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11 speakers (Theo Myer, Dr. Libby O., Dr. Edward L., Mike Shuster, Indy Neidell, Florian Wittig, Carol M. Braun, Dr. Richard S., Amy Rohmiller, Katherine Akey, Male)

[0:00:09]

Theo Myer: Welcome to World War I Centennial News episode number 58. It's about World War I then what was happening a hundred years ago this week, and it's about World War I now. News and updates about the centennial and the commemoration. Today is February 9th, 2018 and our guests for this week include Dr. Libby O'Connell talking to us about the Food Administration's rationing directives a hundred years ago this month. Dr. Edward Lengel with a story about an interesting military demonstration by the Doughboys at New York's Hippodrome. Mike Shuster from the Great War Project blog with the AEF's first military engagements of 1918. Indy Neidell and Florian Wittig from The Great War channel on YouTube. Talking to us about producing this long running video series. Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun telling us about her family's connection to World War I. Dr. Richard Slotkin, who examines the shifting ethnic and cultural landscape in America during World War I. Amy Rohmiller introducing the Ohio World War I centennial effort and their new website. Katherine Akey with some selections from the Centennial of World War I in social media. All this and more this week on World War I Centennial News. A weekly podcast 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. Food will win the war. That was the rallying cry for Herbert Hoover a mining engineer by training, an entrepreneur by character, and a public servant by circumstance. Herbert Hoover was in Europe in 1914 when it all hit the fan he stepped up and helped organize the return of around a 120,000 Americans who got stranded he let 500 volunteers and distributing food clothing steam trip tickets and cash to get the Americans home. Hoover who would become the 31st president of the United States remarked quote, "I did not realize it at the moment, but on August 3rd 1914 my career was over forever. I was on the slippery Road of public life." It's no surprise that President Woodrow Wilson, tapped the young Hoover to run his wartime Food Administration. What a challenge food production and management had become. The men who farm put on uniforms, armies of them needed to be fed, ship loads of food needed to be transported. In Europe, after three and a half years of devastation fighting the populations were starving. With that is an overview let's jump into our way back machine and go back 100 years to the war that changed the world. It's late January 1918, President Wilson issues a proclamation in the official bulletin the government's War Gazette published by George Creel's Committee on Public Information. Dateline January 28, 1918. Headline, president's proclamation calls upon people of nation to reduce consumption of wheat and meat product in order to feed America's Associates in the war. Wilson's proclamation opens with, "Many causes have contributed to create the necessity for a more intensive effort on the part of our people to save food in order that we may supply our associates in the war with the sustenance, vitally necessary to them in these days of privation and stress. The reduced productivity of Europe because of the large diversion of manpower to the war the partial failure of harvests and the elimination of the more distant markets, for foodstuffs through the destruction of shipping places, this burden of their subsistence very largely rests upon our shoulders. The Food Administration has formulated suggestions, which if followed will enable us to meet this great responsibility without any real inconvenience on our part." The proclamation goes on to explain the details and Wilson concludes with, "I therefore in the national interest, take the liberty of calling upon every loyal American to take fully to heart the suggestions, which are being circulated by The Food Administration and of begging that they be followed. I am confident that the great body of are women, who have labored so loyally and cooperation with The Food Administration for the success of food conservation, will strengthen their efforts, and will take it on as a part of their burden in this period of national service to see that the above suggestions are observed throughout the land. President Woodrow Wilson." With us again today is food historian, author and World War I Centennial Commissioner, Dr. Libby O'Connell.

[0:05:54]

Dr. Libby O.: Thank you, Theo. Nice to be back to talk about food and World War I. Because I really believe food is such an important lens for understanding history in a new way.

[0:06:04]

Theo Myer: Libby, the cry was "Food will win the war." This particular program came to be known as meatless Monday, wheatless Wednesday. Can you give us some perspective, was it effective?

[0:06:14]

Dr. Libby O.: Well it was effective in two ways, the amazing thing about this campaign is that it's the first national campaign that unites all citizens without actual rationing. It is totally voluntary, that's very important for everyone to know. This is not the rationing of World War II this is a voluntary program and Hoover working with the mastermind of propaganda, George Creel end up creating a very effective campaign. The campaign will produce 15% reduction in

