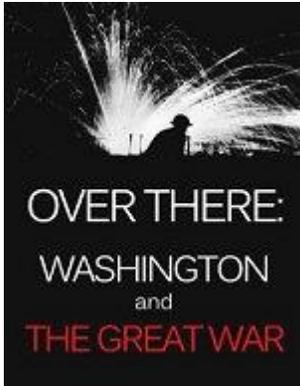


# Over There: Washington and The Great War

May 4, 2014 to January 18, 2015



This [award-winning](#) exhibition commemorated the 100th anniversary of World War One, one of the largest and bloodiest conflicts in history, where over 70 million military personnel were mobilized around the world and more than 10 million combatants and 7 million civilians were killed, including several from Washington, CT. Over 100 men and women from Washington, and more than 150 alumni and faculty from The Gunnery served in The Great War. Students in Bart McMann's *Artifacts and Archives* class at The Gunnery, along with Tom Burger, the 2012-13 Gunn Scholar, conducted research on their school's involvement in the war and shared their findings in a

section of this exhibit.

Letters, pictures, and an interesting array of period artifacts from the museum, local families, and collectors, including Peter Tragni and Dr. Robert Jacobs, among others, were used to explore the dramatic experiences of Washington's soldiers, along with the extensive support efforts that were happening on the home front in Washington through such organizations as the Sister Susie Society, the Red Cross, the Women's Land Army, and the Home Guard. All of their fascinating stories were shared in this exhibit and a diverse series of public programs (see below) through the year, sponsored in part by the Connecticut Community Foundation.

Art director Chris Zaima, designer Sandy Booth, and painter Keith Templeton, along with a team of other volunteers and staff, created another visual masterpiece. Local history came alive as visitors stepped back in time and explored the lives of Washington's residents during World War One, through their own words, and the impact this war had on our small town. The exhibit received praise from [The New York Times](#) in their November 22, 2014 review.



## Take a Virtual Tour of our Exhibit:

<https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/wwi.panotour.gunnlibrary.org/Index.html>

## Watch this YouTube presentation:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=omK08qUrOto](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=omK08qUrOto)

## [Dermandar pans of Our WWI Exhibit](#)

## Past Programs and Special Events Related to Exhibit

[The Legacy of WWI](#) | [New Year's WWI-themed Tea](#) | [Homegrown Hero: Benjamin Foulois](#) | [Lafayette Escadrille](#) | [Chemical Warfare in WWI](#) | [7th Annual Washington Green Cemetery Tour](#) | [WWI Artifact Appraisal](#) | [Poetry of WWI Discussion Series](#) | [Pigeon Program for Kids](#) | [Lecture on WWI Quilts](#) | [WWI Film Series](#) | [The Origins of WWI](#) | [Period Music Performance & Discussion](#) | [Sister Susie Society](#)

### The Evolution of International Society: The Legacy of World War I — January 18, 2015

Dr. Michael John Williams gave a fascinating presentation in the Wykeham Room of the Gunn Library prior to the closing reception for the exhibit, "Over There: Washington and the Great War."



The Great War was a turning point in the evolution of warfare, and it was a conflict that would have far reaching ramifications for international society. The First World War led to the development of international laws regulating the use of certain weapons in warfare, while at the same time serving as the catalyst for a revolution in military affairs that would be realized in the Second World War. The conflict of 1914-1918 the result, in part, of fervent nationalism, also provided impetus for the European project and the idea of a European pacific federation. Meanwhile, the American role in the war provided President Wilson with the ability to enunciate his 14 Points, one of which, the right to self-determination, would undermine the European colonial empires, ushering in decades of change. But perhaps most importantly, the war and its conclusion would set the basis for the next conflict in Europe. A truly transformative conflict, the legacy of the First World War still reverberates today. This lecture will trace developments from the war beyond the armistice to see how they went on to shape the world today.

Michael John Williams is Professor of International Relations, Director of the International Relations Program and Affiliate Professor at the Center for European Studies at New York University. His research focuses on U.S. foreign policy, transatlantic relations, civil-military relations and the intersection between war, technology and society. Before coming to NYU, Dr. Williams was Reader (Associate Professor) of International Relations at Royal Holloway, University of London.

His most recent publications include *Science, Law and Liberalism in the American Way of War: The Quest for Humanity in Conflict* (2014), co-authored with Dr. Stephanie Carvin (Ottawa), "The Afghan War, 2001-2012" in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of American Military and Diplomatic History* (2012) and, *The Good War: NATO and the Liberal Conscience in Afghanistan* (2011). He is also co-editor of the critically acclaimed edited volume *Power in World Politics* (2007).

