Looking back, and into the future: the SMA legacy is alive and well!

It all started in 1999 when several alumni banded together to breathe new life into the SMA Alumni Association, and do what they believed could be done to perpetuate the legacy and memory of Staunton Military Academy.

Although the association had been active since it was formed in 1976, it had experienced mixed results. A small office was opened in Staunton and the process of collecting names and addresses of alumni was begun by Paul “Ike” Kvilighan, SMA '29, and former superintendant Colonel Harrison S. Dey.

From 1976 to 1986, numerous alumni became involved, and it was through their donations that today’s SMA Alumni Association and the SMA Foundation were established. The SMA name, records and memorabilia were purchased and donated to the organization.

The first Staunton reunion was held in 1986, and in 1987, help was enlisted from the Tucker family, who donated the use of office space at Ingleside Resort Hotel for the association’s Alumni Office. Also in 1987, the address list was computerized into the database we have today.

The SMA Alumni Association website (sma-alumni.org) was created in 2001 by Mark J. Orr, SMA '73, and has become a treasure trove of both historical and current information about the organization and its membership.

Beginning in 1999, a series of scholarships were established to be awarded to Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership (VWIL) cadets. The SMA Alumni Association provides a yearly leadership award of $1,000 and in 2002 Hunter W. Henry, Jr., SMA '46, established the Henry Scholarship Honoring SMA and the Henry SMA Legacy Scholarship.

In July 2001, the SMA-VWIL Museum, a joint endeavor of the SMA Alumni Association and VWIL, was opened, made possible by financial help from Mr. Henry and more than 50 “plank owners” who made significant contributions.

The SMA Legacy Projects continued with the creation of the Memorial Wall outside the SMA-VWIL Museum in 2002. Funded by Mr. Henry, it displays bronze plaques honoring alumni from all walks of life with a centerpiece plaque titled “The Ultimate Sacrifice”, designed by alumnus/sculptor Lawrence B. Perkins, SMA ‘51. Other plaques pay honor to SMA alumni, faculty and staff and those who were lost in World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

At the foot of the Memorial Wall is a “Walk of Honor” comprised of inscribed bricks purchase by alumni and families of alumni, honoring fellow cadets as well as SMA staff and faculty.

There is a brick patio at the end of the walk where the SMA eagle (once located over the entrance to North Barracks) and the sallyport gates to South Barracks are permanently displayed behind the eagle.

The SMA-VWIL Museum has become a focal point of alumni who return to the “Hill”, and will this year be expanded to nearly twice its current size — a move made possible by VWIL and Mary Baldwin College that reflects the close relationship that has developed between the college and the SMA Alumni Association.

In 2003, the association was invited to participate in the annual Promotions Board at VWIL, a process that interviews candidates and selects the senior and underclass leadership of the Corps of Cadets for the following academic year.

— Continued on page 3 —
This issue of *The Kablegram* has a single “Then and Now” profile, providing an in-depth look at the outstanding career of VWIL Commandant: Brig. Gen. Michael Bissell.

Mike Bissell and I first developed a close relationship when I became president of the SMA Alumni Association several years ago, and I have watched the bond between us grow year by year, on both a personal and professional level.

We have consulted with each other on all occasions when an action by VWIL would impact our association, and when the efforts of our organization would impact VWIL. He is tireless in his praise, publicly and privately, for the benefits that VWIL has enjoyed as the result of the SMA Alumni Association. When our business contacts in the private sector made significant contributions of computers and furnishings, Mike Bissell made sure each of them received a personal letter of appreciation. He has always “gone the extra mile” to accommodate the needs of our association, at our annual reunions and year-around.

To be sure, we have had our differences. Mike and I have always sought a common ground for us to continue to build upon, with a mutual goal to benefit both VWIL and the SMA Alumni Association — and to perpetuate our legacy as well as enhance the future for VWIL.

