

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 31, 2014

## **Museum of Health Care Marks Heritage Week with New Exhibit on Public Health**

(KINGSTON, Ont.) – On February 20<sup>th</sup> starting at 7:00pm, the Museum of Health Care invites you to celebrate its newest onsite exhibit titled *War and Public Health*. The opening reception will include remarks by Guest Curator Robert Engen, followed by refreshments. Admission is free.

Developed by Queen's University teaching fellow Robert Engen, this temporary exhibit invites visitors to glimpse the profound importance of public health in human history. *War and Public Health* highlights the importance of disease-prevention measures on the outcome of military events, while showing what the absence of these measures can have even on modern armed forces.

“Public health measures such as hygiene, sanitation, vaccination and clean water, completely transformed the way warfare worked,” says Guest Curator Robert Engen. “I’m a military historian by training, and in my research I found that one of the least-studied parts of warfare is one of the most important: public health. Before 1914, infectious disease was the greatest danger to an army in the field, and in some wars five or six times as many soldiers would perish from disease, as would from battle.”

“Even though we now live in the age of vaccination and amazing health care possibilities, military forces can be as vulnerable to disease as ever if their public health measures break down. I hope that this exhibit can help reach both civilian and military audiences to remind them about the importance of disease-prevention measures and also about the thin line between victory and defeat, and between health and mass illness,” Engen concludes.

**Location:** Museum of Health Care, Ann Baillie Building National Historic Site, 32 George St.

**Dates & Times:** Thursday February 20, 2014 at 7:00pm. Remarks at 7:30pm.

**Cost:** Free

Free event parking in Museum (Ann Baillie Building) lot, 32 George St.

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**For more information, contact:** Jenny Stepa or Diana Gore  
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### **About Robert Engen**

Robert Engen was born and raised in Calgary, Alberta, and is now in the final year of his PhD program at Queen's University. His Master's thesis investigated the combat

experience and effectiveness of Canadian Army soldiers during the Second World War, based upon a series of previously unexplored battle experience questionnaire documents. It was published by McGill-Queen's University Press as the monograph *Canadians Under Fire: Infantry Effectiveness in the Second World War*.

Robert has worked for the Canadian Forces Directorate of Land Concepts and Designs at CFB Kingston, and held the 2013 Margaret Angus Research Fellowship at the Museum of Health Care in Kingston. His research interests include Canadian and military history, gender and sexuality, intellectual history, as well as public health, medicine, and the history of mental health.