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8 speakers (Theo M., Mike S., Dr. Ed L., Dave F., Robert R., Karen D., Kacie D., Katherine A.)

[0:00:09]

**Theo M.:** Welcome to World War One Centennial News, episode number 68. It's about World War One, then, what was happening a hundred years ago this week, and it's about World War One now, news and updates about the centennial and the commemoration. This week, our guests include Mike Shuster from the Great War Project blog. Mike updates us on the American expeditionary forces as their inexperienced officers struggled with the challenges of battle command. Doctor Edward Lengel with a story of the second division as they enter the battle at Maizey. Dave Fornell shares the experience of organizing the largest World War One reenactment event in the country. Robert Reed tells us about the Stars and Stripes and how it was revived for troop morale in World War One. Kacie and Karen Devaney with *The Great Forgotten*, a stage play about World War One nurses, not just during the war but after and continuing through the roaring 20s. Katherine Akey with the commemoration of World War One in social media. All this and more on World War One Centennial news. A weekly podcast brought to you by the U.S. World War One 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. We're going to focus on the war in the sky. You'll learn about some new action up there. The death of one of the most prominent aces of the area. New educational material arriving this week for teachers about the World War One air war. A story about the tech that keeps pilot from shooting off their propellers when they engage the enemy. But first, as we jump into our centennial time machine and go back a hundred years this week, we're going to start not in the sky but with a mysterious story about the war on the seas. And also Germany's claims about the success of their U-Boats. It's the middle of April 1918 and in the pages of the official bulletin, the government's daily War Gazette, published for President Wilson by George Creel, his propaganda chief. This week, we find articles of a missing ship. A big one. Dateline, Monday, April 15, 1918. The headline of the bulletin reads, "Naval Collier Cyclops overdue since March 13 at Atlantic port, left West Indies, personnel on board consists of 15 officers, 221 men of crew, and 57 passengers. Searched for by radio and ships, but no traces to be found." The story reads, "The USS Cyclops, a navy collier of 19 thousand ton displacement, loaded with cargo of manganese is overdue at an Atlantic port. She last reported at one of the West Indian islands on March 4th. And since her departure from that port, no trace of her nor any information concerning her has been obtained. Radio calls to the cyclops from all possible points have been made and vessels sent in search of her along her probable route in areas in which she might be, all to no success. Weather has not been bad." A collier is a coal carrier and a cyclops is a massive one. She's 540 feet long and 65 feet wide. She's so big that she's often referred to as a floating coalmine. The ship should have been docked in the waters off Baltimore after she was sent to Brazil to pick up a load of manganese. Now, manganese is pretty valuable stuff right now. It's a mineral of great strategic importance to the war and it's used in the production of both iron and steel. In fact, the lack of this mineral is a major problem facing the German steel makers and iron makers. The cyclops had just picked up a 12 thousand ton load of it. Nothing from the ship will ever be found, no wreckage, oil slick, or debris, not even a distress call. Speculation will rage throughout history leading to wild theories involving everything from a mutiny and a secret sale to the Germans, the sinking by U-boats near Puerto Rico, and even giant squids dragging her under. The mystery of the USS Cyclops will span a century without resolution. There's also news this week about the war under the sea. Dateline Tuesday, April 16, 1918. A headline of the New York Times reads, "Crew of U-85, here are prisoners. 38 Germans captured by destroyer Fanning to be interned in Georgia. Captain Lieutenant Amberger the German commander of the craft, which was sunk last November, heads the party." The story reads, "Franklin D. Roosevelt, acting Secretary of the Navy, has given out tonight, the names of the German prisoners of the submarine U-38. When the craft was wrecked by a depth bomb, dropped by the destroyer Fanning on November 17 last. The crew of the Fanning picked up several life buoys which bore on one side the word Kaiser and on the other the word got. The prisoners were taken to an English port and turned over to British authorities. By agreement between the British, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Army, the prisoners are being taken to Camp McPherson near Atlanta, Georgia." Meanwhile, another article this week presents the claims of the German commander of the Navy that U-Boats are winning the war on the seas. Dateline, Amsterdam, April 18, 1918. A headline of the New York Times reads, "Capelle asserts U-boat is winning. Tells Reichstag three to six times as many ships are sunk as built. American destroyers fail. Convoys also a failure." The story reads, "Vice Admiral von Capelle, German Minister of the Navy, discusses marine warfare before the main committee of the Reichstag, as he declares that the U-boat construction exceeded the losses and that the effectiveness of the submarines had increased. The military declares that the American destroyers, which has been so much talked about, had failed in their objectives. Admiral Von Capelle described as a base lie, the statement made by Sir Eric Geddes, First Lord of the British Admiralty, that German U-boat crews were unwilling to put to sea and that claims by British statesmen that there had been extraordinarily big losses of U-boats were greatly exaggerated. So we have claims of fake news from the war on the seas 100 years ago this week. Now moving to the story on land and in the trenches and the fields of the Western front. It's time for Mike Shuster, former NPR correspondent and curator for the Great War Project blog. Mike, your post last week ended on a

note of the American troops moving to the front and Ed Lengel followed with the hard lessons the Yankee division received as they engaged in Seicheprey. This week, you continue with the incredible challenges that the Americans face, not from the courage or the spirit of the fighting men, but from the lack of experience of the American field commanders. Few of whom have had any actual battle command and they're facing the desperate fierceness of the enemy. What's the next chapter of the story Mike?