I have learned a great deal about Mike Bissell, the man, and have witnessed his day to day interaction with the young ladies in the VWIL Corps of Cadets. The profile and the accompanying accolades from SMA alumni speak for themselves and serve as a fitting testimony to Mike’s integrity, dedication, and to the VWIL program as it is today.

I am now halfway through my third year as president of the SMA Alumni Association, a job that has presented many challenges and offered periodic rewards. It has been as close to a full time vocation as one can imagine, and one that I have for the most part enjoyed.

Whether I continue in this post after this August is a decision that the membership and the Board of Directors will make at the annual reunion in April in Staunton. While I can say that we have accomplished a great deal in two-and-a-half years, there is certainly much more to be done.

Leading our organization requires a constant dedication, a willingness to listen and respond, communicate, maintain relationships, and have a spouse who is willing to not only tolerate the long hours of work that the president puts in, but to become involved herself. I have enormous respect and appreciation for the support and involvement that my wife Jo Ann has given me throughout my tenure.

No leader could ask for a better Board of Directors than the one that guides the SMA Alumni Association. These dedicated gentlemen provide the level of enthusiastic support, critique and wisdom that a president needs to achieve success and continue to perpetuate the SMA legacy. The support from the Board of Directors deserves far more recognition than I can provide in this limited space. Thank you, one and all.

We have spent the past nine months working toward a record-setting reunion this year. As of this issue of *The Kablegram*, the attendance log reveals more than 100 alumni returning to the “Hill” in April. Much of this has been accomplished through networking by members of various classes who have taken the time and effort to contact and encourage others from their classes. Some are returning because of their experiences at our most recent reunions. No matter what the reason for your attendance, you will find the 2007 reunion to be one of the most memorable events in your later life.

— C. David Litzenburg, SMA ’58
The SMA legacy is alive  
— Continued from page 1 —

Also in 2005, the first VWIL Kable Leg- 

dion of Honor was awarded to a gradu- 

ating senior, reviving a tradition that was 

the premier recognition at SMA for many 

decades. The same year saw the name of 

the Howie Rifles conveyed to the VWIL 

drill team.

The 2006 reunion found 92 returning 

alumni, and the 2007 gathering appears 

to be bringing more than 100 “old boys” 

back to the “Hill” in Staunton.

Late last year, construction of a new 

wall cap and drainage system was com- 

pleted on the Memorial Wall, eliminating 

any further leakage into the museum.

We continue to have new members in 

the organization. Some of our alumni are 

networking and finding those who were 

lost for a while, and others are finding us 

on the Internet through our web site. To 

date, our database contains 3,200 mem- 

bers and former faculty and staff.

Where do we go from here? Resting 

on our laurels is not an option.

The SMA-VWIL Museum Committee 

dut during February to map out recom- 

mendations for the expansion project. 

Plans call for the project to be completed 

this year. The expansion will create a 

much larger room for Staunton Military 

Academy artifacts and displays, a sepa- 

rate room dedicated to the Virginia 

Women’s Institute for Leadership (VWIL), 
a more private office for the Alumni Sec- 

retary and association records, a larger 

archives room, and a conference room 

that both organizations can utilize.

We have some lofty goals:

• Continue to build the Scholarship Fund 

  to $50,000, and take the annual award to 

  $2,500 annually;

• Continue to locate alumni who are not 

  registered with the association and get 

  them involved;

• Provide professional expertise and our 

  various talents to assist VWIL in expand- 

  ing the Corps of Cadets to 250; and

• Find new ways to reach out to alumni 

  and to perpetuate the SMA legacy.

These are but a few goals. They are 

all achievable if our organization contin- 

ues to pursue them vigorously. One per- 

son alone cannot accomplish this. It will 

take dedicated and enthusiastic team- 

work from many alumni.

The bottom line? The SMA Alumni As- 

sociation is healthy, active and the SMA 

legacy is very much alive and well!

— C. David Litzenburg, SMA ’58

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Yes, there will be dancing....

