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8 speakers (Theo Mayer, Speaker 2, Dr. Lengel, Catherine Achey, Mike Shuster, Mark Wilkins, Dr. Krasnoff, John Schwan)

[0:00:09]

**Theo Mayer:** Welcome to World War I Centennial News, episode number 66. It's about World War One then, what was happening 100 years ago this week. And, it's about World War One now, news and updates about the Centennial and the commemoration. Today is April 6th, 2018, and 101 years ago, on April 6th, 1917, the United States declares war on Germany, which starts us on a path that will change our nation, our people, our industries and our position in the world forever.

[0:00:44]

**Speaker 2:** The senate passed the War Resolution with only three Republicans and three democrats opposed. The house voted 373 for, with 50 opposed. Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to serve in congress and the lone female representative voted against the resolution. The approved Declaration of War was sent to President Wilson on April 6th, 1917. At 1:00 PM that day, he signed approved, 6 April 1917, Woodrow Wilson.

[0:01:20]

**Theo Mayer:** On this one year anniversary, Dr. Edward Lengel, Catherine Achey and I sit down for our April 1918 preview round table. Mike Shuster from The Great War Project blog updates us on the German Spring Offensive. Mark Wilkins introduces us to World War I pilots and PTSD. Dr. Lindsay Krasnoff tells us about basketball in World War I. Katherine Akey brings a story from the World War I commemoration in social media. Plus, a lot more on World War I Centennial News, a weekly podcast brought to you by the 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. Several months ago during a podcast editorial planning session for an upcoming month, it occurred to us that our planning round table might be something our audience would enjoy listening to. We tried it, you liked it and now we do it. Here's the conversation Dr. Edward Lengel, Catherine Achey and I had earlier this week. The question on the table was, "What are the big stories and themes in April 1918 in the war that changed the world?"

[0:02:50]

**Dr. Lengel:** German Forces are continuing their offensives on the western front and the second part of their so-called Kaiserschlacht begins near the beginning of April. Operation Georgette, also called the Battle of Lys up near Ypres and Flanders hits the Belgian army and Portuguese troops. American troops are pulled in, in the form of engineers as well as some air units. The broader portrait is that Generalissimo Ferdinand Foch, technically in charge of all the forces on the western front, is ramping up the pressure on Pershing to move as many forces to the western front as possible and to get them into action as quickly as possible. So, we're moving closer and closer to actual combat on a large scale on the western front and we have our first engagement on April 20 and 21 on a very large scale at a place called .

[0:03:54]

**Theo Mayer:** Last month, the fighting and the Spring Offensive really started further south, right?

[0:03:59]

**Dr. Lengel:** That's right. The Germans are again, not looking to capture Paris. They launch their first offense on March 21 further south. They are launching this offensive in Flanders in early April. The goal of these offensives is to split the French and the British armies to force them to divert their reserves away from the main point of the German offensive, which is intended to split those armies, drive to the channel ports and force the British to evacuate to Great Britain.

[0:04:35]

**Theo Mayer:** So Catherine, there's this whole thing going on now about storm troop tactics. That's a whole new methodology of fighting that you mentioned earlier starts to look like World War II.

[0:04:46]

**Catherine Achey:** Yeah, actually a lot of what's happening in the Kaiserschlacht and continues to happen over the course of it looks increasingly like World War II tactics. The idea of the infiltrating, concentrated force is not new for the Germans. When Germany was Prussia, they had a conception of this kind of fighting but it really solidifies into storm troop tactics, what's recognizable to us as those kinds of tactics in fact in this push in Operation Georgette.

[0:05:22]

**Theo Mayer:** What's a good definition for storm troop tactics?

[0:05:25]

**Dr. Lengel:** A good definition for storm troop tactics is quick movement by relatively small numbers of highly trained troops that are instructed to bypass enemy strong points and work their way in between and into the rear of those strong points and cut them off and to keep moving as quickly as possible. Now of course, they don't have the armored forces that they would later have in World War II. In fact, the Germans are far, far behind in the development of tanks. But it's a very effective use of infantry and it absolutely catches the British by surprise.

[0:06:04]

**Theo Mayer:** Catherine, you had mentioned something earlier to me when we were talking that during this period is the first tank on tank battle.

