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7 speakers (Theo Mayer, Kevin F., Mike Shuster, Chris C., Jim Corridan, Katherine Akey, Speaker 7)

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Theo Mayer: Welcome to World War I Centennial News. It's about World War I news 100 years ago this week, and it's about World War I NOW, news and updates about the centennial and the commemoration. World War I Centennial News is brought to you by the US World War I Centennial Commission and the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. Today is April 12th, 2017 and I'm Theo Mayer, Chief Technologist for the World War I Centennial Commission and your host today. Let's take a look 100 years ago this week. As the US declares war, the government scrambles to raise funds and stockpile the necessary equipment needed to join the allied effort overseas. On April 14, the headline from the Sausalito News reads: German Ships in US Ports Seized. America's war against Germany started on the home front with the seizure of 27 ships in New York Harbor and four in San Francisco Harbor. These ships will be used to transport our doughboys to Europe. The seizures didn't stop there. Through a campaign aimed to fight against enemy alien civilians. The US would seize a half a billion dollars in private property from German immigrants. This made up most of the funds in the country's pre-war budget. Some weeks ago, I spoke with Kevin Fitzpatrick about his memorial restoration project on New York's Governor's Island. He mentioned these actions. Here's what he had to say.

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Kevin F.: Governor's Island played a very important part in World War I. Shortly after Congress declared war on Germany on April 6th, 1917, soldiers from Governor's Island warded Coast Guard and Army tugboats and seized all of the German ships in the harbor without firing a shot and put the crews on Ellis Island in prison. So, that was really the first military action of the war and was right here in New York Harbor. And it was important for the US because those ships then became troop ships, which were used to take the doughboys to and from York because the American Navy didn't have those kinds of ships at the time. Including the Leviathan, which was Germany's best ship, was captured right here in New York and then used throughout the war and after the war by the US Navy.

[0:02:15]

Theo Mayer: Last week, Mike Shuster from the Great War Project brought us up to date all the way to April 5th, the day ... This week we take a look at the turmoil brewing in Russia. Mike, we look forward to your post.

[0:02:26]

Mike Shuster: Thanks, Theo. Here are the headlines. The Lenin Stratagem. Germans Seal Train with Russian Revolutionary Aboard. Send it Off to Russia 'Like a Plague Bacillus.' And this is special to the Great War Project. The Allies are confronted with a clever political stratagem, conceived by the Germans and designed to knock Russia out of the war. On April 8th a century ago, the Germans prepare the ground for the return of Vladimir Lenin, the Bolshevik leader and revolutionary, to Russia. An outlaw in imperial Russia, Lenin is living in Switzerland where he is out of the reach of Russia's secret police. He continues to agitate for revolution from afar. Lenin opposes what he calls this imperialist war. He has sworn to end Russia's participation should he lead the Bolsheviks to take power. Given the chaos in Russia, and the abdication of Tsar Nicholas, now the Germans realize they can undermine Russia further by smuggling Lenin back to his homeland. Lenin is notorious for his opposition to Russia's participation in the war. "In a move designed to destroy one of the pillars of the Alliance," writes historian Martin Gilbert, "Lenin and 32 other Bolsheviks are herded onto a sealed train and dispatched from Zurich to Russia." The Germans are taking no chances. The train is sealed so that Lenin and his comrades in arms are certain to reach their destination. "The Kaiser, told of this stratagem," writes Gilbert, "approves of it." But others in Germany and Austria worry that a successful Bolshevik revolution in Russia could be dangerous for all monarchies, five of which, Belgium, Serbia, Romania, Albania, and Montenegro, had already been dethroned. Lenin's goal is to spark revolution across Europe. "As the train steamed through the night," reports historian Adam Hochschild, "it carried as escorts to the revolutionaries two German officers, one of whom spoke fluent Russian but was under orders to conceal it, all the better to report overheard conversations back to Berlin." The Russians sing revolutionary songs as they plot their operations once they arrive in Petrograd, the Russian capital. Lenin's slogan of "Peace, land, and bread" has great resonance. "And on a war-weary continent," observes Hochschild, "it could be highly contagious." In London, Winston Churchill expresses unease at the possible wider impact of the German gambit. "In Churchill's words," reports Gilbert, "Germany had sent Lenin on his way to Russia like a plague bacillus. It remained to be seen how fast the bacillus would multiply." And that's the story for this week from the Great War Project.