...at the 2007 reunion in Staunton. While we eliminated the Friday evening barbe- 

cue and dance in the Mess Hall in favor of a reception and twilight ceremony, dancing 

is scheduled for Saturday evening immediately following the banquet at the Stone- 

wall Jackson Hotel. Plans call for the 9:30 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. dance to be held in the 

Colonade Room across the hall from the lounge. Those who wish to dance will be 

able to do so in this additional venue, while those who wish to sit and talk after the 

banquet will find the hotel lobby quiet and accommodating.

Thanks to the generosity of Jay Nedry, SMA ’69 and a number of his former class- 

mates, music will once again be provided by The Rhondells.

We've topped that magic number....

...of 100 alumni returning for the 2007 reunion. It is only late February and to date 

110 alumni are planning to attend. Rooms are still available at the Hampton Inn. The 

block of 40 rooms — 20 have been taken already — will be available for SMA alumni 

until March 15, 2007.

On page 13 of this issue, The Kablegram provides a list of those alumni (as of 

February 21) committed to this year’s gathering. If you plan to attend this year’s ev- 

teys, we strongly recommend that you make your reservations immediately. The 

weekday contact at the Hampton Inn is Toni McGovern at (540) 886-7000. Please 

make sure you advise her, or the person to talk with, that you are with the SMA 

alumni group.

Page 22 provides a list of alternative locations where rooms may be available.

We still need your thoughtful response....

...with your dues remittance for this year. Dues help the SMA Alumni Association 

function efficiently and effectively. To date, 570 members have paid dues, which 

leaves approximately 2,430 alumni who have chosen not to pay dues. While we have 

seen some limited progress in this area, there is much more to be achieved. We 

respectfully ask that all alumni take a few minutes to complete the form on the back 

page of this issue, pay your dues, and make a contribution to the activity of your 

choice. You and all SMA alumni will ultimately benefit.

Several projects need your generous help....

...including the Kable Hall alcove restoration project detailed on page 12. The goal 

is $3,000, of which $1,500 has already been donated.

We also need financial support for the expansion of the SMA-VWIL Museum, which 

will double in size in 2007 and 2008. The Museum Committee met February 10 and 

began work on plans for the expansion, and will likely have more information and a 

projected cost by the April 13-14 reunion.

This will be a significant undertaking and will require strong support from alumni 

to achieve success. The SMA-VWIL Museum is the cornerstone of our legacy, and the 

expansion program will further the perpetuation of our history and legacy.

SMA alumni returning to the “Hill” for the 2007 reunion will find a detailed display 

in the SMA-VWIL Museum illustrating the tentative plans for the expansion. There 

will also be

This issue is packed with news and information....

...thanks in great part to the responses from SMA alumni. There are three pages 

dedicated to the new “Where They Are Now” feature. Unfortunately, there are also 

three pages of TAPS obituaries. Pages 13, 14 and 15 focus on the 2007 reunion, and 

pages 7 through 9 are dedicated to “Looking Back” photos.

Page 4 has news briefs for and about SMA alumni and one late news item, while 

page 5 focuses on notes of appreciation to our alumni and friends who have stepped 

up to provide help. The “Then and Now” profile is on pages 10, 11 and 12. The inside 

date back page offers an expanded Cadet Store order form.

Feedback from SMA alumni is essential to The Kablegram. Send your news and 

comments to us at kablegram@sma-alumni.org or mail them to the SMA Alumni 

Office, P. O. Box 958, Woodrum Station, Staunton, Virginia 24402-0958.
Nominations for election to Board of Directors due now; vote scheduled for ’07 reunion

Nominations for membership on the SMA Alumni Association Board of Directors are being accepted at the SMA Office in Staunton.

Nominations can be submitted either as formal letters or detailed e-mails. Letters should be mailed to SMA Alumni Association, P. O. Box 958, Woodrum Station, Staunton, Virginia 24402-0958, and by e-mail to smaoffice@sma-alumni.org.

