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8 speakers (Dan Dayton, Theo Mayer, Mike Shuster, Richard Rubin, Jonathan B, Steve Kelly, Roy Steinberg, Katherine Akey)

[0:00:01]

Dan Dayton: I'm Dan Dayton, the Executive Director of the World War I Centennial Commission. Thanks so much for joining us for today's show. You know, we're trying to do a couple of things that we feel so strongly are so important to our nation regarding World War I. First is really to inspire a national conversation about World War I so it becomes not the forgotten war, the way so many people think of it, but the war that changed the world. You'll learn so much more about this, as I do every week, by listening to the podcast. The other thing we're going to do is to build America's national World War I memorial in Washington DC. There is no memorial to those who were lost and who sacrificed so much in World War I here in the nation's capital, so we're going to build one at Pershing Park. We're going to have a groundbreaking for that November 11th of this year. Hope you can make it. I hope you'll help with these projects. You can do that by making a donation at ww1cc.org/donate, all lowercase. Or you can text a couple of bucks if you would. Text "WW1" to 41444. That's text "WW1" to 41444. Thanks. Enjoy the show.

[0:01:25]

Theo Mayer: Welcome to World War One 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 U.S. World War I Centennial Commission and the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. Today is June 7th, 2017 and I'm Theo Mayer... Chief Technologist for the World War One Centennial Commission and your host. (music) We've gone back in time. This week 100 years ago is marked by June 5th, 1917. It's registration day! It's all a part of the Selective Service Act that went into law last month on May 18. June 5th is the day when all young men between the ages of 21 and 30 are to register themselves with the government for possible conscription into the US military. Last week you heard about the many differences the American populace had about this issue and how protesting against registration, handing out anti-draft literature, or evading registration is considered criminal and potentially treasonous. All things considered, registration day goes pretty much as expected. We're going to continue to look back at this week from the US government perspective, so let's go to the Official Bulletin the government war gazette published by George Creel, America's propaganda chief, under the orders of President Wilson. Here are some of the stories pulled from the archive of the Official Bulletin, from issues 21 to 27, starting on June 4th, 1917. Headline: There are new names for 14 seized German Ships assigned to Navy Department Service. As war is declared the US seizes a number of German ships in harbors from New York to Honolulu to Manila. This week they're officially assigned to the Navy and they're re-christened. Most of the names are of American cities. Here are some of the name changes. The Breslau is changed to the USN Bridgeport. The Kiel to the USN Camden. The Leihenfels to Houston. The Saxonia to The Savannah. The Nicaria to Pensacola. The Oden Wald to Newport News. The Hohenfelde to Long Beach. Both the last ships are named after US cities with major shipyards. We can only imagine sitting at the table when a team of naval officers worked all this out! Dateline June 4th. Headline: US acquires aviation field in France to train fliers graduated in America. Preparing to enter the war in the sky, the US plans an aviation training program like no other, ever. Part of the story reads: America is responsible for the invention of both the submarine and the airplane. In the development of both, she has allowed Europe to outstrip her. It is for us to show that we can yet surpass both our enemies and our allies in the development of the two great mechanical inventions for which we ourselves are responsible, announces Howard E. Coffin, the chairman of the aircraft production board. He continues with: France and Great Britain have made it plain again and again that they expect aircraft and aviators to be one of America's greatest contributions to the success in the war. Dateline June 5th, 1917. Headline: US may need two billion feet of lumber for war purposes. An ongoing theme in the Official Bulletin, and therefore clearly on the minds of the government is resource management. America is rich in natural resources, but still underdeveloped in the infrastructure to exploit them. This includes industries like timber, which you may remember from a few weeks ago, is how Boeing made his initial fortune in the Pacific Northwest. If you think about America, our woodsmen are a special breed and in the same June 5th issue of the Official Bulletin, there's another headline that reads: nother headline reads: US forming forestry regiment for war service in France. The article goes on with: A regiment of woodsmen and mill workers is being recruited for early service in France and is being organized at the request of the allies to "Get Out Timber for the Armies". This includes railroad ties, trench timbers, mine props, bridge timber, lumber, and cordwood. The work will be performed behind battle lines in France but may fall within the danger zone. The article goes on to state: This regiment will be made up of picked woodsmen. Service in it will give such men a chance to take a part in the war for which their life and training have peculiarly fitted them. Dateline June 6, 1917. Headline: Liberty Loan Trailer to be shown in all movies. So now George Creel gets into film making, producing a movie trailer about people buying Liberty Bonds. Here's the story: A Liberty Loan trailer has been sent to practically every motion picture theater in the country and will be shown at every performance until June 15th. The article describes the film, which includes an inspiring American Flag, and an on-camera message from

