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9 speakers (Mayer, Shuster, Lengel, Akey, Clarke, Robbins, Isherwood, Carls, Song)

[0:00:09]

**Mayer:** Welcome to "World War I Centennial News," Episode #67. It's about World War I then, what was happening a hundred years ago this week. It's about World War I now, news, and updates about the centennial and the commemoration. This week our guests include Mike Shuster from the Great War Project Blog who updates us on what the UK forces are up against both on the front and in recruiting; Dr. Edward Lengel with the story of the US Yankee Division as they enter serious battle; Kenneth Clarke and Michael Robbins introduce a pictorial book, a perfect souvenir of the centennial from the Pritzker Military Museum and Library and the US World War I Centennial Commission; Dr. Ian Isherwood shares his experience in creating a World War I educational program structured around a soldier's letters; Dr. Alice-Catherine Carls, the project instigator for the 100 Cities/100 Memorials project from Jackson, Tennessee and the local research that it spawned; Katherine Akey keeps us in Tennessee with a social media post about a great commemoration event; all this and more 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. Just one year after the declaration of war, 100 years ago, it's time for the third Liberty Loan drive to raise money to pay for the war effort. Let me put the Liberty Loan drive into perspective for you. In early 20th century thinking, Woodrow Wilson's government was completely clear that the war would be financed by money raised specifically for it. And that a majority of that money was to come from ordinary American citizens. By contrast, today in our late 20th, early 21st century, money for our wars and military expenditures are financed from a big boiling cauldron called the national debt. Today the average citizen feels little or no real connection with or responsibility for our military expenditures. Not so in 1917, and 1918. In those two years, during the four bond drives, 20 million individuals purchased Liberty War bonds. Now 20 million investors is a pretty impressive number given the fact that there were only 24 million households in America at the time. More than 17 billion dollars are raised. In addition, taxes are collected to the sum of 8.8 billion dollars. In short, 26 billion dollars is gathered to finance the fight for World War I. Now that's in 1918 dollars. Today that equates to nearly one-half a trillion dollars raised in bonds, largely from citizens and specifically for a purpose. Now with that as a background, let's jump into our centennial time machine and take a look at the national fundraising effort and a whole lot more, 100 years ago this week in the war that changed the world. On April 6th 1918, President Wilson makes a speech to launch the third Liberty Bond Campaign. Here is his declaration as reported in the pages of the Official Bulletin, the government's war gazette published by Wilson's propaganda chief, George Creel. Dateline: Saturday, April 6th 1918. The headline reads: The President Delivers the Following Address at Baltimore Tonight on the Occasion of the Opening of the Third Liberty Loan Campaign. "My fellow citizens, this is the anniversary of our acceptance of Germany's challenge to fight for our right to live and be free, and for the sacred right of free men everywhere. The Nation is awake. There is no need to call to it. We know what the war must cost, our utmost sacrifice, the lives of our fittest men and, if need be, all that we possess. The loan that we are met to discuss is one of the least parts of what we are called upon to give and to do, though in itself imperative. The people of the whole country are alive to the necessity of it, and are ready to lend to the utmost, even where it involves a sharp skimping and daily sacrifice to lend out of meager earnings. They will look with reprobation and contempt upon those who can and will not, upon those who demand a higher rate of interest, upon those who think of it as a mere commercial transaction. I have not come, therefore, to urge the loan. I have come only to give you, if I can, a more vivid conception of what it is for." The president goes on to explain the situation on the ground in Europe and the dire need for America as a Nation to take a stand, take a lead and defend all that the Nation holds dear. And so kicks off the third Liberty Bond Campaign. A few days later the Official Bulletin reports on the Cabinet's Liberty Bond appeal. Dateline: Tuesday, April 9, 1918. The headline reads: Cabinet Members Appeal to all True Americans to Support with their Dollars our Gallant Fighters in the Field. Buy Liberty Bonds, they ask, in proof of your patriotism. The article goes on with a number of cabinet members presenting their appeal of the importance, and the patriotic imperative for buying bonds, but my favorite part comes at the end of the full page article with a subheadline of: What Liberty Bonds Will Buy. The article reads: "\$18,000 invested in Liberty Bonds will equip an infantry battalion with rifles. \$50,000 will construct a base hospital with 500 beds, or equip an infantry brigade with pistols. \$100,000 will buy five combat airplanes, or pistols, rifles, and a half a million rounds of ammunition for an infantry regiment." Just like today, contributors to a cause want to know exactly what their contribution is buying. These guys really knew what they were doing. In another smart move, presumably pulled off by George Creel, the campaign cleverly recruits four of the most popular movie stars of the day and puts them on the road to help raise the money. The headline reads: Liberty Loan Speaking Tour for Four Motion Picture Stars. The story opens with, "Today we're announcing the itineraries of Charles Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and Marguerite Clark for their speaking tour during the forthcoming Liberty Loan Campaign. The article continues with the schedule of their appearances across the country. Then on Saturday, April 13th 1918, just a week after launching the campaign, the headline in the official bulletin reads: Total Sales of Liberty Bonds as Reported to the Treasury Pass

