

Terra Cotta Army Offers Glimpse into Ancient China

By Mary Price

Nearly 50 cadets and faculty members took an unusual field trip on Saturday, Feb. 10, when they traveled to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond to view figures from the Terra Cotta Army, a vast collection of life-size soldiery created to accompany Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of a unified China, into the afterlife.

Plans for the trip began in the fall when Maj. Catharine Ingersoll, assistant professor of English, rhetoric, and humanistic studies, heard that a handful of the 8,000 standing infantry figures making up the Terra Cotta Army were to be displayed at the museum. At the time, Ingersoll, an art historian, was unaware that Lt. Col. Howard Sanborn, associate professor of international studies and a China specialist, was also planning to take cadets to the exhibit.

Just one week before their scheduled departures, Ingersoll and Sanborn learned of each other's plans and decided to combine forces, with the international studies department funding cadet admission to the

museum and cadet lunches, while the English department paid for a charter bus. Faculty and staff on the trip got into the museum for free, thanks to a special dispensation for all state employees.

Sanborn noted that learning about ancient Chinese history is invaluable for cadets seeking to understand modern China because today's Communist leaders use the Chinese emperors of long ago to legitimize their own authority.

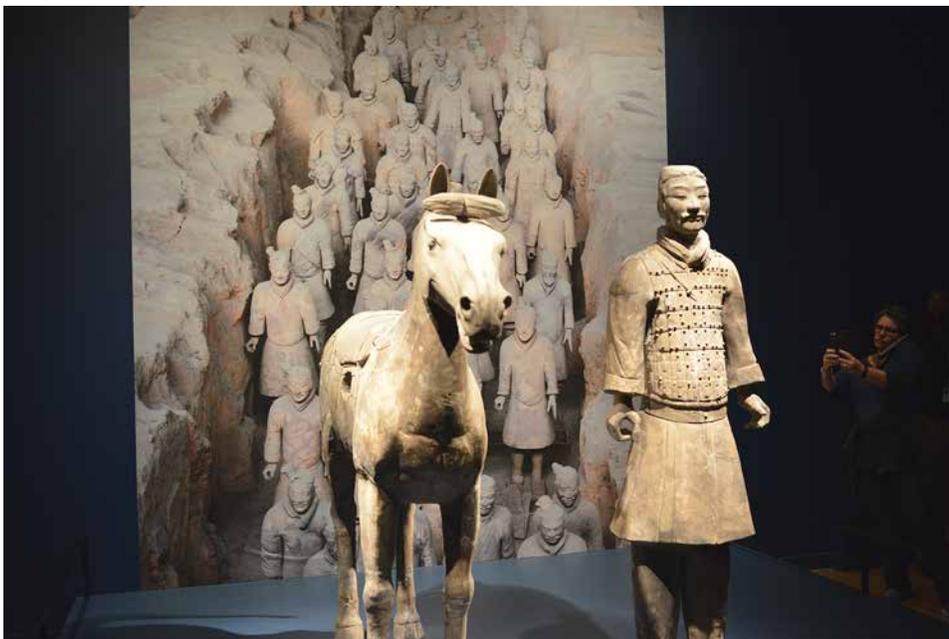
"The claims the Communist Party makes in China are about unity and unification," Sanborn explained. "Part of the story of the emperor that created the Terra Cotta Army, or with whom the Terra Cotta Army is buried, was bringing the country together. There's a lot of claims of legitimacy in the Communist Party today that touch on issues relating to the reign of the first emperor of China."

Sanborn also said that while he's taken cadets to see the actual excavation site in Xi'an, China, in years past, where thousands of the figures have remained since their discovery in a farmer's field in 1974, seeing the figures at close range is just as valuable because each figure is uniquely crafted.

Ingersoll noted that from an art historian's perspective, the scope of the Terra Cotta Army is "absurd." She added that the figures making up the Terra Cotta Army were buried with real, functional Bronze Age



One of the 8,000 terra cotta figures from the Qin Shi Huang Chinese empire on display at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.



The terra cotta figures on display in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts are over 2,000 years old.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

weapons. "Any kind of metal is a valuable commodity and expensive to produce," she said.

Ingersoll also said that excavations are still ongoing at Xi'an and have been since the 1970s. "There's still lots to be discovered there," she commented.

Cadets on the trip said they were glad to have had the opportunity to view not only the Terra Cotta Army, but also the museum's entire collection, which features works of art from every continent except Antarctica.

Rebecca Serrano '18 has been missing out on field trips such as this for years because

she's a member of the NCAA water polo team. This time, she was more than happy to board the bus for Richmond.

"The Terra Cotta [Army] is a collection I've watched documentaries on and imagined seeing in person, but doubted that I ever would," she said.

Venturing out to view the rest of the museum's collection, Serrano found pieces she didn't know were housed there. "I was amazed to see there was a Picasso and a Dali, both of whom I am tremendous fans," she said. "I never thought in a million years that I would see these artists' works."

Travis Arnold '18 said he'd signed up for the trip because he's in Sanborn's Politics in China class.

"When I walked into the Terra Cotta Army exhibit, I was fascinated by the craftsmanship and skill that was required not only to build these very detailed warriors, but all of their armor, weapons, and other objects," he said. "The exhibit was very well done, informational, and allowed us to really get up close and personal with the warriors, something I thought to be extremely cool considering their age and condition." 🌟

Future Naval Officers Select Their Ships

Naval ROTC Staff

Nine midshipmen of the VMI Navy ROTC Battalion recently undertook the first step of their post-graduation lives by selecting their sea duty assignments. Eight of the nine were VMI cadets, while the other is a member of the Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership Corps of Cadets at Mary Baldwin University.

Connor Robertson '18 selected the USS *Porter*, a guided missile destroyer based in Rota, Spain, where he will serve as a surface warfare officer before undergoing intense training in the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program leading to service on a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

Timothy Wenzholz '18 selected the USS *Omaha*, a littoral combat ship based in San Diego, California. Matthew Heinrich '18 selected the USS *San Jacinto*,

a guided missile cruiser based in Norfolk, Virginia. Heinrich also received a congratulatory phone call from the ship's commanding officer and was able to have a conversation with the officers he will be serving alongside in the near future.

Also selecting a ship based in Norfolk was Nathan Dugie '18, who chose the USS *McFaul*, a guided missile destroyer. Bryson Kelly '18 selected the USS *Philippine Sea*, a guided missile cruiser based in Mayport, Florida. Anthony Garcia '18 selected the USS *Sentry*, a mine countermeasures ship based in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain.

Selecting the USS *Carney*, a guided missile destroyer based in Rota, Spain, was Angelah Haseltine '18. Regimental commander Finn Swenson '18 selected the USS *Anchorage*, a dock landing ship based in San Diego, California, where he will serve as a surface warfare officer before training to become an engineering duty officer focused on upkeep of the fleet. 🌟



Matthew Heinrich '18 selects the USS *San Jacinto* for his first duty assignment with Col. David Coggins and Cmdr. Daniel Turbeville in Kilbourne Hall.—Photo courtesy of Naval ROTC staff.



Appellate Judge Speaks in Gillis Theater

Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III hands cadet Nicholas Wainwright '20 a signed copy of his new book *All Falling Faiths: Reflections on the Promise and Failure of the 1960s*. During his visit to post Feb. 21, Wilkinson, who has served on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit since he was appointed by President Ronald Reagan in 1984, discussed his recent book in a talk titled "The 1960s: The Decade We Shall Never Forget" and explored how the trends set in motion during that decade affect public life today.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.