President Wilson himself with an ask to buy Liberty bonds. The article closes, giving Kudos to the Eastman Company... Later known as Eastman Kodak of Rochester NY... For donating the half a million feet of film stock the trailers are printed on. Dateline June 8th, 1917. Headline: 100 US Naval aviators arrive safely in France. Secretary of the Navy Daniels today announced the safe arrival in France of a corps of 100 naval aviators sent there for duty in the antisubmarine operations, and for any other active duty that may be given to them in France. These are the first officers and men of the regular fighting forces of the United States to have landed in France. Lieutenant Kenneth Whiting is in command. Headline: General Pershing in England. The story reads: General John J. Pershing and 53 officers and members of his party are reported to have reached England safely. And finally... Dateline June 9th, 1917. Headline: US can now phone military orders to any part of the country. It may not be the internet, but the US Government was pretty excited about long distance telephone! The story reads: At the inception of the war in Europe, and they meant 1914, there were some outlying places in the US not connected by long lines capable of commercial transmission of telephone messages. Since then The American Telephone & Telegraph Company has extended its lines across the continent and so improved transmission that it is now possible to communicate by long-distance telephone with any section of the United States. These toll and long distance wires reach every town, hamlet, and crossroad of any importance. So if you think of it from a national security standpoint, this is a pretty big deal. And here's another interesting fact... The American Telephone and Telegraph company, AT&T, just happens to be my current Internet Service Provider and so it's AT&T that allowed me to upload this very podcast to reach you. You know, every issue of this amazing Official Bulletin is now being re-published every day on our website on the Centennial of its original publish date. If you're teacher, a historian, whether student or scholar, a sociologist, or just someone interested in exploring the nuances of America's transformation in 1917, and the echoes that still ring in your life to this very day, like AT&T... We offer you this wonderful daily resource at ww1cc.org/bulletin. Explore, exploit, and enjoy! Moving on to our first guest, we're joined by former NPR correspondent Mike Shuster from the Great War Project blog. Mike, in one of my favorite historical science fiction series The Safehold Saga by author David Weber, there's a battle scene where miners tunnel underneath the enemy's fortifications and plant a large cache of explosives under the enemy positions with devastating results. I wonder if the story from post this week was the inspiration for Weber. Tell us the story Mike.

[0:10:28]

Mike Shuster: Well that could very well be, Theo, but the details of the real explosion are truly horrendous. The headline: A terrible scene of slaughter. Huge explosion on Western Front. Tunnelers digging for months. Explosion heard in London. This is special to the Great War Project. In Belgium on the Western front a century ago, British soldiers are digging a tunnel in an "epic doggedness," writes historian Norman Stone. Miners had tunneled below the Messines ridge and had 21 great mines to blow up under it with a million tons of explosives. A million tons. Allied tunnelers have been working for more than six months, writes historian Martin Gilbert, to dig the shafts, one of which is 2000 feet long. The deepest of the mines were placed a hundred feet below the German trenches. Reports Gilbert, 19 mines were exploded under the German front line. One of the explosions blew a crater 430 feet in diameter. Two mines failed to detonate. The explosion is heard miles away in London. The effect of the explosions at Messines was devastating. Ten thousand German soldiers are thought to have been killed outright or buried alive. Thousands more were stunned and dazed, and more than 7300 were taken prisoner. The explosion was so loud, it caused panic in German occupied Lille, 15 miles away. At the site of the explosion, German soldiers trapped in the crater are screaming for help. We could do nothing for them, writes one British soldier. Two days later, the British launch a huge ground offensive, the second in three months against the German trenches, dug-outs, and fortifications on the Messines ridge. Reports historian Gilbert, a British artillery bombardment of more than 2000 guns added to the impact. One of the British soldiers taking part in the offensive is Anthony Eden, years later to become British prime minister. From Eden's company, only one soldier is killed. I knew him, Eden recalls, with the most bitter sadness. The soldier is able to save several of his compatriots before he himself is cut down. He had done what he set out to do and by his firm will he had helped to save many lives, Eden recalls sixty years later. A few days after the crater explosion, the Germans pull their troops back from two Belgian towns. But within a week, the front-line stalemate is re-established. That's the story of this incredible explosion this week 100 years ago.

