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10 speakers (Teo Mayor, Chris .C., Theresa Sims, Cindy Rollman, Ed Bellis, Jordan Beck, Catherine Achy, Dan Dayton, Richard Reuben, Jonathan .B.)

[0:00:09]

Teo Mayor: Welcome to World War 1 Centennial News Episode#52 This new year's week and next week we have a special 2 Episode #series for you. Next week marks our first anniversary for the show, so we wanted to share some of our favorite stories and segments from 2017 with you. They're presented in chronological order. Part one takes us through July 2017 and part two through the end of the year. Now we're not going to spend a lot of time setting up each piece, but we will tell you the date, the episode, and the article titled each time to keep it all in context. World War 1 Centennial News is brought to you by the US World War 1 Centennial commission and the commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. Welcome to part one of our 2017 best stories and review. January 4 -Episode #one. Our first story. As you may have noticed, we've changed our name and our look for 2017. For perspective, we launched the sync call in 2014 as a simple phone meeting to keep our staff and the commissioners up to date as we spun up the commission. In 2015 with many more state partners and interest groups joining in the Centennial commemoration, we expanded our first in 2015 into a web meeting and then in 2016 into a Webinar. For 2017, we're turning this into World War 1 Centennial News, a weekly podcast. We're staying with the theme of World War 1 now all about commemoration, and World War 1 then, all about what happened 100 years ago this week. With you as our live audience, we'll start pushing the weekly show out over the podcast subscription networks. So, welcome to World War 1 Centennial News. Now over to Theresa Sims who will be hosting this week's show. February 15,-Episode #7 Stories of service and family ties introduced by Chris Christopher.

[0:02:26]

Chris .C.: The main thing we want to talk about today, is the stories of services section of the family tie section of the website. So many people today don't really have an understanding of the fact that someone in their family did serve in the war. And when they discover this, they may find photos and they may find diaries, they may find information about this person and perhaps they heard stories, their grandfather, great-grandfather told them about the war. But we have a place here where you guys should bring and post that information and those photos of the service that your ancestor did in the war. And then, this is a place to record all of those notes and to recognize the services these individuals who served in the war, and to make sure that the personal memories of people alive today are still available when the bicentennial comes around later on. Because I think the stories of service, is a wonderful project for school and classrooms. For example, in most cities there's a World War 1 Memorial, the classrooms could go out to the memorial and get a list of names and do some research. Find if the families of those folks are still local, get the pictures and put up stories of service of these people, making that connection there to retirement homes and senior care facilities. This would be a good project for them as well, because many of the people in there who are in their late 80's and 90's, are the sons and daughters of people who served in the war and they have first person memories of their father or mother, grandmother, grandfather who served in the war, and those first person memories you're going to lose all of those here in the next few years, and so this is a great opportunity for organizations that deal with elderly people on a regular basis to help capture those memories.

[0:04:05]

Teo Mayor: March 8 -Episode #10 War in The Sky; the story of Baron von Zeppelin.

[0:04:11]

Theresa Sims: So now we've heard from the land and the sea. What was going on in the sky. Let's find out what's happening this week in the skies over Europe in today's War in The Sky segment. Teo, take it away.

[0:04:23]

Teo Mayor: 100 years ago, this week, on March 8, 1917, Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin died. Let me tell you a little bit about this very interesting man who developed the giant flying machine, which is what his invention was originally called in German. But he's in Fluke Toyak or in 21st century American ginormous airplane. Will start in 1863, when the Baron took leave from the Wharton Bergen Army later part of Germany to be an observer in the Union Army of the Potomac. He came to America during the civil war and hooked up with the Virginians. During the battle of Fredericksburg, which the union lost, he said to have launched a balloon with a soldier in it, ostensibly as a lookout and maybe as a good target practice for the confederates to. A little bit after that battle, he took off on a road trip with a couple of Russians soldiers and some native American Indian guides up the western end of Lake Superior, over the St Louis River and across to Crow Wing Minnesota on the Upper Mississippi, then down to St Paul. Turns out that there was a German-born balloonist there named Johan Steiner who was selling balloon rides. Well, it was up up in a way for the good Baron and Johanns beautiful balloon, which apparently had quite an impact on him. And about 10

