

Society for Military History
Executive Director Annual Report for 2015-2016
Robert H. Berlin

1. General. This year's highlights include the Society's steady membership, continued outreach, active participation as a member of the academic, historical and humanities communities, active member communication, the first meeting app for smart phones and tablets, and financial stability.
2. Membership. As of March 21, 2016 there are 2798 individual members, of whom 274 are student members, and 164 sustaining members (paying \$120). There are 278 institutional members. Membership numbers are constant from last year except for a decline of 80 sustaining members. There were 680 non-renewals in 2015, up from 644 in 2014. SMH has enabled members to renew for two years if they choose on the recommendation of our ultra efficient *JMH* Managing Editor, Roberta Wiener.
3. Finances. Are covered in the Treasurer's report (The Treasurer's Report figures are on a cost basis using the 2015-2016 fiscal year whereas my figures are per the stated dates.) The Society has four accounts at Morgan Stanley directed by Richard Weaver in the Annapolis, MD office. As of March 22, 2016 the accounts totaled \$519,257. The Weigley Fund has \$87,956, the Coffman Fund \$28,805, the Millett Fund \$28,540. The Investment Fund balance is \$304,148 and the Operating Fund \$69,176. Our investment funds are invested the in Nuveen Santa Barbara Dividend Growth Fund (NSBCX) and AllianzGI NFJ Dividend Value Fund (PNECX). Over the past year our accounts have shown a positive 2.03% return year to March 18, 2016. Over the time of our investments the Nuveen Santa Barbara Dividend Growth Fund gained 11.09% and AllianzGI NFJ Dividend Value Fund gained 22.48%. Funds at Morgan Stanley are 89% invested in the two mutual funds and the remainder in money market funds and certificates of deposit (CDs). The Society has operating funds controlled by the Treasurer in a Bank of America account that as of March 27, 2015 total \$292,876. I have online access to the Morgan Stanley and Bank of America Accounts. The Society's has an account at SunTrust to facilitate the Journal staff's deposit of membership dues and other income arriving by check. The Sun Trust balance is \$188,000. The JMH Sun Trust account has approximately \$28,000. SMH total assets as of March 27, 2014 are \$1,028,133. This is an increase of \$4,113 from a year ago. Despite our operating at a small loss this fiscal year, our assets have increased and are ample for current operations. Our arrangement with ADP to handle SMH payrolls and tax data continues to work very well. I recommend SMH consider a fund raising campaign to increase the Weigley, Coffman and Millett Funds.
4. Audit and IRS 990 and W-9 forms. SMH had its annual audit done by James R. Turner & Company, P.C. Certified Public Accountant. I worked with Mr. Turner and Graham Cosmas to assure that our IRS form 990 was accurate to reflect the

current employees and trustees and hours worked. The filed 990's are a public record available online at guidestar.org. SMH is required to file an information return with the IRS disclosing all reportable award payments in excess of \$600 and provide awardees with an IRS 1099. Accordingly, I requested 2015 award winners to provide W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number forms and the forms were sent to the Treasurer to provide to Mr. Turner. This is an ongoing requirement.