[0:12:53]

Theo Mayer: Mike, there had never been anything like that previously, right? This was a brand new event.

[0:12:57]

Mike Shuster: You know, everything about World War I seems to be new in the annals of war, but this is truly extraordinary.

[0:13:06]

Theo Mayer: Thank you, Mike. That was Mike Shuster from The Great War Project blog. We're always telling you about our friends at the Great War Channel on YouTube that present World War I 100 years ago this week as video, and from a more European perspective. Well in Europe, this is week 149 of the war. For the US it is only week 8, and we haven't really not started to fight. In the week 149 episode, Indie Nidel, the host, gives you a great overview of

some of the stories we've been looking at as well... Like Herbert Plumbers tunnels under the Messine Ridge, and the french mutinies that Mike has been blogging about. The link is in the podcast notes or search The Great War on YouTube. Before we leave 1917, we have one more centennial anniversary story for you. The George M. Cohan song Over There turns 100. (music) Over There became America's favorite anthem of World World I and one of the country's great patriotic anthems overall. As you'll probably discover from today's podcast, the hook really sticks in your head. As a special treat today, we're launching our new segment: The Storyteller and the Historian with Richard Rubin and Jonathan Bratten talking about Cohan's song Over There.

[0:14:38]

Richard Rubin: Greetings. This is Richard Rubin, storyteller, the author of *The Last Of the Doughboys and Back Over There*.

[0:14:44]

Jonathan B: This is Jonathan Bratten, historian.

[0:14:47]

Richard Rubin: On June 1st 1917, the song Over There by George M Cohan was first published. I can't really say enough about this song. As a journalist you want to be objective, but in *The Last of the Doughboys* I show my cards. I called Over There not only the greatest American war song ever written, but one of the greatest American songs ever written, period. I really do believe that. (music) The genius of that song, I think, is that you can sing it really the first time you hear it. You just know it as soon as you hear it. It was written, as I said, by George M Cohan who was probably at that point America's most famous songwriter. In fact, his career was already on the decline. His golden age was the first decade of the 20th century when he was known for songs like I'm A Yankee Doodle Dandee and You're a Grand Old Flag, wonderful patriotic songs. He'd had a wonderful career on Broadway and before that in Vaudeville, with his entire family. His sign-off was, "My mother thanks you, my father thanks you, my sister thanks you, and I thank you." Even though he was the son and his parents were experienced Vaudevillians and his sister was older than he, he was really the leader of that family on stage. He'd been dealt some bad cards in the previous year. His father, his beloved father had passed away and then his sister, who was only in her 40s suddenly fell ill and lay dying. George Cohan heard about this when he was out on Long Island and boarded a train immediately to race into the city to be by her side, but by the time he got there she'd already passed away. By early 1917, his career was on the decline. He was dealing with some personal tragedies and possibly a bit of depression. Then the United States enters World War I on April 6th. According to legend, the very next day, April 7th 1917, he was riding the train into New York City from the suburb of New Rochelle. The rhythm of the wheels on the track gave him the rhythm of the song, and the words "Over There" just came to him. He wrote it in a hurry. The song came much more, I think, than a sensation. For a lot of people, that song was World War I. I own a copy of the sheet music that was published shortly after it came out, and already on the back cover it says "Over There, the \$25000 hit song." There's a copy of a check written for \$25000 to George M Cohan from the publisher, Leo Feist. That song would go on to sell two million copies, which may not sound like a lot but remember first of all the population of that United States at that time was about 100 million, so less than a third of what it is now. Previously the biggest selling song of recent times was an anti-war song. I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Solider came out in 1915 and sold an astonishing 650000 copies.

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Jonathan B: Really he picked the perfect time for such a release, because the American population at the time, one of the primary ways at the time they got their news... One of the primary ways that they shared culture was through these songs. Not only that, he's doing this at a time when Americans are entering a period of conflict that is not the most popular American conflict at all. As the War Department and as the US Government is trying to drum up support for entrance into World War I, all of a sudden this song takes on a type of character that you could almost... You could compare it almost to some of the old Civil War songs, like the Battle Hymn of the Republic, or something like that... That galvanizes an entire population into a war effort.