[0:06:11]

**Catherine Achey:** Yeah, April 24. It's an unsuccessful German attack at [Villers-Bretonneux 00:06:17] near . It is the first full-on tank to tank combat. That looks a lot like World War II but like I said, a lot of the German tanks, especially up until now were captured British tanks that they slapped an iron cross on and fixed up and sent back out into battle. They really don't catch up on tank technology during this war. Going back a little bit about the Portuguese that we mentioned really quickly at the beginning, because I don't think we've mentioned Portugal yet at all during the podcast. They kind of don't get involved until pretty late in the game, if I'm correct. Ed?

[0:07:00]

**Dr. Lengel:** That's right. Portugal is an historic British ally that they traditionally had very strong connections. Of course, Spain is neutral throughout World War I but Portuguese troops are present on the western front.

[0:07:16]

**Catherine Achey:** Yeah. And I would mention too, as much as we're hyping the storm troopers and they are pretty successful in moments, they actually suffer ridiculous casualties during this particular push. Operation Georgette is called off before April ends, I think on the 28 or 29 of April. They fail to get as deep as they need to, to cut off the French and British from the supply lines going through Calais, Dunkirk and Boulogne. They really don't seem to be quite as successful in this moment as they are in World War II when they have this full all armed warfare support.

[0:07:57]

**Dr. Lengel:** That's a great point, Catherine. One of the things that I wanted to point out, there's this mythology that somehow, the British and the French never learned anything and the Germans were the only ones to develop these innovative new tactics. In fact, the British and the French had learned quite a lot on their own by this point in 1918, both in how to attack and how to defend effectively. It's partly because of the lessons that they've learned that they're able to inflict such heavy casualties on the Germans.

[0:08:31]

**Theo Mayer:** Ed, you had mentioned that the German intent was not to capture Paris, but they creep up close enough and then use big guns and start to shell Paris, right?

[0:08:41]

**Dr. Lengel:** The purpose here again is frankly, it's a form of terrorism. It's simply to break down allied moral, break down French moral to create a feeling of panic in the capital city and throughout the rear areas that the Germans are about to take Paris. To some degree, they're successful in creating that sense of panic. It was 380 millimeter gun barrel.

[0:09:06]

**Catherine Achey:** Good Lord.

[0:09:07]

**Theo Mayer:** How far could they shoot?

[0:09:08]

**Catherine Achey:** The Paris gun was miles. How many ... Let me look it up real quick. 81 miles, 130 kilometer effective firing range.

[0:09:18]

**Theo Mayer:** How do you even range when you're that far away?

[0:09:22]

**Catherine Achey:** I guess it doesn't really matter all that much. All you want to do is be hitting Paris.

[0:09:27]

**Theo Mayer:** Catherine, General Haig does this backs to the wall speech in mid-April right? What's that all about?

[0:09:35]

**Catherine Achey:** Yeah, it's a Field Marshal, Sir Douglas Haig. He's the Commander in Chief for the British armies in France. He releases what's called the Special Order of the Day on April 11. It's famously known as the Backs to the Wall Memo. It's a rousing speech in written form sent out to the British troops. I can read a little bit of it if you want me to.

[0:10:01]

**Theo Mayer:** Please.

[0:10:02]

**Catherine Achey:** "Many amongst us now are tired. To those, I would say that victory will belong to the side which holds out the longest. The French army is moving rapidly and in great force to our support. There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man. There must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight on to the end. The safety of our homes and the freedom of mankind alike depend upon the conduct of each one of us at this critical moment." It's very rousing.

[0:10:33]

**Dr. Lengel:** And the British have been prone to be very critical of Haig. After all, in the Battle of Third Ypres at the end of the summer of 1917, Haig pushed his forces into what was essentially a death trap and suffered terrible casualties. But his Backs to the Wall Order has an electrifying effect throughout both the British and dominion forces, even the Canadians and Australians. For them, it's a real wake up call for what's at stake.

[0:11:03]

**Theo Mayer:** There's three big generals out there, right? There's Foch, there's Haig and then there's our own. They're in competition in all sorts of interesting ways at this point right because they're all in the battle.