**[0:08:08]**

**Mike S.:** Our headlines this week read, "More Americans reach the battlefield unprepared. British, French highly critical of American preparation. Americans are beginning to die. This is special to the Great War Project. The need for American participation in the war is evident everywhere and everyday. So reports historian Martin Gilbert. From the commanders of both the British and French forces on the Western Front comes an appeal for American troops to join the battle immediately. Earlier, General John J. Pershing, commander of the American forces in Europe, has promised that he would send what troops he could to the front. "You are going to meet a savage enemy," he tells hundreds of American officers, "an enemy flushed with victory. Meet them like Americans. When you hit, hit hard, and don't stop hitting. You don't know the meaning of the word defeat." On this day, April 16th a century ago, more than a thousand New Zealand troops were taken prisoner. Four days later, the Germans launch another massive gas bombardment, firing nine million rounds of mustard gas, phosgene, and other chemicals. A total of 2,000 tons of poison gas. "The Germans too," according to historian Gilbert, "were feeling the effects of the daily attrition." "We are all utterly exhausted," writes Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria. "Everywhere I hear complaints of the accommodation of man and horse in the totally ravaged country, and the heavy loss from bombs." "On April 20th," reports historian Gilbert, "the much-needed American troops were in action in the St. Mihiel Salient, but the results are not favorable to the Allies. More than 650 American troops are caught by surprise by 2800 specially trained German shock troops." Reports Gilbert, "The Americans, outnumbered by more than four to one, fell back with heavy losses." Eighty-one Americans are killed, hundreds more incapacitated by gas. General Pershing is angry at the results of the early encounter with the Germans. He cites bad generalship as the cause of this debacle. The British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, is also enraged. "This kind of result," he writes, "is bound to occur on an enormous scale if a largely amateur United States Army is built up without the guidance of more experienced British and French officers." The British officer corps is highly critical of American training. The comment here, American Commanders and Staffs are almost wholly untrained, while General Sir Douglas Haig writes in his diary that "It would be criminal to count on American help that spring or even summer." "As a result," reports Gilbert, "anti-American feeling is widespread in high British and French military circles, where the Americans are portrayed as amateurs, interlopers and latecomers." General Pershing has to take some action to break this prejudice. He goes to Marshall Foch, the overall commander of Allied forces, outside Paris, and makes a grand gesture. "I have come to tell you that the American people would consider it a great honor for our troops to be engaged in the present battle. I ask you for this in their name and my own." According to historian Thomas Fleming, Foch turns the tables on Pershing. Pershing thinks the Frenchman would put the four available American divisions into the line as an army corps. Instead he put them into quiet sectors. The German onslaught continues, but the Americans still are not fully in the war. That's some of the news from the Great War Project this week, 100 years ago.

**[0:11:32]**

**Theo M.:** Mike Shuster, from the Great War Project blog. The links to the Great War Project blog are in the podcast notes. Welcome to our segment, America Emerges, military stories from World War One with Dr. Edward Lengel. This week, Ed introduces us to the Second Division, a mix of army and Marine brigades, interesting leadership, and a destiny to play key roles in the upcoming battles of the war. These are army soldiers and Marines learning to fight an enemy who's determined to understand them, devastate them, and destroy them. Of course, we, the podcast audience, already know the outcome of the war and that the Americans will figure it out and prevail, but the lessons continue to hurt.

**[0:12:17]**

**Dr. Ed L.:** We've already been introduced to a number of American divisions on the Western front, from the First Division to the 26th Yankee Division, to the 32nd Red Arrow Division. This is a story of one of the most important American divisions, so the entire war, the Second Division which would become famous for its engagements at places like Belleau Wood, and Blanc Mont and the Meuse-Argonne. It was combined of an army brigade and a Marine brigade. The idea was that the army and Marines would be able to get along quite well. Of course, it didn't work out that way on many occasions. It sometimes seemed like they wanted to fight each other more than they wanted to fight the enemy. On this occasion, it's the army that gets into battle first. Second Division is commanded by General Omar Bundy with the Marine brigade being commanded by General James Harbord and the army brigade being commanded by General Edward Lewis. In the middle of April, the 9th Regiment of the Army brigade is moved into the front lines near Maizey, France. This is a terrible place to be. The French commanders had assigned it to a vulnerable salient. It had a river in its rear. It offered easy lines of approach to the Germans who entirely overlooked it from nearby hills. Supposedly French infantry didn't want to try to hold the place themselves and no wonder. As soon as the Doughboys of the 9th Regiment move into the lines, German artillery begins pounding them on and off for