domestic food consumption, leaving 18 million tons of food available to be shipped to the allies between 1918 and 1990 a very short window of time. It's a very effective, integrated campaign, integrated nationally and with the states' cooperation as well. Their posters were these wonderful means of communication that the Bureau of Public Information George Creel's group, created with Herbert Hoover, and got the word out to libraries, and train stations, in supermarket everywhere. Unpopular periodicals and newspapers as well, would have the same message in different colorful ways of expressing it. Talking about conserving food consumption, increasing food production and increasing home conservation, by which they mean home canning really. They offered different ways you could do this and one of them, is the idea of not eating as much meat. By meat here during World War I they meant beef and pork, because that could be exported. They encourage people to eat poultry, all types of poultry and fish as well. It's not like no one is eating animal products, but they're supposed to reduce the amount of beef and pork that they eat. Also the idea of reducing the consumption of wheat. Wheat is very important for the making bread as well as other things, but there are lots of substitutes that you can use to make bread including corn flour, which we have a lot of, we have masses of corn here. The Food Administration recommended people to cut the use of wheat in half so that when you made bread or you were having cereal, it would be only half wheat and then half other grain. The reason why wheat is so important, is it is exported to Europe and baked into bread. The feeling is, is that if you have the civilians in Europe with an adequate supply of bread to be able to feed their families, you will reduce social unrest, and you will increase the food available for the soldiers there. Thirdly, they consulted this new expertise home economics. This home economics scientist who said, "Don't worry American civilians will still be well-fed if they follow our advice by eating more vegetables, more fruit and more chicken, instead of beef and pork." It has two prongs in its approach to propaganda and policy. One is to achieve the goals about reducing food consumption and increasing food export. Secondly, engage people on a voluntary basis. Because if people feel that they are making a difference, their hearts get more engaged in the war effort. They aren't just sitting at home saying, "God Bless America, I hope our troops win." They're actually feeling empowered to serve their country by volunteering in this whole food campaign. It's an interesting and very, very effective policy that was adopted.

[0:10:10]

Theo Myer: Libby, thank you for joining us again and for your wonderful insights.

[0:10:13]

Dr. Libby O.: Well, thank you for inviting me.

[0:10:15]

Theo Myer: Dr. Libby O'Connell is former Chief historian for the History Channel, author, food historian and US World War I Centennial commissioner. Follow the link in the podcast notes to learn more about Dr. O'Connell and how food will win the war 100 years ago this week, and the War in the Sky. There are two events worth noting. First, the Lafayette Escadrille. The fame Squadron of American flyers who flew for the French before America entered the war, are officially transferred from the French Army to the US Army, and re-designated the 103rd Aero Squadron. Also, the US replaces the insignia on all us planes with what is called the Roundel. An outer red ring, then a blue and then a white center. The allies had requested the change out of a fear that the white star in the center of the old design might be mistaken for a German Cross in the fog of battle. The roundel remains in use until the US reverts to its former markings in August of 1919. Fine-tuning the Army Air Service, 100 years ago this week for the War in the Sky. You can follow the War in the Sky with our comprehensive nearly day by day timeline curated by author RG Head. You'll find it at ww1cc.org/warinthesky. One word, all lower case. Or follow the link of the podcast notes. This week for America Emerges military stories from World War I, Dr. Edward Lengel is going to tell us about a very interesting military demonstration by US forces at New York's Hippodrome. Let me set this up, large numbers of troops are wrapping up their stateside training and preparing to ship out. The pace is accelerating and multiple divisions are shipping out simultaneously. Most of them from the greater New York City area. Logistics for juggling railways, encampments, embarkation, debarkation, facilities, ships, food, fuel and weapons is ever more challenging. The Doughboys are pumped and grip with the excitement as they prepare to take it to the Kaiser. Their Adventure is about to begin. This is where Ed picks up the story in New York.

[0:12:36]

Dr. Edward L.: The Hippodrome is an incredible building, it's like a fairytale castle on Manhattan, it was on 6th Avenue between 43rd and 44th street. It doesn't exist anymore but, at the time it was opened in 1905 it was considered the world's largest theater. It had a stage alone that could accommodate a thousand people, including elephants and other kinds of animals. Then audience were up to 5000 spectators. 100 years ago this week on February 3rd 1918, a regiment of Doughboys appears on stage, they pull in at Penn Station that morning. These are guys from the 77th Metropolitan Division, draftees from New York City, of the 308th regiment. They March off to the Hippodrome. Now the 308th regiment would later become known as the source of the famous Lost Battalion, that was surrounded in the Argonne forest for several days in October, attacked by the Germans on all sides. These men would in future become heroes but now they were just rain troops and appear on stage in front of a huge crowd, and a particular company, Company E, that's led by an Irish American stock broker named Captain George McMurtry,

takes the lead in a number of acts that begin with marching back and forth all over the stage, and what's really reminiscent of a Busby Berkeley type musical performance. The troops gather around a campfire and sing wistful songs of home and love of country. They end up with the Star Spangled Banner. Then the stage drops, the prop men do their magic, and it lifts again. The troops of the regiment engage in this depiction of trench warfare or what they imagine trench warfare is going to be. They are subject to a gas attack, of course is not real gas, and they snipe against Germans who were sneaking toward their trenches and pick them off. They even engage in an assault on the German trench and one of the Doughboys is hiding in a tree stump and in a Charlie Chaplin style moment goes rushing across the stage and knocking over Germans. Well, to the audience this is not comedy, to the audience this is real and this is what they think trench warfare is really going to be like. The performance ends it's lauded in the newspapers as being the very stuff of modern warfare, and it's regarded as being a pure depiction of what trench warfare is going to be like. Now the terrible irony is that all the men who choreographed and led this performance would either be killed or wounded in the Argonne Forest on the western front. Crime choreographer was killed, George McMurtry was severely injured. When the troops leave the Hippodrome and they go marching down Park Avenue to 34th Street, they are led by a marching band whose bandmaster Herman Schoenfeld would later perform funeral music for the killed Doughboys as they're carried out of the Argonne Forest. It's a very moving and chilling premonition of what the war is going to be like in a performance by future heroes, feature Doughboy heroes at New York's hippodrome.

