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8 speakers (Theo Mayer, John M. Cooper, Edward Lengel, Mike Shuster, Sonya H., Matheus Lacerda, Farhang Ghajar, Katherine Akey)

[0:00:05]

Theo Mayer: (Music) Welcome to World War I Centennial News episode number 59. It's about World War I then. What was happening 100 years ago this week, and it's about World War I now. News and updates about the centennial and the commemoration. Today is February 16th, 2018 and our guests for this week include Dr. Edward Lengel with a story about the 32nd Red Arrow Division. Mike Shuster from the Great War Project blog with the eroding situation on the German home front. Sonya Hodges-Grantham sharing the story of the 371st regiment and her recent cemetery restoration efforts. [Mattheos Lacerta] with the history of Brazil in World War I. Kathryn Akey, with some selections from the centennial of World War I in social media. All this and more on World War I Centennial News. A weekly podcast to you by the US World War I Centennial Commission, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library and the Star Foundation. I'm Theo Mayer, the Chief Technologist for the commission and your host. Welcome to the show. (Music) A few weeks ago in episode number 56, we brought in Woodrow Wilson expert John Milton Cooper Jr., an American historian, author, educator and former Senior Scholar at the Wilson Center. At the end of the interview, I asked him, "What is the most important thing that we should keep in mind about Wilson as we follow his actions?" He replied with...

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John M. Cooper: Okay. 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. 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, you know, who got a chance to practice what he'd been preaching, teaching, preaching.

[0:02:22]

Theo Mayer: So 100 years ago this week, one of the big stories on the domestic front is Wilson's address to a joint session of Congress further laying out the path to a negotiated piece. With that as a setup, let's jump into our centennial time machine and slide back 100 years to mid-February 1918, in the war that changed the world. From the pages of the Official Bulletin, the government's daily war gazette published by George Creel. This is a great primary source for World War I information, which we republish everyday on the commission's website at ww1cc.org/bulletin and that apparently a few hundred of you now read daily. Dateline: Monday, February 11, 1918. Headline: President in address to Congress outlines the basis for general peace. Asserts that all nations now at war must join in the settlement of ever issue involved. The story opens with Wilson expanding on his 14 points and laying out four principles. He states, "The test of whether it is possible for government's to go any further in the comparison of views is simple and obvious. The principles to be applied are these: first, that each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments is our most likely to bring a peace that will be permanent. Second, that peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere shattles and pawns in a game. Even the great game now forever discredited of the balance of power. But that... Third, every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and it is not part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims amongst rival states. And fourth, that all well defined national aspirations shall be accorded the outmost satisfaction that can be accorded to them without introducing new and perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonizing, that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently, the peace of the world." President Woodrow Wilson. So what's going here? Well one interpretation is this, for three and a half horrific years, powerful imperial forces have been trying to enforce their will and their agenda on peoples and populations. Resulting in an economic and human slaughter, accompanied by unprecedented carnage. No one is laying out a foundation for resolution. Instead, the mindset is in terms of conquest and annihilation. Suddenly, this guy, this leader, this political scientist whose nation is not under direct threat of conquest or annihilation starts to lay out how all of this might be resolved. What the path to resolution looks like. How a new world order might rise out of the ashes. Not under on conqueror, but as a new community of nations. Now, this actually sounds pretty good to a lot of war weary participants, but the Wilhelm? Not so much. As a contrasting story about Ukraine's defeat at the hands of Germany illustrates. Dateline. From Amsterdam Monday, February 11th, 1918. Headline: Kaiser declares that Germany will impose peace on all. The story reads, "Germany desires peace, but before it can be attained, her enemies must recognize that Germany has been victorious." Kaiser Wilhelm said in a dispatch, which continues with, "We ought to bring peace to the world. Such an end was achieved yesterday in a friendly manner with an enemy which beaten by our armies, perceive no reasons for fighting longer. Extends a hand to us and receives our hand. We clasp hands, but he who will not accept peace, but on the contrary declines must be forced to have peace. We desire to live in