Dr. Williams is a Stephen M. Kellen term member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a Fellow of the Inter-University Seminar on the Armed Forces and Society and an alumnus of the International Summer Policy Institute at American University. He has held a Robert Bosch Fellowship in Germany, a Visiting Fellowship at the Rothermere American Institute at the University of Oxford & Nuffield College and a DAAD Fellowship at the Bundeswehr Center for Military History and Social Science in Potsdam, Germany. He was an investigator in the Sustainable Peacebuilding Network, a collaborative research project involving 20 scholars from six countries, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and directed by Prof. Roland Paris (Ottawa).

Prof. Williams is also currently Senior Associate Scholar at the Center for European Policy Analysis in Washington D.C. and editor-in-chief of the journal *International Politics Reviews* and former co-editor of *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*. From 2006-2008 Dr. Williams directed the Transatlantic Security Programme at the Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies in London, he was previously the programme officer for the Leverhulme Programme on the Changing Character of War at the University of Oxford and he worked in the US Senate and at the US Embassy in London. He has consulted for policy makers in the United States, Canada and Europe on various international security issues.

Educated at the universities of Delaware, Hamburg, Bath, Berlin, and Moscow he earned his doctorate at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Following this presentation, we hosted a closing reception to celebrate the end of our award-winning exhibit, "Over There: Washington and the Great War." Guests could take one final look at this powerful exhibit and reflect on everything we learned over the past year.



### **WWI Themed New Year's Tea — January 3, 2015**

We rang in the New Year with an old-fashioned World War One themed Tea Party in the Gunn Museum. Servers and docents were attired in a variety of period outfits from WWI. Visitors had the opportunity to view the exhibit, "Over There: Washington and the Great War, and socialize with friends." Guests were asked to bring their favorite tea cup, and we provided the rest.

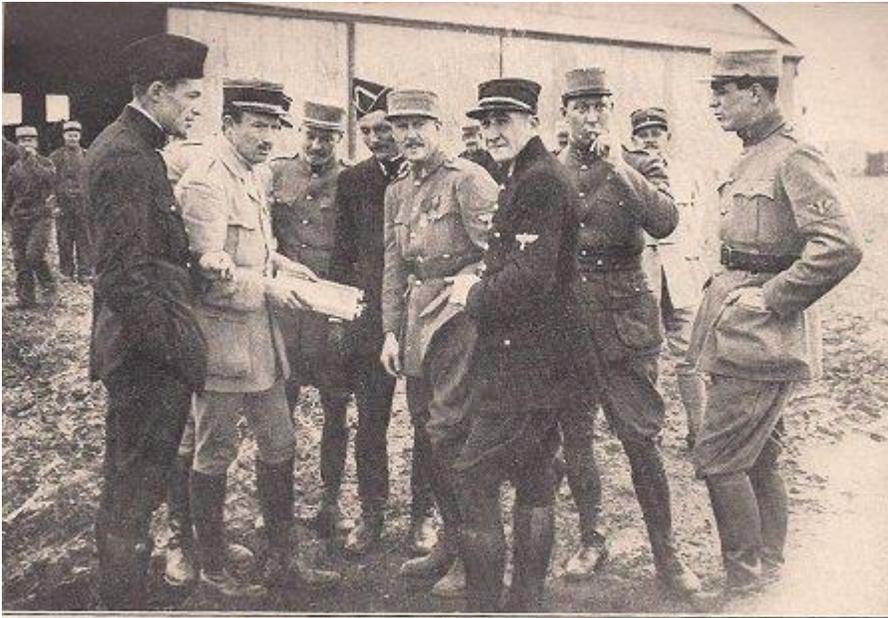
### **Homegrown Hero: The Life of Benjamin Delaheuf Foulois — December 21, 2014**

Tom Burger gave a presentation in the Wykeham Room of the Gunn Library on Benjamin Foulois, one of Washington's most famous residents. Growing up in Washington, and attending The Gunnery, Benjamin Foulois always had a thirst for adventure and glory. While being expected to enter the family plumbing business, Ben ran away from Washington, enlisted in the military, and left his mark by becoming the Chief of the Army Air Corps in World War One, a leader in the creation of the Air Force, and most importantly, the first military aviator in the United States Armed Forces. The contributions of General Benjamin Foulois are still visible today, in both his small hometown of Washington, Connecticut and especially in the world of military aviation.