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Theo Mayer: Great story, Mike. That's an interesting tactic and I'd never heard of this before, so thank you for the story.

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Mike Shuster: And it clearly worked. It led eventually to the Bolshevik seizing power and taking Russia out of the war, but that's for a later story.

[0:05:19]

Theo Mayer: Thank you. Mike Shuster, former NPR correspondent and curator of the Great War Project. For a weekly video on World War I, there's the Great War Channel on YouTube, the channel that shows you the history of the first World War exactly 100 years ago from a more European perspective. If you don't already subscribe to the channel, you should. This week, the Great War Channel's new episodes include Evolution of the British Infantry during World War I, Meet Us in England - See WW1 Airplanes, and The First American Shots Of WW1 - Guam And The Comoran. Moving up to the present, it's World War I Centennial News NOW. Last week, the US World War I Centennial Commission held its Centennial Commemoration Event at the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City. The event was well attended live and we also provided a satellite feed and a web stream that was carried by various folks. We want to congratulate the production team headed by Chris Christopher of the World War I Centennial Commission, Ed Bilous the artistic director from the Julliard school, Ed was our guest last week, Susan Davis International who pulled together all the other logistics and resources, and the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, and most of all, we want to thank the great talent of actors, musicians, volunteers, and speakers who come together for what's been recognized as a truly world class event, worthy of the solemn commemoration of America's entry into World War I. But there were lighter moments as well. Here is one of the songs of the era that was performed live at the event called, If He Can Fight, Like He Can Love, sung by Samantha Gossard accompanied by Alla Wijnands on violin, and Bram Wijnands. (singing) The American doughboy, if he can fight like he can love, what a soldier he will be. With us today is Chris Christopher, the executive producer of the event for the commission. Hi Chris.

[0:08:20]

Chris C.: Hey Theo. Glad to be here.

[0:08:22]

Theo Mayer: Hey Chris, sum it up for us. What happened, and how did it go, and where do we go from here?

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Chris C.: Well, three big questions and I don't want to take up the entire day with everyone going through all this as we could. But we had a really a wonderful event in Kansas City that what I think was appropriate for the occasion, which is to mark the day that the US decided to enter World War I and that day as we'd like to say, change the world and change the nation. And we're still to this day dealing with the consequences of the war and that decision. And so it was appropriate that we have a event to mark that. And then our intent was to reflect again the voices that were raised pro and con in the debate that led to that decision. We didn't just decide overnight that we would do this. The war had been going on since 1914 and it wasn't until 1970 the US came in and there was a process that got us there. And so we wanted to do enough to reflect that process. So, there was an understanding on the part of the those a 100 years later of how we got to that point. And I think we were successful in doing that. I think we in fact with the wonderful help with Ed Bilous and his creative team, I think we created something appropriate for the event and appropriate for the ages. So I'm looking forward to this being a model for a lot of things in the future. Our model for this, by the way, was actually what the Brits did for the Battle of the Somme centenary back in 2016 and several of our commissioners attended that and they all came back to the US and said, "Hey, this is what we should do." And the thing that struck everybody about that event was there were no speeches. Everything at the Somme was people in 2016 reading letters and other things that were written in 1916 from people in and about the Battle of the Somme, which is a horrific loss of life there. And everyone from heads of state down to the sons and grandsons of soldiers were reading these things, and there was music, and there was poetry, and they were very much affected by it as was I once I watched the video. So, we took this as our model and that's what we drove forward here, was to have something that was representative of the time here, what people were saying and thinking at the time. I'm gratified that I think we hit that mark.