the Half a Billion Dollar Mark as Scores of Towns Exceed Quotas. It's a big week on the home front. Raising money 100 years ago for America's participation in a war that changed the world, and it's also a big week on the fighting front. The 100 years ago this week, the 369th US Infantry Regiment goes to the front lines to fight, but with the French. On April 8th 1918, the 369th is amalgamated into the French Army. Oh, wait a minute. Didn't General Pershing insist on keeping the American Expeditionary Forces together as a distinct American fighting force? Yeah, he did, but Pershing's insistence on keeping all the American forces together didn't extend to the black troops in the segregated US Army. Among them were the 15th New York National Guard Regiment, redesignated the 369th Infantry Regiment, but better known as the Harlem Rattlers or the Harlem Hellfighters. Now Pershing presumably didn't have any problems with black soldiers per se, but the question of how to use black troops in the front lines, where they'd have to rely on the full cooperation of white units on either side, was a really gnarly problem. The online blog, "Today in World War I," posted a quote from Hamilton Fish, a New Yorker, who served as one of the regiment's white officers, quote: "The French were crying out for the US Regiments to go into the French Army. So I guess Pershing figured that he could win two birds with one stone: solve the problem on what to do with us and give something to Foch. From then on, we spent our entire service in the French Army. Officially, we're still the 369th US Infantry, but for all intents and purposes we were francais." The post goes on to quote from Noble Sissle, who served in the regiment's famous band. "We were fully equipped with French rifles and French helmets. Our wagons, our rations, our machine guns and everything pertaining to our equipment of the regiment for the trench warfare was supplied by the French Army." The 369th went on to serve with great distinction spending more time on the front line than any other US forces with a fierceness and bravery that never gave ground to the enemy. A proud combat service that started 100 years ago this week in the war that changed the world. Continuing to explore the story on the front, we're going to go to Mike Shuster, former NPR Correspondent and curator for the Great War Project blog. Mike, your post this week speaks to what can only be thought of as a moment of total desperation for the British lines. It's just been exactly two years since they brutally put down Ireland's Easter Uprising. Now they're trying to conscript the Irish and they're not having much luck drafting more Canadians either. General Haig puts out his inspirational "Backs To The Wall" Order and at this very moment of do or die, your story this week closes with a note of hope. Fill it in for us, Mike.

[0:11:12]

**Shuster:** Sure, Theo. The headline reads: Allies Face Resistance in own Ranks. Germans Renew Onslaught; Irish, Canadians Defy England. Finally, the Americans. This is special to The Great War Project. On this day a century ago, the Germans renew their offensive on the Western Front, ferociously. "After a bombardment lasting four-and-a-half hours," reports historian Martin Gilbert, "the battle of the Lys began. Fourteen German divisions attacked on a ten mile front. The British were driven back. So, too, was a Portuguese division, against which the Germans sent four divisions, taking 6000 Portuguese prisoners. Then creating a gap three-and-a-half miles wide in the British line." Reports Gilbert, "So fierce was the initial German artillery bombardment that one Portuguese battalion refused to go forward into its trenches. Further havoc was caused when 2000 tons of mustard gas, phosgene, and other chemicals were discharged against the British forces, incapacitating 8,000 men." "The British situation was so grave," Gilbert writes, "that on April 9th, a century ago, "conscription was extended to Ireland, a measure hitherto avoided because it was so bitterly opposed by the Irish nationalists." The poet, William Butler Yeats, writes in protest, "I read in the newspaper yesterday that over 300,000 Irish soldiers have landed in France in a month, and it seems to me a strangely wanton thing that England for the sake of 50,000 Irish soldiers is prepared to hollow another trench between England and Ireland and fill it with blood. If conscription were imposed on Ireland," Yeats writes, "women and children will stand in front of their men and receive the bullets, rather than let them be taken to the front." There is similar resistance to conscription in Canada. There, "the anti-war feeling that had led so many men to resist enlistment at the end of 1917, reemerges." Hundreds are ordered to report for enlistment in Quebec. Hundreds decline. By April, they are arrested, "whereupon," reports Gilbert, "anti-conscription rioters ransacked and burned the building containing the military service registration office. They then fired on troops who had been sent to disperse them." According to a newspaper account, "The mob used rifles, revolvers, and bricks. The military found it necessary to use a machine gun before the mob was overcome. Four civilians were killed." Gilbert reports, "To calm the situation, the Canadian government ordered a suspension in the arrest of army deserters." Back on the battlefield, for six days the Allies struggle to defend successive lines of German soldiers. On April 11th, the British Supreme Commander, General Sir Douglas Haig issues Special Order of the Day. "There is no course open to us but to fight it out," he declares. "Every position must be held to the last man with our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight to the end." Then this from British nurse Vera Britain assigned to a hospital near the front. She is leaving her sleeping quarters when she has to step off the road to let a large contingent of Allied soldiers pass. "An unusual quality of bold vigor in their stride," she reports, "caused me to stare at them with puzzled interest. They look larger than ordinary men. Their tall, straight figures were in vivid contrast to the under-sized armies of pale recruits to which we were grown accustomed." Then she hears an excited cry from the nurses nearby, "Look. Look. Here are the Americans." That's the news this week from the Great War Project.

