September 23 in the afternoon or evening consistent with individual schedules.

"... I would ask that Cols. Phillips and Brodie suggest an appropriate meeting place and make reservations [for its use]." [Note: the suggested date was later rescheduled for Wednesday, the 22nd.]

The opposition:

On Sep 6th at 11:40 am on an email to me from Col. Morris -- Corri is shown as receiving a copy. Then, after working with Corri Sensabaugh and Natalie Carpenter for the past 3+ months -- I get an email [set out below] from Mr. Thomas Brashears, a person I had never met or had any knowledge of. There follows a series of emails exchanged between us.

Email, Wednesday Sep 8, 2:20 pm

Brashears (TB) > PKM, cc Corri, P. Cook, Gary A. Bissell

*"I understand that another alumnus had reached out to the Institute to assist you with live-streaming the memorial service here on post during your reunion in early October. **Unfortunately we are not going to be able to accommodate this.**" [Emphasis added.]*

"With that said, I am happy to explore an option for our Agencies Communications team to record the event, so that we can distribute it later to your classmates that were not able to attend.

"Please let me know if you have any questions.

"For future reference, please make sure thses [sic] types of requests start with out [sic] office."

Email, Wednesday Sep 8, 3:13 pm

PKM > TB, cc Corri, P. Cook, Gary A. Bissell, RM, reunion committee

"Is your office not equipped to accommodate live-streaming our Memorial Service event at our 65th Reunion on October 5? Or, is there some reason that our Reunion memorial service shouldn't live-streamed from Memorial Hall?

"We know that many of our BRs (and their widows) would very much want to "tune in" to a live Memorial Service which will include "calling of the roll" of our deceased BRs since our last reunion in 2016.

"As the unofficial Chairman of our ad hoc Reunion Committee I have on numerous occasions discussed with VMI AA and others our desire to accommodate widows (and BRs who can't attend the Reunion) — including video recordings. The only response we received was from Bob Morris 79 — an alumnus willing to volunteer his equipment and expertise. If your Agencies Communications team doesn't have

the ability to live-stream the event, then I'm certain Mr. Morris would make himself and his equipment available to meet this need.

"If, on the other hand, there's official objection to live-streaming the event, then I respectfully request knowing why the VMI administration considers it objectionable — and won't permit it."

Now started the brush-off and *faux* excuses --

Email, Wednesday Sep 8, 3:31 pm

TB > PKM, cc Corri, P. Cook, Gary A. Bissell

"Let me know a time early next week where we could discuss this on the phone. I'm happy to give you a call and explain the entirety of the situation.

"I certainly recognize the desire and reasoning behind what you are trying to do and I would like to make as many accommodations as possible. However, these things take some measure of planning.

"Again, please let me know a time early next week when you could be available for me to call and discuss."

Email, Wednesday Sep 8, 4:07 pm

PKM > TB, cc Corri, P. Cook, Gary A. Bissell

"How 'bout later today or anytime tomorrow?"

Email, Wednesday Sep 8, 4:10 pm

TB > PKM, cc Corri, P. Cook, Gary A. Bissell

"Unfortunately I am not available this afternoon (personal/family obligations) and tomorrow is a hectic day for me as well. Friday the Board of Visitors is here and that will take up my entire day. Earliest possible time for me is Monday morning."

Sensing that we were getting the brush-off and making no progress, I wrote ...

Email, Wednesday Sep 8, 4:20 pm

PKM > TB, cc Corri, P. Cook, Gary A. Bissell

"Ok, so it has to be Monday. ...

"PS ... please send me email the address for the secretary to the Board of Visitors? Thank you."

Email, Wednesday Sep 8, 4:24 pm

TB > PKM, cc Corri, P. Cook, Gary A. Bissell

"LTC Kevin Ryan '01 email is ryanka@vmi.edu ... he is copied on this message."

I then called Lt. Col. Kevin Ryan asking if I could address the BoV at their next meeting scheduled in a day or two. Then considering my travel requirements and the board's schedule – I determined that it would not be possible. However, early the next morning I received the following email from Mr. Brashears:

Email, Thursday Sep 9, 9:00 am; TB > PKM

"I have on my calendar to call you at 4pm EDT today. I will have about 15 minutes."

During our phone conversation [that afternoon] I emphasized the importance of live-streaming our memorial service and how it would benefit many BRs and widows that could not attend in person. I explained that alumnus Robert Morris '79 had volunteered his equipment and expertise to do the live-streaming. Mr. Brashears stated he couldn't allow Mr. Morris to participate as the person recording the Memorial Service. Asking "why he couldn't?" – Brashears' answer was that Morris hadn't been vetted by the AA. It was only then that I learned [from Mr. Brashears] that he was the Chief Operating Officer for the VMI AA. I had assumed that he was part of the VMI administration. He then offered that the AA would provide a recording of the service to be made available for distribution. My response was that live-streaming would allow remote viewers to feel almost like they were present. We concluded

that Brashears would discuss the possibilities with Morris and then take the matter up with the VMI Communications and Marketing Office.

I later (September 13) learned from Mr. Morris that Brashears had remarked to him [during their phone conversation] about my request to address the Board .. falsely saying that I had “demanded” ... [to see] “the Board of Visitors on this issue” ... adding that “That wasn’t going to happen.”

On September 13 after Morris and Brashears talked on the phone, I received this email ...

Email, Monday Sep 13, 4:38 am

TB > PKM, cc Corri, Natalie Carpenter, Cook

“I spoke with Bob Morris ’79 today and will be following up with the Institute to see if there will be an opportunity to live stream your memorial service – They (the office of communications and marketing) will have to approve it, based on a variety of factors. ...”

After these phone calls and Brashears last email I was optimistic that our request to live-stream the Memorial Service would be approved. I expressed my optimism with this email to Mr. Brashears ...

Email, Monday Sep 13, 8:29 pm PKM

> TB, cc Corri, Natalie, Cook

“Here’s hoping that the VMI authorities will appreciate the consoling comfort ... by watching the live-streaming of the Memorial Service ...

“A great deal of work ... from your staff that we in ’56 deeply appreciate.

“I have high hopes for favorable approval since VMI itself routinely live-streams events

“Thank you for your help in making this possible.”

Two days later my false hopes are dashed – not with a courtesy call [or even an email] from Mr. Brashears. Instead he tasked his colleague, Ms. Corri Sensabaugh, with conveying to me the bad news. When she called, we first covered some ordinary reunion business, but I sensed *stress* in her voice ... and then she told me that our request to do the live-streaming was disapproved. I asked her for the reasons – all she could say is “It came from Smith Hall.”

I told Corri that we could see no good reasons for the disapproval – and that we wouldn’t “stand still” for this rebuke. I proceeded to draft a formal written response directed to Mr. Brashears with copies to Sam N. Stocks ‘90, Chairman, VMI AA Board of Directors, and Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins ‘85, VMI Superintendent. A copy (attached to this narrative) was sent to Mr. Brashears by email ...

Email, Wednesday Sep 15, 4:26 pm

PKM > TB, cc Sam Stocks, parrentlr@vmi.edu

“Please read the letter I’ve attached to this email. It’s in a “.pdf” format. Please respond by the suspense noted.” [Copy of letter attached to this Narrative]

Email, Wednesday Sep 15, 4:33 pm

TB > PKM, cc Sam Stocks, parrentlr@vmi.edu, Bill Wyatt

“Thank you for your email. I will review it in greater detail in the next few hours. ...

“...COL Bill Wyatt ... has purview over this. ... When we called his office, this is what we were told:

“Requests for live streaming cannot be facilitated or supported at this time. It involves coordination of internal components (tables, arrangements/approval of location, staff member with person/vendor during live shot, etc.) They currently only support VMI sponsored events via livestream. [Emphasis in the original.]

“I have been inordinately busy over the last couple of days so I apologize for not calling you directly.”

Receiving these *faux* excuses late in the day, I replied promptly with a question ...

Email, Wednesday Sep 15, 4:58 pm

PKM > TB

"Sir.