three days. The regiment's third battalion, which oddly enough is commanded by a Marine lieutenant colonel, is in the line on the early hours of April 14th when the Germans lay down an artillery boxed barrage to cut them off from communications and support. Next come over 650 German stormtroopers who's commanding officer had bolstered their morale with quotations from the poet Schuler, as well as extra food which they certainly needed. Some Americans later claimed that 30 German soldiers dressed as French medical men and wearing Red Cross armbands approached their lines just before the attack claiming to be treating wounded men in no man's land. Then they jumped the bewildered American sentries and cut paths through the barbed wire for the stormtroopers to follow. However it happened, the Germans entered the line at four places and got through quickly, breaking into through the 3rd Battalion's rear, but the Doughboys refused to back down. Although the German's tried to confuse them by yelling commands in English and even shouting, "Gas," to try to get them to reach for their gas masks. The Doughboys fight back savagely in hand-to-hand fighting that extended throughout and behind the salient at Maizey. The fighting continues for some time until the Germans at two o'clock in the morning, having captured a few dozen prisoners, decide it's time to withdraw. But now the Americans turn the table on their attackers. As soon as they noticed the German stormtroopers pulling back, Doughboys break ranks and furiously chase the Germans into no man's land and the timing is perfect because just as the Germans are fleeing, some of them run flat into an American artillery counter-barrage that places them squarely between two fires. The American Doughboys shoot and bayonet German soldiers by the dozen before the rest of the Germans escape. The Americans lost seven soldiers killed and 39 wounded, and 26 prisoners, but the Germans lost 59 killed, including some of them who had been captured wearing French uniforms and were summarily executed by angry Doughboys. The Americans also took 11 Germans prisoner. Back within their own lines the Germans interrogate some of the American prisoners, hoping to find out something about the Second Division and the quality of these new troops that are at the front. They conclude that the average Doughboy was fit and sturdy, but quote not concerned with anything that does not approach his personal comfort. This was the Germans thought, quote, excellent military material with which much might be done, but as yet the Second American Division is not ready for important combat. Well they were wrong about that because six weeks later, that important combat would take place at Belleau Wood.

**[0:16:45]**

**Theo M.:** Dr. Edward Lengel is an American military historian, author, and our segment host for America Emerges, military stories from World War One. There are links in the podcast notes to Ed's posts and his websites as an author. Now we're moving on to the war in the sky. It's mid April, 1918 and America's newly minted U.S. Army Air Corps has joined the fighting front above the trenches. This week, 100 years ago, two U.S. Army Air Corps pilots of the First Aero Squadron shoot down two enemy German airplanes over the Allied Squadron Aerodome in France. The encounter is lightning fast. Just six minutes after the front line signaled that German airplanes were crossing the American trenches and heading towards the aerodome, Lieutenant A.S. Winslow of Chicago and Lieutenant Douglas Campbell of California had brought two enemy aviators down. It was the first U.S. Army Air Corps dogfight in history. One of the German planes was set on fire and the other one was knocked out but landed pretty much undamaged and the German pilots were both taken prisoner. Both American aviators eventually received the Croix de Guerre, and Lieutenant Campbell went on to shoot down five enemy aircraft making him the first U.S. Army Air Corps flying ace. As the Americans rose to the challenge this week, the great Red Baron fell. On April 21st, German ace Manfred von Richthofen, a living legend called the "Red Baron," and the "Ace of Aces," was shot down and killed in aerial combat. By the time of his death, he had accrued 80 airplanes shot down. Credit for his kill was given at the time to Canadian Captain Roy Brown. During the fateful scrap, the Red Baron's cousin Lieutenant Wolfram von Richthofen was being fired upon when the Red Baron flew to his rescue and fired upon the attacker, saving his cousin's life. Richthofen pursued the enemy across the Somme where he was spotted and briefly attacked by a Camel piloted by Canadian Captain Roy Brown. At the time, it seems that a single bullet hit Richthofen in the chest, causing him a quick death. But, exactly who fired that bullet and killed the Red Baron is up for debate. Current evidence is that he was killed by ground fire from some Australian troops, but there are many theories. No matter who was the one to take him down, Richthofen left behind a legacy of true aerial mastery and terror. His victory totals will not be exceeded until June of 1941. And that's the war in the sky, 100 years ago this week. For videos about World War One, 100 years ago this week, check out our friends at the Great War Channel on YouTube. New episodes this week include The Battle of La Lys, Operation Georgette, and Stalin in World War One, Scottish Home Rule and Out of the Trenches, and an episode Storm of Steel, Author and Officer Ernst Junger. See their videos by searching for the Great War on YouTube or by following the link in the podcast notes. Alright, it's time to fast forward into the present with World War One Centennial News Now. This part of the podcast doesn't focus on history, it focuses on now and how we're commemorating the centennial of World War One. For remembering veterans, we're doing a follow up on the big reenactor event in Rockford, Illinois we told you about a couple of weeks ago. The Midway Village Museum is 137 acre living history park and the host of the sixth annual Great War event, that featured over 225 reenactors, portraying soldiers and civilians from both the United States and Europe. It's the nation's largest public World War One reenactment and a massive undertaking. If you were there, you had a blast. If you weren't there, we'll point you to some great pictures and videos. And we've invited Dave Fornell, the reenactor coordinator for the event and a member of the Illinois World War One Centennial Commission to tell us the story. Dave, welcome to the podcast.