Nominations to be considered should be submitted to the SMA Alumni Secretary no later than April 1, 2007.

Murray Rosen chosen to head national distribution firm

Murray B. Rosen, SMA ’69, has been named Chief Financial Officer of U.S. Merchants-/Diversified Repackaging. U. S. Merchants is a leading design, manufacturer, assembler and distributor of innovative packaging and display to warehouse club stores including Costco, Sam’s Club and BJ’s.

The firm is headquartered in Beverly Hills, California and has operations throughout the United States and Canada. For the previous six years, Rosen had been Controller of Gans Ink and Supply Company, Inc. of Los Angeles, California. After graduating from SMA, Rosen went on to earn his Bachelor of Arts degree with honors from Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, and his Masters of Business Administration from the University of Chicago (Illinois).

SMA alumni invited to Stuart Hall events

Stuart Hall School has extended an invitation to SMA alumni during their alumni weekend, April 13, 14 and 15 in Staunton. The Stuart Hall reunion is the same weekend as the 2007 SMA reunion.

Among the events scheduled are a dinner and auction Friday, April 13 at 6:00 p.m.; Distinguished Alumni and Honorary Alumni Breakfast Saturday morning at 9:30 a.m.; a golf outing at 10:00 a.m. Saturday; a chapel service at 11:00 a.m.; a noon luncheon (to include recognition of SMA alumni) on Saturday; and a dinner at 5:30 p.m. Saturday.

SMA alumni interested in attending a Stuart Hall event should contact Margaret Wood at mwood@stuart-hall.org.

LATE NEWS

Jorgensen named First Captain for 2007-2008 corps

Cadet Sergeant Major Whitney Jorgensen, a VWIL junior and recipient of the 2006 SMA Alumni Association Leadership Award, has been selected to lead the Virginia Women’s Institute for Leadership (VWIL) Corps of Cadets for the 2007-2008 academic year.

Ms. Jorgensen, from Hampton, Virginia, is majoring in International Relations/Political Science with a minor in Leadership. In her first two years at VWIL, she was a member of the VWIL Band.

She has been active in cross country, soccer, the College Republicans, and the Army Aviation Association of America.

She is on an active duty scholarship and plans to commission in May 2008 in the U.S. Army and will attend a camp this summer prior to her senior year.

Seven cadets will be promoted to the rank of Cadet Captain: Tina Moore, to be Executive Officer of the Corps of Cadets; Belena Stuart, to be S-1; Mallory Showalter, to be Band Commander; Kristen Adams, Amanda Silvers and Janelle Smith, all three to be Platoon Leaders; and Maggie Connelly, to be Color Guard Commander.

Cadet Sergeant Rebecca Burke will be the Howie Rifles Drill Team Commander with a rank of Lieutenant. She assumed the commanding role in November 2006.

Sergeant Major of the Corps of Cadets for 2007-2008 will be Janiare Jackson, and the Band Drum Major Sergeant will be Ashley Langston.

The promotions, along with others too numerous to list here, were approved by the VWIL Promotions Board over a series of three board sessions, one for each of the freshman, sophomore and junior classes, conducted in February.

CORRECTION

The photos at the bottom of the “Pass In Review” article published in December’s issue of The Kablegram incorrectly identified Frederick Harriman as Frederick “Harrison”.

— 4 —
Robert “Gator” Horvath, SMA ‘47 helped with research and provided both pictures and information on when the bust of Major Thomas D. Howie was formally dedicated and the Howie Rifles were formed.

He asked that he be remembered to everyone, and has donated his reunion registration fee (plus a few dollars) to be used to pay for the meals of eight VWIL cadets at the Saturday, April 14, banquet. Thank you, Bob!

John Payette, SMA ‘49, at the request of Sally Howie McDevitt, researched old records and found exact dates for the establishment of the Howie Rifles and dedication of the original bust in the Kable Hall alcove.