"Without careful study of your email – I do have a brief question:

Isn't the Class of 1956's 65th Reunion a "VMI sponsored event .."

I never received an answer to the question.

Email, Wednesday Sep 15, 8:19 pm

PKM > TB, cc Sam Stocks, parentlr@vmi.edu, Wyatt

"Thank you for your prompt response ...

"In regard to your provided quote from Col Wyatt ...

"It does not appear that he fully understands the very limited scope of our request.

"1. Tables - Only a small table is required to set up the laptop for live-streaming and the Class of '56 has already arranged for one if there are no tables in J [sic] Hall.

"2. Arrangements/Approval of Location - We are told the M Hall is already approved for our Memorial Service and so this should be no problem. If this has changed please notify me immediately.

"3. Staff member with person/vendor during the live shoot - I am sure based on the size of the staff at VMI this will not be a problem. Also, since an alumnus will be operation [sic] the equipment I do not see how there would be any problem. In the response I have requested I expect you and Col. Wyatt will further clarify this. Does it have to do with your previous statement that alumni have to be "vetted" by you in order to participate in events?

"4. [Staff] currently only support VMI "sponsored events" according to the VMI staff?"

The next day, just after noon – **permission to live-stream our Memorial Service – was approved!**

Email, Thursday Sep 16, 12:12 pm

TB > PKM, cc Sam Stocks, parentlr@vmi.edu, Wyatt, Corri, Steve Maconi

... "After much work with the Institute ... There has been a change, I am glad to report. The Institute has now approved your request to have Bob Morris '79 provide a live stream of your memorial service. I assume this is only for the memorial service and no other functions."

Planning details for the Memorial Service:

In an August 19th email to Col. Phillips (VMI Chaplain) and [then-known] cadet participants. I scheduled a working meeting for September 23rd (later set for Wednesday, September 22) to work out the details of the program and the detailing of each participant's part in the service.

I also requested the AA (thru POCs Corri Sensabaugh and Natalie Carpenter) to:

- 1) Help identify all legacy cadets (of BRs) presently in the corps.
- 2) Find and reserve a conference room for the working meeting set for September 22.
- 3) Prepared for mailing (within a day or two after the (September 22 working meeting) – a draft of the Memorial Service program and a "cover letter" providing the internet address where they could view [the service] "live-streamed" at 1:30 pm on October 5. [Note: It was stressed the importance of prompt mailing [after the meeting] considering that USPS often takes as much as a week to traverse as little as 200 miles.]

Re #1) Our first response from the AA regarding identifying legacy cadets (of our BRs) was email on:

Email, Monday July 12, 9:37 am

Natalie Carpenter (NC) > PKM, cc RP, Corri

"... I checked on having anyone currently in the corps who's [sic] relative was in the class of 1956. There is currently no one in our system, not even your grandson. I do not believe that our system has been updated, ... [We] have decided to add the question 'Do you have any legacy within the current Corps of Cadets?' to the class of 1956 online registration and paper registration!"

There was no response to the [added] question placed in the registration package for any information about legacy cadets of our BRs. I did ask Corri or Natalie, "Shouldn't the Admissions Office have that data?" They didn't know. Later in September, I called that office myself and spoke with the Interim Director of Admissions, Col. Neil Whitmore. He said they certainly had such data – and a global search of "1956" promptly identified three additional grandsons of BRs in addition to the two grandsons (of Reunion Committee members).

Re #2) After I had decided that a working meeting for the Memorial Service was required (8/19 email to Col. Phillips), I occasionally mentioned to the AA (and others) trying to find a conference room for that purpose. By telephone call from Corri or Natalie, I was later told that a request had been made for a conference room in the new Engineering Building.

Email, Thursday Sep 16, 11:26 am

PKM > Corri, cc NC

"... please note that it should accommodate as many as a dozen attendees (about 10 are expected). The engineering building would be just fine — but if it's not available, then we'll assemble by George Washington's statue on the parapet overlooking Memorial Garden, weather permitting. If the weather drives us indoors, we'll move to the PX."

Then, after no word --

Email, Friday Sep 17, 2:57 pm

PKM > Corri, cc NC

"Will it be Engineering building? If so, room #, point of contact, ... please. Or another place? Thank you for your cooperation." And finally!

Email, Monday Sep 20, 9:50 am

Corri > PKM, cc NC, J Brodie, TB

"Per our conversation this morning, the group will meet in the Moody Hall Executive Dining Room on 22 Sept from 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. ..."

Then an unexpected obstacle! A volunteer cadet informed me that the Commandant's Office had scheduled military duty (a practice "march down") on the Wednesday at 1600, September 22, usually a time free of military duty. I promptly notified ...

Email, Monday Sep 20, 11:08 am

PKM > Corri

"Just learned that there is scheduled for Wednesday afternoon a -- 'March Down' practice -- scheduled for 1600 on the 22d.

"I moved the working meeting from Thursday to Wednesday because I thought generally (after 1600) Wednesdays are duty free. Can you help in getting the Memorial Service participants EXCUISED [sic] from this activity? Or, direct me to the person with that authority? ..."

Email, Monday Sep 20, 11:26 am

Corri > PKM

“Thom Brashears will be in touch with the commandant tomorrow and will follow-up with you.”

Looked like another “brush-off” – but I would no longer depend on Mr. Brashears to be my advocate or lead me based on his action to date. So I contacted the VMI Commandant directly ...

Email, Monday Sep 20, 12:12 pm

PKM > Col. Bogart, Commandant

“Good morning, sir.

“I am the unofficial Chairman of the Class of 1956's 65th Reunion presently scheduled for October 4 and 5. We have included in our reunion schedule a Memorial Service ...

“As part of our preparation for this Memorial Service I have scheduled a working meeting of all participants at 1600 on this Wednesday, September 22. ...

“May I respectfully request that the cadets participating in the Memorial Service may be excused from that practice ...”

Email, Monday Sep 20, 12:18 pm

TB > PKM

“Please allow me to affect coordination with the Institute. I will discuss with the commandant tomorrow.

“This kind of coordination is my job.

“I will follow up with you tomorrow.”

But it was too late. I had already taken care of business.

Email, Wednesday Sep 20, 2:54 pm

Col. Bogart > PKM

“Sir - thank you for your email.

“The Cadets can attend your session and miss Military Duty - thank you!”

Re #3) After the working meeting the names of participating cadets and each’s parts (roll caller, usher, musician) were sent to the Chaplain’s Office for inclusion in the Memorial Service program. The program, along with the internet address for the live-streaming was mailed by the AA to all BRs and widows – allowing persons not attending to “tune-in” to the live-streaming on October 5th.

However, there was a delay in the mailing as described by Corri ...

Email, Saturday Sep 25, 3:10 pm

Corri > PKM

“One item I just learned last evening, our mailroom was unable mail your letters/memorial booklets yesterday due to running out of ink for envelopes. The machine did not alert of low ink to allow us to be proactive and avoid the situation from occurring. The letters will be finished up and out on Tuesday. I’m so very sorry about this and if I had known it would occur, I would have found a backup plan.

“Thank you for understanding.”

Email, Saturday Sep 25, 3:24 pm

PKM > Corri

“I’m sure you’re doing the best you can. ...”

The mailing was postmarked “Richmond - SEP 30, 2021” – received in Manassas, VA on October 2nd – only two days before the reunion. Very little time for anyone to plan or react.

To date 263 persons have viewed the recording on You-Tube. Twenty-two of our BRs registered [to attend] – but only 18 could attend. There were also 4 widows, and 13 guests.

I should note that perhaps Lexington motels are “taking advantage” – At the Comfort Inn I paid \$108.81 for one night on Sep 22, but we paid \$160.84 for each (of two) night on Oct 4 & 5.