5. District of Columbia Government Filing. Our DC legal representative, attorney Stephen M. Schaefer, of the law firm Whiteford, Taylor & Preston L.L.P. advised me that the DC Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs, Corporations Division required SMH to file its two-year report as a BRA-25 non profit corporation by April 1, 2016. I filed the report online and paid the \$80 cost on March 15, 2016.
6. Employees. SMH employees include the executive director, treasurer, newsletter editor/webmaster, recording secretary, archivist, social media fellow and *JMH* employees. The treasurer and I recommend a 5% pay increase for all SMH employees effective May 1, 2016.
7. Committees. I require the SMH award committees to make their selections appropriately, on time and to provide full information to me. In 2016 all the award committees met these requirements and excelled in their duties. Complements and thanks go to the committee members and chair. I have had no communication from the membership committee this year.
8. Constitution. I am working on revising the Society's constitution to incorporate recommendations of the constitutional committee, past officers, a review of other ACLS member academic society constitutions, including online voting and compliance with District of Columbia requirements. I recommend constitutional changes be voted on by the membership in our biannual officer election.
9. Award Plaques and Program. I arranged for the 19 award plaques to be made at Raskin's Jewelers in Prescott, AZ. Cost \$926.39. Frank Wetta with the support of Kean University, NJ and Scott Bruinooge, program designer at Ocean County College, will once again provide the awards luncheon program. SMH paid \$350 for program design. Kean University paid for program printing.
10. The Journal of Military History (JMH) is published by the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) and the George C. Marshall Foundation (GCMF) by agreement for seven years that began in December 2014. The agreement provides for financial support (\$20,000) per year from VMI, office space, release time from teaching for the current editor, and other concessions. Per the agreement SMH agreed to pay to them salary and benefit costs for Assistant Editor Anne S. Wells (approximately \$20,000 per year). SMH retains copyright of *JMH*. The new electronic manuscript management system developed by *JMH* and EventRebels,

JMH Tracker, is successfully operational. Authors who wish to submit manuscripts to be considered for publication by the *JMH* can now set up individual accounts and submit their manuscripts via this link. The *JMH* editorial staff receives an automatic notification whenever a manuscript has been uploaded, and authors are able to log onto their accounts to track the progress and status of their submissions. The *JMH* staff led by editor Bruce Vandervort, continue to produce on time each quarter, the leading scholarly publication in military history. *JMH* quality and high standards are being maintained. *JMH* is printed and circulated in an efficient and cost effective manner. *JMH* operations are covered in the editor's report.

11. EBSCO. I continue to monitor our contract with EBSCO for electronic publication of *JMH*. EBSCO makes quarterly direct deposits to the SMH Bank of America account. In 2015 EBSCO paid \$143,782 to SMH in quarterly payments, an increase of \$4,187 from 2014. On behalf of SMH I signed an amendment to the SMH EBSCO contract in June 2015, effective July 1, 2015, that continues our license agreement. The agreement will automatically renew on 12/31/2021 for one-year renewals unless either party does not renew the agreement. The agreement was reviewed by our Prescott, AZ attorney Donald Zavala and approved by the voting officers and trustees. The EBSCO revenue is an important income source for SMH. Online access to all past issues of *JMH* and its predecessors at no additional charge are a valuable service for SMH members. I have contacted EBSCO regarding their interest in contract renewal and will keep the Council advised.
12. Website and Newsletter. The SMH website www.smh-hq.org is continually updated. Links for membership renewal and donations are effectively run by EventRebels using PayPal Payments Pro. *Headquarters Gazette* is ably edited and published and mailed in a timely and efficient manner. Our newsletter is posted on the website and can be viewed immediately upon publication. The print version of *Headquarters Gazette* remains valuable to members and should be maintained as the editor recommends. Advantage Printing in Leavenworth, KS continues to be an outstanding partner for newsletter layout, printing and mailing. The website and newsletter are vital to keeping our members informed. Kurt Hackemer's initiative and responsiveness is superb.
13. Recording Secretary/Photographer. Tom Morgan prepared the minutes of the Council meeting of April 9, 2015 and the Business meeting of April 6, 2014 in a timely manner. The Business Meeting minutes were printed in the Fall 2015 (Vol. 28, N. 3) issue of *Headquarters Gazette*. Tom took photos at the annual meeting
14. Archives. The Society archives at Kansas State University (KSU) are a valuable resource to assist our operations and for researchers. SMH Archivist Paul A. Thomsen has been diligent in adding to the archives, arranging and digitizing them and working with the KSU library staff. As Paul explains in his annual

report there are concerns about KSU's future willingness to accept our paper archival materials due to space, personnel and budget issues. This is both a Society and personal concern due to the considerable SMH files I want to move from my possession to the Society's. Paul's frequent articles in *Headquarters Gazette* highlight the value of our archives.