friendship with our neighboring peoples, but the victory of German arms must first be recognized. Our troops under the great Hindenburg will continue to win. Then peace will come." This is a very poignant example of the contrasting positions and points of view from two of the leaders 100 years ago in the war that changed the world. We have a lot of links for you in the podcast notes. On a lighter note, 100 years ago, a new weekly publication found its way into the hands of the Doughboys in France. The Stars and Stripes Newspaper. Although the classic periodical was originally produced by Union soldiers in the Civil War, who found an abandoned printing press. They only ran six one page issues at the time. The publication was revived for World War I. Produced by an all military staff and aimed directly at the Doughboys of the American Expeditionary Force. Stars and Stripes is filled with cartoons and articles by and for the Doughboys. Making light of everything from living covered in lice in the trenches, to struggling to communicate with their new French comrades. Though all tactical information is redacted, the contents humor, irreverence and fun is surely a pickup for the boys. I've only seen a couple of issues, but I've already become a fan. Besides, my mom worked for the Stars and Stripes Newspaper in post-war Germany in the 50s. You'll get a taste later, when we use an article from an early issue of the Stars and Stripes for our speaking World War I section. Meanwhile, check the podcast notes to read some of the pages for yourself. I think you're going to enjoy them. 100 years ago this week in the war in the sky. A projected post-war vision using war tech is announced. An article in the Official Bulletin contemplates the future application of the airplane. Dateline: Wednesday, February 13, 1918. Headline: Aerial mail route between Washington, Philadelphia and New York is planned. Bids for five airplanes asked. Machines to make one roundtrip a day will be permanent if practicability is assured. And the story reads, "Postmaster General Burleson [inaudible] called for bids for construction of five airplanes to be used in the establishment of an aerial route for the delivery of first class mail. The bids are to be opened at 2 o'clock on February 21st. The contract will be awarded to the bidder whose airplanes have stood satisfactory service tests in the war and Navy departments. The airplanes and parts to be delivered no later than April 25th. The call for bids requires that the airplanes shall be complete and capable of carrying 300 pounds of mail a distance of not less than 200 miles without stop. The intention is as soon as the authority of the Congress is received to establish an aerial route to Philadelphia and New York, carrying 300 pounds of first class mail for which a special postage rate will be charged. Not to exceed 25 cents per ounce, or fraction thereof and to maintain a permanent service on a regular scheduled time." That is a new civilian infrastructure vision launched 100 years ago this week, because of the war in the sky. Read the announcement for yourself on page two of the Wednesday, February 13 issue of the Official Bulletin, by following the link in the podcast notes or going to ww1cc.org/bulletin. This week on America Emerges: stories from World War I. Dr. Edward Lengel introduces us to the 32nd Red Arrow Division made from the Michigan and Wisconsin National Guard. What's the story Ed?

[0:11:03]

