

2018 Summer Fellows Testimonials



Nick Danby, Harvard University '20
Research Intern at the American Enterprise Institute for Gary Schmitt and Tom Donnelly

Nick is a government and history major and recently chartered an AHS chapter at Harvard.

On a nondescript Tuesday in June, I spent my morning calling university libraries, scouring databases, and reading online scans of 400-year-old books in an attempt to look for a quote from Genoese general Ambrogio Spinola lauding the 1604 Treaty of London and its deleterious effect on England. After some crude Spanish translation on my part, I located ten satisfactory quotes and sent them off to one of my scholars, Tom Donnelly, for his upcoming book analyzing Anglo-American strategic thinking. 30 minutes after submitting the assignment, I shifted my focus 385 years later when I began analyzing and documenting the hard power capacities and capabilities of the original NATO members for 1989 to 2017. After documenting these numbers and visually presented them to my other scholar, Gary Schmitt, for an article identifying inflection points and rationales for NATO's hard power decline in the past two decades. A deep knowledge of 17th century Anglo-Spanish tensions and 21st century NATO weaknesses weren't the only things I gained from my time as a national security research intern for the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). I also was tasked with writing briefing memos that analyzed major Department of Defense and RAND assessments of interest to my scholars. I also helped construct and report on a war game for the US Air Force that will shape future airframe procurement and modernization. Through this internship, I improved my writing skills, garnered a deeper knowledge of the policymaking process, and, most importantly, re-affirmed my commitment to a career in national security and foreign affairs.

When recounting this summer, I would be remiss to not express the utmost gratitude to the Alexander Hamilton Society. By receiving the AHS 2018 Summer Fellowship I was allowed to intern in DC and not worry about how I would fund my summer. The fellowship also allowed me to pursue an internship that would broaden my horizons, interests, and expertise as a future policymaker. Even better, the summer fellowship allowed me to be an integral part of the AHS community. Unlike previous summers in DC, AHS gave me the opportunity to befriend a plethora of students with similar interests to me, which made me part of a broader community. It also allowed me to meet and be mentored by key DC policymakers—people who I now routinely seek out for academic and professional advice. In addition, it always provided me with amazing activities throughout the summer. I don't know of any other program that gives its participants the opportunity to bowl in the White House, get an exclusive tour of the Pentagon, visit Fort Myer and Capitol Hill, and do a day-long staff ride at the Gettysburg battlefield. My internship was undoubtedly gratifying this summer. But my summer would not have been as adventurous, educational, and better if it wasn't for the Alexander Hamilton Society and their summer fellowship.

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Jordan Hayley, Liberty University '20
Intern at the American Foreign Policy Council

Jordan is an international relations and history major with a concentration in strategic intelligence. She is also in the founder of the Liberty University AHS Chapter.

In regard to my internship at American Foreign Policy Council, I learned a lot and really enjoyed my experiences there. I worked on defense technology and counter Islamic extremism projects. For defense work, I worked on AFPC's nuclear modernization primer, which is sent to the Hill; and along with the editing, I was awarded the opportunity to write an entire modernization page discussing Iran, China, Russia, and North Korea's expansive nuclear delivery systems and how to counter arguments against modernization. I had very limited knowledge of defense technology prior to this internship, but after reading and researching the subject constantly at AFPC and hearing from panelists at AHS, I have developed an interest in defense technology and have opened my eyes to the importance of it in order to have an effective military and defense system. Further, I helped the Vice President, Ilan Berman, on Islamic researching projects, but mostly did write-ups for the Global Islamism Monitor, where I am a co-editor of the publication. I am also writing a 200-page Israel briefing book for their trip in September, which I will continue after my internship officially ends. Lastly, I submitted a draft to Ilan for my Op Ed, which urges DOS to officially designate the IRGC as a terrorist organization and will be sent out to media outlets in the next month or so.

While I have only been an AHS member since May, when I started my chapter at Liberty, I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of AHS this summer. The panel discussions that I've been able to attend, such as the Defense Forum with Representative Mike Gallagher and the Salon Discussion at AEI, were very informational and exciting. I took extensive notes at both events, and others, and am now able to form better and more cohesive arguments for a Hamiltonian-like national security and foreign policy stance. For instance, I believe the United States is better able to lead when we have more and better capabilities to defend ourselves against our adversaries, which was articulated for me at the SLC at one of the panels. Furthermore, being a part of AHS this summer and hearing from a variety of national security experts has shaped my career path in a slightly different direction than I had before joining AHS. Before AHS, I was very diplomatic minded and wanted to be a diplomat for the State Department; however, after being surrounded by and expanding my knowledge of national security, I want to have my life dedicated to national security and eventually practice national security law, either in the White House or in the private sector. Also, undersecretary positions in either the DOD or DHS, such as Deputy Secretary of Special Operations in the Pentagon, interests me because I can use my passion for counter terror and knowledge of military history and the Middle East to affect better policies for our men in uniform. I am so passionate about AHS and am dedicated to having the best AHS chapter at Liberty and expand students' knowledge of national security, foreign policy, and economics; and after this summer I feel better equipped to do that in my remaining years at Liberty University.