years later in 1874 after doing a bunch more war fighting, the idea of a big airship shows up in the Barron's diary. It was a pretty innovative approach that he outlined. He imagined that rather than a balloon, all soft fabric, he would build a large rigid frame of light metal. And inside of that he put a bunch of separate gas bags. That would lift the whole beast and it could be ginormous. There were other good ideas floating around at the time. And a French duo called Renard and Krebs made something somewhat similar. So he beat feedback to go talk to the king of Wurtemberg to finance the development of his vision. It went well and it went not so well. But fast forward to 1895 when he got a patent on his design. So a year later in 1896, he finds an initial investor to back him. And finally on the 2nd of July in 1900, The Zeppelin airship, LZ1, made its first flight over Lake Constance in South Germany for 20 minutes and then it got messed up on the landing. But his idea was proven. And he pulls off a kind of a turn of the century Kickstarter to build the LZ2, then dumps his rich wise fortune into the venture. Long story short, he hooks up with a customer slash partner called [Dilag], and together they create a thriving enterprise by going into the Zeppelin Passenger Carrying Business. By 1914 they carried over 37,000 passengers on 1600 flights without a hitch, ushering in a new era of air transportation. Then came the war. Count Von Zeppelin died this week in 1917 before the Treaty of Versailles Shutdown Zeppelin technology or before the second round of Zep Dev, that created the world circling LZ127 and the famous Hindenburg. And way before his tribute rock band Led Zeppelin wrote Stairway to Heaven whose lyrics were clearly not about the Baron Von Zeppelin, who died 100 years ago this week. Or were they?

[0:07:50]

Theresa Sims: Thanks Teo.

[0:07:54]

Teo Mayor: March 29 -Episode #13. Special feature about horses and mules serving during World War 1 with Brooke USA's, Cindy Rollman. Last week on the buzz, Katherine Achy highlighted an article in the Huffington Post about the noble sacrifice of our nations horse and mules during the great war. With us today is Brooke USA special events and outreach manager, Cindy Rollman. Hi Cindy.

[0:08:21]

Cindy Rollman: Hi Teo. I'm delighted to have an opportunity to talk about American horses and mules in World War 1.

[0:08:27]

Teo Mayor: Well, Cindy, tell us more about our equine heroes.

[0:08:30]

Cindy Rollman: But what we know so far, is that there were approximately 1 million horses and mules who were shipped to England and then on France from the United States during the three years prior to the United States entering World War 1. And those animals were used for extremely important tasks, such as transporting guns and ammunition to the front lines, they carried men into battle, they carried wounded men back to safety. They transported food, water, medical supplies, everything imaginable through terribly, terribly difficult situations. What we want to do through our Horse Heroes Program, is give people an opportunity to thank those animals for the contributions that they made to the war. There's an opportunity to honor and remember soldiers through various things like the, National World War 1 Memorial and through a lot of really excellent charities that are still helping veterans today. But there aren't a lot of opportunities available to just thank the animals who made such a great contribution. So through our Horse Heroes Program, we are asking people to donate \$1 in memory of every one of those 1 million horses and the funds that we raise from that will then fund equine welfare programs. Brooke is the world's largest international equine welfare charity. We actually were founded right after World War 1, as a result of horses and mules who were left behind by the armies after the war.

[0:10:10]

Teo Mayor: I do know, and having read a little bit about this, that the military decided to abandon a lot of the animals because it was cheaper to leave them there than to bring them home. And that there was quite a bit of help that they needed.

[0:10:23]

Cindy Rollman: Yes. Just from the United States alone with this 1 million animals that I mentioned, we only know of 200 animals that got to come home after the war. And for any of your viewers who may have seen the Steven Spielberg Movie, War Horse or the Broadway play War Horse, that had a very happy ending, but that that wasn't reality. These animals were left behind. They were, the ones who survived, we're usually sold to slaughter, sold for hard labor. And so they ended up really in worse condition than they were when they were in the war. That the charity that was started as a result of that is still operating today around the world.

[0:11:09]

Teo Mayor: Thank you so much for being with us today and telling us this fascinating story. That was Cindy who is a Brooke U.S.A special events and outreach manager.

[0:11:18]

Cindy Rollman: Thank you Teo.