[0:11:15]

**Dr. Lengel:** That's right. There's a great deal of tension. There has been tension between Foch and Haig for quite some time. In general, they work well together but there is that longstanding Anglo French enmity and tension. Pershing jumps into this whole equation and has at times an almost explosive relationship with Foch. There's one episode where Pershing said he came close to punching Foch in the face. With Haig, it's a little bit more of simple awkwardness. Haig writes privately of his to some degree disdain for Pershing and the American forces, but on the surface he's all diplomacy. Foch can be diplomatic but he can also be volatile. There's a lot of energy exchanged among these three men.

[0:12:12]

**Catherine Achey:** They're almost perfect caricatures of the cultures they're representing in your description just now. I love it.

[0:12:18]

**Dr. Lengel:** Yeah, they are. That's right. It's pretty funny.

[0:12:20]

**Theo Mayer:** Now, what about the war in the sky? What's going on with that?

[0:12:24]

**Dr. Lengel:** There are four American squadrons that participate in the British defensive up in Flanders. For the most part, they're acting under overall British direction. The Americans are just beginning to develop their concept of the use of air power. It's still really in its infancy at this point. Billy Mitchell in particular is beginning to develop his own ideas. There's a great deal of pressure on both the Americans, as well as the British and the French air powers to launch assaults inside Germany to wreak revenge for what the Germans have done in Paris and London.

[0:13:08]

**Catherine Achey:** Yeah. I know from the British perspective, the Royal Flying Corp becomes the Royal Air Force in April 1918. It amalgamates, changes its name, a little shift in organization. They're very busy with Operation Georgette in particular. They drop a lot of bombs. They lose a lot of pilots and a lot of observers flying those bombing missions.

[0:13:34]

**Dr. Lengel:** Then 1918, it's a close run thing but eventually toward the spring and the summer, the Germans have lost many of their greatest aces, including the Red Baron who's lost in 1918. There's a process of wearing down that's taking place at this point.

[0:13:51]

**Theo Mayer:** Did the allies ever actually use the same kind of hitting the civilian population tactics during World War I? Did the allies do the same thing?

[0:14:01]

**Catherine Achey:** I don't think they go into Germany in particular. I don't know. Ed, do you know?

[0:14:06]

**Dr. Lengel:** No. There are some small scale bombing raids against the German railway stations and the like near the border. One thing that is important to keep in mind is that the memory of what the Germans did, both with its long range guns and Zeppelins in World War I continues over for the next 25 years. It's one of the rationales behind the large scale strategic bombing of German cities from 1943 to 1945. There's a sense of payback that many people feel, like it's time the Germans got a dose of their own medicine.

[0:14:52]

**Theo Mayer:** Next, we're going to go to Mike Shuster, former NPR correspondent and curator for The Great War Project Blog. Mike, your post is a perfect introduction to the month of April as you dive right into the situation on the ground for Easter Sunday, April 2, 1918. What was happening on the front?

[0:15:10]

**Mike Shuster:** Well, these are the headlines Theo. "German Offensive Stalls." "Fighting is Fierce, British Allies Outnumbered, Yet Hold Off Attackers." And, "A Poet in the Trenches. Special to The Great War Project." "On Easter a century ago, General Pershing, the commander of the American expeditionary force in Europe finally agreed," reports historian Martin Gilbert, "that American troops could join the British and French armies in small formations." This is well before they were numerous enough to form armies of their own. That had been a matter of sharp contention ever since the US declared war on Germany more than a year previous. Observes Gilbert, "This decision was a boost to allied morale, even if it meant that the bulk of the American troops already in Europe and who would be arriving at a rate of 120,000 a month would not yet be in action." "These are uneasy days for the allies," writes historian Gary, "With both British and French commanders just one step away from panic as the long expected German offensives seem to be unstoppable." It had been General Pershing's view that the morale of our troops depends upon their fighting under our own flag. Winston Churchill, British Minister of Munitions touring the front lines at this moment tell the Prime Minister David Lloyd George in London, reporting on the attitude of the French politicians and generals he was consulting. "It is considered certain here," Churchill wrote, "That the Germans will pursue this struggle to a final decision all through the summer and their resources are at present larger than ours." April 4, the Germans bear down on the allies, launching a renewed artillery bombardment unleashed by more than 1,200 guns and sending 15 divisions against seven allied. The Germans greatly outnumbered the allies, even as more and more American troops begin to arrive in the frontline trenches. Also on Easter a century ago, after 12 straight days of fighting the British pushed back and retake much territory they had previously lost. Then, there is a lull in the fighting. After just a few days, the Germans renew their offensive. "At first," reports historian Gilbert, "there was panic among the British troops facing this renewed onslaught but a combined force of British and Australian troops drives back the attackers." The next day, the German Supreme Commander calls off the offensive. Later, he writes, "The final result of the day is the unpleasant fact that our offensive has come to a complete stop and it's continuation without careful preparations promises no success." Among the soldiers killed that Easter Sunday a century ago is a 28 year old poet and artist, Isaac Rosenberg. He had fought on the western front for nearly a year. Incredibly prolific, he had written some remarkable poetry. Here is just a tiny sampling of his work cited by Martin Gilbert. "Heap, stones and a charred sign board shows with grass between and dead folk under and some bird sings while the spirit takes wing. This is life in France. I killed them but they would not die. Yay. All the day and all the night. For them, I could not rest or sleep, nor guard for them, nor hide in flight." That's some of the news from The Great War Project these days, a century ago.