15. Social Media. SMH activities continue both on Facebook and Twitter. I monitor both daily. The SMH Twitter account is **@SMH_Historians**. Our Facebook Group has 700 members. The second Mark Grimsley SMH Fellow in Social Media, Heather Salazar, promptly and accurately tweets SMH relevant events and news. This year's meeting hashtag is: #SMH2016.
16. Guidebook App for Annual Meeting. After using the Guidebook app for the American Historical Association annual meeting for the past two years and using smart phone apps at other meetings I took the initiative and assessed different products for SMH to use. Guidebook was my choice based on their expertise, reputation and price; Kurt Hackemer concurred, and with the officer's approval I negotiated a contract for Guidebook to prepare a meeting app. Cost \$2,838. Andrew Burtch at the Canadian War Museum provided the meeting program and Francine LaPointe at the Canadian Museum of history and I provided additional content. The app includes the meeting program and much more. Download the app for your smart phone and pad at **Guidebook** <https://guidebook.com/g/SMH2016> We will continue to print a meeting program. I encourage you to connect on the app using the connect section.
17. Annual Meeting 2015. The Society's 82nd Annual Meeting April 9-12, 2015 hosted by the Air University Foundation at the Renaissance Montgomery, AL hotel was successful. The Renaissance hotel, selected by the meeting coordinators, was a superb, new venue in an ideal location with a very helpful and cooperative staff. The \$135 rate I negotiated in 2011 and the \$50,000 in hotel concessions was very favorable. Meeting Coordinators John Terino, Jacqueline Whitt, Paul Springer, Melvin Dealie and Ryan Wadle at Air University excelled in making a marvelous meeting. I worked with the Air University Foundation's Executive Director Joseph A. Panza, Jr. Colonel, USAF Retired, to establish a formal Memorandum of Agreement that I signed on behalf of SMH on June 26, 2014 after review by our attorney. The agreement is three pages in length. It provided a 10% administrative fee from all meeting related revenues processed through the Air University Foundation. SMH profit from the meeting was \$25,000. 560 registered. There were 33 exhibitors. The program committee, headed by Adam R. Seipp, did excellent work.
18. Annual Meeting 2016. The Canadian War Museum and the Canadian Museum of History are hosting the 2016 meeting in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada April 14-17. The meeting hotel is the Marriott Ottawa. Room rate is \$169 CAN with complimentary continental breakfast, free Internet and free meeting space. When I signed the hotel contract in February 2012 the Canadian and U.S. dollars

were equivalent. I insisted that no equivalency clause be in the contract and subsequently the exchange rate has changed in favor of the U.S. currency. The original contract was for 175 rooms for peak nights. I amended the hotel contract, as more rooms were required. Currently 919 room nights are booked at the Marriott Ottawa and our room block is full. We were able to obtain additional rooms at the nearby Delta Ottawa City Centre for overflow. Over **600** are registered and there are 25 exhibitors. As we are working with a Canadian government agency, an unusually complex agreement (18 pages) was required. I signed the agreement in March 2015 after review by our Prescott attorney and incorporation of his recommend language. The agreement calls for sharing any profits 70% to SMH and 30% to the Canadian Museum of History and sharing any losses. Francine Lapointe, Supervisor Special Events and Partnerships at the Canadian Museum of History, and Andrew Burtch, Historian, at the Canadian War Museum our meeting coordinators have been conscientious, dedicated, responsive to my many requests and knowledgeable. They secured sponsors for coffee breaks and the opening reception, have handled innumerable issues dealing with all aspects of the meeting and merit our appreciation and thanks. The program committee headed by Andrew Burtch had difficult choices to make and did so in a timely and expeditious manner. The meeting theme is "Crossing Border, Crossing Boundaries." Ottawa Tourism has been supportive all along and their representatives will be present at the meeting.