[0:19:13]

Richard Rubin: Well, except that the Battle Hymn of the Republic isn't really something that makes you want to get up and go out and do something great. It's a very solemn sound. Over There is quite lively. You're exactly right that songs back then were news. That's where songwriters on Tin Pan Alley got their ideas, was from the daily newspaper. But this was a song that actually drove the news. This was a time when Americans were still deeply ambivalent about entering this war, this great war, but there's absolutely nothing ambivalent about Over There. I would say that that song changed a great many minds. (music)

[0:20:06]

Theo Mayer: That was our new segment, the StoryTeller and the Historian, with Richard Rubin and Jonathan Bratten. We have moved forward into the present with World War I Centennial News now, news about the centennial and the commemoration. From the National World War I Centennial Commemoration Events Register at

WW1CC.org/events, here is our upcoming event pick of the week: The Virginia War Museum's World War I Reenactment Day coming up on June 17th and 18th. As the event post reads: The Virginia War Museum, in conjunction with The Great War Association, will be hosting "America Mobilizes 1917" on Saturday and Sunday June 17th and 18th, 2017 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of America's mobilization for World War I. The event will simulate an American Mobilization Camp preparing our soldiers to go "Over There." During the course of the day there'll be demonstration drills, weapons and tactics displays. It's living history on display with a great edutainment experience for the whole family that's sure to be memorable. Check out National World War I Commemoration events register for things that happen in your area, and to add your own upcoming events to it. Just go to ww1cc.org/events. June is PTSD awareness month, and in honor of that we want to bring you the following report. You may not know this but in World War I hundreds of soldiers suffering from what was then called shell shock were put on trial and even executed for cowardice. We know and are learning so much more today about shell shock, now referred to as PTSD or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. We know that it's a physiological brain trauma, not a psychological failing of the human spirit. In 2006, Britain formally pardoned 306 British World War I soldiers suffering from Shell Shock that were shot for cowardice. PTSD affects 31% of all Vietnam veterans, and about 11% of American veterans that have served in the Gulf conflicts. Shell Shock is actually an apt name for the condition described as occurring after a shell blast has hit the soldier in question. They're sometimes referred to as being "concussed". Trauma after exposure to blast forces on the battlefield, specifically caused by exploding artillery shells, were are a signature injury. In one study, the pattern of damage caused by exposure to blast forces observed in eight military personnel, is distinctly different from what is seen in the brains of football players or boxers. The implications of this finding are profound. The blast shock finding also open up potentially fertile new ground for research: Can injuries be healed or even mitigated? What equipment can be designed to protect service members against blast damage to their brains? Can tests be devised to identify damage in combatants on the battlefield in real time? Read more about the study by following the link in the podcast notes to the National Geographic article "Shell Shock, The 100-Year Mystery May Now Be Solved." This week in education we wanted to highlight the efforts of two groups of students to learn more about this great conflict in Europe, by studying their own backyards. A group of students from the University of Central Florida and another from a middle school in Merchantville New Jersey are making the conflict more relatable by focusing on the human element. In Florida, students are writing biographies for 120 veterans in the Sumter County cemetery. The project includes developing an app for cemetery-goers and for teaching local middle schoolers who visit the cemetery on field trips. In Merchantville, seventh- and eighth-grade volunteers decided to research local veterans as part of an elective course that their history teacher created. The students studied 135 veterans memorialized on a plaque in town put up by local American Legion Post 68. The students presented their findings at a Memorial Day ceremony hosted by the American Legion post, which included a map that will be on display along with the posters students made for each of the four local servicemen who died during the war. These projects serve as resources for future students, but most importantly we hope that other schools will follow in their footsteps. As one eighth-grader in Merchantville put it, "The experience really has been intriguing and enlightening and I want to know more about my community." Learn more about these projects by visiting the links in the podcast notes. Next it's time for some updates on the States. This week on the Wisconsin State Centennial Commission website at ww1cc.org/Wisconsin, there's an article about the Wisconsin Veterans Museum's Oral History Program. The program honors those who served by recording and preserving their stories and experiences. Since 1994, staff members and volunteers have conducted and collected over 2100 interviews with veterans from around the state. The collection represents all branches and all conflicts and eras since World War I to the present day. The Museum recently opened a new exhibit, World War I Beyond the Trenches: Stories from the Front. Throughout the next two years the museum will be offering programming and events that feature Wisconsin's contribution to the Great War, in which 122000 people from Wisconsin served. As part of these efforts, the Oral History Program will showcase the small but exciting collection of World War I oral history interviews. Read more about this remarkable Wisconsin program on the Wisconsin State Centennial website at ww1cc.org/wisconsin, all lowercase. From the Michigan World War I Centennial website, a story about Joseph Guyton... Who was born on June 10th 1889 in Evart Michigan, a small town known for its lumber mills back in the day. Pioneers were just settling the area through homesteading after the Civil War. At age 20 he married his sweetheart Agnes Winona Baker from Lake City, Michigan. Two years later in 1911 they had a daughter, Olive Clara Guyton. Life at this point was going pretty well. Then in 1914 war broke out in Europe. Guyton was drafted into the US Military. Under US military law Guyton could have appealed for an exemption, since he only had a daughter and no name other sake, in case he should die. But he was, like many Americans at the time, too proud not to go. He went, and he went to become the first American casualty of the war on German soil. This coming Thursday June 15th marks the end of the grant application period for the 100 Cities 100 Memorials program. This \$200000 matching grant challenge is to rescue ailing World War I memorials, and in most ways, it actually marks the beginning of the project, not the end. What happens from here is that the submissions will be reviewed to make sure they're compliant with the program rules. You know, that all the part and pieces of the application for the matching grant were submitted. Any applicant that missed something will be notified and they'll have the opportunity to fix any issues. Then the applications will be assigned to the delegate jury, a selection committee that we'll be announcing next week. We have some wonderful people who've agreed to review the project submissions, real experts in the field, We'll be announcing the results this fall. In the meantime, we'll be promoting and profiling all the wonderful projects that were submitted, both on the website and here on the show, starting this