**[0:21:13]**

**Dave F.:** Thank you very much for having me.

**[0:21:15]**

**Theo M.:** Dave, there are three things that I want to touch on today: The event and the experience of attending it, then I will go into reenactors and the reenactor community at large, and third, future plans. Let's start with the sixth annual Great War event, how did it go? How many people showed up and what kind of event was it and what kind of comments did you get?

**[0:21:35]**

**Dave F.:** Each year we usually increase our attendance, so with the reenactors this year we had about 250 reenactors onsite and then we also had about 1500 spectators that showed up. It was a little bit chilly that weekend, it was still pretty good. The folks that showed up were very interested, asked a lot of intelligent questions.

**[0:21:51]**

**Theo M.:** How did it go over? Did everybody have a good time?

**[0:21:55]**

**Dave F.:** Yeah, the spectators that show up, some of them come from the greater Chicago area. It also pulls from the Milwaukee area and southern Wisconsin. A lot of people go out of their way to go to these events that the Midway Village hosts, they also a large event in the fall. It's very good education for anybody who knows just a little bit about the war, but they wanted to find out more. We focus a lot on what the common soldier underwent during the war. There are displays and there's a trench system that's built where we have 20 bunks that are built permanently with wood floors and places for stoves. We have two opposing trench lines that are about 100 yards apart on our main battlefield that our volunteers have been working on for several years. We also utilize the historic village that the museum has of about 25 buildings. Each one of those buildings has displays in it that are either hosted by the museum staff, showing off part of the collections, or by reenactors showing off their private collections.

**[0:22:50]**

**Theo M.:** You do battle reenactments too don't you?

**[0:22:52]**

**Dave F.:** We do. We have a main battlefield that we do three large events on each weekend that we do this event. This year we had the addition for the first time of an , we just got done building every production 1916 vintage Schneider french tank the full scale. That made it's debut appearance out there in support of the Allies and attacking the .

**[0:23:12]**

**Theo M.:** Very nice. Moving on, I'm personally totally fascinated by the reenactor phenomenon, here's my chance to ask about it, so you're a World War One reenactor. My first question is, why?

**[0:23:26]**

**Dave F.:** I started reenacting about 26 years ago. I read an article in the Chicago Tribune about a historic reenactment that was going on for World War Two and I jumped at the opportunity to go out there. It wasn't really a question of if I had any interest in reenacting, it was just, "Where do I sign up?" It's a great excuse if you're a historian and you want to collect a lot of memorabilia from the war, to actually be able to have an excuse to collect it because then you have a show and tell audience that you can bring it out to for several events during the year. For myself, I had collected weapons and I had already started collecting uniforms and a lot of personal effects from World War One and World War Two. It just made a lot of sense to go up ... It's also a weekend to go out and go camping, share a lot of good times with friends and get public education by being able to talk to the public one on one.

**[0:24:15]**

**Theo M.:** Are reenactors organized? And are they organized by historical periods or by regional areas?

**[0:24:22]**

**Dave F.:** Largely by historical periods. You can go anywhere in the country and find events for World War Two for the most part and also for Civil War, World War One is one of the time periods that's growing, because of the centennial primarily but it's not as possible as some of the other time periods. You get a lot of crossover between the different time periods with reenactors who do multiple impressions. With the World War One event that we put on, because of the success of our World War Two event which draws in over 1200 reenactors and close to 10,000 spectators, it was an easy sell when I went to the World War Two reenactors and say, "Hey, do you want to try out World War One?" The typical response was, "Well, I have some interest in, but I don't have a lot of the equipment." I said, "Well sure

you do, you have pieces of World War One Doughboy equipment that's mixed in with your World War Two impression." Usually not a hard sell to get a guy to buy a rifle if they're already collectors. That's usually the most expensive part.

**[0:25:13]**

**Theo M.:** This is based on a conversation I had with Katherine about her interest in her youth, what about women's roles in this community?

**[0:25:20]**

**Dave F.:** Our event is unique that we've tried to stress from day one about the women's roles. We try to give a comprehensive history of the war. We don't want to just have people come out and say, "Here's a bunch of guys shooting at each other in a public battle." But we also wanted to enhance the educational component about what went on during the war. We have displays at the Midway Village event for black soldiers that served in the war. We also have a women's suffrage march that goes through the village a couple times of day. They speak about women's rights and why they should get the right to vote, which came right after the war. We also have a couple women that portray women war workers and then we have impressions for the Red Cross and also for nurses serving overseas.

**[0:26:04]**

**Theo M.:** Perfect. That sounds really well balanced. My last question is to you is what about plans for a 2019 Midway Village? Are you going to do it again for 2019?

