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10 speakers (Theo Mayer, J. Cooper, Jr., Dr. Ed Lengel, Mike Shuster, Joe Weishaar, Peter Jackson, Rich Hively, Dave Casebolt, David O'Neal, Katherine Akey)

[0:00:09]

Theo Mayer: Welcome to World War 1 Centennial News, episode number 56. It's about World War 1, then. What was happening 100 years ago this week. And it's about World War 1 now. News and updates about the Centennial and the commemoration. Today is January 26th, 2018, and our guests for this week include, John Milton Cooper Jr., giving deeper insight into President Woodrow Wilson; Dr. Ed Lengel, with our new segment, America Emerges: Military Stories from World War 1; Mike Shuster, from the Great War Project Blog: Looking at Growing Discontent in Europe; Joe Weishaar, in Our Century in the Making: An Eagle Scout's Perspective; Rich Hively and Mayor Dave Casebolt, from the World War I Memorial Restoration Effort in the city of Nitro, West Virginia; David O'Neal and the restoration of a World War I anti-tank gun; and Katherine Akey, with some selections from the Centennial of World War I in social media. All that and more this week on World War I Centennial News, which is brought to you by the US World War I Centennial Commission, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, and the Starr Foundation. I'm Theo Mayer, the Chief Technologist for the Commission, and your host. Welcome to the show. Woodrow Wilson, an academic and learned man, President of Princeton University from 1902 to 1910, a progressive Democrat seeking and winning the governorship of New Jersey, then running for and being elected to his first term as President of the United States in 1912, two years before the War broke out in Europe. His progressive agenda and his accomplishments in his first term are near-legendary. His personal life is equally dynamic, losing his first wife to illness in 1914, and barely more than a year later, remarrying while still in office. By his second term campaign in 1916, the War in Europe was in full swing. The Germans had sunk the Lusitania, and Wilson ran for office on a platform of America first, and he kept us out of war. Within months of being sworn into a second term, he leads the nation to war, and into an unprecedented transformation politically, legally, economically, socially, and internationally. Wilson takes broad powers and wields sledgehammer transformations. Nationalizes industries, quashes freedoms, and when Congress does not do his bidding, uses executive orders to move his nation into the war effort. Earlier this month, 100 years ago, Wilson presents an agenda for a new international world order, his 14 points, instantly thrusting America into a new role as a world leader. With this as an overview, let's jump into our way-back machine and go back 100 years to the 3rd week of January, 1918, in the War that Changed the World. It's mid-January, 1918. With the Wilson administration taking vast power into the executive branch, some in Congress seek to rein in his power. One such incident takes place this week. Dateline: January 20, 1918. A headline in the New York Times reads, "War Cabinet Bill Ready for Senate to Give Control to Council of Three. Backing Chamberlain's Stand, Senate Military Committee Demands Reorganization of War Work." So, this is what was happening. Oregon's Democratic senator, George Earle Chamberlain, who serves on the Senate Military Affairs Committee, makes a speech in New York and states, "The military establishment of America has fallen down because of inefficiencies in every bureau and department of the government of the United States." And he introduces a bill into the Senate that would retake the war powers of the executive in the cabinet, and put them back into the legislative branch; specifically, the Senate. The White House and Wilson administration fires back. Dateline: January 22, 1918. From the headlines of the official bulletin, The Government's War Gazette, published by George Creel at the order of the President. "President Wilson Answers Criticism by Senator Chamberlain Concerning Departmental Management of War, Claims He was Not Consulted on Proposed Legislation." And the story includes, "When President Wilson's attention was called to a speech made by Senator Chamberlain at a luncheon in New York on Saturday, he immediately inquired of Senator Chamberlain whether he had been correctly reported, and upon ascertaining from the senator that he had been, the President felt it his duty to make the following statement:" "Senator Chamberlain's statement as to the present inaction and ineffectiveness of the government is an astonishing and absolutely unjustifiable distortion of the truth. As a matter of fact, the War Department has performed a task of unparalleled magnitude and difficult with extraordinary promptness and efficiency. There have been delays and disappointments and partial miscarriages of plans, all of which have been drawn into the foreground and exaggerated by the investigations which have been in progress since the Congress assembled investigators. These drew indispensable officials of the Department constantly away from their work and officers away from their commands, and contributed a great deal to such delay and confusion as has inevitably arisen. But by comparison with what has been accomplished, these things, much as they were to be regretted, were insignificant, and no mistake has been made which has been repeated." President Wilson closes with, "My concassation and constant conference with the Secretary of War have taught me to regard him as one of the ablest public officials I have ever known. It will soon be learned whether he or his critics understand the business at hand. To say, as Senator Chamberlain did, that there is inefficiency in every department and bureau of the government is to show such ignorance of actual conditions as to make it impossible to attach any importance to his statement. I am bound to infer that the statements spraying out of opposition to the administration's whole policy rather than out of any serious intention to reform its practices." President Woodrow Wilson. President Woodrow Wilson is truly one of the most remarkable leaders this nation has ever had, and in order to help us know him better,

we've invited John Milton Cooper, Jr., an American historian, author, educator, and former Senior Scholar at the Wilson Center, to speak with us today. Welcome, John.

