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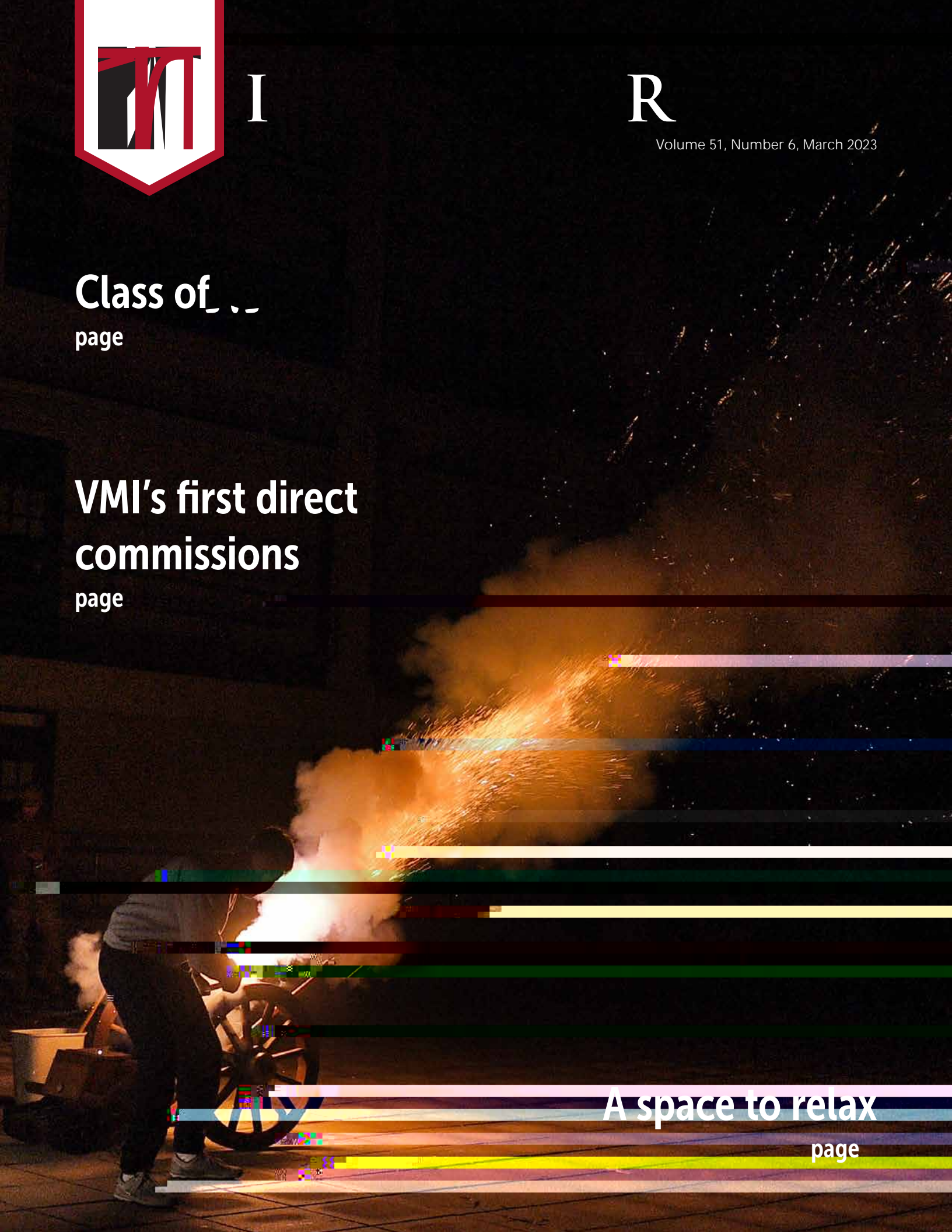
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Cadets Benefit from BEYA Conference

By Maj. Michelle Ellwood

Nine cadets attended the BEYA STEM Conference in February, an event that brings together science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) K-12 and college students, as well as corporate, government, and military professionals for three days. This year's event took place in National Harbor, Maryland.

BEYA stands for Black Engineer of the Year Award, but also stands for Becoming Everything You Are, incorporating a more inclusive audience to their events, which are dedicated to helping minorities pursue careers in STEM fields. VMI has been sending cadets to the BEYA STEM Conference since 2014, with the past two years being virtual. "It was great to be back in person. This is the first time several of these cadets have had an opportunity like this, to engage with two- and three-star generals, executives in

separated the twins to see if Shaquill could succeed without his brother on campus.

At home, Griffin kept busy working two jobs: cleaning offices for his older brother's janitorial business, and towing cars for his father's towing company. "I appreciated my support system, and Shaquill called me every day to see how I was doing, and to encourage me to keep working out and to stay in shape. My brother believed in me, even when I didn't believe in myself,"

Shaquem confessed. He hit a low point when he had to completely submerge himself into a puddle in order to hook up a car to be towed. When he successfully delivered the car to its owner, he was offered a five-dollar tip, but before the bill was handed over to him, the man tore it in two with the words, "This is a lesson, if you want something bad enough, you gotta go get it." Shaquem still has that bill as a reminder to the life lesson.