**Tom Burger**, a member of The Gunnery Class of 2013, was Gunn Scholar for the 2012-2013 academic year. Tom has held a lifelong interest in history, stemming from his relation to Civil War General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, and was greatly influenced by the contributions of his grandfather, Bill Malone. Tom lives in Chicago, Illinois, has continued his love of history by choosing a History Major at Indiana University, holds many philanthropic and leadership positions in the Bloomington, Indiana community, and is a brother of the Delta Chi Fraternity.

**Flying for France: The Lafayette Escadrille and Lafayette Flying Corps in WWI — November 15, 2014**



FIRST AMERICAN ESCADRILLE IN FRANCE

Left to right: Kiffin Rockwell, killed in combat; Captain Thenault; Thaw in his rear; Norman Prince, killed in accident; Lieutenant de Laage, killed in accident; Elliott Cowdin, dismissed on account of ill health; Bert Hall, on leave; James McConnell, killed in combat; Victor Chapman, killed in combat.

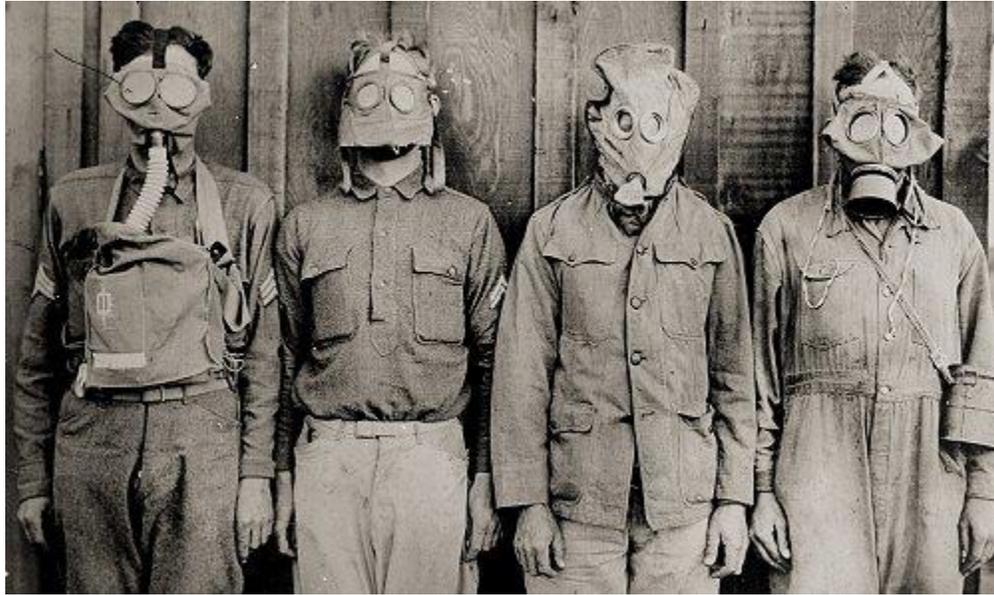
[Click to enlarge.](#)

Dr. Walter Powell gave the presentation, "Flying for France: The Lafayette Escadrille and the Lafayette Flying Corps in WWI" in the Wykeham Room of the Gunn Memorial Library and Museum.

The release in 2006 of the movie "Flyboys" has

renewed interest in those Americans who flew for France before the United States entered World War One in April 1917. The combat experiences of Victor Chapman, Bert Hall, Norman Hall, James McConnell, Kiffin Rockwell, and leading ace Raoul Lufbery captured America's imagination. In this illustrated lecture, Dr. Powell revisited some of their exploits, and those of the Lafayette Flying Corps that followed.

Dr. Powell is the Executive Director of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants in Plymouth, Massachusetts. He has lectured widely on WWI and has guided tours of WWI battlefields in Europe. He holds an M.A. in History and a Ph.D. in English from Kent State University. For 17 years he served as Director of Planning and Historic Preservation for the Borough of Gettysburg, PA. He is also a former historic preservation consultant and adjunct professor in the Graduate Program in Applied History at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. In September 2009 he joined his father in participating in the "WWI Fly In" at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio.



American, British, French and German gas masks ([Click to enlarge](#))

Dr. Ralph Kerr presented "Chemical Warfare in World War One" in the Wykeham Room of the Gunn Memorial Library and Museum. Since its introduction in April 1915, chemical warfare was employed throughout the war. Dr. Kerr's presentation provided an overview of the large-scale use of chemicals on the western front during WWI. This talk addressed how chemicals were employed, described some of the tactics that were developed to support operations and explained defensive measures developed in response to this new form of warfare. Several of the key persons involved in chemical warfare and their contributions were discussed. Additionally, the Washington, Connecticut soldiers impacted by chemical warfare in WWI were highlighted in this presentation.