week with a 100 Cities 100 Memorials project from Brownwood Texas. Joining us now is Dr. Steve Kelly, the president of the Central Texas Veterans Memorial. Hi Steve. Welcome.

[0:28:44]

Steve Kelly: Hello, how are you today?

[0:28:46]

Theo Mayer: I'm well, thank you. Steve, tell us a little bit about your project and the memorial and the coalition you guys had to put together to do this?

[0:28:54]

Steve Kelly: Okay. Our World War I memorial was old and forgotten. We started the Central Texas Veterans Memorial actually in 1944, but up until two years ago it didn't go anywhere because we didn't have any money. Now we have five things that we have done. Number one, we took our old World War I memorial... It was placed at the old high school in 1921... And moved it. The old high school closed down in 1961, and the memorial was actually behind a bush. We have a new memorial site by American Legion Post 196, and the World War I memorial is a centerpiece for that. The memorial weight 18000 pounds. We moved it to the new memorial site. Secondly, we found the names of the 39 Brown County veterans who died in World War I. Of those 39, 26 died of disease. Of course, mainly the Spanish Influenza pandemic. We have a new six foot by four foot granite tablet with those 39 names. Thirdly, we have a bronze plaque that after 96 years the writing is illegible. I just want to read that to you, it's just one long sentence. "To those men from Brown County who rendered valiant service in the World War, who feared not, who believed in the sacred principles upon which this Republic is founded... Who preferred death to slavery, who signified a willingness to give their lives and to perpetuate democracy, this monument is reverently dedicated." Fourthly, we have another bronze plaque that is right next to the original World War I plaque that elicits the history of the World War I plaque. Then finally, number five, we have a bronze plaque that is a synopsis of World War I, starting with the assassination of Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand by Gavrilo Princip, going through the end of the war and down to all casualties both in the United States and worldwide. We have done as much as we could at the New Central Texas Veterans Memorial to restore our old and forgotten World War I memorial.

[0:31:36]

Theo Mayer: Steve, it sounds like it's not only something that honors and commemorates, but it also educates. That's really wonderful.