Email, Friday Oct 15, 2:33 pm

PKM > Corri & Natalie, cc TB, Cols. Phillips & Brodie, and 47 others

“Good morning Corri and Natalie,

“Thank you both for your assistance in making the Class of 1956's Sixty-Fifth Union an enjoyable and memorable event. From our point of view -- all went very smoothly. And the weather was near perfect and the corps put on a very impressive parade. I think we all went home with fond memories. ...”

[There followed my “After-action critique” which included “THE BEST PARTS” followed by “AREAS OF POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT.” Note: The previous paragraph was part of the “critique.”]

Post-Reunion activities:

After a restful period and coming down from the emotional “highs” of the reunion – I sought to fulfil the promises I had made regarding distribution of the recording that was made of the Memorial Service. It started with an email to ...

Email, Monday Oct 25, 11:37 am

PKM > TB

“Mr. Thomas A. Brashears '95

COO VMI Alumni Association

Sir.

“Thank you for your email of October 20. We continue to receive letters of appreciation regarding the Memorial Service held at our 65th Reunion. We've also received several requests for recordings of the live-streamed service (on DVD media). ...

“We are asking that the VMI AA support this effort by mailing a NOTICE that a video recording of the Memorial Service is available at the AA ... A draft of the "notice" letter is offered below. We are also asking that for each video recording shipped -- that the AA provide a copy of the photograph (6 participating legacy cadets) and a reprint of the Memorial Service Program. ...”

[There followed in the same email our draft of the “NOTICE” shown here next]

“VMI AA Letterhead

“Dear Brother Rats, their widows, and friends of the Class of 1956:

“In cooperation with the editorial staff of "The Cadet" and their alumnus mentor -- the Memorial Service held at our 65th Reunion on October 5 was "live-streamed" and uplinked to the internet. In that process a recording has been preserved and now available on DVD media along with a photograph of the six participating volunteer legacy cadets and a reprint of the Memorial Service Program. Send your request to: ...”

Four days later on the morning of October 29th, I called Mr. Brashears, leaving a message, which [call] he returned. After which I wrote to him and we had this exchange of emails ...

Email, Monday Oct 29, 12:11 pm

PKM > TB

“Thank you for returning my call this morning. I look forward to hearing from you on Monday or COB Tuesday at the latest. As you promised I expect we will work out a mutually agreed upon plan to immediately move forward after our agreement on Tuesday that will satisfy the request of many of our

BRs and widows for a video recording of our Memorial Service held during the Class of 1956's Sixty-Fifth Reunion."

Email, Friday Oct 29, 12:53 pm

TB > PKM

"I will decide how best we can accommodate your request and let you know the plan. ...

"Enjoy your weekend."

Email, Monday Nov 1, 2:59 pm

TB > PKM

"I am happy to tell you that we will facilitate the mailing of a physical, standard letter ... This letter will NOT be going to class agents, ...

"I have the draft of the letter. We will review in the coming day or two and provide an edited version (if/as edits are necessary) to you before printing and mailing out. ...

"More to follow and ... understanding costs of the DVDs and your plan for getting them to me to be shipped. ..."

Email, Monday Nov 1, 3:27 pm

PKM > TB

"Sir:

"May I have a draft of the letter NOW so that I may review it in anticipation of our discussions? ...

"PS -- The cost to recipients will be approximately less than \$15 including Priority Mail postage.

***The cost** of the reprinted program and photograph will be provided by the Class of 1956. I see no out-of-pocket cost to the VMI AA."*

Email, Monday Nov 1, 3:28 pm

TB > PKM

"Sir ...

*"I will send you a copy of the letter when I have **finalized it ... hopefully tomorrow**. [emphasis added]*

"I just wanted to let you know that we were doing this."

Email, Tuesday Nov 2, 10:53 am

PKM > TB

"Mr. Thom Brashears, ...

"I am following up on our interaction yesterday where you indicated that you expected to send me today your draft of the recommended letter ...

"As of now I've yet to receive your draft of the letter. ...

*"If moving forward today is not possible, then I must make alternate arrangements. To help in this regard, then we **ask that you send me the complete mailing list from your database for Class of 1956** [emphasis added] BRs, widows, or families in an editable Excel or similar spreadsheet so the Class of 1956 can more forward with sending out the letters ourselves."*

Email, Tuesday Nov 2, 10:58 am

TB > PKM

"Mr McCrary ...

"I... will not be sharing our mailing list with you."

Email, Tuesday Nov 2, 11:22 am

TB > PKM

"Mr. McCrary ...

"Here is what we plan to send to your class ...

"As you all know, thru a great combined effort from many folks, we were able to livestream and

record the Memorial Service held at our 65th Reunion on October 5th. We are now able to make that recording available to you via a DVD or Blue Ray disc, along with a wonderful photograph of the six legacy cadets who participated in that wonderful service. Included in this package will also be a reprint of the program used. If you would like a recording, along with a copy of the photo and the program please send your request to:" [emphasis added]

Email, Tuesday Nov 2, 2:05 pm

PKM > TB

"Mr. Brashears, ...

"Thank you for sending the draft. Unfortunately, ... it is not fair to those who have put so much work into this project.

"... the letter on VMI AA letterhead creates the incorrect impression that the VMI AA ("we") performed all the work in coordinating the service, live-streaming, and recording -- and that it will also perform most of the work required to make the DVDs. ...

"Below are the edits we require ... for the letter to be truthful and accurate.

"If you disagree ... please provide me your specific reasons for VMI AA's decision ... [to] not give credit, as we say, where credit is due. ..."

[THE EDITED DRAFT

Crossing out all within [brackets] -- additions in **bold**.]

*"As you all know, thru a great combined effort from [many folks, we] **the Class of '56 Reunion Committee with substantial and invaluable support from The Cadet newspaper and its cadet staff withsome fellow alumni volunteers, the committee was able to live-stream and record the Memorial Service held at our 65th Reunion on October 5th. Thanks to help from the VMI Chaplain, the Band Director, and the Admissions Interim Director, again supported by The Cadet staff, we were able to involve legacy cadets in the ceremony for the first known time in VMI's history. The event was also memorialized thanks to the help of Cadet Emily Liska, photo editor for The Cadet, who graciously gave her time to photograph the legacy cadets supporting us. Thanks to the volunteer support from the alumnus who live-streamed and recorded the event your Reunion Committee is [We are] now able to make that recording available to you via a DVD or Blue-Ray disk, along with [a] the wonderful photograph of the six legacy cadets who participated in that wonderful service. Included in this package will also be a reprint of the program used. We also thank the VMI Alumni Association for its help in mailing this letter to you and for providing copies of the programs that will also be sent to you. "If you would like a recording, along with a copy of the photo from the memorial service and the reprinted program, please [send] email your request to: and enter your request using the on-line form at , or by mailing your request to:"***

Email, Tuesday Nov 2, 2:34m

TB > PKM

"... the letter. It will have our return address on it. I will not be mentioning the Cadet newspaper ... it is not a sanctioned organization by the VMI Alumni Association, nor the Institute and I cannot give the impression that it is.

"I am happy to name specific cadets and individuals who helped.

"I can provide your class agent the contact information for members of your class, provided he has signed a release noting and acknowledging that he will use that information for the **right reasons**." [emphasis added].

In Conclusion:

Such heavy-handed moves to censor our right to praise and thank those volunteering help, or associate with them, and trying to have our class cooperate in censoring any reference to *The Cadet* newspaper --

is contrary to our God-given rights that are guaranteed by our Constitution and Mr. Brashers' authoritative and disrespectful tone throughout this process is not one that I've previously experienced in all my 66 years of association and interaction with professional colleagues.

That ended my efforts to have the VMI AA assist the Class of 1956 in distributing the recording of the Memorial Service and its program and the photograph of six legacy cadets. The decision was made to "go it alone."

My next communication with the AA was my OPEN LETTER to AA Board of Directors, C/O Samuel Stocks '90, Chairman, with copies to the presidents of VMI Keydet Club and the VMI Foundation. That led to my conversation with Mr. David Prasnicky – the end of which I informed him that the Class of 1956 would finish the job on our own.