[0:11:22]

Teo Mayor: April 5 and April 12. Episodes 14 and 15. Commission news in sacrifice for liberty and peace with Ed Bellis and Chris Christopher. There's really only one story for us this week and that is the commemoration of the US declaration of war. Here in Kansas City, we're holding an event called In Sacrifice for Liberty and Peace, the Centennial commemoration of the US entry into World War 1. With us today, is Ed Bellis, the artistic director for the program here in Kansas City. Ed is also the director of the Center for Innovation in the arts at the Julliard school. Ed welcome.

[0:12:02]

Ed Bellis: Thank you. Such a great honor and pleasure to be here at the World War 1 Centennial event and especially to be here at this marvelous museum as well.

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Teo Mayor: So Ed, describe the creative and artistic approach for this event. It's Kid of unique.

[0:12:15]

Ed Bellis: It is unique and it really involved a tremendous amount of work in all stages. We began our pre production work by doing a great deal of research into the history of the events that led into America's decision to enter the war. And that research included not only looking at texts both written and spoken, but also examining poster art that was used during the day, music recordings and live music that was spoken, poetry, video film, images, reading letters from home or to home that soldiers wrote from the front. We immersed ourselves in all kinds of media across the board just to prepare ourselves for putting together a project of this size.

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Teo Mayor: And as this a bunch of speeches or how does it going to work?

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Ed Bellis: No, not at all. And in fact, I'm glad you asked that question, because we very much wanted to, keep the event much more immersive and engaging and not make it just a series of speeches on stage. And so, we do have a group of speakers that will involve. Most of them are actors and they will be reciting texts from various sources, ranging from letters from soldiers all the way on up through writings and speeches by the president of the United States at the time. But also there's very, very elaborate projection design that will be displayed on two huge monitors on stage, left and stage right. And I'd like to say that the projection design is set up in such a way so that there's visual counterpoint that's taking place. So in other words, we may show soldiers in combat from French battalions on one side of the stage and then their counterparts, in the German army on the other side. We've used some modern technology to bring to life some of the historic film and images from that period. There's some techniques called a parallax editing. And it gives the effect of having a 3D environment. The photos really do come to life almost in a virtual reality kind of way, and the audience feels much more immersed in the experience. And then finally, we also spent a lot of time exploring music and the sound of the day. We also, brought out some archival recordings which are being reprocessed and mixed and they're incorporating it into live musical performances using artists of the day, both in New York and Kansas City. So there's kind of bringing to life of recordings from 1914 through 17. And then re-mixing them with live artists from today.

[0:15:16]

Teo Mayor: 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.

[0:15:27]

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

[0:15:29]

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

[0:15:34]

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 was, I think was appropriate for the occasion,

which is to mark the day that the US decided to enter World War 1 and that day, as we like to say, changed 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's appropriate that we have event to mark that. 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 1917 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 hundred 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 Ed Bellis and his creative team, I think we created something appropriate for the event and appropriate for the ages. 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 breadths did for the Battle of The Somme Centenary back in 2016. 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 they were no speeches. Everything at the [Psalm] was people in 2016 reading letters and other things that were written in 1916 from people in and about the battle of the song, 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.

[0:17:34]

Teo Mayor: Yeah, Chris. I it was really clear that there were 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 is My Boy and I Didn't Raise My Son to be a Soldier sung and counterpoint to each other-

[0:17:53]

Chris .C.: It was something. When I first saw it show up in the script, I said, 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 is it gets more and more spread across the nation and` the world and the aftermath here is a video that gets posted and so forth. When you really get down to it, that's the choice. Are we going to put our young men and women in danger or are we not? And it a difficult decision and that'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. Accepting that we have to do these things doesn't mean we can also appreciate the agony of that choice because both high and low position. So yeah, it was very effective song. And those of you who have not heard it in the audience, do or run that walk to the website and watch the video and hear it cause it tremendously effective.

[0:18:49]

Teo Mayor: Thank you Chris for talking to us. That was Chris Christopher in Sacrifice for Liberty and Peace, the Centennial Commemoration of the US entry into World War 1 hosted by the US World War 1 Centennial Commission and the National World War 1 Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri.

[0:19:04]

Chris .C.: Thank you Teo.