[0:18:27]

**Theo Mayer:** Thank you Mike. Mike Shuster from The Great War Project Blog. This week for War in the Sky, we're turning inward to look at the psychological challenges for those daring and do warriors in the sky during World War I. Joining us is Mark Wilkins, historian, writer, museum professional, and lecturer. Mark is the author of a recently published article in the Smithsonian Air and Space Magazine called The Dark Side of Glory, an early glimpse of PTSD in the letters of World War I aces. Welcome to the podcast, Mark.

[0:19:01]

**Mark Wilkins:** Thank you. Glad to be here.

[0:19:04]

**Theo Mayer:** Mark to start with, how did you get the trove of letters you used for your research?

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**Mark Wilkins:** Well, research is as you know, the treasure hunt. It's intuitive and sometimes information is found in the most unlikely places. That being said, there's some recent books that have collections of pilots' letters. University and national archives are another great source, as are aviation museums or war museums like the Imperial War Museum of London. Local historical societies, sometimes relatives of the pilots. Also, online newspaper and periodical archives are another fabulous source for information.

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**Theo Mayer:** Mark, about how many letters do you think you went through to start to do your research?

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**Mark Wilkins:** Too many to count! Many, many, many letters. Yes.

[0:19:47]

**Theo Mayer:** In World War I, malady was equated with physical issues, but your article deals with the psychological stresses of the pilot's experience. Last year, we were telling stories about soldiers being executed for shell shock on charges of cowardice. How did that play out for the pilots?

[0:20:03]

**Mark Wilkins:** Well, the Field of Aviation Psychology so-called evolved symbiotically with the war. Psychiatrists were initially split about the causation of shell shock, for example. Some thought it was a purely physical phenomenon, whereas others thought it was psychological. This began a debate that actually didn't conclude until around I think 1922. The military finally opted for the latter definition that it was psychological because this allowed them to either be returned to the trenches or the cockpit. This was important because with the epic casualty tolls mounting, they really needed every man. I'm not aware of any pilot being shot for cowardice, although when cowardice was observed, the offending pilot was severely reprimanded or transferred. You have to remember, they were trying to build these guys up as basically rock stars. The trench warfare was not going well and these guys to play these sort of one-on-one jousting in the skies. This was something that gave the men in the trenches hope. They didn't want their image tarnished. Many internalized the struggle. In the British squadrons, it was understood that you kept a sunny disposition in front of the men but you could privately go to pieces.

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**Theo Mayer:** The stress on these aces actually makes a lot of sense. If you were an ace, you flew a lot and the mortality rate of your buddies is off the chart. You don't have like you do in a trench. You've got the courage of the guy to your left and the guy to your right to bolster you. But this is a white-knuckle, cold sweat daily solo experience. It sounds like traumatic stress is inevitable. How common was it?