[0:08:08]

J. Cooper, Jr.: Hi. Glad to be here.

[0:08:09]

Theo Mayer: John, Woodrow Wilson is considered one of the greatest American Presidents ever. Was he, and why?

[0:08:16]

J. Cooper, Jr.: Well, yes, I do think he was. In fact, I'm kind of surprised in these polls of various historians and people who rate the Presidents, that they generally don't tend to rate Wilson higher. They rate him a little bit below his great rival, Theodore Roosevelt, and I don't agree with that. Just think about what all happened during his administration. He's one of the great legislative presidents. He ranks right up there with FDR and LBJ for putting through a huge and important domestic program. The Federal Reserve, of course, is the keystone of that, which has got the income tax, you've got the first ever Child Labor law, you've got a whole bunch of things, and, of course, the nomination of Louis Brandeis to the Supreme Court. And then, he took us into World War I, and he won his war. Also, a little plug for my own profession, but he's the only PhD, and only professional academic, who's ever become President, and I think that was very important to his success. I think it was very important to the kind of tone that he gave to the office.

[0:09:25]

Theo Mayer: So John, Wilson seems like a bundle of contrasting ideas. He campaigns with, "He kept us out of war," but then leads the nation to war. He wants America to fight for freedom and liberty as he nationalizes industries and gags dissent and attacks Freedom of Speech. So the question is, how do all of these contrasting ideas reconcile?

[0:09:46]

J. Cooper, Jr.: I think the contrast is more apparent than real. Wilson definitely did not want to take the United States into World War I. He really didn't. One point, he was talking off the record to a sympathetic journalist, and he said, "If there is any alternative, for God's sake, let's take it." That, "He kept us out of war," that actually referred to Mexico, because the danger of getting into war in Europe had actually receded. Wilson had confronted the Germans over the submarine, and they backed down in the Spring of 1916. So the bigger danger was war in Mexico, and his Republican opposition was quite hawkish and wanted war there, and he really refused to do that. By the way, what he said was, "The world must be made safe for democracy." He didn't say, "We must make the world safe for democracy." Because he didn't believe we could do it, or certainly not by ourselves. The repression of civil liberties during World War I is really the greatest, single blot on his presidency, and it's a strange one, because he predicted that it would happen, that he didn't want it to happen. He was very sensitive on that. Part of it was he let his cabinet members have their head a little too much. Both the attorneys general and the postmaster general went after various dissenters, and he realized that this was happening and, eventually, belatedly, he started to rein it in. But by that time, the War was just about over. So that's the great, great blot there. He had this very prim image, which is namely from his still photographs. If you ever see any newsreels of him, he's actually a rather lively sort, very expressive, and he comes over as a very, very, but certainly controlled sort of fellow. Well, he was controlled, but he was also very passionate about many things. I think he's a deep man, but not a complicated, or not a contradictory one.

[0:11:52]

Theo Mayer: So this is a man who had a huge affect on the nation and, indeed, on the world. So what would you say his most remarkable achievement was as a president?

[0:12:01]

J. Cooper, Jr.: If you only could pick out the single one, funny you should ask that, because we had just observed the Centennial of the 14 Points. That was January 8th, 1918. This was the speech where he laid out war aims, and basically, what he did was he set out a plan for what would be a generous and non-punitive peace. He was also holding something up to the Germans and saying, "Look, this is what you can get in the way of a peace. This is pretty good. You sure you don't want to take this up?" Well, they didn't, originally. But in the Fall of 1918, when our troops really came in and they saw that the game was up, they then sued for peace on the basis of the 14 Points. They approach Wilson. Not the other Allied Leaders. Wilson, himself. And Wilson took the ball and ran with it, and made the Allies, committed the other Allies to it. What he did was, he shortened the War. He shortened the War, certainly, by months. The Allied war plans called for an invasion of Germany in 1919, and the bulk of the fighting was going to be done by us, by our Doughboys, because the British and French were really, really exhausted. Think about what that would have meant, and all you have to do is look at 1944 and 1945, what the fighting in Europe was. Particularly, what it took to conquer Germany. Think about a war like that in 1919. And, by the way, the Bolsheviks had left. The Germans didn't have an Eastern Front anymore. They could fight, they could put all of their forces, and did put all of

their forces, on the Western Front. This would have been a bloodbath, and terribly destructive. Wilson saved hundreds of thousands, maybe even a few million, lives by doing that. He shortened the War. That, I think, was his greatest, greatest achievement. He shortened that War. He really shortened that War. And, again, I think all you have to do is look at the last year or so of World War II to see what we were spared.

[0:14:01]

Theo Mayer: John, as we hear the ongoing story of World War I on this podcast, what else should we understand about Wilson to help us keep it all, and him, in context?

[0:14:11]

J. Cooper, Jr.: Okay. Again, I'm going to go back to the plug for my profession. This man was a student of politics. In fact, he's one of the great academic political scientists of US history. He really had great insights into the way political systems, especially our own, work. And what he did was, he took what he had learned, and the insights and the approaches that he had developed as an academic, and he put them into practice. Now, this was a guy who got a chance to practice what he'd been preaching, teaching and preaching for several decades. And it's, I think, certainly, in US history, and I'm not sure I can find an example in other history, an example that really commends the study of politics as a preparation for the practice of politics. I mean, this guy, this is wonderful. Today, and no political plugs here, we seem to devalue the role of intellect and the role of ideas in politics, and I think that's a great mistake. And I think one of the reasons... One of the reasons; several reasons... That we're in such a political pickle now is that we don't appreciate it. And, certainly, Wilson was the example of this.