[0:19:08]

Teo Mayor: April 26,-Episode #17. 100 years ago this week, the Selective Service Act of 1917. We've jumped into the Wayback Machine, and we're looking at 100 years ago this week. America has declared war and we now face the reality that we actually don't have an army. That's true. In 1917 the US federal armies just barely 120,000 men. In fact, the combined state militias, totally outnumber the federal military with over 180,000 men. Remember, this is only one generation after the Civil War. America is a union of separate states; The United States of America. And the power of the federal government is relatively weak. Our military thinkers estimate that we're going to need a national army of at least a million soldiers. President Wilson thinks he can do it with volunteers, but six weeks after the declaration of war, it's gonna turn out that we only have 73,000 new volunteers. This isn't gonna work. So 100 years ago this week, President Wilson grabs his newspaper buddy George Creel, remember him from last week, our official war propagandist, and they head over to Congress to let them know that we're going to need a draft. So here comes the selective service act of 1917 and Wilson's going to get it in less than a month. Standby. And as our final us domestic note for this week, 100 years ago, this maybe just a little less dramatic for the average Joe, but duly noted that the prestigious New York Yacht Club drops Kaiser William and his brother, Prince Heinrich of Prussia as members. A [housemate]. April 26th -Episode #17. War in The Sky. It turned into the world's largest aerospace company. Let's find out what's happening this week, a hundred years ago in the Great War in The Sky. It's April 24th, 1917. The British are deeply engaged in the battle of Arras, northeast of Paris and near the Belgian border. This was when a German commanding officer, a pilot named Hoffman Edward Zola is on an escort mission when he decides to drop down to 60 feet above the ground and strafe the British trenches. Under fire from hundreds of British rifles and

machine guns, he and his pilots spray the British trenches with over 500 rounds of ammunition before a hit on their engine, forces them to withdraw. This incident, 100 years ago, represents the birth of close air support as a mission and a tactic in military combat. On the home front, there was a small but unnoticed event of world changing proportion. Last week, Catherine Achy pointed you to a blog post that shows the airplane manufacturing behind a hundred years ago. If you followed the link, you saw that it all began with lumber cutting. This is where our story starts a hundred years ago, up in the currently very remote American Pacific Northwest. There's a timber man. He's done very well in the business, but like so many young men of the time, he's fascinated with airplanes. He hooks up with a US navy engineering nerd who got a degree from MIT. Together they build a prototype sea plane, stimulating our timber man to launch a new company, the Pacific Aero Products Company, that was in 1960, a hundred years ago. This week, just days or weeks after President Wilson declares War, this entrepreneurial timber man clearly sees an opportunity with the war effort. He decides to rebrand his company from a component supply company, the Pacific Aero Products Company, to a supplier of actual airplanes themselves. Using his own name on April 26, 100 years ago this week, William Boeing, our timber man, announces the Boeing Airplane Company and that's the birth of the biggest aerospace company in the world 100 years ago in the Great War in The Sky. You can follow these events on our site with RG heads, comprehensive timeline of the war in the sky at ww1cc.org/warinthesky. May 3 -Episode #18 Spotlight in the media. Introducing Sergeant Stubby, the animated film with Jordan Beck. For our listeners who do not know him, let me introduce sergeant stubby. He was a dog. He served for 18 months and participated in 17 battles on the western front. Stubby saved his regimen from surprise mustard gas attacks, found and comforted the wounded and once caught a German soldier by the seat of his pants holding him until human American soldiers arrived. He was promoted to the rank of sergeant and decorated with medals. Back home, his exploits were front page news on major newspapers. Well, Sergeant Stubby's exploits are being turned into an animated film. And with us today for an update on the movie is Jordan Beck. Head of Communications for Fun Academy Motion Pictures. Welcome Jordan.

[0:24:22]

Jordan Beck: Hey Teo. Thanks for having me. That was a really great introduction to our projects. You saved me a lot of work.

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Teo Mayor: Give us an overview and tell us a little bit about the project.

