SMH Candidate Worksheet

Name:

David Kieran

Present position and affiliation:

COL Richard R. Hallock Distinguished University Chair of Military History, Professor of History, and Director of the Institute for the Study of the American Military Experience, Columbus State University

Education:

BA, English, Connecticut College

PhD, American Studies, The George Washington University

Area(s) of historical specialization:

War and Society in US Culture, 1945-Present with particular focus on the US War in Vietnam, post-Vietnam organizational culture of the US Army, and the United States' 21st-Century wars.

Relevant special appointments:

SMH Trustee, 2025-Present

Harold K. Johnson Chair of Military History, US Army War College, 2024-25

SMH conference attendance, participation, and committee service:

SERVICE:

Trustee, 2025-Present

Summer Seminar Co-Director, 2024

Summer Seminar Visiting Scholar, 2023

Communications Committee, chair, 2026-Pres.

Social Media Committee, 2018-2021

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

2026 "'I Wanted to Make a Statement': Max Thurman, The Panama Invasion, and the Cultivation of Warfighter Identity," Annual Meeting of the Society for Military History, Arlington, VA, March 26, 2026.

2024 "'The Army and Our Soldiers Need This Vehicle:' The Army, Congress, and the 'Save the Bradley' Campaign," Annual Meeting of the Society for Military History, Washington, DC., March 19, 2024.

2023 Roundtable: "The All-Volunteer Force at Fifty: Historical Challenges and Perspectives For the Future," Annual Meeting of the Society for Military History, San Diego, CA.

2018 "'If You Love The Troops, You Don't Send Them Back to Fight With Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and a Bottle of Antidepressants:' The Sensory Experience of War and the Debate Over Redeployment to Iraq," Society for Military History Annual Meeting, Louisville, KY.

2010 ""No One Put a Gun to Their Head and Forced Them to Come Here:' Representing the All-Volunteer Army in Narratives of the 'War on Terror.'" Society for Military History Annual Meeting, Lexington, VA.

Significant publications:

Books:

U.C. *When In Charge, Take Charge: Maxwell R. Thurman and the Army's Post Vietnam Metamorphosis* (Advance Contract, University of North Carolina Press)

2019 *Signature Wounds: The Untold Story of the Military's Mental Health Crisis* (New York University Press).

2014 *Forever Vietnam: How a Divisive War Changed American Public Memory* (University of Massachusetts Press (*Culture, Politics, and the Cold War Series*)).

Edited Collections and Special Issues:

2026 *The U.S. Army and Social Change*, co-edited with Beth Bailey. Forthcoming, Cornell University Press.

2020 *Remote Warfare: New Cultures of Violence*. Co-Edited with Rebecca A. Adelman, University of Minnesota Press.

2018 *Re-Conceptualizing Cultures of Remote Warfare*, Special issue of *The Journal of War and Culture Studies* 11.1 (2018). Co-edited with Rebecca A. Adelman.

2018 *At War: Militarism and U.S. Culture in the 20th Century and Beyond*. Co-Edited with Edwin A. Martini. Rutgers University Press

2015 *The War of My Generation: Youth Culture and the War on Terror*, Rutgers University Press.

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles:

2026 "'A Very Fragile Business: The Army, Congress, and the Fate of the GI Bill in the 1980s," *Journal of Policy History* 38:1, 27-48.

2024 "'I Don't Have To Do That Anymore Because I Got Therapy': Recuperated Veterans and the Complexity of Mental Health Discourse at the End of the Forever War," *Modern American History*, 7:2 (2024).

2021 "'It Changed Me As A Man:' Reframing Military Masculinity In the Army's 'Shoulder To Shoulder' Suicide Prevention Campaign," *The Journal of War & Culture Studies* 14:3 (2021), 306-323.

2017 "Rethinking Obama's Vietnam: Vietnam's Legacy and the Politics of Military Awards During the Afghanistan War." *Journal of American Studies* 51:2 (2017), 513-533.

2014 "'We Combat Veterans Have a Responsibility to Ourselves and to Our Families:' Domesticity and the Politics of PTSD in Memoirs of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars." *American Studies* 53:2 (2014), 91-113.

2012 "'What Young Men and Women Do When Their Country is Attacked:' Interventionist Discourse and the Rewriting of Violence in Adolescent Literature of the Iraq War," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 37.1 (2012), 4-26.

2012 "'It's a Different Time. It's a Different Era. It's a Different Place:' The Legacy of Vietnam and Contemporary Memoirs of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," *War and Society* 31.1 (2012), 65-84.

Personal statement:

I have enjoyed serving as an SMH trustee for the past two years, and I am honored to have been nominated to run for SMH vice president. During my time on the board, I have focused on several issues. Foremost, I have sought to be a good steward of the Society and have worked with my fellow board members to ensure that we have a clear strategic vision for where we would like the Society to be in five to ten years and how we can marshal our financial and human capital to get there. Closely related to that is ensuring that our finances remain strong and that they are utilized strategically in ways that serve and strengthen our three priorities: The annual meeting, the Summer Seminar, and the *Journal of Military History.* Towards that end, I co-chaired, with Miranda Summers Lowe, an ad hoc committee that examined our fundraising practices and opportunities as well as our communications strategy. That has led to the formation of a permanent

committee on communications that will, among other initiatives, help oversee the redesign of the Society's website and improve our outreach to prospective supporters and members while better serving our current membership.

During my time as a trustee, I believe that I have earned a reputation for being diligent, thoughtful, hard-working, forthright, and collegial. I have always said that I don't own rose-colored glasses and that being a good steward of the Society means being totally honest and totally kind; we must be willing to ask necessary but hard questions, have rigorous debate, and make difficult decisions, but we should do from a place that seeks to build consensus and where we can have fun while doing it. I have tried to model that as a trustee and would continue to do so as vice president.

As vice president, I would continue to prioritize four lines of effort. First, we must remain responsible stewards of our resources and ensure that we are continue to serve our current members' needs while ensuring the long-term viability and growth of the Society. Second, we must seek to grow our membership and appeal to as broad an audience as possible. As someone who did not initially think of themselves as a military historian, I am well aware that there many people in other disciplines or subfields who would benefit from the SMH community but don't see it as their intellectual home. Reaching out to them and encouraging them to join us is therefore a priority. The related third priority is becoming better at telling our story both internally and externally. The ways that SMH has benefitted its members is vast, from job opportunities and book contracts to teaching ideas and lifelong friendships. Sharing that internally and externally is critical to the long-term health of the Society, as it builds goodwill and sustained engagement among current members while encouraging those outside the organization to consider joining and supporting us. Finally, we must become even more vocal and articulate ambassadors for the value of rigorous, serious, and accessible military history at every level – as teachers, researchers, and practitioners of public humanities; from high schools to the Pentagon and the halls of Congress.

I believe that my professional background is a particular strength for an SMH trustee. I have taught, in various capacities and for varying periods, at K-12, community college, traditional undergraduate, and Professional Military Education institutions; I have taught at both selective liberal arts colleges and a comprehensive state university. As a result, I have some appreciation for the challenges inherent across the professions that we serve. Much of my current work is public-facing, which offers some perspective on the work of our public history colleagues. As a result, I am committed to ensuring that the Society's efforts continue to serve a diverse membership.