Edward Lengel: 100 years ago this week, we were sending our six division over to France. There had been five sent there before, and that division was the 32nd Red Arrow Division that was formed from the Michigan and Wisconsin National Guard, they later became known as Les Terribles, because they were so formidable on the Western Front. They were actually responsible for breaking through the primary strong point in the German Hindenburg line in October of 1918. So a very important division because it's a huge division, 20,000 men. They have to go on several trips. They are shipped from their camp in... Near Waco, Texas all the way across to New York where they board a number different ships. Unfortunately, one of the first contingents made up of medics and military police and other support personnel is on a British ship called the SS Tuscania, which is we've learned previously in the podcast, sank on February 5th, 1918 thanks to a German torpedo. Now the largest contingent of Red Arrow Doughboys board a ship. It's a massive ship that's called the Leviathan. Appropriately for how big it is. It was originally a German ship. The [inaudible] which was a ship of the German Hamburg America line that was confiscated by American authorities when we entered the war in April 1917. Well even though it's such a huge ship, over 8,000 Doughboys plus crew have to cram on the decks and the holds, and their crammed so tightly the corridors are only 18 inches wide. They have to squeeze through here. Well as you can imagine, this is the juiciest target possible for a German U-boat. If a German torpedo hits this ship and it goes under, you can expect thousands of soldiers are going to die. Well, it takes off from New York City on March 4th. It takes several days to cross the Atlantic, and when it enters the danger zone just west of Scotland, because it's bound for Liverpool. On March 11th, there's a sudden terrifying scare. In the middle of the night the Doughboys are just waiting on the ship, hoping that they can get to shore and there's suddenly a huge explosion right next to the ship, and it shakes the Leviathan from stem to stern. But fortunately, the Doughboys who've been drilled carefully for all of this trip, they handled themselves very well. They remained calm and as it turns out, it is a destroyer in the escort screen call the Manly, which thinks it sighted a German U-boat and it drops a depth charges only 800 yards from the Leviathan, and that's where the explosion comes from. It's dashing about firing its five inch batteries, dropping more depth charges. We don't know even to this day, whether there actually was a German U-boat in sight, but fortunately the Leviathan pulls into Liverpool Harbor the next day on March 12th, 1918 to great relief. There was a huge sigh of relief among all the Doughboys on board. Unfortunately, as they file ashore the next day, and they're hoping they're going to get some kind of a feast to reward themselves for their long trial on the Atlantic. They get their first taste of British cuisine. British camp cuisine, which consists of bread, cheese and tea. So they named their first camp on British soil Camp Cheese.

[0:14:50]

Theo Mayer: Great story. So Ed, what are you going to talk to us about next week?

[0:14:54]

Edward Lengel: I'm going to talk about the Big Red One. The American first division and its experience 100 years ago this month at a little French village called Ansauville. Where it experiences a massive German poison gas attack. It's an incredibly dramatic moment, a very important learning moment for the Doughboys. One of the first major episodes of chemical warfare for the American troops on the Western Front.

[0:15:26]

Theo Mayer: Dr. Edward Lengel is an American military historian, author and our segment host for America Emerges: Military Stories from World War I. There are links in the podcast notes to Ed's posts and his website as an author. Now onto the Great War Project with Mike Shuster. Former NPR correspondent and curator for the Great War Project blog. So Mike, even though our ground troops are still being organized in Europe, the US Navy's been operational on the war for nearly a year, including reinforcing the British blockade on Germany. What's the effect on life in Germany been Mike?

[0:16:04]

Mike Shuster: Well the effect on the German population has been profound Theo. So our headline reads, "Germany suffering economic warfare. Everything in short supply. Germans fainting in the streets. Not even a single loaf of bread, nor a glimmer of guilt." This is special to the Great War Project. The British blockade of Germany is nearly airtight. The addition of ships from the US Navy reports historian Thomas Fleming, that abled the British to create a virtually impenetrable blockade, writes another historian. The goal of preventing the arrival of even a single loaf of bread in Germany was all but achieved. The United States Navy joined with the Royal Navy reports historian Hugh Strong. In enforcing the blockade against both the Central Powers: Germany and Austria and their neutral suppliers, and it did so with unexpected vigor. Germany's civilian economy was rapidly reaching a crisis point. There were shortages of everything. Rubber, tin, copper, clothing, household items and above all, food worsened by a poor harvest in 1917. Coal was in short supply reports historian Adam Hochschild. Those waiting in line for it were often shot in cardboard shoes, with the wooden soles. Since scarce leather was saved for soldier's boots. So many horses had been sent to the front Hochschild continues, that the Berlin Zoo's elephants were put to work hauling wagons through the streets. According to historian Thomas Fleming, fats and meat were all but banished from the German diet. The death rate was climbing ominously. The tuberculosis rate had doubled. One American reporter who spent time in Germany reports that Germans are fainting in the streets from hunger. In early 1918, German labor unions call a general strike and a million workers walk off the job in half a dozen cities. This news sparks a new debate in the United States. Some condemn the British blockade historian Fleming reports. As an attack on defenseless women and child and old people, but in the White House, Fleming observes, there was not even a glimmer of guilt about killing civilians. Wilson's closest advisor Colonel Edward House tells the President, "It looks as if things are beginning to crack. I do not believe Germany can maintain a successful offensive with their people in the present state of mind." The House-Wilson team all but gloated when the Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary and the Chancellor of Germany replied to Wilson's 14 points address and conciliatory tones. Stressing their desire for peace. Still, purports the story and Fleming, their remains a war party in Germany that is powerful and remains committed to fighting the war to the finish. Too much talk of peace might also inspire the war weary populations of France, England and Italy to start calling for an immediate armistice. Nevertheless, the balance of forces on the Western Front continued to favor Germany and Austria-Hungary. The British had suffered 800,000 casualties in 1917, reports the story and Norman Stone. And were again under a million in strength. The Americans had begun to arrive, but they still not been training sufficiently. Only a single American division, some 10,000 men are battle ready, and that's the news this week from the Great War Project.