Peter Kunze, Johns Hopkins University, SAIS '19

Intern at the U.S. Department of State, Office of Southern Europe

Peter is a Strategic Studies major in the School for Advanced International Studies where he will serve as the AHS Chapter President this coming fall.

Thanks to the summer fellowship from the Alexander Hamilton Society, I was able to take an internship with the US Department of State. I worked in the Office of Southern Europe, which covers issues related to Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus. All three of those countries play critical roles in US strategy, particularly as we look to counter malign Russian influence in the region. Turkey above all commands substantial attention from policymakers and lawmakers. A longstanding NATO ally, Turkey plays a vital role in combatting terrorism, solving the Syrian refugee crisis, and countering Russian influence. While I was at the office, the bilateral relationship between the United States and Turkey plummeted, from concerns over Turkish plans to purchase Russian weapon systems to their continued detention of American citizens. While unfortunate for US foreign policy, the tumultuous period gave me the opportunity to witness the substantial value of the State Department in advancing the interests of the United States.

The internship has been pivotal for a number of reasons. First and foremost, I want to work in the federal government after graduation, and my internship gave me a vantage point into the variety of careers within the government. Due to my experience, I decided to go ahead and apply for the Foreign Service, and I am currently in the process for that career track. I also saw other types of opportunities that existed across the department and the government, opening my eyes to the variety of career paths in public service. Whether or not I enter the Foreign Service, I intend to serve my country after graduation by working in the federal government somewhere.

Secondly, the internship improved my writing, by preparing memos and readouts of meetings nearly every day. My academics have prepared me well as a critical thinker and writer but communicating in the government is a different skill. Rather than twenty-five-page research papers, principals expect memos to be under a page (and preferably less). The ability to write crisply and concisely is invaluable and may be the single greatest skill for anyone working in the government.

Finally, I saw the good, the bad, and the ugly of the government. From the departmental bureaucracy to the interagency process, I witnessed the inner workings of the State Department and gained valuable insight into how things get done in the government. This insight will enable me to be a more effective civil servant no matter where I end up.

The Alexander Hamilton Society did more than provide funding for my internship. It gave me the intellectual ballast to assess what was going on policy-wise and evaluate what might advance American interests and values. It became apparent that officers in the State Department, both junior and senior, often lack a vision of how their specific portfolio fits into larger US policy. My involvement in the Alexander Hamilton Society has provided me with exactly that kind of vision, to see how the minutiae of policy can advance US security and prosperity.

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Dominic Solari, Georgetown University '20

Intern at the U.S. House of Representatives, Office of Representative Jeff Denham (R-CA 10)

Dominic is a government and history major with a minor in economics. He will be serving as his AHS chapter's Deputy Director of Communications in the fall.

This summer I had the incredible opportunity to intern in the Office of U.S. Representative Jeff Denham on Capitol Hill. At the beginning of my internship, I was one of six interns in the office. My responsibilities included answering phones to record constituents' concerns and assist them as needed, giving tours of the U.S. Capitol to constituents, and drafting response letters and issue statements on behalf of the Congressman. Additionally, I had a few opportunities to assist the legislative staff with researching proposed amendments and bills to prepare the Congressman for a vote on them. At the end of June, I was promoted to head intern in my office and took over much of the portfolio from our Staff Assistant as he moved into a communications role. These new responsibilities included handling all of our office's constituent tour requests, which meant working directly with the White House, the Pentagon, the Supreme Court, and other tour destinations as well as many different constituents on hundreds of tour requests. Throughout my internship, I had the opportunity to interact with leaders of important industries ranging from transportation to agriculture, Congressional staffers, and members of Congress. I also learned a staggering amount about Congressional proceedings, various legislative areas like national defense and appropriations, and general workplace dynamics. Overall, I got a behind-the-scenes look at substantive policymaking and an opportunity to be a small part of it.

The fellowship I received from the Alexander Hamilton Society was critical in making this internship happen. Like most Congressional internships, my internship was unpaid. Having the stability provided by the AHS fellowship allowed me to confidently accept the full-time internship and dedicate my full energy to it, working more than nine hours a day for the entire workweek over three months. The fellowship also addressed my need to pay for housing, which allowed me to utilize my nights after work to attend different government and foreign policy events around DC rather than working a paid job, thereby expanding my educational and networking opportunities. I am so thankful for the Alexander Hamilton Society fellowship for giving me the ability to dive into my Congressional internship and take advantage of my summer in DC.

As mentioned above, a phenomenal part of my summer was the series of events that I was able to attend outside of my internship. Many, if not most, of these were connected to the Alexander Hamilton Society. Every week, it seemed I attended an event with the Hamilton Society as we discussed everything from revisionist powers to military readiness to civil war history. The quality of the discussions I was able to observe and participate in was astounding, but the quality of people I met at these different events was even more breathtaking. I had the opportunity to meet, solicit advice from, and network with people working at the State Department, the DoD, defense consulting firms, and the Trump administration, to name a few. Along the way, I discovered career paths that I did not even know existed, but which became serious contenders for my aspirations, and I met generous people willing to point me in the right direction to get there. So much of my professional interests have been shaped by the people and events of the Hamilton Society this summer and throughout my college career thus far, and for that I am grateful beyond words.