Peter K. McCrary '56

September 15, 2021

SUSPENSE FOR RESPONSE: COB September 16, 2021

OPEN LETTER TO:

Mr. Thomas Brashears '95
Chief Operating Officer
VMI Alumni Association
Moody Hall
304 Letcher Avenue
P.O. Box 932
Lexington, VA 24450
tbrashears@vmiaa.org

Copy Furnished for response and action:

Sam N. Stocks '90

Chairman, VMI Alumni Agencies Board of Directors
7104 Hillsdale Drive
Richmond, VA 23229
(804)285-1898
E-mail: sstocks@kbsgc.com

Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85

VMI Superintendent
Superintendent's Office
201 Smith Hall
Virginia Military Institute
Lexington, VA 2445
Email: parrentlr@vmi.edu

SENT BY EMAIL WITH REGULAR MAIL TO FOLLOW

SUBJECT: Support for the Virginia Military Institute Class of 1956 Reunion Memorial Service

Dear Mr. Brashears:

As the unofficial Chairperson of the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) Class of 1956's 65th Reunion, I respectfully request your immediate response regarding an issue that would have direct, adverse effect on our upcoming reunion and planned Memorial Service on October 5, 2021.

Let me begin by first providing my deepest thanks and appreciation to Ms Corri Sensabaugh and Ms. Natalie Carpenter from your office for their continued assistance to the Class of '56, and me personally, in coordinating our upcoming 65th reunion. Both of these fine ladies have been gracious, helpful and eager to support us as senior alumni for this very special event.

Unfortunately, your actions have been the opposite.

As you are aware, on September 4, 2021 starting at approximately 4:00 PM you granted me 15 minutes of your time to discuss the Class of '56's desire to live-stream our Memorial Service from JM Hall. You provided me this time only after refusing to support the live-stream event that caused me to reach out and request to speak to the VMI Board of Visitors (BOV) on this matter.

During that call we spoke regarding the intent of the Class of '56 to live-stream the Memorial Service from JM Hall. I again explained that, in my capacity as the unofficial chairman (and with our committee's approval) I'd been organizing a Memorial Service (Oct 5 at 1330 in JM Hall) for our 47 BRs who died since our last reunion in 2016. I reminded you that several BR widows expressed a desire to for a copy of the Memorial Service Program, a recorded DVD of the service and especially to view the service live [at home] by means of a live-stream uplink to the internet. I stressed to you that the live-stream is very important to the 28+ widows of BRs in our class who cannot attend as well as some BRs themselves who, for medical and other reasons, cannot make the trip to participate in person.

I explained to you that after I put out a request of assistance to other VMI alumni, a fellow alumnus volunteered his equipment, expertise and to operate it both to record the service and uplink it into the VMI existing internet network. You, however, personally opposed this stating, in part:

- "I understand that another alumnus had reached out to the Institute to assist you with live-streaming the memorial service here on post during your reunion in early October. Unfortunately, we are not going to be able to accommodate this.
- "For future reference, please make sure these types of requests start with our office."

In a subsequent phone conversation, I reminded you that the alumnus (who I provided you the name of) had volunteered to provide the live-streaming for us and that all he needed was information on how to make connection to the existing VMI internet network. You responded that you would not allow the alumnus to support us. When I asked "why?" you stated it was because that alumnus had not been properly "vetted" by the Alumni Agency. It remains unclear to me why VMI alumni need to be "vetted" by the VMI AA before being allowed to participate in any events or what your office's vetting criteria are. You never explained.

You did volunteer that the VMI AA would do a video recording of the service and make that available to anyone wishing one and I reminded you that we would receive such video recording from the live-stream but also wanted to have our qualified alumnus technician operate the hardware required to do the live-streaming so that those not attending could participate by watching it in real time. You stated a concern that allowing the Class of '56 to live-stream our memorial "would set a precedent and other classes may want to live-stream theirs as well." I expressed to you that my understanding was the alumnus who volunteered would have the equipment in place to support all classes at no cost. You ended our call by stating you would both call the alumnus who volunteered and check to see if VMI will approve our request to live-stream.

To this date you have not responded to me as you gave your word you would.

Since our conversation I confirmed that adequate connections for a live-stream are available in JM Hall and no special modifications are required. I am also now aware that live-streaming from VMI is routine from live-stream cameras on Preston Library, VMI's YouTube Channel, the VMI Facebook page and others that cover basketball events, parades and various other ceremonies and events when it is in the best interests of VMI and VMI AA to do so.

This morning I had a call with Ms. Corri Sensabaugh of your office to finalize some reunion coordination. At the end of our call Ms. Sensabaugh informed me it was her understanding that "Smith Hall" has "disapproved" our request to live-stream the Memorial Service. When I asked Ms. Sensabaugh for the name of the individual who denied our request and the rationale for that denial she did not have any further information available to her.

If what Ms. Sensabaugh was told is correct, I cannot understand the resistance by both VMI and VMI AA to our simple request to be allowed to live-stream the Memorial Service. This is especially true in these days of COVID social distancing mandates, especially for an at-risk population. In the past 18 months almost every promotion, retirement or other ceremony to which many alumni have been invited has been live streamed on Facebook or similar platform. These events have been on military installations and the lives-streaming occurred without prohibition. Many of us watch events for our grandchildren in this way and, as covered, live-streaming was and remains a standard practice for VMI and VMI AA when it suits your purposes.

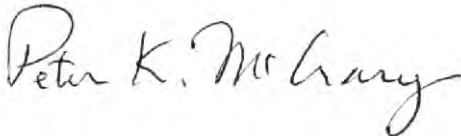
It is my hope that Ms. Sensabaugh was simply mistaken and received incorrect information and so I ask you to correct the record now by providing confirmation we can livestream the Memorial Service.

If, in fact, someone at VMI disapproved our request and it was delegated to Ms. Sensabaugh to deliver the bad news vice you responding as you previously promised, then I formally request that you **provide me official, written notification of the refusal by VMI and the VMI AA to support the class of 1956's request to live-stream our memorial service.** I expect any such denial will include a detailed rationale for that refusal given that we know there are no technology, logistics or financial issues to prevent it. Please also provide copies of any VMI and VMI AA policies that resulted in the disapproval of our request to live-stream the Memorial Service and requiring all coordination to go through the VMI AA with the associated vetting process for alumni. **Neither email nor phone response is acceptable, unless the email is just to provide me the formal response by attachment** and bearing the signatures of the appropriate VMI authority in Smith Hall and yours from the VMI AA.

In closing, I continue to hope this is a misunderstanding as refusing to support VMI '56 in this simple request will turn what should be a celebration of the good times, the camaraderie, and the spirit of VMI that bound our lives together through the VMI ethos into a negative and sour experience. More disappointing will be the exclusion of the 28+ widows as well as the BRs would could not make the trip and who will now be denied participation in the Memorial Service. The class of '56 supported VMI and VMI AA through the years in spirit, action and with significant financial resources and we do not feel something as simple as permission to live-stream a Memorial Service is too much to ask.

I expect your formal response not later than 5:00 PM on September 16, 2021 after which time I will need to inform VMI '56 of the situation and solicit their desires on a path forward.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter K. McCrary". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Respectfully,".

Peter McCrary '56
Unofficial '56 Reunion Committee Chair

VMI Prayer

Almighty Sovereign God and Heavenly Father, in reverent faith we draw near to Thee. We have chosen to be men formed by the Virginia Military Institute, the path less traveled, formidable in challenge, unequalled in testing, challenging those of highest aspiration. We take our place in the ranks of those of upright character, impeccable virtue and unfailing courage. Sacrifice and honor have been our cornerstone, brotherhood and adversity our common bond, character our distinction. We are honored to assume the traditions which prepared our predecessors for greatness. By Thy grace may their achievements of yesterday be lived by us today and guarded by us for tomorrow. To our education, supply Thy wisdom; to our fitness, Thy strength; to our moral excellence, Thy compassion. Grant O' God that we uphold the honor of the Corps such that the Institute may be heard from in our day. This we resolve to do by your Grace. Amen.