[0:21:26]

**Mark Wilkins:** Among those who talked about it, you have to remember that many didn't, it was very common. Elliott White Springs, who was an American who flew for the RFC, the Royal Flying Corp in the 85th and 148th squadron basically said, "It's only a question of time until we all get it. I'm all shot to pieces. My nerves are all gone and I can't stop. Few men live to know what real fear is. It's something that grows on you day by day, that eats into your constitution and undermines your sanity." Let me give you another example. Squadron leader Cecil Lewis wrote, "I realized not then, but later why pilots cracked up, why they lost their nerve and had to go home. Nobody could stand the strain indefinitely. Ultimately, it reduced you to a dithering state near to imbecility. They send you home to rest. They put it in the background of your mind, but it was not like a bodily fatigue from which you could recover. It was sort of a damage to the essential tissue of your being. And never once you have been through it, could you be quite the same again."

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**Theo Mayer:** Mark, after immersing yourself in all of this, can you give us one example of what your biggest takeaway is from this?

[0:22:26]

**Mark Wilkins:** It's a complex notion. It was a bittersweet experience to find easy explanation or quantification from Lee. Lee after the war reflecting, goes back to the western front. He's standing by the corner of a chateau and he says, "In the sunshine by the waving grain with everything now at peace, I remembered them and was filled with a heavy sense of loneliness. I knew that although I had not been killed, something in me had. Something had gone out of me and was buried and would always be buried in 100 cemeteries in France and in England along with the companions of my youth who had died, that our country might live."

[0:23:00]

**Theo Mayer:** We just had a great question come in from our live audience. Frank Krone wants to know, did Richthofen, Germany's Red Baron, appear to suffer from PTSD?

[0:23:11]

**Mark Wilkins:** Yes, he did. He was a fearless pilot, but he was wounded in the head. He suffered a head wound and after that, he changed. He became a little more cautious, a little bit more protective of his pilots. He basically realized that mortality was something that could happen to him. The problem is, we can only deduce what happened based on the letters that many of these guys wrote. Red Baron, even though he wrote an autobiography, he doesn't really talk about much of that stuff. His mother basically is the one who commented on his condition and his temperament had changed after he was wounded.

[0:23:41]

**Theo Mayer:** Last December, we had film maker Derrick Greer on the show about his upcoming film, about the and doing a documentary. You're involved in that project, aren't you?

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**Mark Wilkins:** That's right. I'm the Producer of Aerial Effects and a historical consultant for the film. Basically, it's as the producer for aerial effects, I line up venues for shoots. The aircraft I mentioned, we did one at the Golden Age Air Museum filming replica Nieuport 17's and a German two-seater and simulated patrols and dog fight segments. In addition, I've built a few large scale actually radio controlled models. These will stand in for what we can't do with full scale aircraft. And as historical consultant for the film, I'm helping out with historical big picture aspects. Really, the trick with this is to locate it within the greater framework of the war so the viewer not only sees this particular story in great detail, but is also able to see where it fits within the big picture, the major battles and political trends of the war.

[0:24:31]

**Theo Mayer:** You've got a book coming out. Can you tell us about it and when it's coming out?

[0:24:35]

**Mark Wilkins:** It's basically the article in expanded format. It chronicles the rise of military aviation, nationalism and technology during the late 19th and 20th century, the rise of the ace phenomenon, aviation psychiatry, and finally includes six case studies that illustrate different ways men dealt with the psychological impact of combat flying. It will be out in January 2019. It's being published by Pen and Sword in the United Kingdom.

[0:24:57]

**Theo Mayer:** Okay. We'll put links in the podcast notes or we'll have you back when the book comes out. Thank you for coming on the show and giving us the story and the article.

[0:25:05]

**Mark Wilkins:** Well, thank you for having me.

[0:25:06]

**Theo Mayer:** Mark Wilkins is a historian, writer, museum professional and historical aeronautics expert. You can read his article in the Air and Space Magazine and learn more about his work from the links in the podcast notes. For videos about World War I 100 years ago this week, check out our friends at The Great War Channel on YouTube. New episodes this week include The German Armored Cars in World War I and The Neutral Ally: Norway in World War I. See their videos by searching for The Great War on YouTube or by following the link in the podcast notes. All right, it's time to fast forward into the present with World War I Centennial News Now. This part of the podcast focuses on now and how we're commemorating the centennial of World War I. For remembering veterans, a small village hosts a big event this weekend. The Midway Village Museum is 136 acre living history park located near Rockford, Illinois. This weekend, the Victorian village will host the sixth annual Great War Event, featuring over 225