[0:16:32]

Theo Myer: Next week, Dr. Edward Lengel will tell us about the 32nd red arrow division, made from the Michigan and the Wisconsin National Guard. Some of the divisions first contingent drowns in the Sinking of the Tuscania on February 5th, but most of the red arrow Doughboys travel on the massive ship the USS Leviathan, which used to be a German ship The Vaterland, the Fatherland. As we declare war, we confiscate her in New York Harbor and turn her into a massive troop ship to send the Doughboys to fight its original namesake. It's kind of ironic. Dr. Edward Lengel is an American Military historian author and our segments host for America Emerges, military stories from World War I. There are links in the podcast notes to Ed's post and his website as an author. Now on to the Great War project with Mike Shuster. Former NPR correspondent and curator for the Great War Project Blog. Mike your post this week is titled, The Americans Are In It. By that you mean in the trenches and in the fight. I don't think your story this week needs any more introduction than that.

[0:17:45]

Mike Shuster: No, I don't think so either, but the headlines read, The Americans Are In It And The Clocks Are Ticking. Meltdown the church bells special to The Great War Project. American soldiers are now in the war for the first time 10 months after the United States declared war on Imperial Germany. United States troops are taking offensive action on the Western Front, reports historian Martin Gilbert. On February 13th reports Gilbert in the zone of Champagne. American artillery batteries took part and the French attack that broke through the German lines and captured more than 150 German prisoners. 10 days later according to Gilbert at [Czerweny], two American officers and 24 of their men volunteered to take part with French troops in a raid on German trenches. The raid last half an hour and 25 Germans were taken prisoner. According to one newspaper account although the actual occasion was not of much importance, February 23rd is one of the dates that will always be remembered in the history of the war. It is true that the United States is in the war now, in a real way, with Americans getting killed and inflicting death as well. Later in February, a century ago an American officer is watching another French raid on the German trenches in Northern France. According to Gilbert carried away with the enthusiasm of the moment, he joined in the raid helped to capture several German soldiers and was awarded the Croix de Guerre. It was the first such award to a member of the American expeditionary force. The officer's name Colonel Douglas MacArthur. At the same time Winston Churchill is back in a significant role in the war. Churchill this now minister of Munitions in the British government. At this moment in the war a century ago, Churchill is touring the sorrowful battlefields of the previous three years. Churchill writes to his wife, "Nearly 800,000 of our British race have shed their blood or lost their lives here during three and a half years of unceasing conflict. Many of our friends and my contemporaries all perished here. That seems as commonplace and as little alarming as the undertaker." Churchill writes, "Quite a natural ordinary event which may happen to anyone at any moment as it happened to all the scores of thousands who lie together in this vast cemetery, nobled and rendered forever glorious by their bereaved memory." Still, Churchill among many other British leader surveys the balance of forces at this moment in the war a century ago, and concludes the balance of forces on the Western Front favors the Germans. They, the Germans can hear two clocks ticking observes historian Adam Hochschild. They knew that the great battle to decide the war had to be won before summer otherwise hundreds of thousands and soon millions of American troops would join the fight. In Germany itself, there were signs that the country might not be able to hold out long. Civilians were suffering more painfully than ever with imports kept out of the British naval blockade metal was so scarce, that everything possible kettles and cook pots, door knobs even more than 10,000 church bells were being confiscated and melted down for munitions. That's the news for this week from The Great War Project.

[0:21:03]

Theo Myer: Mike Shuster, from the Great War Project Blog. Every week we tell you about these wonderful videos on YouTube from The Great War channel. The channel has some pretty impressive statistics. It launched in May of 2014, has published over 515 episodes, has over 800,000 subscribers on YouTube and has earned over a 120 million video views. Earlier this week I called Indy Neidell the shows host and Florian Wittig, the series producer at their studio in Berlin to learn a little more about their experience in producing The Great War channel. Indy, Flo, welcome.

[0:21:43]

Indy Neidell: Well thank you very much. Great to be here.

[0:21:44]

Florian Wittig: Hi Theo. Thanks for having us.

[0:21:46]

Theo Myer: Gentlemen, I wanted to bring you on the show not to talk about World War I but to talk but to talk about telling the story of World War I.

[0:21:53]

Indy Neidell: Clever.