[0:14:52]

**Mayer:** Thank you, Mike. Mike Shuster from the Great War Project blog. One last story from the front for our segment, America Emerges: Military Stories from World War I with Dr. Edward Lengel. As Mike indicated, this is the time when the American infantry does arrive on the front. The boys are fresh, healthy and eager when compared to their battle weary allies. They're also green. The Germans want to or maybe they even need to discredit them. The school of combat is now in session for the Americans. And the lessons begin 100 years ago this week in Seicheprey, lessons for all sides. And Ed's here to tell you the story.

**[0:15:34]**

**Lengel:** A couple of weeks ago, we spoke about the 26th Yankee Division entering the front lines and encountering a curious tribe of useful rats in the trenches who helped to protect them from poison gas. At the end of March, the Yankee Division moves into the lines taking over a sector near Ansauville, France that had been occupied by the 1st Division, the big red one. This is a terrible sector. It's low-lying ground. It's swampy. It's flooded and the Germans hold complete command of observation over the sector. They have positions on a nearby hill where they can see everything that's happening and as a result, there pummeling the Yankee Division from the very beginning with artillery and poison gas and machine gun fire. On April 10th and 12th, the German infantry assault positions held by the American 104th Regiment of the 26th Yankee Division, the doughboys firmly hold their ground they drive the enemy back with the help of machine guns and artillery, but it's going to get a lot more difficult. Part of the Yankee Divisions line circles the wrecked little village of Seicheprey. This sector is occupied by the 102nd Regiment which is commanded by gentleman named Colonel John H. "Machine Gun" Parker, who had commanded a Gatling Gun detachment in the Spanish-American War and is still known by this name. Some people doubt his sanity. There is an episode shortly before the troops move into the front lines where Parker is reviewing his men and he drives by in a staff car and he orders them to fire their machine guns over his head as he's driving by. Then when the machine gun fire ceases, he leaps out of his car and yells to them, "I've brought you over here to get killed, and that's what I'm going to do." You can imagine their thoughts as they are occupying the front lines under Colonel Parker. This is a difficult position as a salient. It's vulnerable to attack by the enemy. Parker is worried about it. The Divisional Commander, Clarence Edwards, is worried about it, but they don't have time to make any changes before on the cold and misty morning of April 20th at three a.m., German artillery begin to fire a heavy barrage on the American infantry around such prey. Two hours later at dawn, the bombardment turns into a box barrage that cuts off the Americans from reinforcements or from communications. Simultaneously, 1,000 highly trained German storm troopers move forward through the mist. One of the German soldiers had remarked to a comrade, "Those chaps from the other side of the Big Pond should learn about real war." And that's what they were about to do. The Germans are ruthlessly efficient. They penetrate the 102nd Regiments lines two points and then meet in the rear at Seicheprey, but if they expected the Americans to give up easily, they would be sorely mistaken because the Americans fight hard along the front and in the rear. In Seicheprey, American headquarters troops including clerks and other rear area men pick up their rifles and fight the Germans hand-to-hand. In the front lines, American set up machine guns and move quickly to try to block the penetration. Unfortunately, the penetration has moved too quickly for the Americans to completely deflect it and they take heavy losses. As the American generals are trying to figure out what's going on, General Clarence Edwards calls the brigade commander, General Peter Traub to find out what's happening and to add insult to injury, as they're talking on the phone, two mischievous German soldiers have cut into the line. They interrupt and laugh wildly and they say they're "two crooks and they're in the game," and then they cut the line. When it's all over, the Germans have killed or wounded about 300 Yankee Division doughboys and they've captured five officers and 178 men and two machine guns. The Germans have taken heavy losses, too. We don't know exactly how many casualties they took, but it's certainly in the dozens because the Americans did fight hard. After this battle is over, there's a blame game that takes place. General Edwards of the Yankee Division claims that he had inflicted a severe defeat on the Germans that his losses were not as severe as some people claimed, but Pershing blames this on Edwards. This will very quickly become a vendetta and a difficult problem in the American command, but it's a wake up call for the American forces and an opportunity for them to learn a little bit of what 20th century warfare is going to be like as they move very quickly into a period of heavy combat in the spring of 1918.

**[0:20:37]**

**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 post and his website as an author. For videos about World War I 100 years ago this week, check out our friends at the Great War Channel on YouTube. Their new episodes this week include: "Operation Michael Runs out of Breath" and "France before World War I - La belle epoque?" See their videos by searching for "the great war" on YouTube or by following our link in the podcast notes. Okay. It's time to fast forward into the present with World War I Centennial News Now. This part of the broadcast focuses on now and how we're commemorating the centennial of World War I. We have an update for our segment, A Century in the Making, America's World War I Memorial in Washington DC. As our regular listeners know, we're building a National World War I Memorial at Pershing Park in the Nation's capital. It's a big project and it's been a long time coming. We spoke with sculptor Sabin Howard back in episodes 54 and 55 about a new process. Sabin combined advanced 3D printing technology at the WETA Workshop in New Zealand with traditional classic sculpture techniques to create a 10 foot miniature draft of the sculptural centerpiece for the memorial. The result is called a