MEMORIAL SERVICE

VMI CLASS OF 1956

65th CLASS REUNION



VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
MEMORIAL HALL
LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA

5 October 2021

VMI Class of 1956

Reunion Memorial Ceremony

5 October 2021



Welcome and Invocation..... Chaplain Phillips '87

ReflectionsJohn Harold (Rocky) Stone '56
Psalm 23

Roll Call..... Class of '56 Legacy Cadets
James David Foster '22, Seth David Gibson '22
Samuel Joseph McCrary '23, Joseph Robert McNeil Spears '22,
Charles Page Morrison Telford '22

Amazing Grace..... Cadet Bag Piper
Emily M. Liska '22

Benediction..... Chaplain Phillips

Taps..... Cadet Bugler
Colin E. Butler '23

Cadet Ushers/Escorts
Noah T. Campell '24, Anthony L. Cortez '24
Naomi D. Hahn '24, Kevin T. Linko '23
Jackson E. Lloyd '23, B. Kelly Rollinson '22
Thomas J. Wetherell '22

In Remembrance of Our Brother Rats

November 28, 1952 – Present

**Indicates BR passed after 60th Reunion in April 2016.*

Mr. John R. Selinger '56
Mr. John A. Shibut '56
Mr. George C. Spigener, Jr. '56*
Mr. Theodore R. Spooner '56*
Mr. John F. Stanley '56
Mr. Charles Steinberger '56
Mr. Russell G. Stewart, Jr. '56*
Mr. Thomas M. Stowitts '56*
Mr. E. Wallace Timmons '56
Mr. John A. Tipton IV '56
LTC C. P. Tolley '56
Mr. James S. Troxell '56
LTC J. Thomas Undercoffer '56
Mr. Wm. L. Van Fossen '56
Mr. James Vitagliano '56*
Mr. Virgil A. Walston, Jr. '56
Mr. John F. Watkins '56
LTC Robert L. Webster, Jr. (Ret.) '56*
Mr. James L. Weintrob '56
Mr. George M. Weir, III '56
Dr. H. Lake Westfall, Jr. '56
Mr. Wyndham R. White, III '56
Mr. Alexander J. Whyte '56
COL Frank S. Wiggins '56
Mr. Jack P. Wiley '56
Dr. Gaylord S. Williams '56
Dr. Frank C. Wilson '56
Mr. William E. Woodward '56*

In Remembrance of Our Brother Rats

November 28, 1952 – Present

**Indicates BR passed after 60th Reunion in April 2016.*

Mr. C. Russell Mathews '56
COL Douglas W. McCarty '56*
Mr. Kenneth McDonald, Jr. '56*
Dr. Michael J. McDonald '56
Dr. Frank W. McKinnon '56
Dr. William W. Mears '56
Mr. S. David Montagna '56*
Mr. J. Peyton Moore '56*
Mr. Robert H. Morecock, P.E. '56*
Mr. Reginald C. Morrison, Jr. '56*
Mr. Richard P. Morrison '56
Mr. Anthony Nicoletti '56
Mr. Willard R. Nicolls, Jr. '56
Mr. James H. Overton '56
CPT Allen S. Pate, USN (Ret.) '56*
Mr. Donald E. Pearce '56
Mr. John P. Pittman '56*
Mr. John D. Pointer '56
Mr. R. Jere Real '56
LTC K. D. Reese (USA, Ret.) '56
Mr. Jon A. Roach '56*
Mr. George R. Rodes '56
Mr. William L. Rossie, Jr. '56*
Mr. James N. Runyan '56*
Mr. Thomas H. Saffer '56
Mr. Charles C. Schoen III '56
Mr. Alexander Schwan, Jr. '56

In Remembrance of Our Brother Rats

November 28, 1952 – Present

**Indicates BR passed after 60th Reunion in April 2016.*

Dr. Creed W. Abell III '56
Dr. John S. Aldridge '56*
Mr. Edward J. Alex '56*
Mr. W. W. Alexander '56*
Mr. A. Henry Arp '56
Mr. Robert H. Ashley '56
Mr. William H. Ball, Jr. '56*
Mr. Thomas H. Bankard '56*
Mr. Paul L. Bark '56
Mr. Theodore R. Barker, Jr. '56
Dr. Jack B. Baugh '56
Mr. Frank L. Beale '56*
Mr. Thomas E. Beauchamp '56
Mr. Ronald L. Beebe '56
Mr. Stephen J. Beeken, Jr. '56
Mr. J. Robert Black '56
Mr. Bernard B. Bossard '56*
Dr. Lawrence H. Bowen '56
Mr. Robert J. Bready '56
Mr. Robert L. Brickner '56*
Mr. Armand P. Brodeur '56
Mr. James E. Brophy '56
Mr. Jack A. Bryant, Jr. '56*
Mr. Edwin A. Burns '56
Mr. Hale H. Byrd '56
Mr. Henry M. Chambers '56*
LTC William O. Child '56*

In Remembrance of Our Brother Rats

November 28, 1952 – Present

**Indicates BR passed after 60th Reunion in April 2016.*

Mr. Linwood H. Clark, Jr. '56
Mr. Gene A. Claud '56
Mr. Frank J. Cohen '56
Mr. Vernon L. Crockett '56
LTC Norman L. Custard '56
The Reverend John L. Davis, II '56*
Mr. Hale O. Desonier '56*
Mr. John J. Dickinson, Sr. '56
Mr. Robert T. Dooley, Jr. '56*
BG C. F. Dreyer, Jr. (Ret.) '56
Mr. Harold L. Dye '56
Mr. Earl C. Emerson '56
Mr. F. G. Farthing, Jr. '56*
Dr. Richard M. Fencel '56*
Mr. Hugh P. Finley, Jr. '56
Mr. Fritz Firing, Sr. '56
Mr. James H. Foster '56
Mr. Bruce Fowler '56
Mr. Lawrence E. Frase '56
Mr. Robert C. Fraser '56
Mr. Ronald L. Frinks '56
Dr. Ralph Gibson, Jr. '56
COL Stephen A. Glick '56*
Mr. Robert H. Guinn '56*
Mr. G. C. Guvernator, III '56
COL Kenneth E. Halloway, Jr. '56
Mr. James R. Hannay '56

In Remembrance of Our Brother Rats

November 28, 1952 – Present

**Indicates BR passed after 60th Reunion in April 2016.*

Mr. Wellford E. Hardee '56
Dr. W. H. Higinbotham, Jr. '56
Mr. R. W. Holsinger III '56*
Mr. William R. Hopkins '56*
COL Richard E. Hoyt '56*
Mr. Benjamin Huger II '56*
Mr. Robert C. Irby, Jr. '56
Mr. Paul C. Janshego '56*
Mr. Kent B. Johnson, Jr. '56*
Mr. L. Eugene Johnson, Jr. '56
Mr. Bob G. Johnson '56
Mr. Harry F. Jones '56
Mr. Frederick L. Judge '56*
Mr. Edmund W. Kaaa, Jr. '56
Mr. John J. Kirchmier, Jr. '56*
Mr. L. William Lamb '56*
Mr. Charles V. Lavery '56
Mr. Charles W. Lennon, IV '56
Mr. William S. Lindsay '56
Mr. Franklin J. Lisella '56*
Mr. Francis C. Lo '56
Mr. Richard F. Lyons '56*
CPT Joseph B. Mack, Jr. '56
Mr. Donald L. Macleay, Jr. '56
Mr. James E. Mann, Jr. '56*
Mr. Joseph A. Marangi '56
Mr. Thomas Massie '56

ENCLOSURE 2

From: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 12:44 PM
To: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>
Subject: Request for list of alumni Class of 1956

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I find it necessary to call upon you for assistance once again on this sad occasion.

I am not sure that you or the AA have been notified, but my Brother Rat and friend, Peter J. McCrary, VMI Class of 1956, passed away on the evening of February 8, 2024.