[0:21:54]

Theo Myer: Indy this project came together in the spring of 2014, can you tell us who and how it happened?

[0:22:00]

Indy Neidell: I had an old friend of mine named Spartacus Olsen's at the time the CEO of Media Craft Network which is a German YouTube Network. It was the largest at the time. They produced O&O channels, channels they owned and operated. He had me come down to Cologne where they were headquartered, to pitch a bunch of shows to him into the rest of the board there. I had five ideas for shows that I thought could take off as YouTube channels. One of them, Sparty and I came up with together, was since it was four months before the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the war. One of them was doing what we called at the time World War I weekly, although it changed obviously to The Great War. Even already then in March of 2014 we sketched out roughly how an episode would look. Now, I didn't even really start writing the episodes until near the end of June. It wasn't until mid-July that we shot the first few episodes ... Because of course the first one came out on July 28th, a 100 years later, that we shot the first few episodes and a couple of prelude special. It was very much a race against time to get it started, but that's how it came out.

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Theo Myer: Flo, how did you get involved in the project?

[0:23:09]

Florian Wittig: Yeah. My first day on the show was on the 14th of July. Basically like I think four days before the first filling session and I just ... I had a job interview a week prior and I said, "Yeah. Can you maybe start next week already?" "Yeah, that would be great." Then it was like, "Okay, we need maps, years and script can you check it? This is Tony by the way, he's also one of the producers. Say hi, I hope you want to work together for the next four years." That's how it started.

[0:23:41]

Theo Myer: Gentlemen, for us this is podcast episode number 58, and you're somewhere near episode 520. Now that leaves me in awe, but it also leaves me with a question for you Indy. World War I is such an incredibly, insanely bizarrely surreal story. How do you think immersing yourself so deeply in this and for so long, how's that affected your worldview?

[0:24:03]

Indy Neidell: That's a good question. Well, it really has in many ways. First of all, because now obviously after writing 500 scripts and doing research for most of them, I know a lot of weird stuff about the war. Countries and movements and political actions and things that I never knew existed that you can always take something away from that. Just thinking of the war itself, I grew up in Texas, right? I did study history at university, but it was mostly a Renaissance, European, early modern European history. I learned about World War I in high school like everybody else did. Since we learned mostly about American participation in the war, we learned mostly about the Western Front. You grow up thinking, "Well World War I was a war that was mainly fought in western Europe." Of course working it now, when I'm writing whole episodes about the Mesopotamian front or the Siege of Tsingtao, the Battle of the Falklands, German East Africa. You realize what a colossal all world encompassing war it was and the 13 or 14 fronts when 11 or 12

were active at the same time. The vast number of men from every single continent that came. I never really knew the scale of the war, nor what longterm impact it had aside from just being a war. I mean, for example, in the years, the four years from 1914 to 1918 medicine advanced more in those four years than it has in any four year period of history before or since. You don't realize the enormous leaps and bounds, of course for better or for worse, that technology took. I mean, it's great that you develop mobile X-Ray machines, but maybe not so great for us that flamethrowers and stuff were developed at the same time.

[0:25:44]

Theo Myer: Well, Indy we started changing the moniker for it as The War That Changed The World, and I think that's really appropriate.

[0:25:51]

Indy Neidell: Absolutely. The Europe of 1930 I was like, say the world of 1913 in the world of 1919 we're not six years apart. They were in many ways, completely unrecognizable from each other. The entire social structures were changed or great empires ceased to exist. I mean, before the world was an age of empire, after the war was an age of isms. Communism, republicanism, isolationism, capitalism, any ism you can think of that was the 1920s.

[0:26:19]

Florian Wittig: It's called a world war for a reason.

[0:26:21]

Theo Myer: Yeah.

[0:26:21]

Florian Wittig: Just like, World War I fan actually wrote in at some point. I now understand why it's called a World War. I think that sums up our learning experience on the team here pretty well.

[0:26:31]

Theo Myer: Flo, you and I have been chatting every month for a few years now, and I've really enjoyed watching you guide the project where it is today. Now, one thing that struck me is how incredibly dedicated to your audience you guys are. Can you tell us about them?

[0:26:45]

Florian Wittig: Yeah. I think that's definitely one of the greatest things about working on the show is to get in touch with people all over the world. I mean, we have dedicated fans in the US, and Canada of course, but also here in Europe, we have fans writing in from Thailand, from Japan and everywhere that ... First, most of them just say, "Hey, it's a cool show." Then at some point we realized, from getting comments on YouTube that some of the people actually have a wealth of knowledge in some super specific things. Like, "Hey, I know a lot about this," to type of landing craft. "Hey, I know a lot about, this kind of a battle or this kind of uniform and everything." I think that's one of the best decisions we made. It's like we want to work together with the community and this feedback is the one thing that I think catapulted the show in terms of quality from 2014 to 2018. There's also a good metaphor in this for ... I mean, a lot of the people are from different countries under a hundred years ago, you know I'm German, when we meet someone from Poland or someone from Ukraine or something then, a hundred years ago, we want to start on posing sites of the battlefields and now we can work together to record this and preserve this kind of history.