**[0:26:14]**

**Dave F.:** We are planning on doing it for 2019. The museum has been a great partner and as long as continue the growth and we continue keeping numbers up with attendance then they'll keep doing events, because it's serving their mission of public education. It's part of the history of the town, which is very helpful. Rockford was also the site of Camp Grant, which was one of the major induction centers for World War One. Part of that campus preserved as a nature center where you can still walk through the gunnery range and there's signs all over the place saying, "Don't kick the ground too much because there's still unexploded ordinance." The plan that we have for 2019 is that we're working on building a fully operational FT17 french tank that we're hoping to have out at that event in addition to the Schneider that we built. We also built an aircraft two years ago which is also being brought out. Each year we try to add additional inventory to displays because it is really difficult to find large artifacts like those.

**[0:27:03]**

**Theo M.:** Well Dave, thank you for coming in and telling us about that. It's fascinating.

**[0:27:07]**

**Dave F.:** Thank you very much for having me.

**[0:27:09]**

**Theo M.:** Dave Fornell is the reenactor coordinator for the Midway Village Museum World War One reenactment and a member of the Illinois World War One Centennial Commission. Learn more about the commission and the Midway Village Museum at the link in the podcast notes. 100 years ago, in February of 1918, a new weekly publication found its way into the hands of the Doughboys now arriving in France in ever greater numbers, the Stars and Stripes newspaper. Although the classic periodical was originally produced by Union soldiers in the Civil War when they found an abandoned printing press. They only ran six, one-page issues at the time. The publication was revived for World War 1, Stars and Stripes is filled with cartoons and articles by and for Doughboys, making light of everything from living covered in lice in the trenches to struggling to communicate with their new Francais friends. We reported on the relaunch in episode 59. Ever since, we've been looking forward to the opportunity of inviting somebody from the paper to come on the show and tell us more about it. I'm especially excited to welcome Robert H. Reid, senior managing editor of the Stars and Stripes newspaper. Robert, it's really great to have you on the show.

**[0:28:27]**

**Robert R.:** Nice to be here.

**[0:28:29]**

**Theo M.:** First of all, Robert, for our listeners, we need a context. Could you briefly frame up with the Stars and Stripes paper's all about?

**[0:28:36]**

**Robert R.:** Sure, Stars and Stripes is an independent news organization that exists to serve the American military community overseas. We try to inform readers of what's going on in their military communities as well as back home in the U.S. And the wider world. They seem a bit quaint now in the world of instant communications, but if you're an

American soldier or a Marine or airman stationed in northern Iraq or at an operating base in southern Afghanistan or on a ship in the Philippine sea, your world can be quite constricted. That's where Stars and Stripes comes in. I've had veterans of wars, most recently Iraq and Afghanistan, tell me how much they loved reading Stars and Stripes simply because the alternatives were the instructions on the back of an MRE ration pack. Of course like most news organizations today we do operate a website, stripes.com, for the more technically minded, for the guys who have the bandwidth.

**[0:29:32]**

**Theo M.:** When we saw in our research that the paper had reemerged for the Doughboys arriving in France, we started to read through issues right away, what really struck me immediately was the humor, tongue in cheek, irreverent, good natured, wry, how did that happen? Was that planned or is that just happenstance?

**[0:29:52]**

**Robert R.:** That was planned. To go back a little bit in history, the idea for Stars and Stripes grew out of concerns by the AEF command about troop morale once American soldiers were actually sent to France in 1917. They went to a country that had already been at war for three years. There were no nice fresh barracks waiting for them, especially the closer you got to the front, and the winter of 1917 was particularly harsh, cold and rainy. Mail service was very erratic. Many, if not most, of the enlisted men particularly had never been away from home before. Their lives were a mixture of lonely and bone crushing boredom or abject terror. The command was desperately looking for ways to boost morale. Enter this one young staff officer and former newspaper man named Guy . He had traveled around the AEF talking to officers and enlisted men and came up with an idea for a soldier's newspaper as a morale booster. He formally pitched the idea in November 1917, General Pershing signed off on the proposal and the paper rolled out two months later.

**[0:31:03]**

**Theo M.:** That's great. I had really wanted to know that story and thank you for telling it to us. Full disclosure, I grew up with the paper and the people who made it in post World War Two Germany. We lived as Americans near Frankfurt in the early 50s and my mom wrote for the paper. Here we are today in the third generation of the paper's life, what's it like today?

**[0:31:23]**

**Robert R.:** In some ways it's somewhat similar to what it's always been. Over the years the style has changed in journalism. One of my favorite stories from the old 1918 paper was about mobile dental clinics that the American command had put together and they were moving around the front giving dental care to soldiers. The first paragraph of the story began, "The latest American atrocity, dash, a dentist's office on wheels." It went on to describe the clinics as, "movable torture chambers." And said that about the only good thing you could say about it was that if you needed a laugh there was plenty of laughing gas available.