Since our class agent also passed away a few months ago, I would like to notify my remaining Brother Rats and widows of Pete's passing. I have a list of email addresses that I have accumulated over the years, but I doubt that it is as current or as complete as that of the VMI AA.

Would you please provide me with the most current list of addresses for the Class of 1956? Alternatively, would you agree to send such a message, unedited, from me to each BR and widow about Pete's passing by both email and regular mail? Pete's family knows of my intention to send this message of Pete's passing.

I hope to send this notification in the next day or two, so I appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Thanking you, sincerely,

Jack A. Prizzi, '56

[REDACTED]

From: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>
Date: Tue, Feb 20, 2024 at 3:18 PM
Subject: RE: Request for list of alumni Class of 1956
To: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]

Jack,

We will send an email to your Brother Rats and widows. We do not mail death notifications, as they are all captured in the Alumni Review, which is mailed to all alumni and widows.

All emails that we send are subject to editing for grammar, punctuation, etc. Once you provide us with a draft, we will provide you with the final version that will be sent.

Here is a typical class death notification:

CLASS AGENT COMMUNICATION

Class of 1950B

Dear Brother Rats,

Once more it is my sad duty to report the loss of one of our brother rats, John K. Taylor. John had developed some heart issues in recent years and went into the hospital in September. There, he started a slow decline, and Jan. 28, 2024, at the age of 95, he quietly and peacefully passed away.

Many of us remember John's mellifluous bass voice as he sang in the Glee Club for all four years of our cadetship. He was the club president in his 1st Class year. He didn't confine his singing to just while at VMI. He was present at many, if not most of our reunions, and he could be heard singing "Stout Hearted Men" and other stalwart songs. If persuaded, he could also render "Gaudeamus Igitur" and several other of the more esoteric songs we sang under the tutorship of Col. "Dodo" Dillard, Class of 1934. John was also one of the last remaining riders of the horse troop that existed at VMI during our first two years there.

John Taylor was one of our brother rats who I thought would make it to our 75th reunion, but sadly—no.

Here is a [link](#) to his obituary. His memorial service will be held in Richmond, Virginia, Feb. 24.

Here is a [link](#) to YouTube where you can watch the service.

John's daughter, Debbie Taylor, has offered her address to anyone

who may wish to express their condolences. It is 3225 Friars Walk Lane, Glen Allen, VA 23059.

Bob Lynd
Class Agent
VMI 1950B

Let me know how you want to proceed.

Rah VA Mil, Ed

Ed Johnson '79

Chief Operating Officer

VMI Alumni Association

Office 800-444-1839 ext. 230 | Cell 703-635-0861

www.vmialumni.org



VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION • FOUNDATION • KEYDET CLUB

From: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 9:57 AM
To: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>
Subject: Update - McCrary funeral arrangements

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Attached is the draft with an update for a memorial service.

I hope we can get this out today.

Jack Prizzi, '56
[REDACTED]

From: **Jack Prizzi** [REDACTED]
Date Sent: Wed, Feb 21, 2024 at 9:58 AM
To: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Here is the letter.

Dear BRs, Widows and Families of VMI '56:

Because we have no class agent, I am writing to all of you to tell you of the passing of Peter J. McCrary, our Brother Rat and my friend.

Several months ago, Pete was diagnosed with a form of blood cancer. He underwent treatment and seemed to have been stabilized. But, about 6 months or so before his passing, his condition worsened and he was hospitalized and later was relocated to live with his daughter in Pennsylvania. Early in February, he was moved to a hospice where he passed.

Pete passed away at age 90 on Thursday evening, February 8, 2024. He was the son of Samuel (class of 1930) and Lucille McCrary. Pete was a physics major while at VMI and taught physics and math at VMI for two years following his graduation. After a 17-year career as an aerospace engineer working for Avco Everett Research Laboratory in Everett, Massachusetts, he returned to Virginia to start a new career as a lawyer in Manassas. He graduated from the New England School of Law in 1977, and practiced law into his early 80s. Peter is survived by his wife of 64 years, Anna; three sons, James (VMI class of 1982), John, and Peter (VMI class of 1988); one daughter Suzanne; eleven grandchildren (including Samuel McCrary, class of 2023); and ten great-grandchildren. Pete was an unfaltering supporter of his Brother Rats, the Corps and The Cadet newspaper.

Please watch the tribute to Pete at this link and if you have any memories to share, please send them to: info@cadetnewspaper.org so they can include them in a tribute for the newspaper he so loved.

https://youtu.be/iIM_DyRof2M

I have so much more to tell you about Pete, and will tell you about his continuing fight for VMI in a subsequent letter.

In the Spirit,

Jack A. Prizzi, '56
[REDACTED]

From: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>

Date: Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 10:19

To: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]

As I mentioned, for security reasons, we will not include this section:

Please watch the tribute to Pete at this link and if you have any memories to share, please send them to: info@cadetnewspaper.org so they can include them in a tribute for the newspaper he so loved.

https://youtu.be/iIM_DyRof2M

Let me know if you want me to run through staffing with this section removed.

Ed

Ed Johnson '79

Chief Operating Officer

VMI Alumni Association

Office 800-444-1839 ext. 230 | Cell 703-635-0861

www.vmialumni.org



VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES
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From: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]
Date: Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 12:01 PM
Subject: Re: Update - McCrary funeral arrangements
To: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I am not sure about the "Security issue" as what was written is factual and about VMI.

I want the video to be included.

You may change the "Security Risk" line to the following:

*Please watch the tribute to Pete by VMI at this link and if you have any memories to share, please send them to me at jacomodue@gmail.com .
https://youtu.be/iIM_DyRof2M*

Let's not lose sight of the mission here. I want my BRs to be notified by me, a BR, of Pete's passing.

If you will not send it today, please let me know.

Thank you.

Jack A. Prizzi, '56
[REDACTED]

From: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>
Date: Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 1:22 PM
Subject: RE: Update - McCrary funeral arrangements
To: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]

Mr. Prizzi:

I am good with the tributes going to you.

Regarding the video link, we only send links to videos that are hosted directly by the VMI Alumni Agencies or VMI. This is to ensure the quality of any link we send to alumni. If it is hosted by someone else, videos can be altered or links inserted that can direct people to nefarious websites.

Ed

Ed Johnson '79
Chief Operating Officer
VMI Alumni Association
Office 800-444-1839 ext. 230 | Cell 703-635-0861
www.vmialumni.org



VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES
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From: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>
Date: Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 2:59 PM
Subject: RE: Update - McCrary funeral arrangements
To: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]

Mr. Prizzi:

Here is the email for your review. If you agree, let me know and it can go out today. Ed

[View in browser](#)



VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION • FOUNDATION • KEYDET CLUB



CLASS AGENT COMMUNICATION

Class of 1956

Dear Brother Rats, Widows of 1956,

Because we have no class agent, I am writing to all of you to tell you of the passing of Peter J. McCrary, our brother rat, and my friend.

Several months ago, Pete was diagnosed with a form of blood cancer. He underwent treatment and seemed to have been stabilized. About six months or so before his passing, his condition worsened, and he was hospitalized and later was relocated to live with his daughter in Pennsylvania. Early in February, he was moved to hospice where he passed.

Pete passed away at age 90 on Thursday evening, Feb. 8, 2024. He was the son of Samuel (VMI Class of 1930) and Lucille McCrary. Pete was a physics major while at VMI and taught physics and math at VMI for two years following his graduation. After a 17-year

career as an aerospace engineer working for Avco Everett Research Laboratory in Everett, Massachusetts, he returned to Virginia to start a new career as a lawyer in Manassas. He graduated from the New England School of Law in 1977, and practiced law into his early 80's. Peter is survived by his wife of 64 years, Anna; three sons, James (VMI Class of 1982), John, and Peter (VMI Class of 1988); one daughter Suzanne; eleven grandchildren (including Samuel McCrary, Class of 2023); and ten great-grandchildren. Pete was an unfaltering supporter of his brother rats and the Corps.