[0:28:04]

Indy Neidell: Well, also and I've said many times and I like saying it about the show that this, the Great War, that's the first ever global free real time interactive documentary. I think it's important that it's interactive and that's hence YouTube and stuff. I mean, somebody wants to write a couple of years ago and comment on one of the episodes, "This is the only channel on YouTube where the comments don't suck." I think it's true actually. I read through the comments all the time. I'm happy to answer comments and Flo answers as a channel and I answer as me.

[0:28:37]

Theo Myer: Guys, thank you so much and have a lovely day.

[0:28:41]

Indy Neidell: You're welcome. Yeah, I'm happy to talk about the war. That's what I do.

[0:28:45]

Florian Wittig: Theo, thanks to you. Keep up the Great work for the Centennial Commission.

[0:28:49]

Theo Myer: Yeah, yeah. Excellent. Indy Neidell the host. And Florian Wittig, the producer of The Great War channel on YouTube. Follow the link in the podcast notes. 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. It's a privilege to be joined today by a genuine social pioneer. An amazing person of many honors distinctions and firsts. To start with, Carol Moseley Braun, was one of the first black women to graduate from the law school at the University of Chicago. She was an assistant United States attorney, an Illinois state legislator, a US state senator and ambassador, and my favorite, she was adopted as a member of a Maori tribe. She's also an entrepreneur and on the diplomatic advisory board of the US World War I Centennial Commission. Welcome Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun.

[0:30:05]

Carol M. Braun: Thank you so much. It's my absolute privilege to be with you.

[0:30:07]

Theo Myer: Ambassador Braun, I want to ask you about your grandfather Thomas Davey and his cousin, both of whom served in World War I. Could you tell us about them?

[0:30:16]

Carol M. Braun: Well, my sister actually got me started on this journey on this quest inadvertently. She took some pictures of our family, about my ancestors and wouldn't give them back. I started investigating Thomas Davey and his service in World War I and come to find out he had been awarded, he was eligible for and a medal which he never received during his life or for the Meuse-Argonne of engagement. That it was his cousin that was killed abroad and whose name is on the memorial here in Chicago, in Bronzeville. I began to learn about my grandfather, I've started studying about the 366, which was the infantry unit that he was associated with or affiliated with. It has been a real adventure learning about World War I. I'm really excited about it. Again, it was some unknown history that I did not know, both family history and history of the United States, that frankly I would have been completely in the dark about.

[0:31:17]

Theo Myer: Most men didn't. But did Thomas Davey talk about his experience when he came home from the war?

[0:31:23]

Carol M. Braun: He did not. I was a child when he died and so he would not have. He may have talked about it with my mother and with the older generation, but he never talked with me about it. I had to go on a journey to find out this information at all. We just didn't have any records of it. We had one picture of him, which I now have a here in the house, a picture of him in his uniform and he looks really dapper and wonderful but I've been basically unraveling, the tale of his service over those years.

[0:31:57]

Theo Myer: Ambassador Braun, you've been helping us advocate for this, but why do you think that America needs a World War I memorial in the nation's capital?

[0:32:05]

Carol M. Braun: Well, I think it's critical that all the young people who come to the capital with their schools or with their family have a chance to visit the memorial and get educated about it. It's such a critical piece of our history and it's been neglected and overlooked unfortunately and this memorial will help to change that. I'm just hopeful that we can get the word out as you are doing here today. Why this was so important to the world, not just the United States but to the world. It changed everything. I think history that fails to acknowledge how important this war was in the scheme of things, is incomplete history and therefore a fraud. I just think it's important that we are honest about all the whole truth of our history and that we do what we can to get this memorial built and publicize so young people can know that it's there.

[0:32:58]

Theo Myer: I have to ask you, who inspired you to become the accomplished and amazing person that you are?

[0:33:04]

Carol M. Braun: Well, that's really sweet of you to ask. I appreciate the question. I took a great inspiration for my family. The women in my family were all strong women. My mother, my aunt, et cetera. They led the way and made it possible for me. Just like World War I open the door for our country to be the superpower that it is, my ancestors opened the door for me to be able to go on and do things that they frankly, could not even have imagined. My mother would not have imagined being a law school graduate or being a lawyer, although she aspired to that. I was able to do that and then move on and get to the United States senate and become an ambassador. That's the American

dream right there. I just think that World War I encapsulates both the good, the bad, and the ugly of our American experience. I think therefore it's really important that we tell the stories and we make sure that the next generation knows exactly about the contributions and sacrifice of these Americans.

[0:34:03]

Theo Myer: Ambassador Braun, thank you for sharing your thoughts and your family story with us.

[0:34:08]

Carol M. Braun: Well, I'm delighted to do so. Thank you for asking.