[0:10:27]

Theo Mayer: Yeah, Chris. It was really clear that there were, as I mentioned, some lighter moments like the song I mentioned earlier. There were also some very, very solemn and even heart-wrenching moments there. There was a song that was done about mothers. It was a duet, America, Here's My Boy and I Didn't Raise My Son To Be A Soldier, sung in counterpoint to each other.

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Chris C.: It was something. When I first saw it show up in the script, I said, "You know, if this is done well, this is going to resonate." And boy, it was done well. And I'm thinking it'll resonate a lot as it gets more and more spread

across the nation in the world and the aftermath here as the video gets posted and so forth. When you really get down to it, that's the choice, is are we going to put our young men and women in danger or are we not? And it's a difficult decision and it's a difficult decision we faced in 1917, we're facing it again in 2017, and it's hard to figure a time in the world where it won't be faced. So, accepting that we have to do these things doesn't mean we can't also appreciate the agony of that choice causes it both high and low position. So yeah, it was very effective song. And those of you who have not heard it in the audience should run that walk to the website and watch the video and hear it because it's tremendously effective.

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Theo Mayer: Yeah, and it also points to the fact that there were so many points of views that were presented in the show. Debates between presidents, debates between people, debates between Congress, the fact that mothers, women, wives, soldiers, young men ... Again, if anybody who wants to see the full length ceremony, it's also posted on a website at ww1cc.org/ww1now. Thank you Chris for talking to us. That was Chris, the executive producer for In Sacrifice for Liberty and Peace, the Centennial Commemoration of the U.S. Entry into World War I hosted by the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission and the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri.

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Chris C.: Thank you, Theo.

[0:12:24]

Theo Mayer: There were commemoration events all over the country and some are still being held this coming week. In New York, re-enactors and active-duty Army soldiers gathered in Times Square to lay a wreath in honored of those who left to fight the war. In California, a ceremony was held beneath the main arch of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. In Montgomery, Alabama, they unveiled a statue to recognize the early American aviators who flew with the French military during World War I, the Lafayette Escadrille. Even our friends in Europe stopped for a moment to reflect such as in the UK where they commemorated the centennial at the Guildhall in London. Those are just some examples of what was happening all over the world. And you're going to hear later from Katherine Akey about what happened on social media. The conversation really did begin. We invite you to ww1cc.org/ww1now, all lower case where you can see the entire ceremony as well as additional clips from Kansas city. We'll be posting new things to that site over the coming weeks and Justin just put a whole bunch of links in the chat room. Whether you're on the podcast or the live show, we have a bunch of links for you that you can follow. Moving onto activities and events. We want to highlight the Virginia International Tattoo. Now, it's not about ink. The military tattoo comes from an early 17th century saying. It was originally a Dutch phrase, [Dutch] or turn off the tap, a signal sounded by drummers or trumpeters to instruct innkeepers near military garrisons to stop serving beers and for the soldiers to get their butts back to the barracks. Today the term is often used for military drama and musical events. The Virginia International Tattoo was established in 1997 as an annual celebration of patriotism and international goodwill. Every year the Tattoo welcomes over 1,000 performers from all over the world in a display of military bands, drill teams, mass pipes and drums, Celtic dancers, choirs, and more. The World War I Centennial Commission is partnered with this event, and we invite you and to get more information about it by visiting ww1cc.org/events and filtering to the Virginia Tattoo with two T's, and the link is also in the chat. Now for some updates from the state. Last week, the commission site for Indiana went live at ww1cc.org/Indiana. With us this week is Jim Corridan, the Indiana WWI Centennial Committee Chair. Mr. Corridan is also the director of the Indiana Archives and Records Administration and the State Archivist. Welcome, Jim.

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Jim Corridan: Great to be here, Theo.

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Theo Mayer: Jim, tell us a little bit about Indiana's World War I commemoration efforts and about the website.