reenactors portraying soldiers and civilians from the United States and Europe. Visitors will have an opportunity to enter encampments, tour a reproduction 150 yard trench system and watch large scale narrated battle reenactments. It's the nation's largest public World War I reenactment event and we'll be speaking with some of the events' organizers right here on the podcast in a couple of weeks to hear how it went. For now and especially if you're in the region, visit the link in the podcast notes for a full list of scheduled events at Midway Village Museum near Rockford, Illinois. Also this week for remembering veterans, something I didn't know much about from the world of sports a century ago. I've got a clear image in my mind of baseball in the era. I also see leather helmets and pigskin warriors on the football grid iron. But today, we're going to be looking at another great American institution that as it turns out, made a big splash in France during World War I, basketball. To tell us about it, we're joined by Dr. Lindsay Sarah Krasnoff, a historian, sports writer, consultant and author. Her website says historical insights, communicating globally, sports, diplomacy and storytelling. Lindsay, it sounds like you're going to fit right in here. Welcome to the podcast.

**[0:27:53]**

**Dr. Krasnoff:** Great. Well, thank you so much for having me.

**[0:27:55]**

**Theo Mayer:** Lindsay, for our non basketball experts like me, could you start us off with a brief history of basketball? When did it first develop and how widespread was the sport in America circa 1918?

**[0:28:08]**

**Dr. Krasnoff:** Basketball was developed by a YMCA educator, James Naismith in 1891 as a result of trying to create a game for some of his older students that was not as violent at the time as say football was. It was a game that had to keep their attention, keep them engaged, and be able to be played indoors. This was in Springfield, Massachusetts, which in December is rather snowy. That's how the game originally developed. It spread fairly quickly, including throughout the Northeast and the Midwest and further afield within the United States. Some of the early professional teams and leagues were begun in the late 1890's and early 1900's. By around 1901, we start seeing the first colleges sponsoring basketball games. It very quickly became integrated into the burgeoning sports scene in the United States at that time. Basketball was very much seen as a sport that was played both for men and for women. I think that's an important distinction to note. It was seen as being very beneficial for women's health. You also have this golden halo over basketball at the time. It's seen as part of these sports that help to build what they called muscular Christianity. Build the moral fiber of young people, young men, young women in a protected setting.

**[0:29:39]**

**Theo Mayer:** Did Americans bring hoops to France or were they already playing there?

**[0:29:43]**

**Dr. Krasnoff:** Well, that's a trick question that you ask. Technically, yes. The Americans brought basketball to France. A man named Melvin Rideout who was one of James Naismith's original students in Springfield, Massachusetts. Two years after the game was invented, was sent to Paris to oversee the opening of a new YMCA hostel there in the on the Rue Trévisé. He teaches this new game of basketball to several of his French colleagues and to the young boys who were there watching. What you have is the first basketball game played on European soil occurring there in Paris in December 1893. Fairly quick spread to France, relatively speaking. But because of its association with the YMCA, which was a protestant affiliated organization, there were some difficulties in some of the French openly embracing the sport. When the Americans arrive though in 1917, that's when they start to disassociate the game with the religious aspect. The American expeditionary force was playing basketball most places where they went as part of these recreational sports. The association with the Americans and this cool factor that they seemed to bring also helping to turn the tide of the war and the fact that all stripes of doughboys were playing basketball, regardless of background.

**[0:31:13]**

**Theo Mayer:** You're working on a new book about basketball in France. How popular is the sport there now?

**[0:31:20]**

**Dr. Krasnoff:** Basketball is the second most played team sport in France today, although it trails significantly behind soccer.

**[0:31:27]**

**Theo Mayer:** Oh, of course.

**[0:31:28]**

**Dr. Krasnoff:** However, the NBA is very popular in France and a lot of people watch the NBA. Basketball is increasingly a bigger cultural product in France than it has been in a long time.

[0:31:41]

**Theo Mayer:** Lindsay, why do you think it became popular?

[0:31:44]

**Dr. Krasnoff:** Well one aspect that I think is really interesting is that French military adopted and integrated basketball into their training exercises in the 1920's and 1930's. When you talk about how did basketball become more popularized in France as a result of the war, yes. On the one hand, its association of cool post war American cultural world, that's a main initiator. But the French military sees it as a very good game to help rebuild the decimated bodies of lots of French youth that were implicated in the war. So, it's the army and also the Catholic Church that helped to start to popularize it in the 1920's and 1930's.