[0:34:10]

Theo Myer: Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun, is a pioneering politician, former US senator from Illinois. She was the ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa, and she also serves on the diplomatic advisory board of the World War I Centennial Commission. Read more about her at the links in the podcast notes. We're going to start this week in our Remembering Veterans section with Dr. Richard Slotkin, historian, professor emeritus of English and American studies at Wesleyan University and author of the Book Lost Battalions, the Great War and The Crisis of American Nationality. Welcome Dr. Slotkin.

[0:34:51]

Dr. Richard S.: Thank you very much, Theo.

[0:34:52]

Theo Myer: Dr. Slotkin, your book looks at the changing American cultural identity as experienced by two different military units. The 369th a black regiment, and the 77th the melting pot division. Why did you choose these two units for your book?

[0:35:09]

Dr. Richard S.: This a World War I period, is the culmination of a 40-year period in which racism and ethnic prejudice in the United States were constantly accelerating. It's a period when, Jim Crow is being established in the south segregation, disenfranchisement and lynching. But also the racial prejudice against blacks is being transferred to the so called new immigrants, particularly East European Jews and Italians. The anti immigration movement, the slogan, is a formulated by Lawrence Lowell of Harvard who said, "Indians, Negroes, Chinese, Jews and Americans cannot all be free in the same society." That's where things stand in 1917 and then United States gets involved in World War I. Overnight they've got to raise an army of three million. They've got to bring blacks and immigrants into the army and they've got to bring them in with some enthusiasm. There's 180 degree reversal, and the war department adopted policy, which says, "Soldier after soldier is to be turned out fit and eager to fight for liberty under the stars and stripes mindful of the traditions of his race, and the land of his nativity, and conscious of the principles for which he is fighting." It's that big reversal that produces these two units recruited locally in the New York area. One is the 369th infantry, black infantry, originally the 15th New York National Guard regiment. The 77th division is raised really from the ... Basically from the tenements of New York and trained out in Yaphank, Long Island. I chose to write about them because first of all, they're from the same place. They're both raised in the city. These are the two groups whose citizenship is under threat before 1917 and through service in the army, they're hoping to win an equal place in American society.

[0:37:24]

Theo Myer: How did the experience of these two units differ in terms of being marginalized ethnically?

[0:37:29]

Dr. Richard S.: The common experience of course with combat, and both of them had a heroic record in combat. The 369 served with the French army, and was awarded the unit citation of the Croix de Guerre. There's the whole regiment that the Croix de Guerre which is the highest French medal. The 77th division, particularly the 308 infantry became the famous lost battalion. They fought a kind of Alamo fight in the Argonne forest for seven days, surrounded. Three quarters of them became casualties, they never surrendered. They had this heavy combat experience. They were like a social microcosm of American society particularly in New York City. Working class soldiers and the officers are predominantly Ivy League graduates and Wall Street lawyers and stockbrokers to a large extent. You get in the interactions within the regiment, the byplay between the classes. One of the astonishing things about them is that in both cases they develop mutual respect and affection going both ways in the regiments. They will well officers and it worked out very well for them. The big differences are, the American army was segregated. Pershing at first it did not want black units serving alongside white units. He shipped the 369th to the French army. They called themselves, Les Enfants Perdus, the orphans, the lost children of the American army. This proved to be a great benefit to them. Because the French welcomed them as Americans and made no distinction of color and train them to be assault troops. The bad part is that whenever they came in contact with the American army, they were Jim

Crowded. The officers in rest camps, white MPs that is sergeants, were told that they didn't have to obey off orders given by officers of black regiments. There was an instruction issued to the French from the American Army headquarters that, it was dangerous for the French to treat blacks in an equal way, because it would give them ideas that would be dangerous when they came back home and had to go back under Jim Crow. That's the big difference. Whereas the 300 Nathan's century in the 77th division, serving with the American army, we're generally treated like regular troops. The only real difference is that very few ... I couldn't actually find any of the ethnic soldiers, the Jews, the Italians, the Chinese, who actually served in the regiment as well, were promoted above the rank of sergeant major. None of them became officers.

[0:40:35]

Theo Myer: From your point of view, why should American students be taught about the exploits of these soldiers?

[0:40:41]

Dr. Richard S.: I think there's a couple of reasons. First, it's just an act of historical justice to remember the service of these soldiers who fought for their country under very difficult circumstances. Who accepted in good faith, the idea that if they served patriotically they would win equal treatment. I think it's particularly relevant now that we're experiencing such a heavy racial backlash against racial minorities and ethnic minorities particularly new immigrants. To be reminded that the same prejudices were being laid out a hundred years ago. That the answer to it was really to open the country, to accept these people. What you found was that their patriotism was capable of making the highest sacrifice. I should also add that although they served during the war with the promise of equality, when they got back, the promise was broken. Jim Crow got worse in the 1920s. The Ku Klux Klan got up to five million members nationally in the 1920s. Far as immigrants were concerned. Congress passed the immigration restriction act in 1924, which limited the number of east European Jews, Poles, Italians, and of course Asians, who could come in into the country radically limited. That in the 1930s, Jews would be trapped in Hitler's Germany as a result. The soldiers resented the breaking of the promise and some of the activism for civil rights that began in the 1920s and 30s was led by veterans Jewish and black veterans.