[0:19:19]

Theo Mayer: Mike Shuster from the Great War Project Blog. You met the host, Indie Neidell and producer [inaudible] Wittig from the Great War Channel on YouTube in last week's podcast. Here are the channel's new episodes for this week. One is Austro-Hungarian House of Cards, and Motor Torpedo Boats in War World I, and another probably about life in Germany, Strikes and Mutiny. To see their videos about War World I, follow the link in the podcast notes or search 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. This week in commission news, between right now and next Tuesday February 20th at noon eastern is the only time ever, in history, that you'll be able to order one of the collectible commemorative World War I service medal sets. Now we've talked about them before, these are special US Mint created World War I commemorative silver medals for each of the military services that fought in World War I. There's one each for the Army, the Marines, the Army Air Corp, the Navy and the US Coast Guard. They're really beautiful and actual collectibles, because after this single mint run that's it. That's how many will exist in the world, so order yours today. Most important, and why we're promoting them, every commemorative World War I medal set that you buy helps build the National World War I Memorial in Washington D.C. Every sale adds \$10 to the memorial effort, so grab a

valuable piece of history and at the same time, honor all those who served in World War I. The order site is at the US Mint, but we've made it single step easy for you. Type ww1cc.org/coin into your browser and you'll get right to the purchase site. That's the letters W-W the number one and the letters C-C.O-R-G. Forward slash and the word coin, or of course follow the link in the podcast notes. In fact, pause the podcast. Yeah, right now. Pause the podcast. Go put in an order right now, because we'll be here later, but these special World War I commemorative service medals won't. This week in our remembering veterans section, we're being joined by Sonya Hodges-Grantham. A mother, grandmother, genealogist, author, citizen historian and researcher with the motto, "Get the job done and get it done right." She's the founder and president of the World War I 371st Historical Society, and the restorer of Child Cemetery in South Carolina. Sonya welcome.

[0:22:29]

Sonya H.: Good afternoon. How you doing?

[0:22:31]

Theo Mayer: So Sonya, your interest in restoring this particular cemetery stems from your own family history, can you tell us the story?

[0:22:39]

Sonya H.: Yes. My mother and my grandmother was from Concord Sumter, South Carolina and she came to Columbia briefly on a visit, and she met my grandpa to be Sanko Thompson Sr. They married in December of 1917, and then he entered the Army around July, August of the same year. He volunteered for service for the 371st Infantry Regiment 93rd Division Color of World War I, and his photograph hung in our living room for many, many years. My mother knew that the regiment was famous that her father fought in, but she didn't know how famous the regiment was, and I didn't either.

[0:23:32]

Theo Mayer: Okay. So the 371st is one of the lesser known black regiments in World War I, but it's corporal Freddie Stowers is one of the only two African Congressional Medal of Honor winners from World War I. Can you tell us about the regiment and Freddie?