Soon after that incident, Shaquem received a call from the coach at UCF, inviting him back, but learned that offer came at his brother's sacrifice. When Shaquill heard the coach

Cadets Receive Direct Commissions with Coast Guard

By Marianne Hause

For the first time in VMI history, cadets have received active-duty direct commissions to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) by way of the Auxiliary University Programs (AUP), and will take their oath of office and receive their first salute at the Joint Commissioning Ceremony on May 15. The momentous achievement has been earned by three cadets, all from Virginia: Aidan Rice '23, an electrical and computer engineering major from Mechanicsville; Sarah Robertson '23, a computer science major from Richmond; and Aidan Simmons '23, an international studies major from Aldie, who also serves as the AUP unit commander. Emma Pratt '21, an alumna from Floyd, will also commission, and Conner Jorgensen '23, a civil engineering major from Glen Allen, received a commission into the USCG reserves.

The USCG falls under the Department of Homeland Security, unlike other military

branches that fall under the Department of Defense. The USCG does not offer a Reserve

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Breakout

Two weeks after Little John was fired in barracks for a fake out, the real Breakout took place on Monday, Feb. 13. The weekday Breakout was

Sowers and Timmes Recognized by SoCon

By Marianne Hause

Col. Tom Timmes '92, professor of civil and environmental engineering, and Institute and Corps Sgt. Maj. Tom Sowers, were recognized at the Keydet basketball game on Feb. 15 in Cameron Hall for being named members of the All-Southern Conference Faculty and Staff Team for the 2022-23 academic year. With two representatives chosen from each of the Southern Conference's 10 member schools, the All-Southern Conference Faculty and Staff Team recognizes in-

dividuals who have demonstrated service to their schools and made contributions to campus life and the local community.

Timmes served for over 25 years in the U.S. Army Medical Center, Fort Belvoir, Illinois. He is a retired Army Major General and a member of the Southern Conference Faculty and Staff Team.

climate. He worked as an internal medicine physician in Lexington for seven years. "It turns out I was a terrible businessman, and they don't teach you how to run a business in medical school. I was actually struggling because I would treat patients who didn't have any money, and I wouldn't charge them. I worked long hours. If it snowed and patients didn't show up, I didn't have any income, but I still had to pay my staff, and that was disheartening." Copeland got to know Dr. William W. Old III, the previous VMI physician, since Old often referred patients to him. So, when he heard Old was retiring, he applied for the position. "I liked the fact that this was a salaried position with retirement benefits. It gave me a fixed schedule, so I had more time for my family. I had two young children at the time, so that was very important to me. I felt welcomed at VMI right away, and the cadets referred to me as 'Dr. New,' since I replaced Dr. Old," he quipped.

Having no personal military experience nor any familial military connections, Copeland was initially anxious about adapting to the culture at VMI, but over time has learned a lot about the VMI culture, and appreciates the directness, honesty, and goodwill he finds on post. "The Honor Code rubs off on everyone who works here, and it makes you very conscious of the importance of being rigorously honest," he said.

Under Copeland's tenure, the infirmary has grown with more services offered. "When I first started, we had four full-time nurses and one administrative person. Over time, we have increased our services, and I think we're doing a better job. We now have three full-time administrators and eight full-time nurses covering round-the-clock shifts. First thing on Monday mornings, we used to have 50 to 60 cadets show up waiting to be seen. Now, we encourage appointments, and have an average wait time of less than five minutes. We know how busy the cadets are, so we strive to get them seen and back to their duties as quickly as possible," Copeland explained.

The addition of family nurse practitioner, Jenny H. Crance, DNP, FNP-C, in 2011 also helped Copeland with his practice. "Not only does she share the load of patient care, but it is so helpful to be able to discuss ideas with her, and to get second assessments from her. Her presence here has made a big difference," said Copeland.

The VMI infirmary has 18 beds, but is not a hospital. "The usual maladies we treat here, are things like stomach viruses. Normally a college student with that type of illness would go back to the dorm room to recuperate, but for a cadet, it's hard to be sick in barracks. Allowing cadets to stay here until they recover is more of a convenience for them, and it also helps to protect their roommates from catching the virus. The nurses assess cadets and have me or Jenny Crance see patients they are concerned about. The nurses make sure the patients are getting their fluids and medications. If cadets

are more seriously ill, or if they need an X-ray or IV fluids, they are referred to the hospital in Lexington," said Copeland.

According to Copeland, COVID-19 first hit VMI the same time it did at schools all over the country. "We were very busy, but the staff here pulled together and got the job done. Jenny Crance was instrumental in restructuring the efficiency of the office. Caitlin Perry, the head nurse, worked out how to swiftly communicate with the commandant's staff, primarily Sergeant Major Suzanne Rubenstein, in isolating COVID-19 positive cadets and providing them proper medical care. Alerting and quarantining close contacts added to the workload. "We were following CDC guidelines about how to quarantine and isolate, and it was almost overwhelming. But the staff maintained calm, and developed a protocol on the fly, which

the more than 65 city agencies; a job fair; and an employer panel discussion regarding real-world advice for students.

The winners of the capture-the-flag-style competition for the



Midwinter Formal

Cadets and their dates dance in Cocke Hall during the Midwinter Formal Feb. 17 and 18. Friday night, 1st and 2nd Class cadets attended, with 3rd and 4th Class cadets attending Saturday. Put on by the S7 sta , the James Bond-themed event featured live music and 007 decorations.—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye.

