

THEN AND NOW — A PERSONAL PROFILE

John A. Nolde, Jr., SMA '63: the quiet loyalist

A “well-respected figure” is how John A. Nolde, Jr., SMA '63 describes his memory of Colonel Robert Wease, a Staunton Military Academy instructor who was never his teacher.

Little does Mr. Nolde know, at least until now, that the same words have been used by his classmates — and those in the SMA Alumni Association who know him — describe him.

John Nolde enrolled at SMA as a sophomore in 1960 and graduated in 1963. He fondly remembers his Chemistry teacher, Colonel Brown and other faculty such as Colonel Dove, the Commandant of Cadets, and Dick Steinberg, who coached him in track.

After his SMA experience, Mr. Nolde spent four years at the University of Miami and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in business administration.

“The University of Miami was totally different,” he recalls, adding that “you went from something like 650 cadets to 12,000 students.”

After college Mr. Nolde spent six years in the Virginia National Guard, serving with the 276th Combat Engineering Battalion. When on active duty he served as a cook, preparing meals to the entire battalion. They were never called to serve in Vietnam.

He worked for a time at his family's bakery, called Nolde Brothers, Inc., and then left the bread business for real estate. “I went from dough to dirt,” he said. The bakery was sold in the mid-1970s to Interstate Brands and, subsequently, Flowers Industry.

Mr. Nolde began his real estate career in property management acquired his brokers license and worked briefly in commercial sales before launching what would be a long career in home building. He partnered with a friend, Milton Kusterer, to buy his first lot, and together built their first house.

The Nolde Company was formed in 1971, and Mr. Nolde has since built close to 1,000 homes and several commercial properties in the Richmond, Virginia area. He also develops raw land into residential lots.

He served as President of the Home Builders Association of Richmond in 1993 and is currently a director of the National Association of Home Builders, where in 2001 he was elected to life membership. He also has served as a director of the Home Builders Association of Virginia, where he sat on the legislative committee. He was elected to the Home Builders Association of Richmond's Hall of Fame in 2003, recognizing his many years of service to the industry.

What he says he enjoys most about his work is the ability to “turn an idea into a finished product....to take something that is nothing and turn it into a place someone lives in and enjoys.”

One project of which he's particularly proud is the development of an eight-field soccer complex in the Short Pump area west of Richmond. He volunteered to serve as general contractor for the project in the 1980s when his son was a player

for the soccer club, Richmond Strikers. The club and field complex are now a successful operation that have served hundreds of local youth and their families.

Mr. Nolde serves on the Board of Trustees of the endowment foundation for Steward School, a private school in Richmond. His deep appreciation of the school, which his daughter attended, led him to establish a scholarship for rising juniors or seniors, entitled the Nolde Stewardship Award.

In 1969 he married Mary Harvard Birdsong. They have two children: a son, John Arthur Nolde, III, who recently returned to the Richmond area, and a daughter, Mary Harvard Nolde, who lives and works in Richmond. He has two grandchildren, Kate and Charles, ages three and one, to whom he is described as “a spectacular, doting grandfather.”

Mr. Nolde's son has joined his father in the family business — father in residential real estate and son in commercial.

Consistent with the tradition in all the personal profiles published in *The Kablegram*, Mr. Nolde was asked for his thoughts about the SMA Alumni Association. He responded: “It is great to see SMA and VWIL form such a close

relationship to keep the spirit alive of SMA. A bond has been built between the two schools that must not be broken.”

Mr. Nolde is known as a man of few words, evidenced by his response to the question of what the SMA Alumni Association can do to improve what we do.

“Keep up the good work,” was his answer.

Then he added:

“General Bissell and Dr. Bryant have put together a very unique program. Not only does it give the cadets a college education it also provides a platform to build leadership skills that will be with them all their lives. The cadets have taken many of our traditions, added theirs and produced a cadet corps that is second to none.”

“Come back to ‘the HILL and see for yourself.”

Editor's note: I have not had an opportunity to sit down one-on-one with John Nolde and get to know him. I know his reputation. I know that his peers in the SMA Alumni Association hold him in high regard. I know that the association's Scholarship Fund benefits every year from his generosity. I know that you can count on John Nolde being at every reunion, and always there for the perpetuation of our legacy, whatever the need may be. He provides an excellent example of a loyal alumnus. I need to take time to get to know him better.

The Kablegram normally publishes side-by-side profiles of an SMA alumnus and a VWIL cadet. In this issue, space became a premium and time became a constraint. The VWIL profile schedule for this issue will be published in the January edition.



LETTERS AND E-MAILS

August 28, 2006 by e-mail:

"Thank you, I had received a message from his son shortly after the death and had in fact exchanged at least one message with Glenn earlier this year when I asked him to the reunion. He had a chronic health condition that unfortunately did not respond to treatment. I hope that you and your family are in good health. I appreciate all the work and attention that you devote to holding our diminishing band of brothers together. I know that the task is made much more difficult since we have not had a school to rally around for 30 years. I have thoroughly enjoyed the last two reunions and reliving some of the happiest days of my life."