[0:23:48]

Sonya H.: Yes. The regiment was an all black regiment. They were trained at Camp Jackson and they were the first black men to train at Camp Jackson. They were also an all black regiment that consisted of white officers, and they were fierce fighters and they were the only regiment that consisted of draftees and enlisted men, because we must remember the 369th, 370th and 372nd. They were National Guard Units, but the 371st, their members were enlisted men and draftees, and they performed vigorously during World War I, but their service has been long forgotten and buried. But I had a plan to change all that, and now the history is coming out. Corporal Freddie Stowers, he was a native of Sandy Springs, South Carolina and he was killed September 28th, 1918, and more than 70 years after his death, President George H.W Bush awarded his two surviving sisters the Congressional Medal of Honor, because nobody could locate the daughter or the mother. But the 371st, they were fierce fighters, they were placed under the French command due to segregation with the white soldiers, but they proved themselves and they deserve to be recognized. I guess since they were all black and from a Southern state, that was one of the reasons that the history has been held for so long. But they have an excellent record, and patriotism and fighting for our country.

[0:25:36]

Theo Mayer: Okay. Last question, unkempt or abandoned cemeteries are all over the southern countryside. So given your experience, what advice can you offer someone, who may like you did, want to take on the conservation of an abandoned cemetery?

[0:25:51]

Sonya H.: If you know of an abandoned cemetery, first of all, cemeteries are important, because they tell a lot about the person. They're museums, cemeteries are some of the oldest museums in this country and they are very important. However, it's been developers and businesses they want to come in and raze the cemeteries. But that's also against the law. So the first thing you need to do is to make sure the cemetery is documented in the historical society, or the national archives, your libraries or state museums. Then if it's not, you need to write your government officials and let them know that the site is a cemetery. However, that's been overlooked a lot in South Carolina. It's important to save cemeteries because like I said, they tell a lot about your family history, especially for African American's because that's one site where prior to death certificates, and the census records that African Americans can enter, and they maybe able to find additional information. Such as the birthdate and the year, and the setting where their loved ones are.

[0:27:12]

Theo Mayer: Well that's really great advice Sonya. You took on the Child Cemetery kind of solo. How did that go?

[0:27:20]

Sonya H.: So I went and I contacted Interstate Polymer Group in Columbia, South Carolina. It's a manufacturing plant and that's where the cemetery is located. That's also the grave site of my grandfather, Sanko Thompson Sr. My son and I, we asked for permission to enter the gates of Interstate Polymer Group and my mother had told me for so many years, every time I asked about the Child's Cemetery, she said, "Sonya, that cemetery is not there anymore. Stop asking about it. Leave it alone, because it's not nice to disturb the dead." However, my mother passed away in 1999 and so for years, I left everything alone, but 2009 came, and I wanted to do something different to set the 371st aside from the other regiments. I wanted to install a marker in the cemetery, because it was no marker in the United States to commemorate the 371st. My goal was to place the marker in Child's Cemetery, because that's where my grandfather is buried, and I also wanted to do it without government funding, or public funding. I set out to restore this cemetery and I met my goals. I kept the faith. I kept the faith and it has taken me to victory.

[0:28:48]

Theo Mayer: You're a pretty amazing lady. Thank you. Sonya, thank you for joining us today.

[0:28:54]

Sonya H.: All right, it has been a pleasure and I am proud to be an American. I'm proud of the service of my grandfather and his comrades, and I hope the recognition of the forgotten war, World War I will be highly recognized and written in American history. It is, but somehow it's covered. The soldiers of World War II, they were excellent fighters and they helped to bring the US to victory, but you can't have two without having the one.

[0:29:27]

