

REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE
SOCIETY FOR MILITARY HISTORY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert H. Berlin, Executive Director, SMH (for distribution to the SMH Council)

FROM: Bruce Vandervort, Editor, *Journal of Military History (JMH)*

SUBJECT: 2015-2016 Annual Report

1. Automated Systems
2. Logistics & Staff
3. Budget request for FY 2016-2017
4. *JMH* Annual Report for 2015-2016
5. Action Requested of Board of Trustees

1. Automated Systems

Since March 2012, the Society's web-based membership data management system has been hosted by Event Rebels. Since the implementation of the Event Rebels system, the proportion of membership renewals and purchases accomplished through the system's self-service portal has risen from about 40% of the total to nearly 70%.

The system continues to function effectively in updating the online membership directory, keeping SMH members informed through mass e-mails, and generating address lists and reports. It is available to provide custom reports to regional coordinators or committees upon request to the *JMH* business services staff.

After four satisfactory years, the SMH has contracted with Event Rebels to continue hosting the SMH membership data management system. In addition, and in light of their satisfactory performance, the SMH has contracted with Event Rebels to provide a system for *JMH* manuscript and book review submissions.

JMH Tracker was launched this past summer and is available to receive submissions through a portal on the SMH website. Since its July 15, 2015 launch, 64 manuscripts have been submitted through *JMH Tracker*, the first submission arriving within 24 hours.

2. Logistics & Staff

Under our renewed contract for continued publication of the *Journal* at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), in effect through 2021, the George C. Marshall Foundation (GCMF) will continue to provide office space in the George C. Marshall Library and Museum for the *Journal* staff. However, the GCMF no longer provides an editorial assistance grant (partial salary) and health insurance for *JMH* Assistant Editor Anne Wells, both of which obligations have now been assumed by SMH. In May 2015 Ms. Wells completed work on the seventh and final volume of the George C. Marshall Papers, which brought to an end her longtime employment at the GCMF and opened up the opportunity for *JMH* to utilize her editorial skills full time. Ms. Wells has been a member of the *JMH* staff almost since the arrival of the *Journal* in Lexington in 1990 and in her capacity as Copy Editor has made possible the awarding of innumerable Moncado Prizes. But she is also a published scholar of the Second World War and has a discerning eye for quality in the manuscripts we receive. We are eager to have her as a full-time member of the staff, with the title of Associate Editor, providing assistance to the Editor in evaluating and processing manuscripts in addition to her continued service as principal copy editor.

Our part-time editorial/business assistant, Kachina Johnson, hired early in 2015, has been a valuable addition to our staff. After assisting in the design of *JMH Tracker*, our online system for manuscript submissions and tracking, she is now managing that system as well as enhancing the efficiency and productivity of our office in a variety of other ways.

Associate Editor Tim Dowling continues to provide valuable assistance to our editorial team and is currently responsible for the book review section of the *Journal*. He has expanded our pool of available reviewers through both personal contacts and placement of a reviewer sign-up form on the SMH website.

In the spring of 2016, Editor Bruce Vandervort will retire from teaching at the Virginia Military Institute to devote full time to editing the Journal. Vandervort's eventual assumption of full-time status, coupled with the full-time duties to be taken up by Anne Wells, will bring the number of full-time employees at the *Journal* to three. In our view, this poses the problem of providing a health insurance program for *JMH* employees. Up to this point, Vandervort's health insurance has been provided by VMI; Anne Wells has been covered by the George C. Marshall Foundation; while Managing Editor Roberta Wiener has been paying for her own health insurance. The possibility of coverage by an SMH-funded program of health insurance had the support of preceding presidents of the Society and is under consideration by the current president, but so far no concrete action has been taken. We believe that this subject should be taken up by the SMH Board of Trustees at the upcoming annual meeting.

3. Proposed Budget for FY 2016-2017

JOURNAL BUDGET FOR FY 2016-2017: EXPENDITURES

Salaries ¹	\$176,000.00
Printing/mailling/off-prints of <i>Journal</i>	\$ 64,000.00
Operating Fund (office supplies & other <i>Journal</i> expenses) ²	\$ 16,000.00
Electronic Manuscript Submission System	\$ 1,500.00
In kind services; VMI technical support	\$ 5,000.00
Phones, fax, postage (VMI)	\$ 5,000.00
In kind services, Marshall Fdn., space and utilities	\$ 8,000.00
TOTAL	\$275,500.00

JOURNAL BUDGET FOR FY 2016-2017: INCOME

SMH funding ³	\$237,500.00
VMI private funds grant	\$ 20,000.00
In kind services: VMI technical support	\$ 5,000.00
Phones, fax, postage (VMI)	\$ 5,000.00
In kind services, Marshall Fdn., space and utilities	\$ 8,000.00
TOTAL	\$275,500.00

1. Includes the editorial assistance grant (partial salary subsidy) formerly provided by the Marshall Fdn. under the previous contract. It is henceforth to be counted as part of Anne Wells's salary.

2. On average (2012-2015), the Journal office spends approximately \$17,000 annually on operating expenses. Approximately 26% of Journal operating expenditures are for office supplies and equipment; 11% for bulk mailings, postage, and other shipping; 10% for advertising and promotional materials (brochures and posters); 5% for illustrations for *JMH*; and 48% for travel and other conference-related expenses. *JMH* operating funds are held in a checking account at SunTrust Bank in Lexington, with Bruce Vandervort and Roberta Wiener as signatories. The *JMH* account has a current balance of approximately

\$28,000. At our request, as of last year, payments into our operating account are temporarily reduced until we spend down the balance.