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Jim Corridan: Well, we had a great kickoff event last week on April 6th to mark our activities in Downtown Indianapolis and we have events scheduled throughout the remainder of 2017, 2018, and even actually into 2019, where we'll be commemorating both individuals who provided tremendous service to the nation and also some special things around events that happened with entities that provided resources like hospitals to the soldiers out in Europe.

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Theo Mayer: Well Jim, your team did a really good job with the website by the way. I work with them and it looks really great.

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Jim Corridan: Well, thank you. We're really proud of the work that we did here and the materials and the resources that we've put on there. And of course I'm sure all the states are doing great things to help promote and provide social media impetus to their websites. But we also want to be sure to thank the Federal Commission and the National Commission for their efforts in supporting this and also providing this as a resource to us.

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Theo Mayer: Well thank you, Jim. How was your actual centennial commission put together? Because every state is trying to work it out. Some have task forces, some have actual commissions. Were you set up by the government in Indiana?

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Jim Corridan: We were indeed. Our former governor, now vice president at state, Mike Pence, established the commission while he was the governor, and our committee has been working for the last, I don't know, six or nine months. So, he appointed me as the chair, and we made a recommendation of a list of people that start as the beginning of that committee. Since then, additional names have been added largely related to various organizations that might have deep interest in the commemorations. And then, you know, as far as structure, we then broke out into the subcommittees, and we continued to organize and organize, and talk about what's going on, and the great efforts we're putting forth to try, and have people remember the significant contributions that Indiana made to the Great War.

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Theo Mayer: Well, thank you, Jim. That was Jim Corridan, the chair of the Indiana World War I Centennial Committee. Now we'll take a broader look with the international report. From Europe the headlines reads: Honoring The Fallen: Royals And Trudeau Remember Soldiers Lost In World War I Battle Of Vimy Ridge. On Sunday, The British princes Charles, William, Harry and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau joined French President Francois Hollande to remember the armed forces who sacrificed their lives in the 1917 Battle of Vimy Ridge at the Vimy Memorial Park in Northern France. The event marked the 100th anniversary of the battle that stole the lives of 3,598 Canadians and injured 7,000. Vimy was not the most strategically significant of Canada's World War I battles, but just the first time that military units from across the country fought together. The link is in the chat room. Onto 100 Cities 100 Memorials. Now, there's just nine weeks left to submit a matching grant application for restoring your local World War I memorial. There's \$200,000 in matching grants available for 100 projects around the country and it's not too late to get one of those matching grants to help because the time is short and it takes a while to pull these things together. We posted a series of links in this week's 100 Cities 100 Memorials blog posts at ww1cc.org/100memorials. The first link will take you to a downloadable PDF of the application submission form. Now, we haven't had that up before, but we've had a series of requests for people to be able to read the form, look at it, and then prepare their materials. So that's now available as a download. The second link will lead you to a resource page where you learn from others who are submitting their projects. Another link takes you to the submission instructions and finally there's a link where you can ask questions of the program managers. So, the clock is ticking. Go to ww1cc.org/100memorials today. Moving on to posts and articles. Now the commission website hosts a wealth of information that's constantly being updated. So, let's take a look at one of them. This week, Commissioner Monique Seefried penned a piece for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Seefried, a native of France, talks about her feelings of the great war after she immigrated to the US. In a short span of time, the American military ballooned from a force of thousands to millions. These men and women were from all walks of life and ethnic backgrounds. Together, this diverse coalition of Americans tipped the scales toward victory. In Monique's own words, "The US intervention in World War I is perhaps the country's greatest contribution to world peace." Follow the link to see the full article. You think Tsing Tao is just a really good Chinese beer? Well, it's more than that. This week in the WWRITE blog, Mark Facknitz talks about the Siege of Tsing Tao. Mark is an award-winning short story author and a professor of English at James Madison University. In recent years he has divided his research interests between the Great War and Willa Cather. His post includes a beautiful series of photos showing life on a lesser known corner of the Great War. Check it out at ww1cc.org/wwrite. For our Spotlight in the Media, The American Experience World War I documentary, The Great War, premiered on PBS starting April 10th. If you missed it and the other episodes, you can find the full series on the PBS website. We've been looking forward to this release of the series for months and now it's finally here. Follow the link in the chat room and catch up on Monday's and Tuesday's and Wednesday's episodes. It's time for The Buzz, social media and World War I. As always, we're rounding out today's program by taking a look at what was happening on social media this past week. Katherine Akey, our Social Media Director is with us. Katherine, welcome.