Theo Mayer: Sonya Hodges-Grantham is a genealogist, author, citizen historian and researcher, the founder and president of the World War I 371st Historical Society and the solo restorer for the Child's Cemetery in South Carolina. Follow the link in the podcast notes to learn more about this amazing woman, and about her restoring the cemetery. And now for our feature: Speaking World War I. Where we explore the words and phrases that are rooted in the war. Adjusting to life in the Army and in Europe was a huge change for many of the young men serving in the AEF, the American Expeditionary Force. As we mentioned at the top of the show, starting this week 100 years ago, the Stars and Stripes Newspaper offered sincere, if tongue in cheek, advice and stories for our boys. The February 15th, 1918 edition includes a cheat sheet of terms and phrases for the new Army. The Doughboys Dictionary. Items to find in the dictionary include insurance premium: something that puts about one sixth of your pay where you'll never be able to get at it. ABRI: underground shelter entirely populated by soldiers and cooties. Dugout: the most satisfactory life insurance policy sold in the less healthy portions of France. Trench, singular: a hole in the ground without beginning and without end. Entirely filled by water and very frequently, the object of the enemy's attention. Trenches, plural: the thing in which the people back home imagine we are all the time. Machine gun: an arrangement alleged to be an aid to do the work of 15 men, but requiring the work of 30 to keep it in operation. And underwear: the favorite ration of the goat, sheep tick, and flea. The Doughboy Dictionary from the Stars and Stripes Newspaper, helping our boys with speaking World War I 100 years ago. See the podcast notes to learn more. For our international report this week, we have something special for you. Calling in all the way from Brazil today, we're joined by Matheus Lacerda. A passionate hobby historian with a Master's Degree in International Relations. Matheus recently published a book about Epitacio Pessoa, who was the head of the Brazilian delegation at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 and who was later elected President of Brazil. Welcome Matheus.

[0:32:06]

Matheus Lacerda: First of all, I thank you for the invitation and I would like to say that's an honor to participate in this program, and to present for everybody part of our history, in which we fought for world freedom alongside the United States and the Allies. I apologize for my English, but I will try to do my best to make myself understood by everyone.

[0:32:29]

Theo Mayer: You're doing great. So Matheus, I think many of our listeners will be surprised about Brazil's involvement in the war. Can you give us an overview of Brazil's World War I history?

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Matheus Lacerda: Yeah, at the start of the war, we had a position, a neutral position and this neutral position ended in April 1917. After the torpedoing by German submarines of the ship Parana in April 11th, 1917. We broke up diplomatic and commercial relations with Germany. The declaration of war against Germany only occurred on October 26th, 1917 after the torpedoing of another ship the Macau, and the imprisonment of it's commander. On this date, the national congress in response to the request of the President Venceslau Bras, decreed the recognition of this state of war, initiated by Germany [inaudible] against Brazil. Which resulted in the sending of our men of service from the Army and the Navy to Europe. They had been trained and participated as part of the 60th group of the Royal

Air Force. [inaudible] maybe not the right word, but they found a hospital in France to which treated were injuries soldiers and all medical problems. They had about a... Maybe 100 physicians, surgeons and students and other soldiers. The most important thing about the military participation was the creation of the DNOG, that was the national division of war operations. With [inaudible] and other vessels and crews, and they had the mission to enter the African coast to patrol the Atlantic against the German submarines. The Brazilian statesmen, they thought that it was important to participate at the war, because after the war, they can go to Versailles and participate in the peace conference.

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Theo Mayer: Your book is actually about Epitacio Pessoa, who was the ambassador or the participant at the Versailles Peace Conference. Who was he and what role did he take at the conference?

[0:34:59]

Matheus Lacerda: Epitacio Pessoa he was a former federal deputy, Minister of State, Minister of Justice, Minister of the Supreme Court and former Attorney General of Brazil. He was also Federal Senator and he was the head of the Brazilian delegation.

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Theo Mayer: Well he later became the President of Brazil, right?

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Matheus Lacerda: Yeah, and that's an interesting election, because he was elected while he was in France participating in the peace conference. At that time, Brazil was a young republic, so... The most important obligation that we had at that time, was to receive indenization for the coffee that we sold to Germany before the war and important one, the most important was about the ships... The German ships that we caught here in Brazil, during the war. This issue was important because France and England, they lost a lot of tonnages and Brazil, a few tonnages, but capture more tonnages than lost.

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Theo Mayer: So Matheus, let me just ask you, Brazil was at the Versailles Peace Conference and what Brazil wanted was the right to keep the ships that captured. Is that what their main goal was?