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Theo Mayer: Thank you, John.

[0:15:32]

J. Cooper, Jr.: Okay. Thank you.

[0:15:33]

Theo Mayer: John Milton Cooper, Jr., is an American historian, author and educator. Links to his biography of President Wilson, and to the Wilson Center, are in the podcast notes. This week in the War in the Sky, we want to introduce you to General Billy Mitchell, a pretty extraordinary man. As World War I broke out, Billy Mitchell recognized the importance of aviation. So, in 1916, he learned to fly on his own nickel. Heading to Europe on January 20th, 1918, Mitchell, now a colonel, was promoted to chief of the air services of the first army. Colonel Mitchell found himself in command of more than 1,500 British, French and American aircraft, the largest air force ever assembled. We'll learn more about this leader and flyer over the coming months, a man who became chief of the air services this month, 100 years ago, in the War in the Sky. See the podcast notes to learn more. Welcome to the second installment of our new series, America Emerges: Military Stories from World War I, with military historian, author and storyteller, Dr. Edward Lengel. Hi, Ed.

[0:16:52]

Dr. Ed Lengel: Hey. Glad to be on the show, Theo.

[0:16:54]

Theo Mayer: Ed, your story this week rolls us back to September, 1917, when American celebrated National Draft Day. Now, the Draft wasn't the most popular new law of the land, but in New York, there was a parade and a baseball game. Tell us the story.

[0:17:10]

Dr. Ed Lengel: So on September 4th, 1917, New York City celebrates probably the most lackluster, popular parade of the city's entire history. Thousands of men who have been drafted to serve in New York City's 77th Metropolitan Division have assembled across Manhattan, and they sort of March, because they haven't been trained at all yet, across Manhattan, and more actually kind of amble and look around and enjoy the sights and see what the city is like. And they're delighted to see Teddy Roosevelt, up on a grandstand, waving to them, and they wave back and they gather around him and shout and celebrate. But what they're really looking forward to is the baseball game, because they've all been given free tickets to go to the Polo Grounds and to see the Boston Braves play against the beloved New York Giants, both of which are very good teams. There are several future Major League Baseball Hall of Famers there, including Giants manager, John McGraw, and one of America's greatest athletes, a 30 year old pinch hitter, Jim Thorpe, also a Native American and also a football player. They get ready for the game. The Mayor of New York City, John Peyroux Mitchell, comes out to home plate and gives a short speech. He turns to the soldiers and the players, and he says, "Fight clean, fight fair, fight hard, and win." Well, they're ready to go, but, first, Harry Barnhart, who is the leader of New York City's Community Chorus, marches out to home plate, and he has decided everybody must sing patriotic songs before the game begins. And a groan wafts through the crowd, but he makes them sing

anyway, and they sing one song after another, after another, after another. By the time they get to the Star Spangled Banner, not only is the crowd no longer paying attention, but the ballplayers, including Jim Thorpe, are just standing around there, looking bored. And that's not good enough for Barnhart, so he turns to the players and demands that they begin to sing, too. Once again, it's one song after another, after another, and everybody's utterly sick of it. They just want the game to begin. Barnhart hears this chanting begin up in the stands, and he wonders what it is. What he assumes is just that they want more songs. But, in fact, they're simply thirsty. They've been gobbling free ham sandwiches all day, but they haven't had anything to drink, and they're chanting, "We want soda! We want soda!" Well, as it just so happens, there are a good number of Boy Scouts around, and Barnhart sends the Boy Scouts up into the stands with big baskets of soda pop, and the poor Boy Scouts get mobbed by the draftees, who take all the soda pop. And by that point, Barnhart is done and the game can finally begin. It doesn't start well. The Braves go ahead 2 - 0, but in the 8th inning, one of the Giants ballplayers gets a run off of a double. And so, it's a 2 - 1 game. The crowd, now, is getting excited. It's a good, close game; they're looking forward to the 9th inning. But, again, there's another interruption, as General Bell, who is the leader of the 77th Division, walks out to home plate and gives a long, incredibly dull speech about pest control. Well, that sucks the life out of the game. By the time General Bell finally leaves, the draftees are dejected, they're not really that interested in the game anymore, and, in any case, the Braves score another run and go ahead 3 - 1, and the soldiers shuffle out of the stadium with that kind of anti-climatic sendoff to training. It's a wonderful anecdote. It was, in many ways, an utterly hilarious day, from Teddy Roosevelt to this game, and it's one of the strangest games in Major League Baseball history.

[0:21:23]

Theo Mayer: So, Ed, what are you going to tell us about next week?