19. Annual Meeting 2017. The meeting will be March 30-April 2, 2017 hosted by Florida State University and meeting coordinator Kurt Piehler, who coordinated our 2003 meeting in Knoxville, TN., Associate Professor of History & Director, Institute on World War II and the Human Experience at Florida State University. In March 2013 for SMH I contracted with the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville, FL Riverside hotel for 325 rooms at a rate of \$139 single occupancy and \$149 double occupancy. Rate includes complementary continental breakfast. The hotel reservation link is active and is posted on the SMH website under conferences. I negotiated free meeting space, a 66% attrition rate, and other concessions. I am coordinating with Kurt Piehler the written meeting agreement that will require review by our attorney and Florida State University. Visit Jacksonville is sending a representative to our annual meeting in Ottawa to promote Jacksonville and the beaches and to interact with our members; they are an exhibitor. The meeting theme is "Global War: Historical Perspectives." The Call for Papers will be printed in the 2016 meeting program and *JMH* and is in the meeting Guidebook app. Based on the success of poster sessions at recent AHA meetings and with the president's approval the 84th annual meeting will include a poster session to allow military historians (especially doctoral students) to share their research through visual materials. Proposals for single, individual presentations may be submitted as posters. For information on poster sessions see: <https://www.historians.org/annual-meeting/future-meetings/submit-a-proposal/poster-session-general-information> The president, in coordination with Kurt Piehler, and with the approval of the voting members and trustees will appoint the 2017 program committee.

20. Annual Meeting 2018. Derek Frisby, Associate Professor Global Studies and Cultural Geography at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) is developing a formal proposal for the University and Lipscomb University to host the SMH 2018 meeting in the Nashville, TN area April 12-15, 2018. Derek and MTSU hosted the Society's 2009 meeting in Murfreesboro, TN. Working with Eric Cooper, Director Global Accounts, Helms Briscoe I have determined that due to Nashville's first tier category among meeting cities and its popularity no downtown hotels are available for our meeting. The hotel will be either the Airport Sheraton Music City or Airport Marriott, both are approximately five miles from downtown. Rates approximately \$169 per night in April 2018 without breakfast. We would plan to have buses to take members downtown on the Friday evening and arrange activities. I request approval to work with Eric Cooper at Helms Briscoe to secure a Nashville airport hotel contract.
21. Annual Meeting 2019. The Society is open to proposals.
22. Annual Meeting 2020. The Army Historical Foundation, who successfully hosted the SMH 2012 meeting, is interested in hosting our 2020 meeting. The National Museum of the U.S. Army at Fort Belvoir is now projected to be open in June 2019. Matt Seelinger, Chief Historian of The Army Historical Foundation, will develop a proposal next year. The meeting would be at a hotel in the Arlington, VA/Crystal City area. Matt and I agree that the Marriott Crystal Gateway is the preferable hotel. Rates will be approximately \$189 per night. The U.S. Army Center of Military History has expressed interest in supporting the meeting.
23. Future Meeting Hotels. The hotel industry supply demand has shifted in favor of hotels since I secured previous contracts. The rates and concessions I obtained in the past for SMH are no longer available. According to Eric Cooper, "In 2015 and beyond, demand has greatly surpassed supply as the new supply is slow to catch up. Hotels have seen increases in rate and high occupancies that has surpassed 2008 levels. This supply/demand trend is expected to continue until 2018-2019 when hotels that are under construction now begin to open doors...We are in one of the strongest sellers markets the industry has seen. Rates are typically increasing 6-8% a year and even higher in some markets. Availability is at an all time low with many hotels operating at levels above 90%. Rates are increasing at an all time rate, concessions at an all-time low."
24. Future Annual Meetings. SMH should consider establishing an adhoc committee on annual meetings to consider future locations, meeting operations including: format, meal events, attendee experiences and host requirements.
25. George C. Marshall Lecture. Rick Atkinson, award-winning author of *The Liberation Trilogy*, spoke to approximately 70 at the American Historical Association meeting in Atlanta Georgia at 5:30 PM on Saturday, January 9, 2015. Our president and the GCMF president introduced the lecture series and

the speaker. I arranged and SMH paid for the well-attended post lecture reception at the Hilton Atlanta. I will arrange the Marshall Lecture and reception with the AHA for Craig Symonds at the AHA meeting in January 2017 in Denver, CO. Craig L. Symonds taught history at the U.S. Naval Academy for thirty years and is the author of many award-winning books. The 2018 Marshall Lecturer will be selected by Marshall Lecture Committee headed by the Vice President.