[0:31:44]

Steve Kelly: Yes. We have the bronze plaque with the history of World War I, but also all of the wars from World War I forward. World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the three most current wars. The purpose for the Central Texas Veterans memorial was to honor all veterans, but especially the 259 veterans from Brown County who made the ultimate sacrifice from World War I forward. Thank you very much for having us on. It's always a pleasure to tell everyone who will listen about our World War I memorial restoration. Thank you for having us!

[0:32:19]

Theo Mayer: That was Dr Steve Kelly, president of the Central Texas Veterans memorial, telling us about the Brownwood Texas Post 196 World War I memorial rescue project. You can stay up to date with everything happening in the 100 Cities 100 Memorials project by signing up for the program's blog at ww1cc.org/100memorials. This week in our International Report we have a story from England, about Americans. The Daily Mail recently published an article about the Choctaw Code Talkers, a group of Native American soldiers, mostly from Oklahoma, whose native language was used to baffle the enemy. The story goes that two soldiers on the Western Front were overheard by a captain speaking in their native Choctaw language. The Germans had been able to decipher many of the Allies' codes over the years, and it struck the captain that using the Native American language as a code, given that the Germans had no knowledge of it or familiarity with similar languages, could be just the ticket. It's important to note that at this very same time, the US government, in an attempt to "Americanize" the natives, was trying to eradicate the language. The Choctaw success paved the way to the Navajo Code Talkers in World War II. It's another amazing example of America coming to grips with its own culture. Read more about it by following the link in the podcast notes. In our Articles and Posts we explore the World War One Centennial Commission's rapidly growing website at ww1cc.org. This week in the news section there's an article about a stage production called Billy Bishop Goes To War. We have with us today Roy Steinberg, the producing artistic director for the Cape May Stage in New Jersey. Roy, Welcome!

[0:34:14]

Roy Steinberg: Why thank you.

[0:34:16]

Theo Mayer: Roy, before we dive into the production, can you tell us briefly about the Cape May Stage?

[0:34:20]

Roy Steinberg: Yes. The Cape May Stage is on the southernmost tip of New Jersey and our mission is to produce plays that provide a catalyst for discussion about important events of the day. In May of 2017, we looked at 100 years back and said, "Well in May of 1917, the United States got involved in World War I." So we searched for a play that would address that. We came across Billy Bishop Goes to War by John Gray and Eric Peterson. It's a play about a Canadian Ace fighter pilot who shot down more German planes than anyone. It's a musical play. One actor plays many, many characters and there's a piano player as well. He plays the other characters. It tells the story of Billy Bishop, who is not a great student, and was in the calvary. He looked up and saw a plane and said, "That's where I want to be instead of being in the mud." Turned out he was not a great pilot either, but he had great eyes and he could fight and shoot down enemy pilots. That's what this play is about.

[0:35:26]

Theo Mayer: You know, Roy, we profiled Billy Bishop in our War in the Sky segment some weeks ago, and it was true... I think his quote was, "I'll bet it's clean up there and not full of mud and horse(bleep) like down here," I believe was the quote.

[0:35:40]

Roy Steinberg: That's right. That's exactly right.

[0:35:43]

Theo Mayer: Well, so how's the audience been reacting to the subject matter in the play?

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Roy Steinberg: Well we get standing ovations every night. Because we opened our season with it, so we were playing this play during Memorial Day and during D-Day, although that was World War II, it really has a kind of poignancy... Particularly since our nation seems to be again in a perilous place, and war is on some people's minds. Young people going to war is on many people's minds. The play deals with people as young as 19 and 20 and 21 who were dying. One of the more poignant lines was that it shouldn't be that you should be ashamed to be alive when you're 21.

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Theo Mayer: What size is the theater?

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Roy Steinberg: The theater has 134 seats, and it too is historic. The venue was built in 1853. It was a church and its on the National Historic Register. We renovated it so that the inside is a state of the art theater, but that theater was standing when World War I was happening. We feel very special to be in this extraordinary town, which is a historic town... In fact the entire downtown is a historic district and on the National Registry.

[0:36:52]

Theo Mayer: Well thank you for coming on, Roy.

[0:36:55]

Roy Steinberg: My great pleasure.