**[0:32:02]**

**Theo M.:** One of the first cartoons that struck me was the one about not sneezing into your gas mask.

**[0:32:08]**

**Robert R.:** These old Stars and Stripes is a real look back at an America that's dead and gone. The people that founded the paper looked at the experience of the British and the French, who's troop papers had fallen flat, and they decided one of the things was that these papers were given away free so the soldiers assumed it was command propaganda, so they wouldn't even bother to read. They thought if we make them pay for it, they'll take it more seriously. They'll at least look at it. As an incentive though, to get people to subscribe, it was proposed that the profits from the subscriptions would go to subsidized tobacco rations. The more people in a unit who bought the paper, the more tobacco was available. They also decided to accept paid ads, first from American companies, later from British and French. They had strict rules: no political advertisements, no advertisements from politicians back home saying, "We support the troops." The idea being that if you support us, then enlist and come over here. But they did have things like ads for Boston garters or Wrigley's chewing gum, Fatima cigarettes, and razor blades were a big one.

**[0:33:16]**

**Theo M.:** Also uniform enhancements that you could buy, heavier coats and things like that I noticed.

**[0:33:22]**

**Robert R.:** Oh, yeah. If you wanted that thermal underwear on those cold nights in the trenches, they will put you in touch with the people willing to sell it. It really caught on. The first press run I think had a few thousand a ceiling of 30,000 was the plan, but at the end of the armistice they were publishing a half million copies and the staffing increased from an initial eight up to about 300 people putting it out.

**[0:33:45]**

**Theo M.:** That's a great story. Robert Reid, thank you for bringing it to us.

**[0:33:49]**

**Robert R.:** Thank you.

**[0:33:49]**

**Theo M.:** Robert Reid is the senior managing editor of the Stars and Stripes newspaper. You can learn more about the paper and see archival copies at the Library of Congress by following the links in the podcast notes. To wrap up, our spotlight in the media this week, we're turning the focus back onto the service of women in World War One and the play *The Great Forgotten*, set during World War One and through the Roaring 20s. The play follows two sisters, American nurses in France during World War One, and their adjustment to a whole new world at the end of the conflict. The segment actually kicks off a conversation that will become evermore important on the podcast, looking at the profound post-war experience in America. With us to tell us about their original production are a mother and daughter playwriting team, Karen and Kacie Devaney. Welcome to the podcast.

**[0:34:43]**

**Karen D.:** Thank you.

**[0:34:43]**

**Kacie D.:** Thank you.

**[0:34:44]**

**Theo M.:** Alright, let me start with you Kacie. The play was initially your idea and you ended up getting your mom involved. Tell us about that.

**[0:34:54]**

**Kacie D.:** Yes, absolutely. The seed for writing *The Great Forgotten* was planted when I was living and studying in France. I had visited a handful of military museums. I went to the war memorial in , the Museum of the Great War in . I was always disheartened by the lack of information regarding the women who served by the soldier's sides and who played a key role in the success of the Allies. Fast forward, I graduated in 2013, I was determined to move to New York City and make it as an artist, a playwright. I knew I had wanted to write a historic play. I knew I wanted to write an epic play. It just hit me like a bolt of lightning, World War One nurses and then the women of the lost generation. My mom along being an incredible writer and artist herself was also a registered nurse through my entire childhood. I called her and I said, "Mom, I've got this idea to write this play. You're a nurse. You're an incredible writer. Do you want to do this with me?" And she said, "Absolutely."

**[0:36:03]**

**Theo M.:** Great. Karen, the two main characters embody the experience of so many women that served in the war, did you base your characters on real individuals?

**[0:36:13]**

**Karen D.:** There was a plethora of influences that helped shape the characters of *The Great Forgotten*. It wasn't based on one individual in particular, other than my grandmother and my own experiences. My grandmother, who's a registered nurse during the 30s inspired me to take that same route. Although they're fictionalized characters, after years of researching the roles of nurses in war, in particular World War One, we based them on real experiences and research we did about the nurses, the diaries we read, all of these were a huge influence on the story that we told. It represents the experience, but the characters themselves are fictionalized.

**[0:36:55]**

**Theo M.:** Well this is obviously a real passion project for both of you. Why do you think the stories of these women in and after World War One matters?

**[0:37:05]**

**Kacie D.:** A big portion of literature and history really lends itself to the male story particularly World War One. This piece of history is so important for women to know because it's testament to where we are today, where we need to go. If it hadn't been for World War One, women wouldn't have many of the liberties we have today because of the war, the men were off to fight and the women had to take the place of the men in the workforce. Whether it was working in factories, or driving buses, or delivering mail-

**[0:37:36]**

**Karen D.:** And just to piggy back that there's very little done on nurses in general. In any particular World War One, which is where the nursing profession really came to life.

**[0:37:47]**

**Kacie D.:** When the war ended and you had the Spanish influenza, we couldn't have created a society then that was ready to get back on it's feet. That's a huge testament to both the women and the men. That's where the passion has been for me.

**[0:38:00]**

**Karen D.:** We just felt it's really important to see war through a nurse's eyes, see war through the women's experience.