A funeral mass is scheduled for March 5, 2024, 11a.m. at [Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 1427 West Braddock Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22302.](#)

If you have any memories to share, please send them to me at jacomodue@gmail.com.

I have so much more to tell you about Pete and will tell you about his continuing fight for VMI in a subsequent letter.

In the Spirit,

Jack A. Prizzi, '56
jacomodue@gmail.com



VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION • FOUNDATION • KEYDET CLUB

VMI Alumni Agencies
P.O. Box 932
Lexington, VA 24450

[Unsubscribe](#)

Ed Johnson '79
Chief Operating Officer
VMI Alumni Association
Office 800-444-1839 ext. 230 | Cell 703-635-0861
www.vmialumni.org



VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES
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From: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]
Date: Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 3:05 PM
Subject: Re: Email for Review
To: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I agree!
Please send it out.

At some point very soon, I hope you will tell me about the security issues so that I can avoid them in the future.

Thank you,

Jack A. Prizzi, '56

From: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]
Date: Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 3:19 PM
Subject: Security Issues
To: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>

Dear Mr. Johnson,

In the sample announcement you sent to me, there were two lines with links as shown below, copied directly from your email. Neither of these links appear to have been generated by VMI sources, and one is a YouTube video!

What is going on with this? Please include the video in my message to my BRs.

Jack A. Prizzi, '56

Here is a [link](#) to his obituary. His memorial service will be held in Richmond, Virginia, Feb. 24.

Here is a [link](#) to YouTube where you can watch the service.

From: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 7:09 PM
To: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>
Subject: Waiting

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I am still waiting for a response from you.

I want to know why my BRs were not permitted to have a video of a tribute to Peter McCrary on his passing. You sent me, as an example of what is sent out by the VMIAA, a death notice of a member of the Class of 1950B that contained links to two videos similar to the one that I included in my draft of Pete's death notice.

You stated in an email that there were "Security Issues" with regard to the video in my draft. But, we both know that was not the truth. If you did not make that decision because it was not in your purview (meaning that you did not have the "juice"), then please feel free to send my question and email up the line as far as it needs to go to answer my question.

I am a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and I believe in integrity, honor and accountability.

Jack A. Prizzi, '56

From: Ed Johnson [REDACTED]
Date: Wed, Feb 28, 2024 at 4:24 PM
Subject: RE: Waiting
To: Jack Prizzi <jacomodue@gmail.com>

Mr. Prizzi,

It is common for us to send links to obituaries that are publicly available. The security concerns for this type of link are minimal as the funeral home is responsible for the content of the site on their end and is regulated.

The second link is to a church YouTube site. We only link to official obituaries and live streams of memorial services from a church or funeral home.

This was not the case for the link you provided. Additionally, in that link is a solicitation to subscribe, that organization is not affiliated with VMI or VMIAA. Therefore, we will not send that to our alumni and widows.

All the best, Ed

Ed Johnson '79
Chief Operating Officer
VMI Alumni Association
Office 800-444-1839 ext. 230 | Cell 703-635-0861
www.vmialumni.org



VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION • FOUNDATION • KEYDET CLUB

From: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>
Date: Fri, Feb 23, 2024 at 10:19 AM
Subject: RE: Update - McCrary funeral arrangements
To: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]

As I mentioned, for security reasons, we will not include this section:

Please watch the tribute to Pete at this link and if you have any memories to share, please send them to: info@cadetnewspaper.org so they can include them in a tribute for the newspaper he so loved.

https://youtu.be/iIM_DyRof2M

Let me know if you want me to run through staffing with this section removed.

Ed

Ed Johnson '79
Chief Operating Officer
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www.vmialumni.org



VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION • FOUNDATION • KEYDET CLUB

From: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]

Date sent: Tue, Feb 27, 2024 at 7:09 PM

To: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I am still waiting for a response from you.

I want to know why my BRs were not permitted to have a video of a tribute to Peter McCrary on his passing. You sent me, as an example of what is sent out by the VMIAA, a death notice of a member of the Class of 1950B that contained links to two videos similar to the one that I included in my draft of Pete's death notice.

You stated in an email that there were "Security Issues" with regard to the video in my draft. But, we both know that was not the truth. If you did not make that decision because it was not in your purview (meaning that you did not have the "juice"), then please feel free to send my question and email up the line as far as it needs to go to answer my question.

I am a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and I believe in integrity, honor and accountability.

Jack A. Prizzi, '56

From: **Ed Johnson** <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>

Date: Wed, Feb 28, 2024 at 4:24 PM

Subject: RE: Waiting

To: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]

Mr. Prizzi,

It is common for us to send links to obituaries that are publicly available. The security concerns for this type of link are minimal as the funeral home is responsible for the content of the site on their end and is regulated.

The second link is to a church YouTube site. **We only link to official obituaries and live streams of memorial services from a church or funeral home.**

This was not the case for the link you provided. Additionally, in that link is a solicitation to subscribe, that organization is not affiliated with VMI or VMIAA. Therefore, we will not send that to our alumni and widows.

All the best, Ed

Ed Johnson '79

Chief Operating Officer

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VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES
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From: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]
Date sent: Fri, 8 Mar 2024 11:03:57 -0500
Subject: My Response to the Editing
To: Ed Johnson <ejohnson@vmiaa.org>

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Matters far more important this week have delayed my response to you.

You have now given me three different reasons through three separate email messages, all untrue, for excluding a video of a tribute to Pete McCrary on his passing while allowing similar videos on other such notices, particularly, the one from the Class of '50B that you provided as an example. That video celebrated VMI and a distinguished graduate of the Class of 1956.

It has become clear to me that the standards of the VMI AA range from none at all, arbitrary to just capricious and abject censorship. All of our email exchanges and the bad conduct of the AA could have been avoided had you provided the email addresses of my BRs. Also, I asked that the notice of Pete McCrary's passing not be edited. You tried to assure me that the AA edited only for punctuation and grammar. Not so!

In the process of that censorship, the AA has alienated its future constituents and simultaneously betrayed its present constituents. In my opinion, instead of serving and supporting your Alumni membership, it seems to have become a lackey of the administration based on the correspondence I have received and the meetings and Town Halls that I attended virtually. The AA would not exist, except for the Alumni and the money they donate through the VMI Foundation. The AA has become, to me, a large cost center and an ineffective voice of the Alumni.

While I am giving my opinions, membership in the VMI AA is a result of graduating from VMI. It is automatic and, to my knowledge, no decision is required by a graduate except perhaps to the contrary. To me, no one in the AA has the right to take away a graduate's right to membership. Fundamentally, what you cannot grant, you cannot take away.

I am a graduate of The Virginia Military Institute and I believe in integrity, honor and accountability.

Jack A. Prizzi '56

From: Jack Prizzi [REDACTED]

Date Sent: Sat, Apr 6, 2024 at 10:46 AM

To: [EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR CLASS OF '56 and others redacted]

Dear Brother Rats,

The Alumni Association is holding its annual meeting today and perhaps you have received an email about voting online. We have until sometime later today to cast a vote, until around 1800hrs, I think.