[0:42:28]

Theo Myer: Dr. Slotkin, thank you for your insights.

[0:42:30]

Dr. Richard S.: You're very welcome.

[0:42:32]

Theo Myer: Dr. Richard Slotkin is a historian, professor emeritus and author. Follow the links in the podcast notes to learn more about him and his books. Now for A Century in the Making the story of America's World War I memorial in Washington DC. In this segment, we take you on an insider's journey that explores this grand undertaking and the people behind it. In the summer of 2017, the US commission of Fine Arts and the National Capitol Planning Commission, unanimously approved the conceptual design for the memorial centered around a monumental work of Bronx Sculpture. Sculptor Sabin Howard then embarked on an eight-month effort to bring the memorial to life and as you heard from Sabin himself in our podcast episodes number 54 and number 55, the sculpture has evolved from his original sketches and drawings into 3D images and 3D models. Sabin's efforts at the Weta Workshop in New Zealand culminated in late January with the creation of a sculptural maquette of the proposed design. Essentially that's the sculpture at a 1/6th scale. Last week you heard an audio documentary on this show as the striking model, which is around 10 and a half feet long by about one foot high arrived in Washington DC. The maquette serves as the first draft of the memorial sculptural design and development and is scheduled to be presented to the Commission of fine arts on Thursday, February 15th, for that review and feedback. Then on Friday, February 16th the maquette will be unveiled to the public for the first time, on the Fox and Friends television show. Now pending on all regulatory agency approvals anticipated by the summer of 2018, the design and the development of the sculpture will enter its final production phase including casting. We actually built two of the maquette to accommodate both public and private displays over the coming months. Watch the unveiling on Fox and Friends next Friday or come to our website that weekend at ww1cc.org/memorial for a first look yourself. Follow the link in the podcast notes to learn more. Now for our feature, Speaking World War I, where we explore the words and phrases that are rooted in the war. As we talked about at the top of the show, rationing and ingredient substitution became necessary in World War I America. Special recipes were developed to keep food tasty but also within the rules laid out by the Food Administration's guidelines. These new wheatless, meatless and sugarless recipes strove to keep familiar foods on the table of America and they earned their own nickname, which is our speaking World War I phrase for this week. These war time foods and recipes were deemed to have been Hooverized in honor of the Food Administration's chief Herbert Hoover. There was cake made with potato flour instead of wheat, candies made with molasses or honey instead of refined sugar, and bread using a mixture of potato, rye and corn flour. Actually, Hooverized food sounds to me, like a very contemporary, trendy, gluten free, health food, paleo, veganess kind of a diet. Somehow I think Hooverized recipes doesn't sound like a trendy, hip slick hook. Even if it is this week's phrase for speaking World War I. See the podcast

notes to learn more. For our updates from the states, we're pleased to announce that Ohio has launched a new centennial website at ww1cc.org/ohio, all lower case. With us is Amy Rohmiller, World War I coordinator at the Ohio history connection to tell us more about the site and the World War I Centennial Commemoration efforts in Ohio. Welcome Amy.

[0:46:34]

Amy Rohmiller: Thanks, Theo. Good to be here.

[0:46:36]

Theo Myer: Amy. Tell us about the Ohio World War I Centennial Organization. How's it structured and what kind of projects are you guys working on?

[0:46:43]

Amy Rohmiller: Well, we have a two prong structure, I guess you would say. The Ohio World War I Centennial Commission, is made up of people from all around the state in Ohio who have an interest in World War I, or who represent groups that are interested in commemorating World War I in some way. We have World War I reenactors, directors of historical societies with strong connections to World War I, veterans groups, the American Legion, the Ohio Army National Guard historian is on our committee, the State Library has somebody on the committee. We try to represent a wide variety voices on our statewide committee to plan our signature statewide commemorative events. Then the second role of our committee is to support events that are going on around the state. We really try to amplify and support however we can, events that are going on everywhere. We know that lots of local organizations, libraries, historical societies, American Legion post are having their own World War I events. We list them on our calendar, send support if we can, things like that. We're really grassroots movement.

[0:48:15]

Theo Myer: Amy, what was the experience of Ohioans like during the war?