All payments to SMH — primarily membership dues, advertising revenues, and royalties — are either sent to the Journal office or paid by direct deposit into the SMH bank account. All checks are deposited into the SMH account at SunTrust. This account is entirely separate from the JMH account and is controlled by the SMH Treasurer. The JMH office staff has been provided with deposit slips for the purpose of depositing checks received on behalf of SMH.

3. *JMH* salaries, printing costs, online manuscript system, and operating funds. Note that printing costs are down \$4,000 from 2014 due to fewer pages published.

4. *JMH* Annual Report for 2015-2016

General Comments

Members of the Board will recall that the *JMH* appears in both print and electronically. The electronic version is distributed to a global audience under contract with the SMH by EBSCOHost.

As Table I illustrates, the *Journal* continues to be a robust publication, averaging 308 pages per issue and 1,457 pages per year over the last three years. In spite of the size of its individual issues, the *JMH* continues to be published consistently on time.

TABLE I: TOTAL PAGES PRINTED IN EACH ISSUE

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
JANUARY	320	335	360	348	356	324	424	460	284
APRIL	320	321	357	332	336	316	384	424	304
JULY	397	365	341	348	320	320	408	332	328
OCTOBER	355	377	385	364	388	404	376	332	316
TOTAL	1392	1398	1443	1392	1400	1364	1592	1548	1232

Status of *JMH* Subscriptions (as of 21 March 2016)

The total number of individual subscribers has held steady over the past fiscal year. More than 250 subscribers have taken advantage of our two-year subscriptions since they became available in July 2015.

Subscription figures

2,798 individual subscribers (of whom 274 are students), just up from 2,795 in March 2015

278 institutional subscribers, slightly up from 270 in March 2015

164 sustaining members (paying \$120 and above), down from 244 in March 2015

25 contributing members in 2015 (paying more than the amount of their dues), down from 33 in 2014

680 non-renewals in 2015, up from 644 in 2014

Publishing data

The number of manuscripts received in 2015 stayed pretty much the same as in the previous year, at 125 compared to 123 in 2014. Exchanges with the editors of comparable publications make clear that this is an extraordinarily high volume of incoming copy. This reflects both the continuing prestige of our *Journal* and the persistent need of scholars for professional validation.

The extraordinary season of conflict commemoration rolls on. The past year has seen the end of the commemorative period for the War of 1812, the Napoleonic Wars, and the U.S. Civil War, but remembrance of the First World War has only just begun. Under the guidance of the SMH Editorial Board, the *Journal* is doing its bit to commemorate these conflicts. In October 2012, we brought out a well-received issue of the *JMH* devoted to the War of 1812. In October 2015, we produced a number devoted to World War I. Our January 2016 issue was given over to an exploration of the phenomenon of war termination, with the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars as a focus.

Necessary as it is, the commemoration enterprise is not without its problems. Devoting whole issues to a single topic has further congested an already densely populated manuscript pipeline, forcing sometimes serious delays in getting eager authors into print. This was a main consideration, along with cost, behind the decision of the Editorial Board last year to reverse its decision to commission a special issue of the *Journal* devoted to the U.S. Civil War. Publication of the special number, the equivalent of a fifth annual issue of the *JMH*, was voted down unanimously by the Board in a poll conducted by the Editor. The articles that would have appeared in the special issue are being published separately in the regular numbers of the *Journal*.

Status of manuscripts submitted in 2015

Total submitted	125
Accepted	26
Rejected	51
Withdrawn	4
Under peer review	44

Articles published

Thirty-three articles were published in 2015, along with seven feature pieces and review essays. The smaller number of articles published in the past year does not reflect a shortage of copy, far from it, but rather deference to the request of the previous president that we reduce the size of the *Journal*.

We were disappointed that we were unable to publish any historiographical essays in 2014 or 2015, but are delighted to be publishing John Matsui's essay on trends in Civil War scholarship during the sesquicentennial years in our April 2016 issue. We hope this is a good omen for the future. These essays have always been difficult to recruit because of the amount of work they require, but they have proved invaluable to readers, particularly younger scholars. The Editorial Board will be asked at this year's

annual meeting to take further steps to facilitate soliciting these essays, perhaps by choosing one of its members to be personally responsible for the task.

Book Reviews

The number of book reviews totaled 208 in 2015, an average of 52 reviews per issue.

Table II: BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS

ISSUE	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
JANUARY	79	62	60	90	61	61	64	67	53
APRIL	72	66	49	69	33	45	63	68	59
JULY	61	56	69	63	62	52	66	56	56
OCTOBER	86	61	67	62	60	74	67	58	40
TOTAL	298	245	245	284	216	232	260	249	208

Advertising TABLE III: TOTAL ADVERTISING (# of pages, including paid, exchange, and free ads)

The number of advertising pages in print has been trending downward, but more advertisers are opting to place their ads on the SMH website.

ISSUE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
JAN.	10	12	11.5	11	8	7
APRIL	13	14	15.5	17	15	12
JULY	17	16	12	12	9	7
OCT.	13	14	17	14	12	12
TOTAL	53	56	56	54	44	38

5. Action Requested of the Board of Trustees

- a. Approval of the *JMH* Budget for 2016-2017
- b. Provision of health insurance coverage for full-time *JMH* employees
- c. Approval of full time status and salary for Anne Wells