Dr. Kerr works at the Pentagon on the Joint Staff. He is the Technical Director for Joint Requirements Office for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense (JRO-CBRND). He served as an active duty Army Chemical Officer from 1982 - 2003 and was responsible for CBRN defense operations at various command and staff levels.

**7th Annual Washington Green Cemetery Tour, with a special World War One theme — October 24, 2014**



Costumed guides led groups of visitors from the Gunn Museum to the Washington Cemetery where the town's departed citizens were stationed at their gravestones to tell their tales of tragedy and triumph. Tour groups followed a magical path of 1,000 luminarias spanning a quarter-mile through the shadowy cemetery and hear the lively and dramatic stories of Washington's residents from WWI. The costumed character actors stationed at each gravestone shared their perilous tales of combat in Europe, and the

life of a soldier stationed in muddy, rat-infested trenches; women described their experiences as nurses, YMCA workers, and in war relief organizations such as the Sister Susie Society; and much more.

The tours departed from the Museum in groups of fifteen people every 10 minutes between 6:30-8:30 p.m, and lasted approximately 45 minutes. Numbers for the tours were handed out at the Museum starting at 6:15 p.m. A Halloween themed movie was shown and treats were served in the Wykeham Room of the Gunn Library as attendees waited for their tour group to depart. The Museum was open for viewing of the exhibit, "Over There: Washington and the Great War."

### **World War One Artifact Appraisal Event — October 12, 2014**

A World War One artifact appraisal event took place in the Wykeham Room of the Gunn Library. Pre-registered participants were invited to bring their World War One artifacts to be evaluated by Dr. Robert Jacobs, a long-time military collector, whose items are on display in the Gunn Museum's current exhibit, "Over There: Washington and the Great War." Dr. Jacobs was available to answer questions and verbally appraise items for estimated age and value. Attendees were able to watch and listen to the other appraisals taking place in an Antiques Roadshow-type format.



Dr. Robert Jacobs has been involved with military artifacts and history for 50 years and has an extensive collection of historical American militaria, with a specialty in World War One. His expertise runs the gamut from uniforms and insignia, to weaponry and vehicles of the Great War. He is the current president of the American Veterans Historical Museum, a nonprofit interactive museum which provides collaborative services to other museums and venues such as West Point and FDR's home at Hyde Park, NY. He has participated in reenacting WWI as part of the Great War Association and has been a guest speaker at the Retired Officers Club of Western CT and the Sherman Veterans Organization, and has lectured at New Fairfield High School. Dr. Jacobs is a practicing dentist and a part-time instructor at the UConn School of Dental Medicine.

### **Between the Lines - Poetry of World War I Discussion Series — September & October, 2014**



A series of World War I poetry programs entitled "Between the Lines." were conducted on six Tuesdays, September 9 through October 14 at 6:00 p.m. in the library's historic Wykeham Room.

2014 marked the centennial of the start of WWI, a conflict that killed or wounded over 20 million people, changed history, and profoundly affected the art and culture of the Western world. This Great War inspired a huge outpouring of reactions in prose and

verse in all generations and classes. Poets seem to have responded with particular energy to these events. These weekly discussions, led by Bowdoin Professor Emeritus John Turner, explored a broad variety of poetry inspired by the war and its aftermath.

While developing this program Professor Turner observed, "What a pity we never seem to learn the fundamental lesson taught by all wars and insist on going back into the breach knowing it won't make the world a better place. Such an irony that war can produce such amazing art. Why does suffering bring out some of the best in us?"

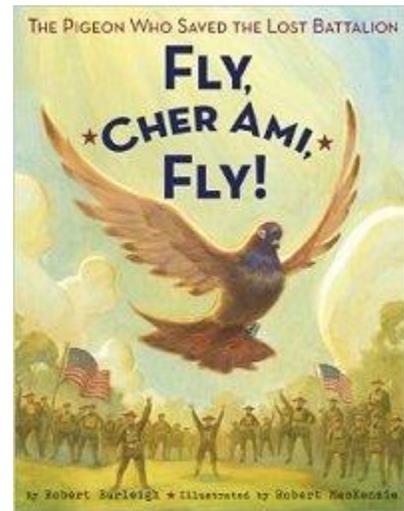
John Turner began teaching at Bowdoin in 1971. He received his undergraduate degree at St. Andrews University in Scotland, his M.A. from Indiana University and his Ph.D. from Harvard. His major field of research was Golden Age Spanish poetry and his thesis dealt with the figure of Icarus as an emblem of the courtly lover in Golden Age poetry. During his early years at Bowdoin, he taught and published primarily in the area of modern Latin American literature, prose and poetry. Professor Turner retired from full-time teaching in 2011 and is a resident of Washington, CT.