I voted earlier this morning and voted against all nominees, their entire slate. I did so for several reasons:

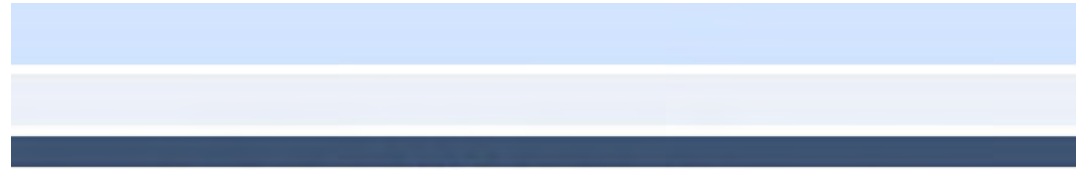
1. There is only one slate of nominees. All were selected by the existing directors. It is a self-perpetuating board. No write-ins are permitted and no nominations from those in attendance are permitted.
2. During our 65th Reunion, the COO of the VMI AA impeded and was, by his own actions, attempting to prevent the Chairman, our late BR Pete McCrary, from recording and distributing the Memorial Service.
3. Pete led a group of alums from other class years to change the self-perpetuating nature of these elections until the day he passed.
4. In an email to each of you about Pete's passing, the current COO, Ed Johnson '79, gave me three different reasons, all false, as to why a video tribute to Pete could not be included.
5. I do not like what is happening at VMI with the Rat Line, the attacks on the Honor System, the adoption and implementation of DEI, all without opposition by the VMI AA. In my opinion, the VMI AA no longer represents us, but has become an extension of the Administration.
6. The AA suspended Pete, his son, and 6 others from membership in that organization because they were trying to change the self-perpetuating nature of the AA. Since we became members of the AA because we graduated, and that membership did not require approval by the AA, I do not believe that they have the right to unilaterally suspend anyone. Do you vote to suspend these men? Did you learn about it from the AA? Do you know the allegations and that there was no due process?

I am not telling you how to vote. I am telling you why I voted as I did. Yes, over the years VMI needed to change, but destruction of the core value system should not.

My best regards to you all in the Spirit of

a bygone VMI

Jack Prizzi '56



John Taylor

July 29, 1928 - January 28, 2024

Obituary & Events

THANKS

Send Flowers

Plant a Tree

23 Trees, Flowers, or Condolences have been sent in support of John's family - [View on Tribute Wall](#)

Share a memory

Type here to share a memory of John Taylor or send condolences to the family.

Photos/Video Candles Memos

ADD MEMO

John Taylor Obituary

John Kenneth Taylor (95) of Richmond, VA passed away peacefully at his home at Cedarfield on Sunday, January 28, 2024. Born in 1928 in Yorksham, VA, John was the eldest of Dwight and Mary Taylor's 7 children. Throughout his childhood, the family moved frequently, living in Rhode Island, Virginia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Missouri. John graduated high school in Hinesville, Georgia and attended The Virginia Military Institute, graduating in the Class of 1950, a fact that he proudly shared on his personalized license plate. Throughout his life he

Read more...

Events

Memorial Ceremony

Sunday, February 24, 2024
11:00AM

St. Paul's Episcopal Church 813 E. Greer Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Add To The Tribute Book

Ongoing

Help fill the Tribute Book of John with photos, shared photos, or personal tributes.

View Tribute Book

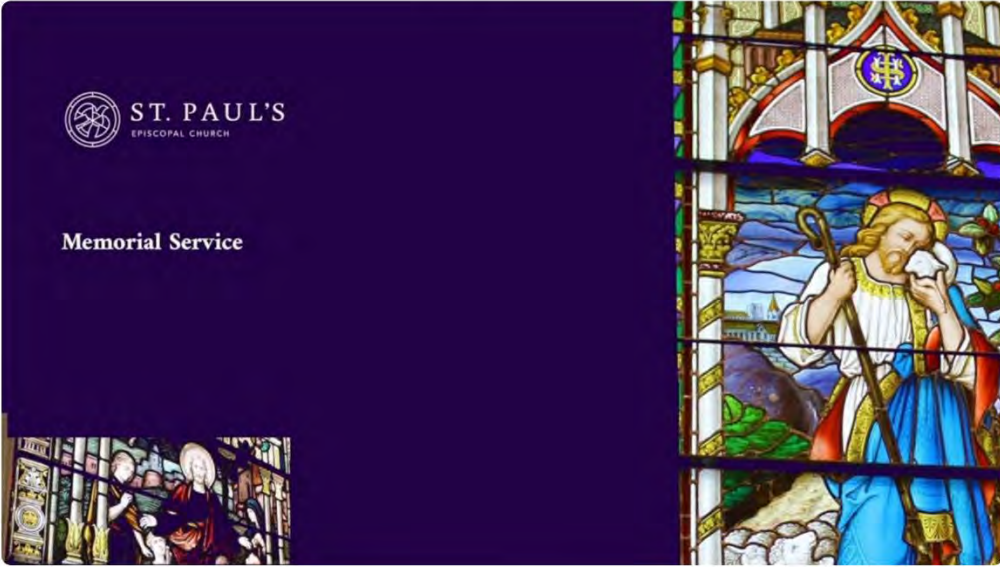
Share Obituary:



 CENTRAL 3920 Augusta Avenue Richmond, VA 23230 804-545-3806 Diana Director	 CHIPPENHAM 2920 Hull Street Road Richmond, VA 23224 804-545-0900 Zoe Director	 STAPLES MILL 8222 Staples Mill Road Richmond, VA 23228 804-224-5157 Ernie Director	 CREMATION CENTER 1900 Hull Street Road Richmond, VA 23224 804-545-0900 Diana Director
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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-iDmudBFqw

Search



Top chat replay

Live chat replay is on. Messages that appeared when the stream was live will show up here.

St. Paul's RVA Service Bulletin: [http://www.stpaulsrva.org/wp-content/...](http://www.stpaulsrva.org/wp-content/)

Memorial Service for John Taylor

St. Paul's RVA
456 subscribers

Subscribe

2 2 Share Download Clip Save ...

117 views Streamed 5 days ago
Service Bulletin: [http://www.stpaulsrva.org/wp-content/...](http://www.stpaulsrva.org/wp-content/)

A memorial service will be held for John Taylor at St. Paul's on Saturday, February 24th, at 2:00 PM ...more

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The Ultimate Expedition
26:13
237K views · 3 weeks ago

"Do You Have Any Other Questions?" Courtroom Scene ...
NOW PLAYING
7:57
11M views · 1 year ago

From: Microsoft Outlook <MicrosoftExchange329e71ec88ae46158bc35ab50e41109a@NETORGFT7279344.onmicrosoft.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 11:49 AM
To: jacomodue@vmiaa.org <jacomodue@vmiaa.org>
Subject: Undeliverable: Peter McCrary Class of 1956 Announcement & Video

Your message to jacomodue@vmiaa.org couldn't be delivered.
jacomodue wasn't found at vmiaa.org.

john.arthur Office 365 jacomodue
Action Required Recipient
Unknown To address

How to Fix It

The address might be misspelled or might not exist. Try one or more of the following:

- **Retype the recipient's address, then resend the message** - If you're using Outlook, open this non-delivery report message and click **Send Again** from the menu or ribbon. In Outlook on the web, select this message, and then click the "To send this message again, click here." link located just above the message preview window. In the To or Cc line, delete and then retype the entire recipient's address (ignore any address suggestions). After typing the complete address, click **Send** to resend the message. If you're using an email program other than Outlook or Outlook on the web, follow its standard way for resending a message. Just be sure to delete and retype the recipient's entire address before resending it.
- **Remove the recipient from the recipient Auto-Complete List, then resend the message** - If you're using Outlook or Outlook on the web, follow the steps in the "Remove the recipient from the recipient Auto-Complete List" section of [this article](#). Then resend the message. Be sure to delete and retype the recipient's entire address before clicking **Send**.
- **Contact the recipient by some other means**, (by phone, for example) to confirm you're using the right address. Ask them if they've set up an email forwarding rule that could be forwarding your message to an incorrect address.

If the problem continues, ask the recipient to tell their email admin about the problem, and give them the error (and the name of the server that reported it) shown below. It's likely that only the recipient's email admin can fix this problem.

Was this helpful? [Send feedback to Microsoft](#)

From: **Mail Delivery Subsystem** <mailer-daemon@googlemail.com>
Date: Sun, Feb 25, 2024 at 4:38 PM
Subject: Delivery Status Notification (Failure)
To: [REDACTED]



Message blocked

Your message to jacomodue@vmiaa.org has been blocked. See technical details below for more information.

The response from the remote server was:

550 5.4.1 Recipient address rejected: Access denied. AS(201806281)
[\[MW2NAM12FT004.eop-nam12.prod.protection.outlook.com\]](#) 2024-02-
25T21:38:41.364Z 08DC35461E22C1C7]