[0:36:25]

Matheus Lacerda: The main goal was this one, the ships and the indenization for the coffee, but at the conference Epitacio Pessoa saw space to go beyond this issues. So the Brazilian delegation participated actively to the foundation of the League of Nations. At that time, they axis of economy and friendship from Brazil changed from Europe to United States, and Brazil tried to consolidate it's friendship with United States at that moment. As you see, we had military participation, a small one... Smaller than Portuguese participation, but we had more winnings at this conference for example. The Brazilian entourage came back to Brazil, but before he passed through the United States and Canada. At my research, I discovered that he had a very big reception from the United States government and the newspapers made a lot of articles about his visit. He arrived in New York and then he went to Washington D.C., then he visited Boston and then come back to New York where he take a ship, an American ship bring him back home. The USS Idaho.

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Theo Mayer: A fascinating story. Thank you so much for calling in from Brazil and giving us a little bit more insight about Brazil in World War I. Matheus J. Madero Lacerda, author of the Diplomacy of President Epitacio Pessoa. Learn more about the book and Brazil in World War I by visiting the link in the podcast notes. This week in World War I War Tech, we're going to talk about synthetic rubber. The rise of motor vehicles was huge in World War I and the new transport helped to get soldiers to the front, carry wounded to hospitals and haul supplies every which way. But the tires on these machines were made of rubber. Something that came nearly exclusively from the British colonies of Ceylon and Malaya in South Asia. And rubber, was one of the many important materials that Germany found herself blockaded from by the British Navy with help by the US Navy of course as Mike explained earlier. Cut off from the world supply, the German tire industry supply of rubber was stretched thin, and the german army faced a logistical problem. The answer came from a German chemical company we now associate with aspirin, Bayer. Who came up and started to mass produce methyl rubber that was created from lime and coal. 24,000 tons of methyl rubber was produced during the war, but it was an inferior substitute for the real thing. It didn't work really well in the cold and lead to a lot of tailbone bruises for the troops, but it helped get Germany through the war. After the war, menthyl rubber went the way of imperialism and like imperialism, was never seriously considered again. Importantly, the work on these materials eventually led to more effective synthetic rubber substances including those manufactured by American rubber companies in World War II when we lost access to South Asia. Read more about synthetic rubber during World War I by following the link in the podcast notes. In articles in post from our rapidly growing website at

ww1cc.org and tie in neatly into the story told by our guest, Sonya Grantham. This week, there's an article about Corporal Freddie Stowers, an African American war hero. Who was posthumously awarded the medal of honor for his service in World War I. Corporal Stowers was born in 1896 in Anderson County, South Carolina. Now despite the discrimination that he faced there, he made the decision to serve in the segregated 371st Infantry Regiment. He was serving as a squad leader in company C of that regiment in the 93rd Infantry Division during an attack on Hill 188. Now that was in the Champagne Marne Sector of France. Sadly, he was killed in action that day, but the story of his exceptional bravery and leadership lived on. Earning him the Medal of Honor posthumously. Read the entire inspiring story of Corporal Freddie Stowers at the link in the podcast notes. Also in articles in post this week, is a story about how technological terror of the war inspired the world of fashion. World War I introduced so many terrible new war machines, and prominent among those was of course the aircraft. Which could now reach beyond the battlefield and into the homeland. A genuine weapon of terror bringing the war from the soldier to the citizen. For Londoners, the threat began in January of 1915, when the German's sent zeppelins loaded with bombs across the channel. In fact, the World War I air raids often at night, accomplished very little tactically, but their true purpose was to upset the peace, terrorize the civilians and sink morale. In that, they were pretty successful. The threat of bombings in the middle of the night meant that Londoners had to be ready to evacuate their homes with little to no notice, and no proper British woman wants to be caught out on the street during a raid in her night gown. So new sleeping suits and pajamas with legs made their way into the magazines, fashion and British bedrooms. Assuring a good night's sleep and a practical modest and stylish retreat in case of a nighttime raid. Read more about how just days after the first zeppelin raid over England, British women were already dressing for bed to be prepared to meet the midnight world at a minutes notice at the link in the podcast notes. This week, some special thoughts of love for Valentine's. Often when we speak about the war, we focus on the more gruesome details. The death, the mud, the gas, the lice, the devastation, but everyday life continued throughout the war, despite all of it's horrors. Husbands missed their wives, and girls missed their sweethearts. Now, second Lieutenant Francis Tracy wrote to his wife full of longing and love, and apologies for how hard his absence had been on her.