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Katherine Akey: Hi. It has been a busy week for us in the social media department. So many incredible events were happening in the last week, both out in the world and online, between remembrance services in cities and towns across the US, the Kansas City event, and special events led by institutions and museums, we've really seen this incredible new level of engagement with the public, which is just amazing. Since the April 6th commemorations, we've seen a 170% increase in page views on Facebook and a whopping 600% overall increase in our reach. That means six times as many people have been looking at our posts and reposts our videos and articles since April 6th. Similar

increases in engagement are happening in our Instagram and Twitter feeds. In fact, we've even dominated the trending tags on Twitter for a while from April 6th to 7th. Both the #WorldWarI Centennial and the topic of the World War were amongst the most tweeted about subject out there in the Twittersphere. So, to everyone who has tagged and tweeted, shared and commented, thank you. Every time you engage with the stories we share, you help bring the reach of that information even further, which helps us reach this goal of making World War I and its commemoration a national conversation.

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Theo Mayer: So, Katherine, it really is one of the core goals for the commission to ignite a national conversation on World War I, and I would say this is a pretty seminal shift for us.

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Katherine Akey: Yeah, it's a huge shift and I would expect these volumes to stay up if not to increase mostly because before April 6th, a lot of people who were interested in World War I in the US had a special interest. Now, with things like The Great War on PBS and other initiatives happening across the country, it's entering a national sphere in a way that it wasn't beforehand. And so, now lots more Americans are being exposed to the stories and the commemoration of the event, which is great because it gives us so many more people to reach out to and to connect with. Okay, I have one last little social media story that I wanted to remind everyone of, and this is on that topic of how this conversation just is going to keep escalating and growing and growing over the next year. Yesterday was World War I Social Media Day. There were a ton of institutions sharing special content through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The Air and Space Museum, The National Museum of American History, The National Museum of African American History, The Park Service, and lots of smaller local museums had things like live Q and A's from their collections, they shared photographs and stories from their history. Now, if you weren't able to catch all of those events, I recommend you go back through their Facebook and Twitter feeds to catch up on all the awesome stuff that went on yesterday. There's a full concise list of all the participants on the Smithsonian website. So, if you Google the phrase World War I Social Media Day, the very first link that pops up is a link to the Smithsonian's website with all of those institutions and all the cool stuff they were doing listed.

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Theo Mayer: Thank you, Katherine. That's the show for today. Thank you for listening! We want to thank our guests Kevin Fitzpatrick, Historian and New York Governors Island expert, Mike Shuster from the Great War Project blog, Jim Corridan, the Chair of the Indiana World War I Centennial Commission, Chris Christopher from the US World War I Centennial Commission, Katherine Akey the Social Media Director from the US Commission, and I'm your host, Theo Mayer.

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Speaker 7: The US World War I Centennial Commission was created by Congress to honor, commemorate, and educate about World War I. We rely entirely on your donations. No government appropriations or taxes are being used. Our programs inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War I. We are bringing the lessons of the 100 years ago into today's classrooms. We are helping to restore World War I memorials in communities of all sizes across our country. And we are building a national World War I Memorial in our nation's capital in Washington D.C. All of this work depends on your support, so please give what you can. It's easy by texting, WW1Now to 41444. World War I Centennial News is brought to you as a part of that effort. We want to thank Commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library for their support. The podcast can be found on our website at ww1cc.org/cn and in the iTunes store. Search for WW1 Centennial News. Thank you so much for joining us and don't forget to commemorate. (singing)

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