[0:21:26]

Dr. Ed Lengel: I'm going to tell you about another great spectacle in New York City, this one exactly 100 years ago, took place at New York City's Hippodrome, when, also troops of the 77th Division, but these are men who would go on to become part of the Lost Battalion, go on stage at the Hippodrome in front of a crowd of thousands of civilians, and demonstrate what they thought it would be like to fight on the Western Front, simulating trench warfare and all the rest. It was a great spectacle, and I look forward to telling that story.

[0:21:58]

Theo Mayer: Ed Lengel is an American military historian, author, and our new segment host for America Emerges: Military Stories from World War I. There are links in the podcast notes to Ed's post about baseball, and his website as an author. Now with us is Mike Shuster, former National Public Radio correspondent, and curator of the Great War Project Blog. Mike, your story this week is about how the War is being considered in Europe as we roll into 1918. What's the headline?

[0:22:30]

Mike Shuster: That's right. And the headline could read, "Americans Now in German Gun Sights. Sentiments Strong for Continued War and for Ending It. A New Theme Emerges: Blame the Jews." And this is special to the Great War Project. "The desire to continue the War, and the hope of ending it, were in conflict in every nation," so writes historian Martin Gilbert of the Balance of Sentiment in Europe a century ago. In public, at least, the moral imperative of victory was still being publicly asserted, and widely held. Britain has 2,000,000 men under arms, and it is planning to bring another 420,000, despite shortages in troops and equipment everywhere. Reports Gilbert, "Hunger and starvation at home were as much as an influence for war weariness as the killing." "A secret British report, based on a careful reading of British intercepted correspondence, revealed, "The decided increase in letters in favor of an immediate peace." This weariness is not confined to Britain. In Berlin, at nearly the same moment in Germany a century ago, reports Gilbert, "More than 400,000 went on strike, demanding peace. Within 48 hours, these strikes had spread to six other cities." The government reacts swiftly and firmly, declaring Martial Law in Berlin, Hamburg, and drafting many of the striking workers into the army. But the hunger that the British naval blockade had exacerbated could not be assuaged by Martial Law or compulsory service. Reports Gilbert, "Civilians were being forced to eat dogs and cats. Bread was made from a mixture of potato peelings and sawdust." "Wartime privations," writes historian Adam Hochschild, "inflamed an angry nationalism in Germany, producing a foretaste of the hysteria that, a quarter of a century later, would reach a climax of unimaginable proportions. Ominously making the fraudulent claim that Jews were shirking military duty, right-wing forces demanded, and won, a special census of Jews in the army. Anti-Semitic books, pamphlets and oratory proliferated." Gilbert observes, "By this time 100 years ago, the head of the pan German league was calling for a ruthless struggle against Jews. Nevertheless, there is more attempts to talk of negotiated peace. That sentiment emerges from Vienna, and words from both the Austrian foreign minister and the new German chancellor." Meanwhile, significant developments on the American side. On January 18th, a century ago, writes historian Gilbert, "A full American division, the first, entered the frontline. It had been sent there to gain experience of holding the line, and took no offensive action." As soon as the Germans discovered that Americans were opposite them, they tried to demoralize them, launching a raid on an American listening post, killing two soldiers, wounding two, and capturing one. Then they ambushed an American patrol in No Man's Land, killing four,

wounding two, and capturing two. "The inaction of the Americans causes much consternation on the American side, but they are still held back. At the same time, thanks to the Russian collapse, this leaves the Germans free to move more than 3,500,000 German troops," reports historian Norman Stone, "with the horses to keep matters mobile." In other words, the German superiority could be concentrated with a crushing effect at any single spot on the line. And that's the news this week from the Great War Project.

[0:26:02]

Theo Mayer: Mike Shuster from the Great War Project Blog. For videos on World War I, go see our friends at the Great War channel on YouTube. This week's new episodes include: Assassination Attempt on Lenin, and Central Powers Occupation of Italy, and British Pistols of World War I, and, finally, Road Trips: 2018. Next month, we've invited the host of the Great War Channel, Indy Neidell, to join us and talk about how hosting this YouTube channel for the past four years has affected him and his perspective on World War I. Meanwhile, follow the link in the podcast notes, or search for, "The Great War," on YouTube. It's time to fast forward into the present, with World War I Centennial News Now. This section isn't about history, but rather, it explores what's happening now to commemorate the Centennial of the War that Changed the World. In commission news, as we mentioned last week, the US Mint has released a special 2018 World War I commemorative silver dollar, but also, they created World War I service medallions commemorating the five military branches that fought in World War I, the Army, the Navy, the Marine Core, the brand new Air Core, later to become the Air Force, and the Coast Guard. These five special collector sets of commemorative silver dollar and service medallions are being minted in a very limited quantity, and the only time in history, ever, that you'll be able to buy them is between right now and February 20th, 2018. So you have less than a month to snag a piece of history with a collector set. Get one, get all five, but get them now. Go to ww1cc.org/coin, that's slash-c-o-i-n, or click the link in the podcast notes. Now, if you're listening to this podcast, clearly, you already have some interest or connection to the Centennial of World War I. This is the remembrance of the Centennial that you're going to want to keep and pass on to the next generation, but you have to do it right now. Thank you. It's time for our new 2018 segment, a Century in the Making: America's World War I Memorial in Washington, DC. As our regular listeners know, we're building a national World War I memorial at Pershing Park in the nation's capitol. It's a big project, and it's complicated, and it's hard, and it's been a long time coming. So in this segment, we're bringing you along on an insider's journey that explores this grand undertaking, the adventure, and the people behind it. Joe Weishaar is a brilliant, young visionary, who won the international design competition for this memorial, and he's also an Eagle Scout, a designation that just predates World War I. In fact, it turns out that the first Eagle Scout Award was given to a scout, Arthur Rose Eldred, in 1912. Now, Eldred actually goes on to join the Navy during World War I. He serves on convoys in the Atlantic, and on a submarine chaser in the Mediterranean, surviving, both, a sinking ship and the Spanish Flu. Last week, Joe spoke at the Boys Scouts' Annual Midwest Regional Fundraiser. As an Eagle Scout, himself, Joe helps us continue to strengthen the connection between the Boy Scout and World War I. Welcome, Joe.