[0:32:29]

**Theo Mayer:** Lindsay, thank you for coming on the show and telling us a lot about things that probably many of us didn't know about.

[0:32:35]

**Dr. Krasnoff:** My pleasure. Thanks for having me.

[0:32:37]

**Theo Mayer:** Dr. Lindsay Sarah Krasnoff is a historian, sports writer, consultant and author of several books. Learn more about her and her writings by following the links in the podcast notes. For 100 Cities, 100 Memorials. Today, the anniversary of America's declaration of war in 1917. The final 50 awardees have been announced. Here's a section from the press release. "On the eve of the 101st anniversary of the United States entering World War I, the US World War I Centennial Commission and the Pritzker Military Museum and Library announced today the final 50 World War I memorials to be awarded grants and honored with the official national designation as World War I Centennial Memorials." "All 100 memorials in all 100 cities have now been designated, including such national landmarks as Chicago Soldier Field, LA's Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, San Francisco's War Memorial Veterans Building and Opera House, Honolulu's Natatorium and Washington DC's National World War I Memorial at Pershing Park. In addition, many smaller local community projects are being recognized, such as Scranton, Pennsylvania's Colonel Frank Duffy Memorial Bridge and Park, Cape May, New Jersey's Soldier and Sailor's Monument, Ocean Spring, Mississippi's Emile Ladner World War I Memorial, and North Carolina's North Carolina State University's Memorial Bell Tower, to name just a few. The newly designated memorials are in 37 different states and each will receive a \$2,000 matching grant towards the restoration, conservation and maintenance of these local historical treasures." Here's John Schwan, the interim president and CEO of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library from their livestream announcement.

[0:34:33]

**John Schwan:** Congratulations to all those named as official World War I Centennial Memorials. One symbolic memorial for every year of the past century. Thank you to the towns and cities across the country that took part in this program and thank all the individuals who helped pull this together so that we may never forget the sacrifices of those who served in The Great War, lest we forget.

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**Theo Mayer:** This is a nearly two and a half year effort to get 100 memorials designated, but it's not the end of the program. For example, we're going to continue to profile the projects on the podcast every week and we're going to accelerate our Memorial Hunter's Program to identify and create a national register of World War I memorials around the nation. We're going to continue to encourage and support communities around the country to commemorate their local World War I heroes through their memorials that are all over America, a lot of them hidden in plain sight. As Dan Dayton, the Executive Director of the World War I Centennial Commission noted in the press release, "I am impressed by the community involvement that has sprung from these projects. By focusing on restoring these community treasures, local cities, veterans' groups, historical societies and citizens have come together to remember the community's heritage. That's really the key goal of the program." See a searchable listing of all 100 cities and memorials at [ww1cc.org/100memorials](http://ww1cc.org/100memorials) or follow the link in the podcast notes. Here's our weekly feature, Speaking World War I where we explore the words and phrases that are rooted in the war. Today, when you encounter something that's exaggerated, major, melodramatic, big, huge, maybe just too much, we sometimes describe it as being over-the-top, which is our Speaking World War I phrase this week. During World War I as the soldiers sat in the muddy trenches in anxious anticipation, preparing to take the offensive, that dramatic moment when the whistles blew and the men climbed up and over the berms of the trenches, rushing out into no man's land, facing enemy shells and gas and machine guns. That was known as, you guessed it, going over the top. At the time, it was a literal physical