maquette. We made two of 'em to show America and to help us raise money for this strictly publicly funded memorial project. One maquette was on display at the visitor's center in the Tennessee Bicentennial Mall in downtown Nashville right in front of the state capital. It was quite a hit at the Tennessee Great War Commission's event last Saturday where it was featured as part of the presentation from Terry Hamby, the World War I Centennial Commission Chairman. Both maquettes are being prepped for a busy schedule of showings at special events and fundraisers around the country. We'll keep you updated as the schedules evolve. Katherine, you went to a fundraiser on Wednesday and got your first look at the sculpture that's called "A Soldier's Journey." What was your reaction?

**[0:23:04]**

**Akey:** I think the thing I was most surprised by ... Number one, it's really beautiful, but I was really amazed at the amount of detail, even at that size, even way, way, way smaller than the final piece will end up being. Little things like the texture of the cloth making up the men's . Or there's one section where one of the soldiers has just lifted his foot out of the mud, and you can see the footprint in the mud, and it's got the right nails in the footprint that would have been in the soles of the boots that they were wearing at the time. It's very impressive, and it's going to be really amazing to see it when all the figures are essentially life-size just because of the amount of detail that he was able to incorporate.

**[0:23:55]**

**Mayer:** Did you pick up any comments from any other people as they were getting their first look at it?

**[0:23:59]**

**Akey:** Yeah. Similar to me, just sort of like, "Wow. This is so much more detail." I think being 20th and 21st century, individuals were kind of used to sculptures that are not in the Renaissance tradition. It's really nice to see people's response to that kind of technique to a classical sculptural technique; something that incorporates a lot of , a lot of detail and see them really appreciate that.

**[0:24:31]**

**Mayer:** I think you just made Sabin very happy.

**[0:24:34]**

**Akey:** Probably. He deserves it. He did a really good job. It looks great.

**[0:24:38]**

**Mayer:** Thank you, Katherine. Learn more about the memorial and follow the incredible journey of a project that's been a century in the making. Go to [ww1cc.org/memorial](http://ww1cc.org/memorial) or follow the link in the podcast notes. And while we're speaking about the memorial, we have a brand new way for you to help build America's World War I Memorial in Washington DC and at the same time, get yourself a very special, colorful, inspiring and lasting souvenir of the centennial. This week marks the release of a new visual pictorial table book called "Lest We Forget: The Great War." The book is dedicated to the Centennial and produced by The Pritzker Military Museum and Library along with the World War I Centennial Commission. When you get this visual remembrance, a full one-half of the proceeds go to building the memorial. With us to tell us more about "Lest We Forget," which also has a companion exhibit in Chicago at the Pritzker are Kenneth Clarke, former President and CEO of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, and Michael Robbins, historian. Ken was the executive and creative director for the book and exhibition and Michael was writer for the text. Gentlemen, welcome to the podcast.

**[0:25:55]**

**Clarke:** Thank you for having us.

**[0:25:56]**

**Robbins:** very much. Yep. Glad to be here.

**[0:25:58]**

**Mayer:** Hey, Ken, let me start with you. "Lest We Forget" is a book and a companion exhibition. Can you give us an overview? What's the concept?

**[0:26:05]**

**Clarke:** Sure. There are two things that are supposed to go together and yet stand completely independently. About 20% of the content is shared between either the book or the exhibit in downtown Chicago. "Lest We Forget," the book is a poster, photograph, and text book that is supposed to give anybody who wants to learn about World War I, a image rich, wonderful dive into the history of World War I without overwhelming them with all the information that is available on the war. The exhibit in Chicago focuses on the doughboy experience, and the sailor experience. It goes from artifacts from the USS Olympia sailors to the soldiers as they went through the various battles and then it goes

into an exploration of the American cemeteries in France where many of the men who died in France and elsewhere are buried from World War I.

**[0:27:02]**

**Mayer:** Ken, there's nearly 350 images in this book. There's posters and photographs. How did you select them?

**[0:27:08]**

**Clarke:** For the posters, we acquired many, many, a thousand plus World War I posters. We went through a very interesting process of getting those all cataloged and scanned. I sent the posters over to Michael and Wendy Palitz, who is my fellow creative director for this book. From those 300, we winnowed it down to about 166. The images, unlike the posters ... The posters don't tell a story of World War I because posters are not chronological. They're propaganda pieces more or less. The images in the book go with the text that Michael Robbins wrote. Those really give you a photographic image of what was happening during the war. You have this interesting art book that has a history of the war that is also illustrated.

**[0:27:55]**

**Mayer:** That's a good segue over to you, Michael. Now you're the writer on the project. What story are you telling and how do the words interact with the pictures?

