

Executive Profile — Bill VanDeWeghe

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SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL STAFF

As a new director at San Diego-based RA Capital Advisors LLC, Bill VanDeWeghe will put technology in the forefront while dispensing defense-related financial advice.

VanDeWeghe, 44, has been leading the private investment bank's defense industry team since joining the firm in January.

At the division of RA Capital Group, he plays a role in advising clients about mergers and acquisitions, private financings, complex shareholder matters and restructurings.

The defense industry's reliance on technology has heated up during the last several years as new strategies arose for fighting the war on terrorism and protecting the homeland, VanDeWeghe said.

So when he advises a government contractor or other defense-related firm on financial strategies, he often considers how the transaction would be affected from a tech standpoint.

Defense and technology often merge into business in the form of products such as unmanned combat devices, surveillance cameras, sensors, software, radar and sophisticated weaponry.

"Is protecting our ports a military interest or a civilian interest? That line has blurred," he said. "Everything should fit together to make that soldier or Marine the most effective."

VanDeWeghe joined a defense team that capitalized on this way of thinking when it advised San Diego-based Titan Corp. during its sale to New York-based L-3 Communications last year. Washington Technology ranked the \$2.6 billion transaction the No. 1 Government Systems Integrators Deal of the Year for 2005.

The new L-3 Titan Group provides information and communications products, solutions and services for national security.

The RA Capital Advisors team also advised Vancouver, B.C.-based Seaspan Corp., an operator of 15 container vessels that trades on the New York Stock Exchange as SSW, during its \$600 million initial public offering in 2005. The deal was the exchange's largest shipping IPO and third largest transportation industry IPO.

The self-effacing VanDeWeghe will bring a range of capabilities to the already successful defense industry team.

He spent the last 15 years advising executives and business leaders as a commercial and professional liability lawyer at the San Diego-based Klinedinst PC law firm. The Princeton University graduate earned his law degree at the Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William & Mary in Virginia. His military career got off the ground in 1983, when he began serving as an Army artillery officer on active duty in Germany. That was followed by a position commanding a firing battery in the Virginia National Guard.



Ironically, VanDeWeghe said he gained most of his military knowledge while running for Congress in the 53rd District during 2001 and 2002. Although he lost the bid for political office, he said he acquired valuable insights and personal contacts through his participation in defense and industry associations. "I was always keenly interested in defense, then the opportunity came along to join this team," he said.

RESUME

Name: Bill VanDeWeghe.

Title: Director.

Company: RA Capital Advisors LLC, a financial advisory division of RA Capital Group.

Industry involvement: National Defense Industrial Association; Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association International; San Diego Military Advisory Council; San Diego Rotary Club 33.

Education: Bachelor's degree, Princeton University; law degree, Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William & Mary.

Born: June 1961.

Residence: Point Loma.

Family: Single.

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY

Essential business philosophy: To build a long-term relationship with clients so we can provide the advice to increase the value of their business.

Best way to keep a competitive edge: Through the relationship you get to know the client so well that you can provide senior advice on their transactions.

Latest industry trend: I see defense contractors being asked to solve very specific problems that are urgent or time sensitive. I see more security technology.

Goals achieved: The two transactions last year with Titan and Seaspan. We're pretty proud of those.

Goals yet to be achieved: I want to continue building the relationships, focusing on those defense contractors in San Diego to provide the advice like we provided to Titan and increase the value of their company.

JUDGMENT CALLS

Best career decision: Move to San Diego in 1990. This continues to be a place for enormous opportunity.

Toughest career decision: To be an investment banker and tell them when it's not in their best interest to buy or sell a company can be very challenging.

Best opportunity: Real estate in the 1990s.

Mentors: Robert Horsman, the president of San Diego National Bank; and John Hawkins, the president and owner of Cloud 9 Shuttle, Inc.

TRUE CONFESSIONS

What I like best about my position: Is being able to work with companies that are trying to find solutions for defense and national security.

Pet peeve: Dishonest people or people who try to get an unfair advantage in a transaction.

Most valuable lesson learned: In the most challenging or difficult situation you can also find the best opportunities.

Person I'd most like to meet: Col. William "Wild Bill" Donovan. He was a Medal of Honor winner during World War II and head of the CIA predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services.

Most-respected competitor: We are a private boutique but some of our services compete with the largest investment banks in the country. Many times we are collaborating with them on transactions.

Greatest passions: Family and friends and members of the military and their families. They have an incredibly difficult job right now.

What I'd be doing if I weren't doing this: Government service in the Department of Defense.

PREDILECTIONS

Favorite author/book: "The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt," by Edmund Morris.

Currently reading: "In the Arena," Caspar Weinberger's autobiography; and "The World Is Flat," by Thomas L. Friedman.

Favorite status symbol: None.

Favorite vacation spot: Napa Valley.