[0:29:47]

Joe Weishaar: Hi, Theo. Thanks for having me back.

[0:29:48]

Theo Mayer: So, Joe, when you spoke at the event last week, was it Scouts, Scout leaders, or others? Who was the audience?

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Joe Weishaar: So it ended up being mostly Scout leaders, and I probably should've thought ahead. I was on Thursday, last week, so a lot of Scouts weren't able to get out of school.

[0:30:04]

Theo Mayer: How were you and your story received?

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Joe Weishaar: It was received very well. I was speaking at an event, both, in Joplin, Missouri, and in Pittsburgh, Kansas, and being from that area, I think my story resonates very well with troops and scouts in those regions, especially with the... I have the local connection, the heartland kind of country connection, and then, also, being a young person involved in this project.

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Theo Mayer: So, Joe, do you think your scouting experience influenced you, or prepared you in some way in entering and ultimately prevailing and winning the international design competition for the National World War I Memorial?

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Joe Weishaar: It definitely was probably one of the early challenges of my life, to get my Eagle Scout Award, and anybody who's been through that process, I think, knows how much work it really involves. My Eagle Scout project was my first architectural undertaking. At the time, it was one of those things where I didn't want to deal with a sitting organization ever again, because that was the hardest part. I just wanted to build things. Somehow, now, I've managed to find the biggest city organization in the country and deal with their process. So it's an interesting juxtaposition, to be sure.

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Theo Mayer: Joe, do you think that Scouts are aware of the connection of scouting in World War I?

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Joe Weishaar: Not as much as I think they should be. Some of the facts that I spewed off last week were new and surprising for people to hear. So the drives for collecting peach pits that went on in Georgia and across the South, the collection of different woods and things for things like propellers and gunstocks, and the selling of war bonds, I mean, was really the first kind of organized fundraiser that the Boy Scouts partook in.

[0:32:07]

Theo Mayer: Well, something interesting that came up this week in our research about World War I 100 years ago, let me read you an excerpt from the January 21st, 1918 issue of the New York Times. The headline read, "War Task for Boy Scouts. Will be Dispatch Bearers for Public Information Committee." And the story reads, "President Wilson has sent the following letter to Colin H. Livingstone, President of the Scouts National Council. My dear Mr. Livingstone, I desire to entrust the Boy Scouts of America with a new and important commission, to make them the government dispatch bearers in caring to the homes of their community the pamphlets on the War, prepared by the Committee for Public Information. The excellent service performed by the Boy Scouts in the past encourages me to believe that this new task will be cheerfully and faithfully discharged. Yours sincerely, President Woodrow Wilson." So, Joe, any thoughts or comments on the story?

[0:33:08]

Joe Weishaar: I think it's a great kind of fit for where we are now, because one of my goals I've been going to the regionals I had last week and getting to talk with Scouts and leaders, is to get them engaged and to participate in the Centennial. I think, through other podcasts, you guys have done a wonderful job of talking about some of our other programs, like the 100 Cities 100 Memorials program, our Stories of Service, the Memorial Hunters, those different efforts, and the Boy Scouts were really a natural fit for those types of programs. So I love it with that article, that even 100 years ago, people were looking for ways to get the youth of this country involved and participating in the wartime efforts.

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Theo Mayer: Joe, great to have you on the show again.

[0:33:59]

Joe Weishaar: Yeah. Thanks for having me. I look forward to coming back.

[0:34:02]

Theo Mayer: Joe Weishaar is the winning designer of the international design competition for the National World War I Memorial in Washington, DC. The design lead for the project, and an Eagle Scout. We're going to continue to bring you an insider's view of the stories about the epic undertaking to create America's World War I Memorial in our nation's capitol. Learn more at ww1cc.org/memorial or follow the link in the podcast notes. And now for our feature, Speaking World War I, where we explore the words and phrases that are rooted in the War. Soldiers in war treasure the personal effects that they carry with them into battle. Photographs of loved ones, letters from home, trench art they might've spent hours creating, cigarettes and souvenirs found on the battlefield. It's their precious connection to the other reality. Now in the heat of battle, it's easy to misplace or lose your trinkets, especially when a soldier is wounded and gets moved from the front by stretcher bearers or other men of the medical services. For the British in World War I, with typical, English dry humor, they renamed their Royal Army Medical Corps, the RAMC, to Rob All My Comrades. They gave a similar treatment to their mail services, the Royal Engineers Postal Service, the REPS. They got recast as postal pilferers, with R-E-P-S equaling Rob Every Poor Soldier. It's trench humor. Rob All My Comrades, and Rob Every Poor Soldier; recast acronyms from the trenches of World War I, and this week's Speaking World War I phrases. See the podcast notes to learn more. For our Spotlight in the Media section, we have an exciting story this week. England's Imperial War Museum has teamed up with famed director Peter Jackson and asked him how he would tell the story of World War I. The director of the Lord of the Rings trilogy took on the challenge and announced a new project this week. Here's Peter Jackson, speaking about telling the story of World War I in a new and innovative way.

