

## President's annual report, 2015-2016

The first year of my term as President has been characterised by regular and generally unspectacular developments and issues, and I do not intend to offer an encyclopaedic listing here. The President's role is a combination of chief executive and chairman of the board with a range of functions, many of them involving discussion and approval of matters that come before the executive. Much of my time has been involved in the detailed work for the 2016 annual meeting and preliminary work for the 2017 and 2018 meetings as well.

One interesting aspect of the past 12 months has been the number of requests we have received for support from other historical organisations. I can take absolutely no credit for this; in part it is a function of the times we face and it reflects the very hard work put in by my predecessor, Greg Urwin, in building bridges especially to the AHA (more on this below) and the ACLS. In no particular order these have included giving our support to a proposal from the National Security Archive for targeted declassification of Secretary of Defence records, support for the program at the University of Wisconsin in light of proposed changes to the state university system, and support for the Bipartisan Congressional History Caucus at the request of the NEH. As a non-resident, non-American I have been very conscious of not appearing to insert myself into issues that could be interpreted as having a domestic political flavour and in all such cases I have sought and been guided by the advice of the Executive Director and the Vice-President.

The good and developing relationship with the AHA was demonstrated clearly at their annual meeting in Atlanta in January. As President I introduced this year's George C. Marshall lecturer, Rick Atkinson, and enjoyed the interactions at the reception and dinner which followed his lecture. It was well-attended (in the context of a decline in overall attendance this year at the wider meeting), and I thank those members of the Society who travelled to Atlanta to be present for it. Thanks to the efforts of Dr Emily Swafford of the AHA, the Society also co-sponsored a session presented by the Vietnam Commemoration within the Department of Defence. This was well-attended again and is available in streaming format on our website. I am in preliminary conversation with the panel members to see if they will present along similar lines in a Presidential Panel format at our next annual meeting in 2017. I think many members would find it stimulating and enlightening, as I did.

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