[0:48:20]

Amy Rohmiller: It's really hard to pin down a typical Ohioans experience of the war. Lots of Ohioans were soldiers and fought overseas in the war. Ohio sent approximately 4% of the entire nation's manpower over to the trenches. We also had one of the biggest training camps in Ohio at Camp Sherman outside of Chillicothe, over 120,000 troops were trained there. There's definitely a large military experience of Ohioans. Ohio was also very involved in war production and producing materials and industries to support the war effort. Factories all over the place were involved in that. Armco in Middletown was producing steel for the war, Dayton was producing airplanes and airplane engines for the war effort. At the same time though, Ohio was also a very German State at the time. There are lots of German immigrants who lived in Ohio and so they were also experiencing the flip side of all of this patriotism to support the war effort because there was also a lot of anti German sentiment here in Ohio. Towns changed their names. There was a town in northeast Ohio named New Berlin and the main employer of the town, the Hoover company forced the town to change its name to North Canton to remove any association with anything even remotely associated with Germany. There are stories of dachshund being rounded up in Cincinnati because those are German dogs, and you can't have anything related to Germany that way. German newspapers went out of business, German stopped being taught in schools. We also have that experience in Ohio too. It depends on who you were and where you lived, what your experience of the war was like.

[0:50:19]

Theo Myer: Amy, your website looks really great. What kind of information should people expect to find if they go to ww1cc.org/ohio?

[0:50:28]

Amy Rohmiller: We are trying to provide a lot of great information about Ohio on the website. Ideally in the next couple of weeks you will be able to go online and see articles that delve deeper into those stories that I mentioned previously. We're trying to explore the war from all different aspects, from the military to the home front, to social history, to industrial history, to tell people's stories that they may not know when they think about World War I. At the same time, we're also trying to get the word out about all of the wonderful events to commemorate the war that are happening in our state. We are constantly updating our calendar of events with all the events that we know about. We're trying to add all of the memorials and museums related to World War I too. We hope that we're a one stop shop for anything you may want to know about World War I in Ohio.

[0:51:30]

Theo Myer: Amy, if I'm an Ohioan and I have something I want to contribute to the story, is there a way of reaching you?

[0:51:37]

Amy Rohmiller: Yeah, you can certainly contact me, you can email me. My email is on the World War I website, and I love seeing what people send in. Just last night actually we got an email from a gentleman who transcribed his grandfather's World War I diary, so we're trying to figure out where we can put that to make that more accessible. If you have a story or a resource that you'd like to share, please send it to us.

[0:52:08]

Theo Myer: Amy, thank you for joining us today.

[0:52:10]

Amy Rohmiller: Thank you.

[0:52:11]

Theo Myer: Amy Rohmiller is the World War I coordinator at the Ohio History Connection. Visit the Ohio World War I centennial website at ww1cc.org/ohio or follow the link in the podcast notes. That brings us to The Buzz, the centennial of World War I this week and social media with Katherine Akey. Katherine, what did you pick this week?

[0:52:36]

Katherine Akey: Hey there, Theo. Popular posts on our Facebook page this week are all about color. The National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City has started a new project color our collections. You can follow the link in the podcast notes to download a coloring book, drawn from the museum's collections, including several of Captain Bruce Van's father's illustrations. Last for the week, another collection of color photographs from World War I is making the rounds online, but these are not black and white images that have sent to have color added, they're original color images from a hundred years ago. The color process used to create them is called auto chrome and it used dyed pieces of potato starch to turn a normal black and white negative into the beautiful velvety color photos you can see at the slate article in the podcast links. That's it this week for The Buzz.

[0:53:26]

Theo Myer: Thank you everybody for listening to another episode of World War I Centennial News. We had a lot of guests this week and we want to thank them. Dr. Libby O'Connell, author, historian and World War I Centennial Commissioner. Dr. Edward Lengel, military historian and author. Mike Shuster, curator for the Great War project blog. Indy Neidell & Florian Wittig from The Great War channel on YouTube. Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun, pioneering politician and diplomatic adviser to the commission. Dr. Richard Slotkin, historian, author and professor emeritus. Amy Rohmiller, the World War I coordinator at the Ohio History Connection. Katherine Akey, the Commission Social Media Director and the line producer for the podcast. 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. We're bringing the lessons of 100 years ago into to 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 & 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 WW1 Centennial News. On Amazon Echo and other Alexa enabled devices, just say, "Alexa, play WW1 Centennial News podcast." Our Twitter and Instagram handles are both at WW1CC and we're on Facebook at WW1 Centennial. Thank you for joining us. Don't forget to share the stories that you're hearing here today about the war that changed the world.

[0:55:32]

Male: Those fellows out there don't seem to be very cheerful. Let's stand up and sing them a song with some pep in it. Well, I wouldn't stand up too high if I were you, or you'll be singing with a harp in your face instead of a gun. We're used to that this trench is full of [inaudible]. Come on song birds, let's do it. (singing)

[0:55:56]

Theo Myer: Jeez, I need to decide, is it going to be the low FODMAP gluten free diet? Or maybe the gut health diet? Or wait the Matcha turmeric Maca diet? That sounds good. Or the Mediterranean makeover or maybe I ought to go for vegan 2.0. Forget about it, I'm just going to Hooverize my recipes. So long.

[0:56:42]