[0:36:15]

Peter Jackson: I'm really excited to talk to you about a new project I've been working on with 1418 now and the Imperial War Museum. The Imperial War Museum approached me a couple of years ago, and they asked me what could be done with their original first World War footage. In a way, just sort of present it in a way that hadn't really been seen before, and I thought about all the digital technology that exists today, and can we restore that footage and make it look new and make it look sharp, and in a way that goes way beyond what has ever been done before? So we did some tests and the results were... I mean, they really surprised me. They were unbelievable. We can make this grainy, flickery kind of spit-out footage look like it was shot in the last week or two. It looks like it was shot by high definition cameras, it's so sharp and clear now. And so, we are making a film. We're making a film, not the usual film that you would expect on the first World War. We're making a film that shows this incredible footage, which the faces of the men just jump out at you, it's the faces, it's the people, that come to life in this film. It's the human beings that were actually there, that were thrust into this extraordinary situation that defined their lives in many cases. And we also, accompanying these restored images, we have gone through about 600 hours of audio interviews with our veterans in the 1960s, '70s, '80s. We have made a movie which is to show the experience of what it was like to fight in this War. Not strategy, battles; we don't talk about any historical aspects of the war particularly. We just talk about the social and the human experience of being in the War. And it's actually amazed me, what some of these people, or what some of the veterans, I mean, their interviews, I've never heard before, and they talk about it in a way that's surprising. We have a sort of a cliched version of the War. I guess we now, 100 years later, we have made up our own minds what the first World War was like, but I think it's going to be very surprising when you listen to the voices of the men that fought the War and were there and experienced it, had to live it, what they had to eat, how they slept at night, how they coped with the fear. That, combined with these incredibly sharp images, is going to I think be quite a surprising film. I look forward to getting this film finished as a contribution to the Centennial of the first World War, and I'm very excited about it.

[0:38:47]

Theo Mayer: Follow the link in the podcast notes to see some example footage of what Peter Jackson was talking about, and to learn more about the project. Moving on to our 100 Cities 100 Memorials segment, about the \$200,000 matching grant challenge to rescue and focus on our local World War I memorials. This week, we're profiling the Living Memorial to World War I in the city of Nitro, West Virginia. They're currently in the running for a round two grant. With us, to tell us about their city and their World War I project, are Rich Hively, the President of the Nitro Historic Commission, and Dave Casebolt, Mayor of the city of Nitro. Welcome, gentlemen.

[0:39:30]

Rich Hively: Thank you, Theo. We appreciate the opportunity.

[0:39:32]

Theo Mayer: Mayor Casebolt, why do you call the city of Nitro a living memorial to World War I, and where did the name, Nitro, come from?

[0:39:40]

Rich Hively: Well, let me tell you. In 1917, shortly after the War began, the Senate passed the Deficiency Appropriations Act. That was on October the 6th, of 1917. This Act allowed for the dealing of three large gunpowder plants capable of producing about 500,000 pounds a day. So they immediately sent engineers out, looking for an area to build these plants, and the first location they selected was an area just a little bit west of Charleston, West Virginia. They passed this Act on October the 6th, and a little bit over two months later, they're breaking ground to build a gunpowder producing complex. And it went from farmland to farm prospects and employed over 100,000 people. So it literally became a boom town.

[0:40:31]

Theo Mayer: And how did it get the name Nitro?

[0:40:34]

Rich Hively: Well, Nitro, most people think of nitroglycerine, but that's incorrect. The name Nitro comes from nitrocellulose, which is the main ingredient in gunpowder. There were several names suggested for the city when it was started in 1917. One of them was actually Redwop, which is Powder spelled backwards. I'd hate to be called the city of Redwop, so I'm thankful we are the city of Nitro, from nitrocellulose, the main ingredient in gunpowder.

[0:41:02]

Theo Mayer: Rich, what are you proposing for the 100 Cities 100 Memorials program?

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Dave Casebolt: Well, Nitro has had a museum since 1982. You know, we are a military community. We're only here because of World War I, and we want to recognize that. We've had a museum of some sort since 1982. It's small. It got smaller, then it got bigger, back and forth. We are now left with a 400,000 foot facility. We have a lot of military archives, city of Nitro archives. We need some additional items, like mannequins and display cases, things like that, that we can present what we have appropriately. We really have some great things in the museum, but we really need to improve on how we present those in our exhibit. That's what we are asking for in the grant that we proposed.