Lee W. Lawrence, SMA ‘56, First Captain that year and currently a member of the SMAAA Board of Directors, spent many hours and telephone calls while contacting all the known former First Captains from SMA, encouraging them to return to the “Hill” this year for the 2007 reunion. His efforts resulted in seven former Regimental Commanders now planning to attend the events in Staunton.

Jay C. Nedry, SMA ‘69 has arranged for a repeat appearance of the renowned “Rhondells” this year at a post-banquet dance. Although we do not have names to list, a number of his classmates and associates have banded together to fund the expenses of having the band this year.

Thomas E. B. Phillips, SMA ‘74, past president and currently secretary and a member of the Board of Directors, was able to arrange for the return of the Thomas D. Howie bronze bust to the association for placement in the alcove in Kable Hall where it resided from 1947 to 1977.

John H. “Jack” Lowe, SMA ‘49, a resident of Staunton and a member of the SMA-VWIL Museum Committee, has dedicated time and effort to repairing the World War I monument, evaluating the actions needed to repair the Memorial Wall, examined the eagle display on the patio outside the museum, was involved in the Memorial Wall construction project in 2006, and will be repairing the pedestal in the alcove of Kable Hall where the Thomas D. Howie bust will again rest.

Mr. Lowe has also agreed to be chairman of the SMA-VWIL Committee and will be involved in the forthcoming expansion of the facility.

Harry W. Bruckno, SMA ‘62, has been tireless in providing help in a number of areas, including supervision of the 2006 construction project at the Memorial Wall — including coordination with VWIL and Mary Baldwin College administrators and the private contractors involved — and in providing transport of donated furnishings from Northern Virginia to Staunton. Mr. Bruckno this year has served as SMAAA vice president.

Dominic “Jack” Dalbo, SMA ‘68, has created and donated rubber butt plates for the weapons used by the VWIL Howie Rifles so that the team can practice indoors on hardwood floors. Previously, he was involved in the acquisition of the 24 Mauser rifles as well as providing the appropriate slings.

Following the 2005 SMA reunion, $250.00 contribution was received from from Kevin Gorman, SMA ‘70, designated for the Howie Rifles. The funds have have been recently used to provide custom sewn patches, similar to the old SMA Howie Rifles patch but in a green and gold color combination.

Hunter W. Henry, Jr., SMA ‘46 again this year will use his aircraft to fly from Texas to Richmond, Virginia to pick up his former SMA roommate, Colonel Brooke F. Read and Susan Read, then fly to Staunton for the reunion. He will return his guests to Richmond before flying back to Texas on Sunday. Several weeks ago he offered to expand the trip to a side trip to Cleveland to bring Robert Horvath, SMA ‘47 to the reunion and then return him on Sunday, but Mr. Horvath is unable to attend the events this year. For his many gestures of kindness such as this one we salute Mr. Henry.

Several members of the staff at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel deserve our recognition for having made our reunion organization and coordination tasks much easier: Chrissy Coutu, Reservations Supervisor; Sean Liccione, Revenue Manager; Candi Fugarty, Conference Services Manager; Candie Freeman, Front Desk Supervisor; and Michelle Hoggarp, Front Desk Clerk. Their individual and collective efforts helped make the 2006 reunion a memorable event, and they continue this year to accommodate our special needs.

Toni McGovern, Guest Services Manager at Hampton Inn in Staunton, has gone “above and beyond” to make sure that our members are accommodated for the 2007 reunion, and provides us with a weekly report of new alumni reservations.

Major Raymond Marsh, U. S. Air Force ROTC Detachment 880 at Virginia Military Institute, found an SMA yearbook and various artifacts from 1922 and delivered them to the SMA-VWIL Museum in November 2006. Thank you, Major Marsh, for your sensitivity to our history and our legacy.

Mrs. Sandi Lord of Vista, California, daughter of William M. Hawkes, Jr., SMA ‘28, donated a scrapbook of photographs and SMA memorabilia from her father’s time at SMA. Some of these pictures are featured on page 9 in the “Looking Back” feature in this issue, and all the materials will be placed on display in the SMA-VWIL Museum.