[0:36:56]

Theo Mayer: That was Roy Steinberg, producing artistic director for the Cape May Stage in New Jersey, talking to us about their production Billy Bishop Goes to War which runs until June 23rd, Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8 PM and a Sunday matinee at 3. Follow the link in the podcast notes to learn more or to get ticket. In our WWRITE blog, which we host on the Commission website, and which explores World War I's influence on contemporary writing and scholarship, this week's post is: A Journey of Commemoration: The Great War through the Lens of Art, by Susan Werbe. Appropriate to our previous guest, Susan is the executive producer of The Great War Theatre Project: Messengers of a Bitter Truth, performed in Boston, New York, and Letchworth in the UK. In the post she also discusses the process of weaving voice, dance, theater, writings, and song cycles to examine the collective memory of war on the individual. Werbe also discusses her latest project, Letters You Will Not Get, a libretto using various genres of women's World War I writings, set to commissioned contemporary music. Read the blog post to learn more about this wonderful showcase of an extraordinary, multidisciplinary project, not to be missed! Go to ww1cc.org/wwrite... And if World War I's influence on contemporary writing and scholarship is of particular interest, sign up for the blog at the same link. That brings us to the buzz, the Centennial of World War I this week in social media with Katherine Akey. Katherine, what do you have for us this week?

[0:38:44]

Katherine Akey: Well earlier in the episode we mentioned the Choctaw Code Talkers, a famous and interesting example of covert communications during the war. Another means of passing information secretly was devised in the domestic spaces under German occupation... Knitting. An article from Atlas Obscura this week details the use of knit scarves and garments as means of transmitting messages under the Germans' noses. By dropping stitches and otherwise disrupting the knit pattern, women were able to encode messages into the innocent warmth of a hat or scarf. Knitted messages were used in World War II as well, and you can read more about this method of covert comms by reading the article, *The War Time Spies Who Used Knitting as an Espionage Tool*, at Atlas Obscura. Finally this week, you may have noticed on social media over the weekend an awful lot of images of fried rounds of sugar-covered goodness. This past Friday was National Doughnut Day. National Doughnut Day was started in 1938 to honor the Salvation Army's Doughnut girls. Nicknamed the Doughnut Lassies, the women who served doughnuts to troops are often credited with popularizing the doughnut in the US once those troops returned home from war. Doughnut Lassies served coffee and doughnuts to soldiers in the trenches. Rations were so poor that the doughnut idea was conceived as a means of cheering up the soldiers with something universally loved: fried dough. Doughnuts were not the primary reason Salvation Army workers were in the fighting zones of France, but it became one of the most iconic reasons for their presence. We hope you enjoyed a doughnut this past weekend, and the next time you enjoy one, be sure to take a pause to thank the Lassies who braved the war zone to comfort American soldiers with fried, delicious doughnuts.

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Theo Mayer: Thank you, Katherine. I'm off to get myself a sugar buzz from a nice glazed donut! All of Katherine's stories have links in the podcast notes. And that's it for World War I Centennial News for this week. Thank you for listening! We want to thank our guests: Mike Shuster from the Great War Project blog. Richard Rubin, Author and Storyteller and Jonathan Bratten, Historian, with their new segment the StoryTeller and the Historian. Dr Steve Kelly, president of the Central Texas Veteran memorial about their 100 Cities 100 Memorials project. Roy Steinberg producing artistic director for Cape May Stage about their production of Billy Bishop Goes to War. Katherine Akey, the Commission's social media director and also the line producer for the show. And I am Theo Mayer, your host. The US World War I Centennial Commission was created by Congress to honor, commemorate and educate about World War I. Our programs are to inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War I. This show is a part of that effort. We're bringing the lessons of the 100 years ago into today's classrooms. We're helping to restore World War I memorials in communities of all sizes across our country. And, of course, we're building America's National World War I Memorial in Washington DC. To do this good work, we rely entirely on your donations. No government appropriations or taxes are being used, so please, we're asking you to give what you can by going to ww1cc.org/donate, all lower case. Now we tell you a lot of ww1cc.org, but remember this one, /donate. We need your help. Or if you're listening to the show on your smart phone, you can also donate by texting us with a donation. Just text the letters "WW1" to the number 41444. 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 we're on iTunes and Google Play at WW1 Centennial News. As of last week, we can also be found on TuneIn. Our Twitter and Instagram handles are both @ww1cc and we're on Facebook @ww1centennial. Thanks for joining us. And don't forget to share the stories that you're hearing here about the war that changed the world. (music)

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