[0:41:59]

Rich Hively: Nitro's really proud of its history. We have actually contracted with an engineering group that is going to present to us, next week, a beautification plan that incorporates our history. When you think of Tombstone, Arizona, you think of a Western town. We want people, when they think of Nitro, West Virginia, we want them thinking of a World War I town. Everything we are doing in town encompasses our history. Every event we have, we bring our history into it. We are creating a sense of place for our children that live here, a strong identity making them a part of our community. So when they leave this community, they will always talk about Nitro. We are very proud of that history.

[0:42:47]

Theo Mayer: Well, it sounds like a fascinating place. And if I come to the city of Nitro, what will my experience be?

[0:42:54]

Rich Hively: Well, that's what we are in the process of creating now. Like I said, we have built our Living Memorial Park. All of our advertising, all of our marketing for our city includes our history, so we are starting to create that identity. And as I said, we will be bringing in this beautification plan that is going to bring the whole community together to execute this plan. It'll be a plan that will take five to ten years to complete, but it'll improve our businesses and our citizens on one focal point of making Nitro a World War I community. So in the future, we are going to create that when you're driving by Nitro, you're going to know it's a World War I community. We're already doing that now. We're doing a good job of that now. But you're going to be able to live it when you come into town. There will be World War I memorabilia, things that people can see. We already have setup street signs, all of our street signs down First Avenue have a World War I soldier on it, a Doughboy soldier in the sign. So everything we're doing in this town is to remind people of our history. We believe that's going to help bring business in. It's what makes us unique. Nitro, fortunately, has that history that no town even close to us has. We have that World War I history, and most towns were just formed and have very little history to go back on. So we have this strong history and we're starting to use it and we're starting to market it. That is what we are working toward.

[0:44:29]

Theo Mayer: Gentlemen, thank you so much for being with us today.

[0:44:32]

Rich Hively: Thank you. We appreciate the opportunity.

[0:44:34]

Theo Mayer: Rich Hively is President of the Nitro Historic Commission, and Dave Casebolt is the Mayor of the city of Nitro, West Virginia. Learn more about the 100 Cities 100 Memorials project by following the link in the podcast notes. This week, we're launching another new segment for 2018: World War I War Tech. We frequently come across technology from the War that's utterly fascinating, and we'd like to share some of these technological curiosities with you. Not just weapons, but also medical, communications, and other tech that sprang up at the time. But today, it's all about a bigger-than-an-elephant-gun, shoulder-fired, German behemoth designed to shoot tanks. With us, is David L. O'Neal, creator of the World War I Preservation Collection, who recently finished restoring this 1918 tankgewehr, or tank gun. David, welcome.

[0:45:33]

David O'Neal: Greetings, Theo. How you doing?

[0:45:35]

Theo Mayer: I'm doing well, thanks. So to start, before we get on to this mean Mauser, how did you get into restoring World War I era machinery?

[0:45:43]

David O'Neal: I've been collecting World War I artifacts for about the past 40 year. I created the World War I Preservation Collection to share the collections online. I occasionally run into very poor conditioned artifacts, and my background is in design engineering, designed experimental equipment for aircraft in flight tests. So I have an

extended knowledge of materials, paints, metallurgy, wood repair and skills of that nature. So it naturally falls into line for restoration work. And then, of course, with my background in collecting and history, it all just kind of falls in line.

[0:46:24]

Theo Mayer: David, tell us about this 1918 Mauser. How did you come across the one that you're restoring, and what makes this a unique and special tech of the era?

[0:46:32]

David O'Neal: Well, I came across this particular gun, it was in a house fire, and it was badly burned. All that was left of this gun, serial number 5043, was just the metal components. I'd say probably 80% of the metal components were still there, but that's all there was. The 1918 Mauser is an important gun in World War I history, just because it's the world's first anti-tank gun. It came about because of the British attack on Cambrai, November of 1917. It was the British first assault using multi-tanks, and it surprised the Germans so badly, that they had to come up with a way to fight off the tank. What they did was they built the Mauser tankgewehr around an existing anti-tank round called the TuF round. It's T-U-F, and it stands for, "Tank und Flieger," which is, "Tank and Aircraft." The Germans were in development of a combination anti-tank, anti-aircraft gun. They had developed the round for it, but this particular machine gun wasn't going to come out until very late in the War, and so they needed a stopgap measure, so they created the tankgewehr, "Tank gun," as you said earlier, and it was rushed and put into production to take on the British and French tanks.

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Theo Mayer: Well, I understand they ultimately made 15,000 of them.

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David O'Neal: It was only made in 1918. So, yes, it's a lot of guns for the short period of time, but, ultimately, in numbers as compared to the rest of the weapons that were made during the War, it's just a blip.

[0:48:13]

Theo Mayer: So this gun, just describing it for a moment, sort of is stands shoulder-high. It just looks like a giant blowup. On your website, we see a lot of images of the gun at every stage of repair or rebuild. Can you tell us a little bit about the process? And did you use any high tech to restore the World War I tech?