**[0:28:04]**

**Robbins:** As Ken, pointed out, the words, and the pictures, more or less, go together in a general chronology of the developments in the war while the posters stand somewhat apart as propaganda commentary on the nature of the war. I think the best summary of the role of the posters was delivered by Hew Strachan, eminent professor of military history and his point about the posters are that they really tell in an emotional way, and a very economic way what the war was about and why both sides, the Central Powers and the Allies, were actual fighting. The posters are a special kind of emotional commentary. The story of the text is primarily a chronology. There are chapters on each individual year of the war, but also it has an underlying theme, and I think the underlying theme is the importance of World War I, not just as a world war, but as a world changing war with long lasting results that we can see even today.

**[0:29:09]**

**Mayer:** We like to call it and refer to it often as the war that changed the world. Now a question to both of you, what were some of the hardest challenges in pulling this all together?

**[0:29:19]**

**Clarke:** I think the biggest challenge was really coordinating a well-balanced book that also made sure that we were getting the right mix of posters so that you would have the ability to tell a little bit of that story that Michael just referred to that Hew Strachan was talking about; that emotional aspect of the war.

**[0:29:37]**

**Robbins:** I think everyone who undertakes to - with a great deal of humility - to tell the story of World War I in one medium or another, quickly comes to realize that this is such a vast event that the real challenge is deciding what not to tell and what not to include.

**[0:29:54]**

**Mayer:** That makes a great deal of sense. We have a saying when you're throwing out great stuff, you're in good shape and that's always the giant challenge of this.

**[0:30:02]**

**Robbins:** Yes. I think that's true here.

**[0:30:04]**

**Clarke:** Michael and I and Wendy had a lot of fun with this particular one as far as discovery and also having an "ah-ha" moment that was important to us. The "discovery of the Free Corps" posters in the museum's and library collection, we knew we had them, but just making sure that they got into the book because these are the propaganda posters that were the militias that formed immediately following World War I in Germany that were considered the precursor of the Nazis.

**[0:30:32]**

**Robbins:** There was a very high percentage of the German people in the German military who did not believe that they'd been defeated even though they clearly had been. They were reluctant to give up the kinds of things that they had to give up under the provisions of the Versailles Treaty. They formed quasi military organizations that were highly disruptive of civil society in Germany at the time.

**[0:30:55]**

**Mayer:** Real quickly, Ken, one last question I wanted to ask you. Who is this book actually aimed at? Who's it for? Is it for enthusiasts, historians or who is the book for?

**[0:31:06]**

**Clarke:** There's a saying out there is the people who know the least want to know the most. What I really wanted to accomplish with this book is create a book for somebody who isn't an expert on World War I or even military history, tell an accessible good story about World War I so that people can understand what Michael said and what the World War I Centennial Commission says, that this war changed the world and we're living in its aftermath right now. That was the goal. The goal is everybody and I know that that's a hard thing to get, but I think we got close.

**[0:31:39]**

**Mayer:** The book is available in bookstores nationwide, but the easiest place to get it is in the Commission's Merchandise shop. Look under Commemorate at [ww1cc.org](http://ww1cc.org) and we also have the link to the Commission's shop in the podcast notes. Gentlemen, thank you both for coming onto the podcast and introducing us to this beautiful must get souvenir of the centennial.

**[0:32:02]**

**Clarke:** Thank you.

**[0:32:02]**

**Robbins:** Thank you very much.

**[0:32:04]**

**Mayer:** Kenneth Clarke and Michael Robbins, the creative director and writer for "Lest We Forget: The Great War." Now for our education segment, we have a story of a teacher and his approach to teaching World War I. Collections of soldier's letters and diaries from the war continue to be discovered and rediscovered 100 years after they were first written. As we've learned from a number of museum curators, they offer an amazing opportunity to help understand this event in history as they bring in the first person point of view. Today, we're joined by Dr. Ian Isherwood, visiting Assistant Professor at Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania who's doing exactly that. Welcome, Dr. Isherwood.

**[0:32:48]**

**Isherwood:** Thanks for having me on.

**[0:32:50]**

**Mayer:** Dr. Isherwood, you've been using wartime letters from Lieutenant Colonel Jack Peirs, a British soldier as the foundation for teaching history to your students. For context, can you tell us briefly about the soldier, and how you came across his letters?

**[0:33:03]**

**Isherwood:** Sure. Lieutenant Colonel Jack Peirs was an officer in the British army from 1914 until 1919. He served with distinction in the 8th Queen's Regiments, which is from West Surrey in England. He rose in rank from Lieutenant to Lieutenant Colonel and he was repeatedly decorated for valor on the Western Front. He was very much a model officer and he fought a very hard war for three years of service. The letters came to me and came to the college through his family and through one of my students. A student came up to me after class one day, Marco Dracopoli, and he told me that he had a collection of his great-grandfather's letters from World War I. When Marco brought them in a very large box that was full of this material, I realized that this was an extensive collection of over 300 letters plus a [theme-ara 00:33:52] from an officer that was in command and very much learning how to command over three years of active war. Marco went on to use this material for a very good paper called "A New Officer for a New Army," but then after he graduated, I got together with his family and with our college archivist. We sat down and we thought about uses for the collection beyond traditional archival use for it. We came up with an idea to create a digital history project, where we would release the letters 100 years to the day in which Peirs wrote them. We set up an Instagram account and a Twitter account from Jack Peirs and a Facebook page so that we would be able to tell the story of this officer, but also his men and the transformation of war on the Western Front as a commemorative project over the next three years. That's what we've been doing with The Peirs Project.