Participants were welcome to join one or more of the discussions. Copies of the readings were available at the circulation desk one week prior to each discussion. The exhibit

"Over There: Washington and The Great War" was open for viewing in the Gunn Museum before each discussion.

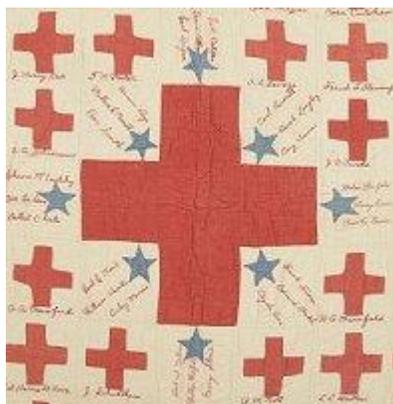
### **World War One Pigeon Program for Kids — September 28, 2014**

A World War One pigeon program for kids took place in the Wykeham Room of the Gunn Memorial Library. The book, *Fly, Cher Ami, Fly!*, about the famous pigeon who helped save the "Lost Battalion" of the 77th Division in October 1918 was read. Kids then wrote their own secret pigeon messages. Live pigeons, like those used to send messages in World War One, were present, and released by the children at the end of the program.



Pigeons have long played an important role in war. Due to their homing ability, speed, and altitude, they were often used as military messengers. Homing pigeons were used extensively during World War One. The U.S. Army Signal Corps used 600 pigeons in France alone during WWI. The pigeon named Cher Ami was awarded the French "Croix de Guerre" medal for heroic service delivering 12 important messages during the Battle of Verdun. On her final mission she delivered a message, despite having been shot, which saved about 200 US soldiers of the "Lost Battalion". Cheri Ami is currently on display at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

The exhibit, Over There: Washington and the Great War, was open for viewing on the day of this event. The exhibit and associated programs have been supported in part by a sponsorship grant from the Connecticut Community Foundation.



### **The 11th Hour of the 11th Day of the 11th Month: WWI Quilts — September 7, 2014**

Quilt historian and lecturer, Sue Reich, gave a presentation on the background of quilts through the 1910s with an emphasis on quilt making during the World War I years, and a trunk show of quilts from the era. Sue is the author of several books on quilts and she also conducted pre-sales for her new book, *World War I Quilts*.

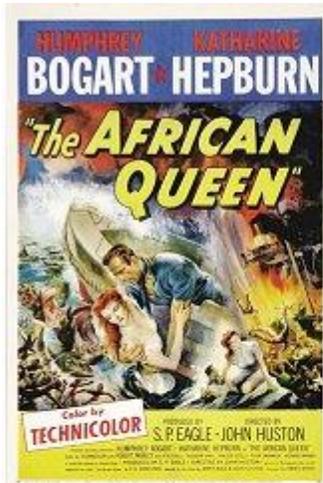
Sue Reich has been the head of the Connecticut Quilt Search Project for the past 10 years. She is a co-author for "*Quilts and Quiltmakers Covering Connecticut*", the documentation book of Connecticut quilts. In 2007, she compiled two books, *Quilting News of Yesteryear: 1,000 Pieces and Counting* and *Quilting News of Yesteryear: Crazy as a Bed-Quilt*. She lectures widely on World War II

quilts, Connecticut quilts, Crazy quilts, Multitudinous Pieced quilts, and floral quilts. Her extensive collection of World War II quilts has been exhibited at the Quilter's Hall of Fame, the American Museum of Science and Energy in Oakridge, TN, and the New England Quilt Museum. She is a regional coordinator for Connecticut and Board Member of the American Quilt Study Group, she has contributed to the Connecticut Memorial Quilt, and she is a AQS Certified Quilt Appraiser.