**[0:38:06]**

**Theo M.:** In a one phrase answer from each of you, in turn, what was the biggest realization for you personally or discovery in doing the project? Let's start with you Kacie.

**[0:38:17]**

**Kacie D.:** One phrase, two words, the nurses. I really knew little about the nurses' contribution during World War One and then how the war changed women's lives and how that's influenced our lives today. That was really compelling.

**[0:38:36]**

**Theo M.:** Thank you and Karen, how about yourself?

**[0:38:38]**

**Karen D.:** Exactly what Kacie said, I knew there was a role that the nurses played in all the wars, but had no idea how impactful it was and how it took decades for them to be recognized, that was an eye opener. And just to have to come back to the states and once again be subjugated to these lesser roles.

**[0:38:58]**

**Theo M.:** In closing, when are you guys going to be performing the play again?

**[0:39:01]**

**Kacie D.:** Hopefully this year with the centennial on its way we've definitely had an interest.

**[0:39:07]**

**Karen D.:** We've also been writing a Netflix pilot.

**[0:39:10]**

**Kacie D.:** If you're listening and interested in our project, please contact us because we'd love to collaborate with you.

**[0:39:15]**

**Karen D.:** Yes, absolutely.

**[0:39:17]**

**Theo M.:** Karen and Kacie Devaney are a mother daughter playwriting team. Learn more about their play *The Great Forgotten* by following the links in the podcast notes. Now for our weekly feature, *Speaking World War One*, where we explore the words and phrases that are rooted in the war. The war torn landscape of Belgium and the Western front is often described as being nearly featureless, mud, shell holes, stumps and a tangle of trenches, but there's one feature that stood out. It was a highly coveted tactical position, low great structures dotting the muddy landscape. The Germans began constructing these steel reinforced concrete bunkers in order to enhance their defenses against the British artillery on the Hindenburg Line. With walls and ceilings several feet thick, the bunkers could easily withstand all but the highest caliber shells and were often obscured with debris to prevent detection. A lot of them were built in the Ypres salient, where a high rainfall and water table made trenches a near impossibility. As the British and Commonwealth troops stared out at these little buildings in the moon like cratered world of the Flanders, they noted their similarity to the small medicine boxes carried by civilians, earning the structures the name pillbox, which is our speaking World War One word this week. Nowadays according to the Department of Defense, the word defines small, low, fortified outposts that house machine guns and anti-tank weapons, or that thing you carry your meds and vitamins in. Pillboxes, created by the Germans and named by the British, and this week's word for *Speaking World War One*. Learn more by following the links in the podcast notes. In education news this week, the latest World War One education newsletter just came out. Issue number 12 is *Air War and Weapons Technology*, and features articles on the development of aerial warfare and the incredible technological boom that accompanied and supported it. The issue includes resources for teaching about the history of unmanned drones, the life and service of the only African

American member of the Lafayette Escadrille, Eugene Bullard, the role of zeppelins in the war, and the changing military technology of the war. The newsletter is published by the World War One Museum and Memorial and in partnership with the World War One Centennial Commission. Go to our new education website at [ww1cc.org/edu](http://ww1cc.org/edu) where you can sign up for the education newsletter and connect with the commission education program or follow the link in the podcast notes. This week for World War One War Tech, we're headed back into the sky to take a look at a technological development that helped usher in the age of aerial dog fighting. Early in the war, planes were used exclusively for observation, but to get a clear image of the enemy lines, you had to fly low and slow, in a fairly straight line, which left you easy pickings if an enemy plane with a gun came along. This started an arms race in the sky as each side tried to outgun the other in order to protect their observation planes. The first attempts to mount a machine gun on an airplane ended after the nose-heavy prototype crashed on its first experimental flight. Some guns were mounted and shot over the wings and also pusher plans with the props behind the pilot were developed, allowing them to shoot ahead of themselves without hitting the blades of the propellor. It was Dutch aircraft designer Anthony Fokker who came up with the ultimate answer for the Germans. His mechanism, referred to as the interrupter gear, connected the firing of the machine gun to the turning of the propellers, allowing the bullets to pass through the brief gap between the blades. Yet despite the tests on both the ground and in the air, proving his design worked, German generals remained skeptical. They demanded that Fokker fly into the air and shoot down an enemy by himself. He did as he was told. Although a French plane soon came within his sights, he found himself unable to pull the trigger. Fokker returned to the flying field and vocalized his refusal, demanding that someone else test the plane instead. So it was that the famous Lieutenant Oswald Boelcke was the first pilot to successfully use the interrupter gear to shoot down another airplane, on August 1st, 1915. The German planes would continue to dominate the skies, a phenomena known as the Fokker Scourge until mid 1916. The interrupter gear, a technological marvel that brought air combat into the future, and the subject of this week's World War One War Tech. We've put links in the podcast notes to learn more about the interrupter gear, including a link to a video from a YouTube channel called "The SloMo Guys," where you can watch an interrupter gear operate in very, very slow motion. It's an interesting video, check it out. For articles and posts we're going to continue with the idea we launched a few weeks ago, highlighting the features from the weekly dispatch newsletter. Headline: VMI and VA Commission presents World War One Commemorative Symposium on April 27th. Conference attendees will hear from national and regional experts who will explore the political and military leadership of World War One. The experiences of the soldiers and the generals on the front and the role that Virginia plays in the Great War. Headline: Treasure trove of Army Major Amos J. Peaslee and the first Diplomatic Courier Service. Major Peaslee's led the first ever Diplomatic Courier Service during World War One. Now his personal documents and artifacts related to the Diplomatic Courier Service, including a personally engraved copy of the Treaty of Versailles, are on their way to the state department. Headline: Until very recently, we had forgotten a tremendously important aspect of the U.S. Experience that eventually changed this country forever. Read the essay by scholar Keith Gandel as he explores the literature of World War One and what we can learn from it today. Headline: Very small ships make very large impact. Read about the U.S. Navy Submarine Chasers in World War One, on the cutting edge of anti-submarine warfare. Headline: Robert Frost, a poet for whom life and war were trials by existence. The write blog this week focuses on the iconic American poet Robert Frost and his insight into the connections between war and the human condition. Finally, our selection from our Official Centennial Merchandise shop, the new book, *Lest We Forget: The Great War* is available through our shop. The book features nearly 350 high-quality images, an introduction by Sir Hew Strachan and text by historian Michael Robbins. Importantly, when you get this visual remembrance of the war that changed the world, a full one half of the proceeds go to building the World War One Memorial in Washington D.C. Sign up for the Weekly Dispatch newsletter at [ww1cc.org/subscribe](http://ww1cc.org/subscribe) or check the archive, [ww1cc.org/dispatch](http://ww1cc.org/dispatch) all lowercase, or just follow the link in the podcast notes. And that brings us to the buzz, the centennial of World War One this week in social media with Katherine Akey. Katherine, what are the stories this week?