**[0:34:44]**

**Mayer:** The audience for this show is definitely the right audience to tell about this. They love these kinds of things. Now at the Commission, we're really interested in techniques for teaching this subject. What advice would you give to others who may want to undertake an educational program like this?

[0:35:00]

**Isherwood:** I'd say a few things. One is to not be scared to go outside of your comfort zone and use technology and to also not be scared by the burden of expertise. We involve students. Our student research assistants are really the backbone of the project. We've actually put together a really good team. I'd say that my advice is to just do it and to experiment as you're going along the way.

[0:35:25]

**Mayer:** That's sage advice. Now do you think this might work for a younger audience of students rather than university?

[0:35:33]

**Isherwood:** Yes. I think definitely. I think that for students in high school or in junior high, a project like this is a great opportunity to teach historical methods early where you bring sources in. You have students learn basic questions for source evaluation. You then have them work with transcribing source materials, digitizing them, with annotating them and then writing some degree of commentary on them. That's the model that we've been working with. Our students, they have become better historians by working on the project. I think that you could implement this at all levels.

[0:36:06]

**Mayer:** We've had museum curators and then so forth who were publishing the first person accounts. The wonderful thing that seems to be common is that the first person point of view gives you just incredible insights that you just can't get out of facts. Did you find that as well?

[0:36:23]

**Isherwood:** Definitely. Peirs is also a very lively correspondent. Peirs is gossiping from the Western Front. He's talking about entertaining his men. He's talking about transformation of leadership. That certainly helps because it gives you a real voice of somebody that you can then build a context around. It's not just the story of Peirs that we're interested in. Peirs commanded a battalion of 800 men and through Peirs we're hoping to tell a bit of their story, too. It's a very hard fought battalion. They were involved in every major campaign of the British Army on the Western Front. They're reconstituted time and time again, suffering very, very bad casualties, but they endure and they fight through the rest of the war.

[0:37:02]

**Mayer:** You're personally working on a new and upcoming book. Can you tell us a little about that?

[0:37:06]

**Isherwood:** My previous book which is entitled "Remembering the Great War" was a study of soldier memoirs written in Britain during the inter-war period, the 1920s and 1930s. When I looked at the Peirs material, I realized that there's a book opportunity here. I haven't found a publisher yet for it, but the book as I've designed it is about the life and death of a battalion of infantry on the Western Front; how they become hardened soldiers by the end of the war. I'm hoping to take the idea of a traditionally regimental history and turn it on its head a little bit.

[0:37:41]

**Mayer:** Dr. Isherwood, thank you for coming in and giving us the insights and some really good ideas about how education for the subject can be dealt with. Thank you.

[0:37:50]

**Isherwood:** Thanks so much for having me.

[0:37:51]

**Mayer:** Dr. Ian Isherwood is a visiting Assistant Professor and the Chairperson of Civil War Era Studies at Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. We put links for his Jack Peirs website and twitter accounts in the podcast notes. Now let's head into our weekly feature Speaking World War I where we explore the words and the phrases that are rooted in the war. It's a health fad pretty much anyone can benefit from. It's very popular. It's very hip and I'll bet you had no idea it's was from World War I. No, it's not Zumba. No, it's kickboxing and no, it's definitely not P90X. It's our speaking World War I word for this week: Pilates. Pilates is named for its inventor, Joseph Hubertus Pilates, who created it in Great Britain during World War I. Pilates, interestingly, was born a German citizen. He was a frail and sickly kid who exercised for both his health and self-defense against bullies. He eventually grew into an accomplished boxer and a martial artist, and traveled to England in 1912 to find work, picking up a job as a circus performer, but when the war broke out, he was arrested as an enemy alien and interned on the Isle of Man. It was there that he came up with his method of mental and physical exertion, which he called "Contrology." It as a way to encourage his fellow inmates to stay healthy. Many of the prisoners there were bedridden, and so Pilates invented a

makeshift resistance-training machine out of the springs and straps taken from the beds and attached to the foot and the headboards. Now this use of resistance loads would later become a staple of the Pilates method. After World War I ended, Pilates emigrated to the United States and settled in New York, where he and his wife, Clara, founded the first Body Contrology Studio in 1925. And, of course, that was the foundation for the trendy new exercise method known far and wide as Pilates. Pilates, created by a German citizen prisoner in wartime, and this week's word for speaking World War I. You'll find more information by following the link in the podcast notes. This week for our 100 Cities/100 Memorials segment, the \$200,000 matching grant challenge to rescue and focus on our local World War I memorials. It looks like this week is Tennessee week all over because we're going to be profiling the World War I Memorial Fountain Project from Madison County in Jackson, Tennessee. With us to tell us about the project is Dr. Alice-Catherine Carls, the Tom Elam Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Tennessee at Martin, and a member of the Tennessee Great War Commission. Welcome, Dr. Carls.