[0:24:30]

Jordan Beck: Sure. As you mentioned, Sergeant Stubby is the most decorated canine hero in American history. And so we're really honored to have found this story and able to bring it to, audiences that might otherwise not get this piece of history. To see early 20th century history through the eyes of a dog, really expands the reach of the World War 1 Centennial commission's mission to honor and remember that time in American history. Stubby was small stray dog that just wandered onto the parade grounds at Yale University while the hundred and second infantry regimen also of the 26th Yankee Division, were training on the grounds of Yale. And this dog just adopted a soldier named Jay Robert Conroy. We have Logan Lerman voicing Conroy and the one who really takes Stubby under his wing. When you look at this history and you look at their story, you see that neither one of them would've survived the war without each other. We have Helena Bonham Carter voicing his elder sister Margaret. Now we realized early on in our process that we'd written a story that was devoid of a female character. You know, it was really about Stubby and the guys, so going back into our research, we discovered that Conroy was raised in large part by his elder sister Margaret. So we introduced Margaret as a character to help tell the story through letters and journals between her and her brother. And that really helps us in expanding this time We're really fleshing out this period in history for our kids and frankly for adults who don't understand what the country was like and what the world was like a hundred years ago. And then who better to voice the bond Vivanta a French Waloo soldier, who's been in the trenches for years before the Americans arrive, but takes Conroy and Stubby under his wing, who better to voice him than Francis most iconic living actors, Gerard Depardieu. So we have a great cast that's really bringing this to life and expanding those black and white photos that we all know into full CGI animated color that the entire family can appreciate and enjoy and learn from. The animation is actually being conducted by Mikros image. Mikros Image recently worked with Paramount on the little prints, and just completed Captain Underpants for Dreamworks. So we're going to have top quality world-class animation to do this, and our score is being composed by Patrick Doyle. Patrick Doyle is a two time Oscar nominee. He has 60 film credits to his name. He did Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire he did Bray for Pixar. So we're really excited about the role that music is going to play in bringing this history to life.

[0:26:57]

Teo Mayor: Jordan, I have an interesting question. You guys must've gone through a lot of discussion about whether Stubby was going to have a voice, does he?

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Jordan Beck: That is a fantastic question. We decided that because this is a historical film and while it is a work of historical fiction, we want to retain as much authenticity as possible. Stubby didn't actually talk in history. So we made

the decision that we aren't going to anthropomorphize Stubby to include a voice. So Stubby doesn't talk, but he is very expressive as dogs are. And really for Stubby to have done all of those heroic actions in history, he didn't have to say gas, gas, gas. He developed his own method of communication that the men of the one World War 2nd were able to understand. They could look at Stubby and realize, Oh wow, gas attack incoming or incoming shells, because he could hear ordinances as it was flying through the air. So we wanted to keep that level of authenticity and really allow the historical Stubby's method of communication to be part of this animated film.

[0:27:59]

Teo Mayor: That's great. So Jordan, thank you very much for joining us.

[0:28:02]

Jordan Beck: Thank you very much.

[0:28:06]

Teo Mayor: May 3,-Episode #18. From the Buzz. Moss is mostly good with Catherine Achy.

[0:28:13]

Catherine Achy: Finally, I wanted to point out the single most popular article we posted on Facebook the past week, about an unsung hero of the war that saved thousands and thousands of lives; Moss. During the war, sepsis was prevalent and an incredible problem for medics. By December 1915, a British report warned that the thousands of wounded men were threatening to exhaust the material for bandages, but ultimately there just wasn't enough cotton, a substance that was already in high demand for uniforms. So a Scottish surgeon, Botanists Duo, had an idea; stuff the wounds full of moss. Yes, moss the plant, peat moss to be exact. Today this tiny little plant is known for its use in horticulture and Biofuel, not to mention its starring role in preserving thousands of years old bog bodies. But humans have used it for at least a thousand years to help heal their injuries. Read more about the role of moss in healthcare in the last thousand years and during the war at Smithsonian magazine's article, how humble moss healed the wounds of thousands in World War 1.

[0:29:22]