— J. Lewis Sapp, SMA '59

Editor's note: This e-mail was received in response to an earlier one that advised Mr. Sapp of the death of one of his classmates and friends, Glenn Traiger, SMA '59.

September 12, 2006 by e-mail:

"Dear David:

As a member of WW II SMA graduating class of 1942, I am sending this e-mail document to compliment the alumni staff for keeping the great spirit of our wonderful Academy alive.

I entered South Barracks on September 3, 1941, Room 342 and met my roommate Peter Heck. We were both from New Jersey and it was a good match.

On December 7, 1941 the entire academy paraded through Staunton and the population was saved against a Jap invasion.

During 1941-42 years we were State Champions in football, swimming, baseball, track and boxing. This was made possible by the outstanding cadets from New Martinsville, West Virginia, who were outstanding athletes.

I want to remember my classmates who were killed in World War II and Korea: Bill Frost, Alan Seigle, John Casey, Charles Marino. My dear friend Ben Rush died at a later date in Pennsylvania.

Finally, looking through my Class Book, I want to thank certain wonderful classmates for my being part of SMA '42 history: Ted Tanner, Ken Frye, Gurson Zeidman, Philip Emerson, Edwin Pape, William Hawkins, Mark Melhado, Charles Minihan, and Kells Carroll."

— George H. Fox, Jr., SMA '42

September 11, 2006 by e-mail:

"I really appreciate your call and it was great talking with you too. My wife and I had a wonderful time in Staunton last weekend. We went to the Hill several times and spoke with the cadets, viewed and walked through the SMA buildings, and thought about my days/years on the Hill. I am looking forward to a return this month and perhaps, as you suggested, on the 29th and 30th.

We enjoyed staying at the Stonewall Jackson. We attended a performance at the Black Friars Theatre, walked along "Main Street", had several nice meals, etc. We were very impressed. I cannot believe the Dixie movie theater is still in operation.

After SMA, I attended Pennsylvania Military College and graduated in '68. Being a ROTC grad, I entered the Army and retired after 22 years as an '05, LTC (Military Police). My pri-

mary assignments were Hawaii, West Point staff and faculty, Leavenworth for staff college and two tours in Washington. After retirement, I began employment with the Federal Government. I plan to retire in the Spring of '08.

We are looking for a place to "hang our hat" and after this past weekend, Staunton is on our list. Should I live in Staunton in the near future, perhaps I could help with the women's leadership program. When I was at West Point, I worked in a program called Project Athena, which was a initiative to ensure the success of women at West Point.

Let's stay in touch. I will get my dues mailed out and I plan to order a few items from the Cadet Store. Thanks for registering us for the '07 reunion."

— Kenneth L. Lescallett, SMA '62

Director, Protective Operations Division

HQ, US Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

Editor's note: Mr. Lescallett contacted the SMA Alumni Office by e-mail after a visit to Staunton. What followed were a series of e-mails that resulted in his being electronically reunited with a number of his 1964 classmates. These types of results make the work of the SMA Alumni Association worthwhile.

September 2, 2006 by letter:

"I would like to thank you for the generous scholarship that was awarded to me. It was put to good use this summer commuting back and forth as an intern for [U.S.] Senator George Allen [R-VA].

I would also like to thank you for the Junior and Senior offices and conference rooms. They are wonderful and were truly needed and [are] used very often for class meetings and Command and Staff meetings.

The SMA Alumni Association is truly our saving grace. The corps truly appreciates all of your hard work."

— Cadet Sergeant Major Whitney Jorgensen

VWIL Class of 2008

Editor's note: Cadet Jorgensen was the 2006 recipient of the SMA Alumni Association Leadership Scholarship.

September 2006 by e-mail:

"You've probably already checked it, but there is a Classmates web site that lists several of my classmates. I tried Classmates.com and could only bring in a couple of new names, and none of the old. However, the fact that they all registered indicates that the old tie is still there and they might be reunion-interested. I remember the names Jerome Ix (from Charlottesville originally), Chuck Berman, Ross Gilliken, Jules Polachek, LaMarche, Ash. There were several others.

Last night, inspired, I dug out a diary I kept at age 16, from early January until late May 1944, when we went home for the summer. My mother had given it to me for Christmas 1943 and commented that someday I would appreciate it. I read the whole five months in awe. Dutch Sebrell is in it often as we did a lot together. I never realized how many times I cleaned Lt. Marc Munsill's room as a Rat. I'll tell him that he owes me if I see him at the Amherst-Williams Homecoming this November.

— Edward Rowen, SMA '45

Editor's note: Thank you for the remembrances.