**[0:47:12]**

**Katherine A.:** Hi Theo. Last week we talked a lot about the Liberty Loans and during the third loan drive, celebrities were drafted to help hype the program as they traveled across the country, including the movie stars Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and Charlie Chaplin, but they aren't the only darlings of the silver screen that helped the war effort. This week on our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/ww1centennial](https://www.facebook.com/ww1centennial), we shared photographs and draft registration cards of two other familiar faces. The first being Buseter Keaton, known to the army by his given name, Joseph, who was assigned to the 40th Division, 159th Infantry, a division that did not wholly see battle but did serve on the Western Front. Then there's also Walt Disney, who was just 16 years old when he joined the American Red Cross and arrived in France as a paramedic, serving near Neufchateau. You can see photos of them by following the links in the podcast notes. Two more nods from the Buzz, this week, the Friends of Jenny, a historical aviation restoration group, shared an album of images updating us on the progress of one of their major restoration projects. Their Curtiss Jenny rebuild is receiving it's new engine. Check it out at the link in the notes and follow their Facebook page as the project continues to pick up speed. Finally this week, the nation was sad to hear of the passing of former First Lady, Barbara Bush. But you may not know that she was daughter of a World War One Veteran. Her father, Marvin Pierce, enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserves in 1918, was promoted to Lieutenant and served as an Engineering Corps officer in France from September 1918 to May 1919. Our thoughts are with her family and loved

ones, and you can read more about her long and storied life at the links in the podcast notes. That's it this week in the Buzz.

**[0:49:07]**

**Theo M.:** And that's our episode this third week of April. Thank you for listening to World War One Centennial News. We also want to thank our guests, Mike Shuster, curator for the Great War Project blog. Dr. Edward Lengel, military historian and author. Dave Fornell, reenactor coordinator and member of the Illinois World War One Centennial Commission. Robert H. Reid, senior managing editor for the Stars and Stripes newspaper. Karen and Kacie Devaney, playwrights. Katherine Akey, World War One photography specialist and line produce for the podcast. Many thanks to the newest member of our team, Mac Nelsen our sound editor. And of course, everybody calls him Mac the knife. A shout out to our researchers, John Morreale and Eric Marr. And I'm Theo Mayer, your host. The U.S. World War One Centennial Commission was created by Congress to honor, commemorate, and educate about World War One. Our programs are to inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War One, including this podcast. We're bringing the lessons of 100 years ago into today's classrooms. We're helping to restore World War One memorials in communities of all sizes across the country, and of course we're building America's National World War One Memorial in Washington D.C. 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 WW1 Centennial News on iTunes, Google Play, TuneIn, Podbean, Stitcher, Radio on Demand, Spotify or use your smart speaker. Just say, "Play W-W-One Centennial News Podcast." Our Twitter and Instagram handles are both [@ww1cc](https://twitter.com/ww1cc) and we're on Facebook at WW1Centennial. Thank you for joining us and don't forget to share the stories that you're hearing here today about the war that changed the world. From all of us, and Snoopy, so long.

**[0:51:49]**