Teo Mayor: May 10 -Episode #19 100 years ago this week for Mother's Day. Mother's in World War 1. Mothers always play a special and difficult role in war, and World War 1 is certainly no exception. Let's take a look. The motherhood image plays a key role in America's recruitment campaigns. The war propaganda artists use mother figures to remind young men of their duty to their country and family. And to assure them that, their mothers and their wives will be very proud of them if they become soldiers. One notable poster shows a mother and a wife embracing a newly minted recruit with the slogan, they're proud of you. Be proud of yourself. Another shows a mother inviting a reluctant young man forward with a slogan. Go. It's your duty lad. Join today. Mothers are the home front resource managers. They are the fundraisers for the war effort, promoting war bonds and raising money with bake sales and raffles and all the while they conserve. They keep the family home and the life going under sharp rationing of essential goods. And they're filling in and all sorts of places as American men take up soldiery. Mothers are the healers as they nurse the wounded. At World War 1, Red Cross propaganda poster shows a caring nurse with the slogan, the greatest mother in the world, and they're also healers in another way. The devastating loss of life in world War 1 leaves many mothers with the heartbreaking task of mourning and memorializing their dead. One of the memorial symbols is the gold star. Families are hanging popular Man in Service Flags in their windows. Red, white, and a blue star. Mourning mother's cover that blue star with gold fabric, symbolizing their loss. Women are encouraged to forego the traditional mourning garb in favor of a simpler black armband with a gold star. Woodrow Wilson refers to these women as the gold star mothers. Moving forward 10 years to 1928. The organization, American Gold Star Mothers is founded. To this day, mothers who have lost a child in military service, wear a gold star pin to honor their deceased. Moving forward to the present, we addressed the difficult conflict of motherhood and war during the commission's April 6 commemoration event in sacrifice for liberty and peace, with a medley sung and counterpoint. Here is Chrissy Poland with America Here's my Boy counterpoint with Ramona Dunlap with I Didn't Raise My Boy to be a Soldier. On Mother's Day, to mothers of soldiers everywhere we salute you. And we thank you for bearing your gold star burden. June 6th-Episode #23 Commission News. A brief mission profile from commission executive director, Dan Dayton.

[0:35:32]

Dan Dayton: I'm Dan Dayton, the executive director of the World War 1 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 1. First is really to inspire a national conversation about World War 1. 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 1 memorial in Washington DC. There is no memorial to those who were lost and who sacrificed so much in World War 1 here in the nation's capital. We're going to build one at Pershing Park and 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 lower case. Or you can text a couple of bucks if you would. Text WW1 to 41444 thanks. Enjoy the show.

[0:36:51]

Teo Mayor: Also June 6-Episode #23 Special Feature George Colin's Over There turns 100. With Richard Rubin and Jonathan Bratton. The George M. Cohen Song Over There, turns 100. Over There became America's favorite anthem of World War 1, and one of the country's great patriotic anthems overall. And as you'll probably discover from today's podcast, the hook really sticks in your head. And as a special treat, today we're launching our new segment, the storyteller and the historian with Richard Rubin and Jonathan Bratton, talking about Cohen Song Over There.

[0:37:44]

Richard Reuben: Greetings. This is Richard Reuben Storyteller, the author of *The Last of The Doughboys* and *Back Over There*.

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Jonathan .B.: And this is Jonathan Breton, historian.

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Richard Reuben: 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 call Over There, not only the greatest American war song ever written, but one of the greatest American songs ever written in that period. And I really do believe that. The tease 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. And it was written, as I said by George M Cohan who was probably at that point, America's most famous song writer. In fact, his career was already on the decline. His golden age was the first decade of the 20th century when he was unknown for songs like I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy and You Are 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, was really the leader of that family on stage. He'd been dealt some bad cards in the previous year. His beloved father had passed away, and then his sister, who's only in her forties, suddenly fell ill and lay dying. George Cohan heard about this when he was out on Long Island and boarded the train immediately to race into the city to be by her side. But by the time he got there, she'd already passed away. And so by early 1917, his career was on the decline. He was dealing with some personal tragedies and possibly a bit of depression. And then the United States enters World War 1 on April 6th. Then 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. And the rhythm of the wheels on the track gave him the rhythm of this song and the words Over There just came to him and he wrote it in a hurry. The song became much more, I think, than a sensation for a lot of people. That song was World War 1. 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 \$25,000 hit song" And there's a copy of a check written for 25 thousands to George M Cohan from the publisher, Leo Feist. That song would go on to sell 2 million copies, which may not sound like a lot, but remember, first of all, the population of the United States at that time was about a hundred million, less than a third of what it is now. And previously, the biggest selling song of recent times was an anti war song. I Didn't Raise My Boy to be a Soldier, came out in 1915 and sold an astonishing 650,000 copies.

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Jonathan .B.: And really he picked the perfect time for such a release because, American population at the time, one of the primary ways that they got their news, one of the primary ways that they shared culture was through the songs. And 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. And so, as the war department and as the US government is trying to drum up support for entrance into World War 1, all of a sudden this song takes on a type of character that you could compare it almost to some of the old civil war songs like the, *The Battle Hymn of The Republic* or something like that that galvanizes an entire population into a war effort.