**[0:40:44]**

**Carls:** Thank you for having me.

**[0:40:45]**

**Mayer:** Dr. Carls, your World War I Memorial honors both the women on the home front in Tennessee and the men on the fighting front in France. That's a really interesting approach. Could you tell us more about it?

**[0:40:57]**

**Carls:** The fountain itself has two plaques. One that is dedicated to the surgical dressings workers of Madison County and the other that is honoring the men in both Madison County who died in the war. That is what I have been researching to learn more about the history of the fountain and the history of the men and women in the war. I think because the fountain was created that way back at the end of World War I, this tell something about the city of Jackson.

**[0:41:30]**

**Mayer:** It's very unique for a World War I memorial to honor both the home front and the war front.

**[0:41:35]**

**Carls:** Exactly, it's very unusual. Jackson is located in West Tennessee and it was actually the center of very lively and active chapter of the American Red Cross. It was all due to the work of Dr. James McClaran, a local physician who went to the French front in 1915 and came back to Jackson with the knowledge of a new form of dressing that was much more adapted to the grievous wounds suffered by the soldiers as a result of heavy artillery bombardment. The first thing that he did when the United States entered the war is to send Mrs. Dudley, a local woman, to New York to learn how to make surgical dressings. Then she came back, founded a local chapter of the American Red Cross very early with other local women. These ladies started sewing surgical dressings right there in June 1917. It's absolutely amazing. What is even more amazing is that the ladies were learning to sew in classes that were held at this home and the third class of women who learned to sew those dressings was a class of all African American women. I think this is very, very unusual also.

**[0:42:46]**

**Mayer:** Fascinating.

**[0:42:46]**

**Carls:** Yeah. If we go a little bit deeper in that direction, not all the women who participated in the sewing effort and not all the men who died in the war are listed on the fountain. This really is an interesting piece of historical evidence because the fountain, in 1919, was segregated. Names of African American soldiers who died from Madison County are not on the original plaque. Also, how about this entire class of African American women in its report, the local chapter indicated that this was the only such case in the entire United States of having an entire group of African American women who learned to sew surgical dressing. Here we have an opportunity to put something online and to leave a document in the Jackson Madison County Public Library. It's more than just restoring a memorial fountain. It is righting the entire history behind it.

**[0:43:44]**

**Mayer:** I think that's a lovely statement. One of the reasons we did the 100 Cities/100 Memorials program was to stimulate and have communities rediscover their heritage. For your project, you've been promoting it locally. How's the community response been?

**[0:44:00]**

**Carls:** This is very interesting. Everybody I talked to is really very excited about this project. The city commission to the local archivists, the historians, the mayor and different people, when I mention the fountain, they say, "Oh, yeah. I used to drink from that fountain. I remember it well. Oh, it is a World War I fountain? You're kidding?"

[0:44:20]

**Mayer:** That's not uncommon at all.

[0:44:22]

**Carls:** No. Where we're discovering very important piece of Jackson's history.

[0:44:27]

**Mayer:** The memorial, as you mentioned, was designed as a fountain, but it's been dry for a long time. In your grant application, you hadn't quite decided whether you're going to get the fountain replumbed. That's a major undertaking. It's very tricky. Are you going to do it?

[0:44:41]

**Carls:** Actually, two days ago, the fountain was lifted from its foundation and the restoration work has begun. We could see that inside, it's all hollow. It'd be very easy to fit pipes, but it will not replumbed.

[0:44:55]

**Mayer:** Do you have any rededication plans for this year?

[0:44:57]

**Carls:** November 11th, 2018, we're preparing a rather elaborate rededication of the fountain.

[0:45:05]

**Mayer:** Dr. Carls, thank you for leading the project on behalf of your community and on behalf of the men and the women of your county who served here and abroad in World War I. Thank you.

[0:45:14]

**Carls:** Thank you for having me. This has been an honor and a privilege.

[0:45:19]