[0:48:31]

David O'Neal: Yeah, yeah, we did. Some of the metal pieces that were missing, like the front sight, and there was a recoil lug inside, we used 3D modeling. Basically, had to get original components, measure those, and then recreate them in the CAD world, computer-aided drafting. So we made 3D models of those, and then, once we had those, drawings were created of those parts, and then they were sent out to machine shops so they could be manufactured. Once I got those parts back, we were able to replace those back into the gun. The gunstock, all the wooden components, were burned away. We didn't have those anymore. And a fellow collector, Hayes Otoupalik, out of Missoula, Montana, he graciously allowed us to copy his original tankgewehr stock, and we sent it off to a replicator, and they actually replicated a brand new stock out of the original material, which was ash, and we fitted the gun components back into the new stock and started our recreation from there.

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Theo Mayer: So what happens to the Mauser now?

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David O'Neal: It stays in the World War I Preservation Collection, because it's such a rare piece. Now, 100 years later, I would venture to say that there's probably less than 500 of these that still exist in the world today. So it's going to stay in the World War I Preservation Collection. But I would be open to putting the gun on loan to museums, so they could show it, and it could be regional if anybody wanted to contact me and take it out on loan.

[0:50:04]

Theo Mayer: Okay, last question. What's your next project?

[0:50:07]

David O'Neal: I just finished this project, so I don't have anything lined up yet; however, there's a lot of artillery monuments that are out there, that a lot of these artillery pieces have been sitting outside for the past 100 years after World War I, and a lot of them are in great need of restoration. They're covered with a quarter-inch of paint; they just don't look like they used to back in World War I. I wouldn't mind taking on some of those, if I can find particular monument pieces that I could do. And then, I would always be interested in restoring a World War I motorcycle, like a Harley or an Indian motorcycle into, like, a dispatch rider from World War I. Yeah, that'd be really cool to do.

[0:50:48]

Theo Mayer: That sounds great. That does sound great. Well, I thank you for coming on and telling us about this giant beast of a gun, and good luck with your projects.

[0:50:57]

David O'Neal: Thanks for having me, Theo.

[0:50:59]

Theo Mayer: David L. O'Neal is the creator of the World War I Preservation Collection. Learn more about the collection and view images of the tankgewehr restoration by following the link in the podcast notes. And that brings us to The Buzz, the Centennial of World War I this week in social media with Katherine Akey. Katherine, what did you pick for us this week?

[0:51:22]

Katherine Akey: Hey, Theo. Both of our stories this week take us down into the trenches. First, we'll head over to Atlas Obscura to an article we shared this week about a rare example of a well-preserved World War I trench. The trench is part of the British lines in Sanctuary Wood, also known as Hill 62. The Belgian farmer who once owned the land, and returned to it after the War, chose to leave the trenches as he found them. Sanctuary Wood now operates as a memorial and museum, and when you visit, you can climb down into the ruins of the original trenches, and the museum includes many items the farmer found and collected over the years on his property. Rifles, German steel helmets riddled with bullets, and a collection of period stereoscope photographs of the battlefield. You can see images of the trenches, dugouts and shell holes at Sanctuary Wood by visiting the link in the podcast notes. Lastly for the week, we'll head to Kent, Ohio, where schoolchildren recently got a very hands-on lesson about World War I. Armed with homemade cardboard pistols, rifles and machine guns, and a few snowballs here and there, ninth grade students of Theodore Roosevelt waged a mock battle, complete with generals barking orders and medics running over to attend to the wounded, dragging them away from the battle on sleds over the snow. This exercise was a first for the school, involving 50 Advanced World History students divided into French and German forces. Each student received a card with their role and task to execute during the simulation, and after. Generals who designed battle plans and helped build fortifications would have to write condolence letters for lost troops. Soldiers would pen journals, and medics would record their cases and actions, while journalists would assemble a newspaper account of the action, and interviews. After the mock battle, the students enjoyed hot chocolate and genuine army MREs, Meals Ready to Eat. Read more about this unique project by following the link in the podcast notes. And that's it this week for The Buzz.

[0:53:24]

Theo Mayer: And thank you for listening to another episode of World War I Centennial News. We also want to thank our guests. John Milton Cooper, Jr., author, educator and historian. Ed Lengel, military historian, author and storyteller. Mike Shuster, curator for the Great War Project Blog. Joe Weishaar, architect, and National World War I Memorial designer. Rich Hively and Mayor Dave Casebolt, from the city of Nitro, West Virginia. David O'Neal, creator of the World War I Preservation Collection. Katherine Akey, the show's line producer, and the Commission's social media director. Special thanks to Eric Mar, for his research help. And I'm 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 podcast is a part of that, and we thank you for listening. We're bringing the lessons of 100 years ago into today's classrooms. We're helping to restore World War I memorials in communities of all sizes across the country. And, of course, we're building America's National World War I Memorial in Washington, DC. We want to thank the Commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, as well as the Starr Foundation, for their support. The podcast can be found on our website at ww1cc.org/cn. On iTunes and Google Play, at ww1centennialnews. And on Amazon Echo, or other Alexa-enabled devices, just say, "Alexa, play W-W-1 Centennial News podcast." Our Twitter and Instagram handles are both at ww1cc. And we're on Facebook, at ww1centennial. Thank you for joining us. And don't forget to share the stories that you're hearing here today about the War that Changed the World. R-E-P-S. Royal Engineers Postal Services. Or Really Exceptional Podcast Stories. I love acronyms! So long.

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