26. Regional Activities. Covered in the Vice President's report. Regional coordinators utilized our online form to obtain authorization from the vice president and I for SMH sponsored events including activities at: Missouri Valley Historical Conference, Northern Great Plains History Conference, Barnes Conference at Temple University, Ohio Academy of History, The Rocky Mountain Military Affairs Society, Workshop on World War II and Environmental Change at the Ohio State University, and Conference on War and Sexual Violence at CUNY Graduate Center.
27. Organization Activities. I represent SMH on the **National Coalition for History** (NCH) policy board and participate in its decision-making. I was reelected (there being no other candidates) to serve as policy board recording secretary for another year. I attended the NCH board meeting at the AHA meeting. NCH executive director Lee White is our lobbyist in Washington, DC and good at keeping us informed of relevant issues. The **National Humanities Alliance** advances national humanities policy in the areas of research, education, preservation, and public programs. Our second year of membership works to provide information and further establishes the Society as a member of the academic and public humanities communities. I maintain good communication with Stephen Kidd, the Alliance's executive director. I attended the **American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS)** Conference of Administrative Officers semi-annual meeting in November in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The ACLS and the Montreal Convention and Visitors Bureau paid most of my expenses including air and hotel. It is very useful for me to meet with fellow executive directors of academic societies. ACLS is a gateway to shared information on how academic organizations of varying sizes operate. Jim Grossman, Executive Director **American Historical Association** and SMH member and AHA Manager of Academic Affairs, Emily Swafford, will speak to the Council about SMH and AHA initiatives.
28. Public Statement Policy. I recommend SMH adopt a public statements policy due to the increasing request for statements on matters both relevant and semi-relevant to military history. The policy should provide criteria for SMH action and procedures for taking action.
29. The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press contacted SMH in October 2014 to join, at no cost to the Society, a legal action. Subsequently, the voting officers and trustees passed a motion to join with other historical organizations to support a petition by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press to

unseal grand jury testimony from 1942 Espionage Act investigation of Chicago Tribune. The Reporters Committee and a coalition of historical organizations joined author and naval historian Elliot Carlson in asking the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois to unseal records from the grand jury proceeding. The legal proceedings continue and Katie Townsend, Litigation Director for the Reporter's Committee for Freedom of the Press in Washington DC, provides regular updates to me.

30. Insurance. SMH renewed for the second of three years its \$2,000,000 Non Profit Directors and Officers Liability Policy with United States Liability Insurance Company of Wayne, Pa. Total policy cost is \$1,585 per year. The policy is purchased through McGowan & Company, Inc. Insurance Underwriters in Fairview Park, Ohio. I am arranging for SMH purchase of a special event policy via our broker at McGowan & Company thru HUB International's Ontario Office for our 2016 annual meeting. In 2015 SMH purchased a \$1 million dollar business crime insurance policy issued by Travelers Casualty and Surety Company of America at a three-year cost of \$4,720.
31. Executive Director Travel and Expenses. I charge my SMH expenses for travel, postage, office-supplies, reproduction and related to the SMH Morgan Stanley MasterCard debit card. I do not charge SMH for phone calls, cell phone, Internet service, office space, or computer.
32. Resignation. I will conclude my service as Executive Director that began in April 2000 on April 30, 2017.

I thank the officers, trustees, employees and committee members for their work and support.

Robert H. Berlin
Executive Director
Society for Military History
March 28, 2016