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Richard Reuben: 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 song. Over There is quite lively. You know, you're exactly right that songs back then were news. That's where song writers 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 great war, but there's absolutely nothing ambivalent about Over There. And I would say that that song changed a great many minds.

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Teo Mayor: And that was our new segment, the storyteller and the historian with Richard Reuben and Jonathan Bratton. June, 14 2017-Episode #24. Spotlight in the media. Three theories on why wonder woman was set in World War 1. In our spotlight on the media, the headline reads, Wonder woman smashes domestic box office record for female directors. So on the one hand we have a hit movie, but on the other hand we have kind of a little mystery. The Wonder Woman in DC comic book issue one, that came out on July 22nd, 1942, was originally set in World War II. But the summers early blockbuster is set in world war I. We had to ask why. So we put another one of our commissions intrepid summer interns, Paul Burke Holser to chasing down the mystery, and here's the story. Theory 1, from IGN interview with producer Charles Robin. Robin said that the film was set in World War 1 because it adds a culture shock aspect for Diana, the main character, Wonder Woman. Diana romanticizes war and trains and hand to hand combat. She believes that combat is an honorable competition between warriors. World War 1, Robin explains, was the first major conflict where the combatants didn't even see the people that they were killing. In the film. World War 1 introduces the extreme suffering of modern warfare to Wonder Woman, driving her to seek a solution. A second theory, the film makers wanted to set themselves apart from their rivals at Marvel Comics with characters like Captain America, who story is set in World War II. And theory three comes from Breitbart, putting forth the theory that World War 1 sets a more politically correct agenda. The writer who wrote the article in January of this year, predicted that the film would be strongly anti war and that World War 1 would be a better foil for that because World War II had such clear villains like Hitler. I don't know about that. When I saw the film last weekend, I didn't feel that it was much of a political statement at all. It just seemed like a really well-made summer blockbuster, a real fun ride and entertainment, and a really strong female lead. What do you think? And if one of the people from the film, here at this podcast, we'd love to know the truth. June 14 -Episode #24 International report. The violin of private Howard. This week in our international report comes a wonderful story about two young British men, and the violin that brought them together across a century. Private Richard Howard began making his violin before the outbreak of World War 1, planning to finish it on his return. Sadly, he died in the fighting on the first day of The Battle of Messines Ridge in June of 1917. The violin passed from person to person being put together and finished over the course of decades. It wound up in Sam Sweeney's hands, a British folk musician who somehow knew that it was something special. Inside the violin, there was a date 1915 and Private Howard's name. Sweeney tracked down the young soldier and his descendants. In a recent ceremony, Sweeney played the soldiers violin at his grave as Howard's family looked on. The family hadn't known much of anything about Howard, his granddaughter saying, "I know nothing at all about my grandfather. I was very interested to learn about him because I had heard nothing except, your grandfather died in the war. People in those days didn't talk about it for fear of upsetting someone. My mother Rose was 11 when he died. I have to say the news when it got to me just blew me away." Sweeney to tell the instrument's unique story in his show made in the great war, which he's touring across the United Kingdom. Thank you for having joined us for our World War 1 Centennial News New Year Special. Our favorites of 2017 part one. Join us next week for part two. Happy New Year to all of you for 2018 and for 1918 from the whole team at World War 1 Centennial News. World War 1 Centennial News is brought to you by the US World War 1 Centennial commission and our founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. Special thanks to the show's line producer Catherine, achy researcher Eric Mar, plus our many wonderful guests, contributors, and a rolling team of interns. I'm your host, Teo Mayor. Thank you for listening. The US World War 1 Centennial Commission was created by Congress to honor, commemorate, and educate about World War 1. Our programs are to inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War 1. We're bringing the lessons of 100 years ago into today's classrooms and we're helping to restore World War 1 memorials in communities of all sizes across our country. And of course, we're building America's National World War 1 memorial in Washington DC. Thank you to the commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military museum and library for their support. This podcast can be found on our website at ww1cc.org/cn. On iTunes and Google play at WW1 Centennial News. And on Amazon Echo or other Alexa enabled devices. Just say, Alexa, play WW1 Centennial News podcast. Our Twitter and Instagram handles are both @WW1CC, and we're on Facebook at WW1 Centennial. So long.

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