### World War I Film Series at the Gunn Library — July & August, 2014

2014 marks the 100th anniversary of World War One, one of the most significant conflicts in history, claiming millions of lives and altering the global balance of power. In support of the Museum's exhibit "Over There: Washington and the Great War," we screened a selection of some of the most popular World War I films at the library's Wykeham Room. These films vividly represent different events of the war and its impact. The screenings were:

- **Monday, July 14 - The African Queen**  
Starring Academy Award winners Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn, *The African Queen* tells the timeless tale of two mismatched strangers joining forces in a common cause - and finding love along the way. The story chronicles the burgeoning romance between Bogart's river rat Charlie Allnut and Hepburn's missionary Rose Sayer, as they reluctantly join forces to torpedo a German gunboat in war-torn East Africa. Rated PG / 105 minutes.
- **Monday, July 28 - A Farewell to Arms**  
A ravishing adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's legendary novel. Starring Gary Cooper as Lt. Frederic Henry, a young ambulance driver for the Italian army in WWI, when seeking cover during an air raid, he encounters Nurse Catherine



Barkley and the world shifts under his feet. They fall in love and in the midst of war and some intrigue, the pair struggles to stay together and survive the horrors around them. Rated PG / 152 minutes.

- **Monday, August 11 - Flyboys**

Director [Tony Bill joined us](#) for a discussion and screening of his film, *Flyboys*. Inspired by the true story of the legendary Lafayette Escadrille, this action-packed epic tells the tale of America's first fighter pilots. These courageous young men distinguish themselves in a manner that none before them had dared, becoming true heroes who experience triumph, tragedy, love and loss amid the chaos of WWI. Rated PG-13 / 139 minutes.

- **Monday, August 25 - War Horse**

From legendary director Steven Spielberg comes this epic adventure, a tale of incredible loyalty, hope and tenacity. Set against the sweeping canvas of World War I this deeply heartfelt story begins with the remarkable friendship between a horse name Joey and his young trainer Albert. When they are forced apart by war, we follow Joey's extraordinary journey as he changes and inspires the lives of everyone he meets. Rated PG-13 / 146 minutes.



### **The Beginning of the End: The Origins of World War I — June 28, 2014**

Dr. Michael Nolan, a professor of European History at Western Connecticut State University, presented a lecture to mark the 100th anniversary of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of the Austrian Empire, the spark that ignited World War One. On June 28, 1914 Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were assassinated by a Serbian nationalist who was a Black Hand

Terrorist as they visited the city of Sarajevo. This assassination was the catalyst of World War One, a four-year event that claimed the lives of over 10 million soldiers and 7 million civilians around the globe. Dr. Nolan discussed the contentious years leading up to the assassination, how the events of that day unfolded, the impact the resulting war had on the 20th century, and who was really to blame for the origins of the war, the answer to which is not as clear-cut as many might think and has vexed historians for the past century. Dr. Nolan is a 2001 graduate of Brandeis University and is the author of *The Inverted Mirror: Mythologizing the Enemy in France and Germany, 1898-1914* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2005).

## **To End All Wars: Music of World War One — May 18, 2014**

Rick Spencer performed both well-known and obscure songs of the period along with a discussion of the issues, events, and personalities of First World War. 2014 marked the 100th anniversary of World War One, which claimed over 10 million lives and came to be called "The War to End All Wars". The folk and popular songs of the period were patriotic and inspiring. Some were filled with pathos, describing tragedy, loss, and the fears and hopes of those who were affected.



Rick Spencer has been in the historical performance industry for over 25 years. He worked for 20 years as a researcher, historian and presenter of traditional maritime songs and sea chanteys at Mystic Seaport and has performed widely in the United States, Canada and Europe. Rick is best known for his work as a developer and presenter of theme-based historic music programs. He is the former executive director and curator of the Dr. Ashbel Woodward Museum in Franklin, CT.



Sister Susies on Washington Green - The Allied Market Fundraiser - August 5, 1916

## **Readings from the Archives: The Sister Susie Society 1914-1918 — May 5, 2014**

Prior to World War I a group of girls living around Washington Green met weekly during the summer at each other's houses for a morning of reading and sewing. They were known as the Junior Reading Circle. With the outbreak of the war they started working for the Allies sewing refugee garments and surgical dressings and renamed themselves

"The Sister Susie Society", from the popular war song "Sister Susies Sewing Shirts for Soldiers". This paper, written by Dorothy Abbot Loomis and Edith Rossiter Bevan in 1930, discussed the members of this group and all that they did to support the war effort in Washington. Museum staff presented this paper about the history of Washington from the Museum's archive, related photographs and artifacts from the Museum. Attendees shared their memories in a discussion that followed, at the Washington Senior Center.