[0:43:02]

Farhang Ghajar: September 20th, 1918. France, dearest woman finish your letter last evening, but had to cut it short as we moved into a new area last night. I have a few moments to spare, so I'm going to resume my chat with you. During this period of separation, there has come a new strong, more spiritual love into my heart. For the dear precious woman who has suffered so much, as I'm only now beginning to thoroughly understand at my hands. My one prayer, is that I may be privileged to have one more opportunity to make you happy. The mistakes I have made. The heartaches I have caused you stand out like the shell holes that deface much of this country that once was so beautiful. I am learning my lesson honey, and this experience, this separation from you is burning its brand into my soul as nothing ever has before. May god bless and preserve you. Write, write. Your devoted hubby.

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Theo Mayer: Tracy wrote this letter to his wife on September 20th, 1918. Only seven days before he died in battle. He's buried in the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery. The track is an excerpt from the YouTube series The Letters and performed by Farhang Ghajar. The link is in the podcast notes. On our website at ww1cc.org, you'll find the story of Rebecca and Charles Duffy. Submitted by their daughter Lucy. Rebecca, who was a young French girl when the war broke out met and fell in love with an American soldier who was taking French lessons from her mother. The infatuation was immediate with Charles proposing to Rebecca just three weeks later. Read their incredible story by following the link in the podcast notes. You know, when we were preparing for the story, it seems like American love letters from World War I have not very well archived or collected. Hint, hint, hint to our listeners. There's a great project and opportunity for you. American love letters from World War I needs someone's attention. Meanwhile, in the UK media and on their web, you'll find the heart's beating fondly. We've put a list of links in the podcast notes for you to explore. And to wrap things up for Valentine's here is some audio clips from Love Songs of the Times. (Music) And on that note, it's time for the Buzz: The centennial of World War I this week in social media with Katherine Akey. Katherine, what did you pick?

[0:47:35]

Katherine Akey: Hi theo. Our friends at the Department of Homeland Securities US Citizenship and Immigration Services History Office are hosting an online webinar about the history of World War I soldier naturalization's on February 22nd. During World War I, nearly a fifth of the American armed forces were foreign born. In fact, Congress passed laws to expedite military nationalizations encouraging immigrant enlistments and to naturalize every servicemen before they shipped out. The webinar will provide an overview of the immigration services World War I soldier naturalization program and explore some of the unique research challenges the records present. Make sure to tune in at the link in the podcast as the webinar won't be recorded. You can also go back to our episode number 41 to hear our interview with Allison Finklestein and Zack Wilske from the USCIS History Office and Library. And that's it this week for The Buzz.

[0:48:35]

Theo Mayer: Thank you for listening to another episode of World War I Centennial News. We want to thank our guests Dr. Edward Lengel, military historian and author. Mike Shuster, curator of the Great War Project Blog. Sonya Grantham, citizen historian and researcher. Matheus Lacerda, Brazilian author and citizen historian. Katherine Akey, the commission's social media director and line producer for the podcast. Thanks also to our new intern, John [Moreles] for his great research assistance. 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 and this podcast is apart of that. 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 D.C. We want to thank the commission's founding sponsor. The Pritzker Military Museum and Library as well as the Star Foundation for their support. The podcast can be found on our website at ww1cc.org/cn on iTunes and Google Play at [ww1centennial news](http://ww1centennialnews.com), and on Amazon Echo and other Alexa enabled devices. Just say, "Alexa, play WWI Centennial News Podcast." Our Twitter and Instagram handles are both @WW1CC and we're on Facebook at [ww1centennial](http://ww1centennial.com). 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. Hey, I saved one more entry from the Doughboy Dictionary for you. Officer of the day: a lieutenant trouble with sleeplessness and possessed of the bad habit of coming around between midnight and dawn, and asking embarrassing questions. So long.

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