



THE EAST TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MUSEUM of EAST TENNESSEE HISTORY
Making history personal

For Immediate Release

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Kidnapping the Kaiser: Tennesseans in the Great War
A Brown Bag Lecture by Darrin Haas and a WWI Encampment Display
by the Tennessee State Parks' World War I Living History Group

PROGRAM: *Kidnapping the Kaiser: Tennesseans in the Great War*, A Brown Bag Lecture by Darrin Haas and WWI encampment display by the Tennessee State Parks' World War I living history group

DATE: Lecture: Noon, Friday, January 8, 2016
WWI Encampment: 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Friday, January 8, 2016

LOCATION: East Tennessee History Center
601 South Gay Street
Knoxville, TN 37902



ADMISSION: FREE | Attendees are encouraged to bring a "brown bag" lunch

(Knoxville, TN) In cooperation with Fort Loudoun State Historic Area and the Tennessee Great War Commission, the East Tennessee Historical Society will be commemorating East Tennessee's contributions to the First World War on Friday, January 8, with a lecture and living history encampment. At noon in the East Tennessee History Center auditorium, National Guard historian Darrin Haas will speak on the 1919 plot by American officers, including Tennessee National Guardsmen, to kidnap the German Kaiser in a quest for justice in the aftermath of World War I. The lecture anchors an all-day encampment in Krutch Park and the History Center, where visitors can interact with members of the Tennessee State Parks' living history group portraying soldiers of the American Expeditionary Force. Stations will explore topics including soldiers' daily life, the role of new technology, and famous Tennesseans in the war (including Sergeant Alvin C. York).

After the U.S. entered World War I in 1917, many East Tennesseans joined the army and fought in France, helping the Allies defeat the German-led Central Powers. The years of destruction and death led to calls for justice in the streets of the Allied nations and in the ranks of the Allied armies. Feeling this impulse, in late 1918 a group of American officers and enlisted personnel from the 114th Field Artillery Regiment formulated a plan to visit the deposed German Kaiser to ascertain his status. Leaving on New Year's Day 1919, the group used political and press connections to enter the Netherlands and even infiltrated the castle holding the former monarch, but the Dutch military arrived and forced the group to return to Allied lines. As word of the trip

spread, the men found themselves at the center of an investigation by American officials, but American newspapers hailed them as heroes.

Darrin Haas is a Ph.D. student in Public History at Middle Tennessee State University, where he is writing a dissertation on Tennessee's memorialization of World War I. He spent the last 8 years as the Command Historian for the Tennessee Military Department and often writes for *National Guard* and *GX: The Guard Experience* magazine. Darrin currently serves as a Military Police Major in the Tennessee Army National Guard and has served tours in Iraq and Kosovo.

On Saturday, January 9, the living history team will be repeating the program at the Fort Loudoun State Historic Area in Vonore from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with a 1:00 p.m. lecture by Darrin Haas. Fort Loudoun shares ties to the historic event, as Elsworth Brown of Chattanooga, one of the American officers involved in the plot, played a large role in research at the Fort Loudoun State Historic Area. While serving as Fort Loudoun Association's research director and archaeologist from 1953-1957, he conducted excavations at the fort and collected numerous works from archives across the United States and abroad. His contributions to Fort Loudoun State Historic Area paved the way for the reconstructions of the past decades, and allowed the park staff to reconstruct the lives of numerous men who called the Fort home from 1756-1760. For questions please call the park office at 423-884-6217 or email hobart.akin@tn.gov.

The Brown Bag lecture is sponsored by Harriet Z. Albers Memorial and the lecture and corresponding activities are free and open to the public. The lecture will begin at noon at the East Tennessee History Center, 601 S. Gay Street, Knoxville. Guests are invited to bring a "Brown Bag" lunch and enjoy the lecture. Soft drinks will be available. For more information on the lecture, exhibitions, or museum hours, call 865-215-8824 or visit the website at www.EastTNHistory.org.

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