Quite worthy of our appreciation is the VWIL team of cadets who are dedicated to staffing the SMA-VWIL Museum every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. The team’s supervisor is Cadet Corporal Danielle Gardiner, a sophomore. Team members are cadets Jaqueline Hadley, Bianca Pleasant, and Elizabeth Dewey. Cadet Renee Miller served on the team during the first semester of the current academic year. The team also cleans the museum weekly, greet guests and provides informative tours. Without their assistance, the museum could not maintain scheduled hours and be available to SMA alumni.

Cadet Lieutenant (S-1) Deborah Durbin, VWIL ‘07, has begun the process of collecting photographs, information and artifacts related to Major Thomas D. Howie, and is building a new display dedicated to him in the SMA-VWIL Museum. The project is an internship for Ms. Durbin.

A senior at VWIL majoring in history, she plans to graduate in May 2007 and pursue a master’s degree in 20th Century American History. Her experience includes internships at Fairfield Plantation in Gloucester County, Virginia and development of traveling exhibit documenting the experiences of four women living at the plantation during four critical time periods.
VWIL NEWS

Cadet Captain Jennifer Wilde gets a handshake from Captain Brandon Bissell, Program Officer for the U.S. Army ROTC office at Virginia Military Institute after Miss Wilde contracted with the U.S. Army to commission following her graduation from the Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership (VWIL) at Mary Baldwin College.

Adefunke Adeyeye, VWIL '09: first a Marine, now a cadet

Although she was only 16 when she enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, her father was not surprised by his daughter’s ambition.

“He remembered a time when he was a government official and we lived in the American Embassy area in Nigeria, when I was may seven years old,” she recalls, “and I told him I wanted to be like an Embassy guard.”

“They were U.S. Marines and he had much respect for them,” she says.

Now Adefunke Adeyeye is a sophomore at the Virginia Women’s Institute for Leadership (VWIL), a different environment after her five years of service as a Marine, including eight months deployment in Iraq in 2003.

Ms. Adeyeye, now 22, was 15 when her family—members of one of the largest royal families in Nigeria — relocated to the United States. Her first name, Adefunke, was bestowed by her grandmother and means “the crown given to me so that I can care for it”, reminds her of her heritage and growing up surrounded by 24-hour bodyguards, even at the boarding school she attended.

Unlike most cadets at VWIL, she is already a seasoned, albeit still young, veteran of wartime service. Her Marine Corps service included the emotional duty of caring for the bodies of fallen American armed forces personnel and Iraqi civilians.

“You have to be very careful with how you process some remains because of religious beliefs and social practices,” she says, explaining that the service taught her to be respectful of people and to practice patience, honor, courage and much more.

Today, Ms. Adeyeye is attending Mary Baldwin College and is enrolled in the VWIL program to “take a break from the taxing day-to-day responsibility” of being a U.S. Marine. However, the structured military environment at VWIL has its own similar challenges. Since January 2006 she has continued to report to duty as a reservist one weekend a month.

Ms. Adeyeye quickly embraced the people and environment of the college as a member of the African Student Collective and the field hockey team, for which she earned all-conference honorable mention recognition.

Each underclass VWIL cadet has an upperclass cadet mentor known as a “calic”. Cadet Captain Julia Cochran, Ms. Adeyeye’s “calic”, describes her as “determined, fit, and an exemplary cadet who works well with her peers and is bound for success.”

Her goals include “someday to be a forensic anthropologist for the CIA, FBI or United Nations”, Ms. Adeyeye says, adding that she is “continually surprised by what I can find out about a human being and their history from a skeleton.”

She says: “My mother is a doctor, and it pleases her to know I am headed toward medical school, probably after I retire from the military.”

Editor’s note: The information for this profile was taken from an article in the Cupola, the Mary Baldwin College newspaper.