description of what you did, but appropriately it remains in our lexicon today as something seriously radical. Over-the-top, something you might toss off lightly about somebody or something but a phrase with a really heavy history and this week's phrase for Speaking World War I. Check the podcast notes to learn more. This week for World War I War Tech, we turn our attention back to late March and early April 1918. Paris is under attack as behemoth cannon shells, some weighing as much as 230 pounds fall on the city, killing dozens, creating panic and initially really confusing city officials. Where are the guns? The Paris Guns, as they came to be known, were sitting 80 miles away and they were responsible. This German super gun wasn't meant for the battlefield. It was specifically designed to terrorize and demoralize civilian populations. It was so massive that it could only be moved around by rail. It was created by extending a 380 millimeter naval gun barrel to a length of 112 feet. That and 550 pounds of gunpowder gave these beasts the extreme firing range. Ed Lengel mentioned that en route to their target, the shells literally arced into the earth's stratosphere 24 miles up and up there, there's almost no atmospheric drag. Again, increasing the range of the guns. This new weapon began its assault on Paris in late March 1918, continuing periodically for over three months until early August. Now, the panic and fear that spread after the initial attack was really actually short-lived. The terror weapon never proved to be much of a threat to French strategy or even to population's morale. Nevertheless, the Paris guns proved to be a domestic propaganda hit in Germany, as the ability to strike the French capital directly did a lot to stem the public's anxiety over the course of the war. The Paris Gun, an engineering marvel. A terror weapon aimed at the Parisians 100 years ago and the subject of this week's World War I War Tech. Learn more and see images of the mobile monsters at the links in the podcast notes. For articles and posts, we're going to try something new this week. Many of the new posts are featured in our Weekly Dispatch Newsletter, so we're going to give you the highlights from the dispatch as an overview. A feature in Politico outlines how President Trump's parade this year, which looks like it's going to fall on or near Veteran's Day may have special World War I meaning. It's an interesting article and an interesting read. News about Sergeant Stubby. A followup on the film's recent premier, a street fair honoring the pup in his hometown of Hartford, Connecticut and a new Sergeant Stubby statue plan for Middletown, Connecticut. Test yourself and your World War I knowledge by taking a quiz from the National Archives. Check out a new illustrated battlefield travel guide. Read a bittersweet story about Easter of 1918. A new exhibition highlights Anglo-American relations during the war and it's on view in Bath, England. Doughboy MIA features Private Edwin C. Kitterman of New Middleton, Indiana. And this week's featured story of service is that of Private Wayne Minor, an Illinois native who was killed in action just three hours before the armistice. Sign up for the Weekly Dispatch Newsletter at [ww1cc.org/subscribe](http://ww1cc.org/subscribe). Check the archive at [ww1cc.org/dispatch](http://ww1cc.org/dispatch) or follow the link in the podcast notes. That's articles and posts for this week. Which brings us to The Buzz, the Centennial of World War I this week in social media with Catherine Achey. Catherine, what did you pick?

[0:41:08]

**Catherine Achey:** Hi, Theo. Really interesting article popped up on Facebook this week about ordinance from World War I that continues to surface and pose a real threat. But not in Europe, right here on the East Coast of the United States. Listeners might be familiar with the Zone Rouge, a 460 square mile area of France, centered around Verdun that's been determined to be too physically environmentally damaged for human habitation as a direct result of The Great War. There's even an entire department in France, the or the Department of De-mining, that's been tasked with safely disposing of ordinance from the World Wars. Since it's establishment in 1946, more than 630 members of that force have been killed in the line of duty. We have no such force here in the US so when seven rifle grenades from World War I were discovered recently on the coast of New Jersey, explosives experts had to be called in to safely dispose of the munitions. So, how did these grenades end up in New Jersey? It turns out, disposing of unneeded munitions by dumping them into the sea was a commonplace practice as recently as 1970. As a result, there are an estimated millions of tons of potentially explosive ordinance on the sea floor and every once in a while, some makes its way onto shore. You can read more about the Zone Rouge and the intermittent discovery of World War weapons on American shores by visiting the links in the podcast notes. And, that's it for this week in The Buzz.

[0:42:36]

**Theo Mayer:** And that's the first week of April for World War I Centennial News. Thank you for listening. We also want to thank our guests, Dr. Edward Lengel, military historian and author. Mike Shuster, curator for The Great War Project Blog. Mark Wilkins, historian, writer, museum professional and lecturer. Dr. Lindsay Krasnoff, historian, sports writer, consultant and author. Catherine Achey, the Commission's social media director and the line producer for the podcast. A shout out to our intern, John John Morreale 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, including this podcast. 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 our 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 Star Foundation for their support. The podcast can be found on our website at [ww1cc.org/cn](http://ww1cc.org/cn) or search [ww1centennialnews](https://www.apple.com/itunes/search/ww1centennialnews) on iTunes, Google Play, TuneIn, Podbean, Stitcher Radio on Demand, Spotify, or use your smart speaker. Just say, "Play ww1centennialnews podcast." Our Twitter and Instagram handles

are both @ww1cc and we're on Facebook @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.  
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