**Mayer:** Dr. Alice-Catherine Carls, Professor of History at the University of Tennessee, and a member of the Tennessee Great War Commission. Learn more about the 100 Cities/100 Memorials program and about West Tennessee in World War I by following the links in the podcast notes or by going to [ww1cc.org/100Memorials](http://ww1cc.org/100Memorials). This week for World War I War Tech, another technology that saved lives instead of taking them. In the early months of the war, amputations for wounded soldiers were at the same high level as those of the Civil War. In other words, very high. By late 1915, that rate dropped dramatically. What happened? That year, a French physician, Théodore Tuffier, testified to the Academy of Medicine that 70% of amputations weren't because of the initial injury, but because of later infections. As we've talked about on the podcast before, the mud-filled, deeply unsanitary conditions of trench warfare were a happy home for bacteria that caused gangrene. The antiseptics of the 19th century were just basically inadequate. But two men, French doctor Alexis Carrel and British biochemist, Henry Dakin, came together under the cloud of war to combine their two discoveries to create one very effective method of disinfecting wounds. Dakin created a solution of sodium hypochlorite that managed to kill any bacteria in the wound, but didn't damage the flesh surrounding it. Meanwhile, Dr. Carrel developed a strategy of opening and thoroughly draining the wounds. Put together, the Carrel-Dakin method proved the most effective antiseptic treatment to date. The procedure quickly spread into use all across Europe, saving untold numbers of limbs from amputation. The Carrel-Dakin method, an incredible leap forward in the treatment of field wounds and the subject of this week's World War I War Tech. We've put links in the podcast notes to learn more, including a link to the Commission's website on medicine at [ww1cc.org/medicine](http://ww1cc.org/medicine), all lower case. For articles and posts, we're going to continue with the idea we launched last week of highlighting the features of the weekly dispatch newsletter. So here we go. Headline: Final 50 World War I Memorials Announced in Wrap-up of Competition Phase of 100 Cities/100 Memorials. In the article, you'll also learn about the Memorial Hunters Club, a crowd-sourced effort to create a comprehensive national register of World War I memorials. Headline: The Film Needed Really Brilliant Nuanced, Convincing Performances. The interview from this podcast with director Saul Dibb, about the motion picture "A Journey's End," now in wide release has been turned into a print article on the website. Headline: It Was a Sad, but Poignant Tale. Two lifelong friends, now octogenarians, have produced a documentary film about one of their uncle's service in World War I. Headline: Pennsylvania Oil and World War I. Remember how important coal was during World War I? Supplement that knowledge by reading about the role of Pennsylvania oil during the war. Headline: Over Here in Michigan, High School Athletes Gave to the World War I Effort. Michigan's high school athletes helped fill the labor shortage created as millions of men shipped out overseas. Headline: Break of Day, Poet Isaac Rosenberg. The Write blog features the WWI poetry of British soldier,

Isaac Rosenberg, who died on Easter Sunday, 1918, and who was also mentioned by Mike Shuster in last week's podcast. Headline: The Story of Donald Chapman. This week's featured Story of Service submitted by his grand niece, Tish Wells. Finally, this week's selection from our official online Centennial Merchandise store, an authentic classic green US woolen Army blanket from Woolrich, Inc., the oldest, continuously operating woolen mill in the US and supplier of army blankets 100 years ago. Sign up for the Weekly Dispatch newsletter at [ww1cc.org/subscribe](http://ww1cc.org/subscribe). Check the archives at [ww1cc.org/dispatch](http://ww1cc.org/dispatch) or follow the link in the podcast notes. And that brings us to The Buzz, The Centennial of World War I this week in social media with Katherine Akey.

**[0:50:15]**

**Carls:** Hey, Theo. As we commemorate 101 years since first joining the World War, incredible events are beginning to take place across the country to remember those who served. Over the last weekend, Tennessee held a massive living history event in Nashville, the very event that the maquette recently appeared at. The Tennessee State Park System hosted the event, which included reproduction trenches, encampments and field kitchens, as well as World War I era aircraft and many reenactors including Suffragettes and Salvation Army doughnut lassies handing out freshly made treats. There was also a large group of reenactors representing the African American troops of Tennessee, wearing the iconic French Adrian Helmet that was distributed to the troops amalgamated with French units and the whole weekend was capped off with a period baseball game. We shared an article this week on Facebook as well as an album of photos from the event. You can find links to those in the podcast notes. Lastly for this week, we shared an article that instigated some spirited debate on our Facebook page: a list of what the author of the article considers 13 essential books on the American Expeditionary Forces. The list is a great starting place for anyone wanting to delve deeper into this chapter of American history, but be sure to check the link to the Facebook post itself to see all the recommendations made by our community. There were many of them. That's it this week for The Buzz.

**[0:51:44]**

**Mayer:** And that's the second week of April for "World War I Centennial News." Thank you for listening. We also want to thank our guests. Mike Shuster, curator for the Great War Project blog; Dr. Edward Lengel, military historian and author; Ken Clarke and Michael Robbins, creative director and writer for the new souvenir of the Centennial book, "Lest We Forget"; Dr. Ian Isherwood, historian and World War I educator; Dr. Alice-Catherine Carls, World War I researcher and member of the Tennessee Great War Commission; Katherine Akey, World War I photography specialist and the line producer for the podcast. Many thanks to the newest member of our team, Mac Nelsen, our intrepid sound editor. A shout out to our intern, John Morreale, for his great research assistance. And I am 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 the country. Of course, we're building America's National World War I Memorial in Washington DC. We want to thank the Commission's founding sponsor the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, as well as, the Starr Foundation for their support. The podcast can be found on our website at [ww1cc.org/cn](http://ww1cc.org/cn). Or search for "WWI Centennial News" on iTunes, Google Play, TuneIn, Podbean, Stitcher, Radio on Demand, Spotify or use your smart speaker. Just say "Play WW One Centennial News Podcast." Our Twitter and Instagram handles are both [@ww1cc](https://twitter.com/ww1cc) and we're on Facebook [@ww1centennial](https://www.facebook.com/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.

**[0:53:57]**

**Song:** (Singing).

**[0:54:45]**

**Mayer:** Welcome to Beverly Hills Pilates, the latest and trendiest in exercise. No, it's not. It's from World War I. So long.

**[0:54:55]**