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10 speakers (Mayer, Hochheiser, Shuster, Langel, Weiss, Kempster, Davis, Neighbors, Hutchison, Akey)

[0:00:09]

**Mayer:** Welcome to World War I Centennial News, episode number 69. It's about World War I then, what was happening 100 years ago, and it's about World War I now, news and updates about the Centennial and the commemoration. This week, Dr. Sheldon Hochheiser tells us about an iconic American company and its role in the war, AT&T. Mike Shuster from The Great War Project blog updates us on the German morale as Operation Georgette comes to a close. Dr. Edward with the story of Elsie Janis, the sweetheart of the doughboys. Elaine Weiss introduces us to the Farmerettes, the Women's Land Army. Group Captain Peter Davis and Commander Peter on the Australian and New Zealander commemoration for Anzac Day. Phil Neighbors and Perry Hutchison with the 100 Cities, 100 Memorials Project from Granite, Oklahoma. Katherine with the commemoration of World War I in social media, and a lot 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 , the chief technologist for the Commission and your host. Welcome to the show. Today, we're going to explore the US telephone system during the war. Unlike most nations, where the phone systems are typically government-owned, the US telephone system has always been privately held. Well, not always. For one year during World War I, the US government took over the nation's telephone system. But, perhaps most amazing of all, a year later, after the war, the US government gave it back. With that as a setup, let's jump into our centennial time machine and look at the American telephone story 100 years ago in the war that changed the world. It's the summer of 1918, and the House Committee on Interstate Commerce is holding hearings about a government takeover of the nation's privately held telephone system. Only three witnesses are called to testify: Albert Burleson, the postmaster general, Newton Baker, the secretary of war, and Josephus Daniels, the secretary of the navy. Now, these men, eventually backed up by President Wilson, are pushing for a takeover of the phone system, citing among other things national security concerns, including the protection from spies using this incredibly powerful technology that's rapidly spreading across the land. Most remarkably, the representatives of the phone company are not asked to participate in the discussion. To help us tell the amazing story of AT&T during the war, we invited Dr. Sheldon Hochheiser, the corporate historian from AT&T to join us on the show. Dr. Hochheiser, welcome to the podcast.

[0:03:18]

**Hochheiser:** It's a pleasure to be here.

[0:03:20]

**Mayer:** Dr. Hochheiser, from an AT&T historical perspective, what was the story here?

[0:03:27]

**Hochheiser:** On July 16, 1919, by a joint resolution of Congress, the president was authorized to take possession and control of the nation's telephone and telegraph systems. Note not ownership. The postmaster general, under authority of the president, did so effective August 1. Theodore Vail, the president of the company, issued a statement budging full cooperation. The war ended on November 11. By the following March, plans were underway to return possession and control to the private owners, which was accomplished August 1 of 1919, exactly one year later.

[0:04:09]

**Mayer:** What happened as a result of the postmaster general's action with AT&T at the time?

[0:04:16]

**Hochheiser:** The postmaster general established the United States Telegraph and Telephone Commission and appointed several people, initially from his department but soon including one senior vice president of AT&T, to take over not just AT&T but also the separate telegraph industry, independent telephones, and for the most part left officials at AT&T and its various local subsidiaries in place. They were the people who had the expertise in how to run and operate the telephone business.

[0:04:49]

**Mayer:** Moving on, because there's a lot more going on with AT&T during this period than just this event, during the war, how did the telephone facilities rise to beat the wartime needs?

[0:05:01]

**Hochheiser:** By massive globalization of the facilities and the personnel of AT&T and its Bell System. Example: long-distance telephone service had only recently in 1915 reached all the way across the North American continent,

connecting the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Long-distance service was available, rather expensive, and largely used by commercial interests where it was worth it. The other thing to remember is that every telephone call required at least one operator. You picked up the phone and an operator answered at the local switchboard. A local call might require one operator; a long-distance call, many. Washington was not a place with a great volume, particularly of long-distance calls. For example, at the beginning of the war, there were 100 available long-distance circuits for Washington. Of those 100, only two went west. By the middle of 1918, there were 500 circuits, including 64 additional circuits, and these are physical lines, wires, and cables to New York itself and direct circuits to a lot more additional points. This was repeated throughout Washington, and not just throughout Washington. It was repeated wherever there was a large concentration of activity related to the war. All of that equipment was built by AT&T's manufacturing subsidiary, Western Electric. It all had to be installed by AT&T installers. It all had to be maintained by operators. To meet the demand, say, in Washington, 500 operators were brought in from around the country, and many more operators, many more young women, had to be trained.

**[0:06:53]**

**Mayer:** The company obviously paid a big role in the mobilization effort, but not just here, also in Europe.

**[0:06:59]**

**Hochheiser:** Well, yes. Now, I know you've had Professor Elizabeth Cobbs on talking about the Hello Girls, a very important and fascinating story. Well, where did those telephone systems those Hello Girls operated so capably come from? At the request of the Signal Corps, AT&T mobilized 13 battalions of trained telephone men and their supervisors, who became their officers, to go to Europe and build and operate in a technical sense of maintaining the equipment, stringing the lines, which had to keep being done when the front moved-

**[0:07:35]**

**Mayer:** Was there any kind of telephone infrastructure in Europe at the time? Did they have their own initiatives, or was this sort of something coming over from America?

**[0:07:43]**

**Hochheiser:** The French had a telephone system. AT&T's telephone technology was widely recognized as the most advanced in the world, and General Pershing was used to it from the United States. Secondly, the telephone lines didn't necessarily go where General Pershing needed them to go: out to where the troops were. So what happened was the AES Telephone System interfaced with the French telephone system. If General Pershing wanted to speak to his French counterparts, it would then get connected to the French telephone system, and those Hello Girls who were bilingual often served as translators. General Pershing needed a telephone system that would be to American standards, operated by people who spoke English and who were dedicated to stringing lines where General Pershing wanted the lines to go.

**[0:08:36]**

**Mayer:** Dr. Hochheiser, we just got in a question from our live audience. Frank Crohn wants to know what happened to AT&T's chief technologist, John , after the war.

**[0:08:47]**

**Hochheiser:** Well, John Carty, chief technical officer, directly reported to the president. John Carty joined the Signal Corps Reserve very early on in 1917 as a colonel, and he was then promoted to general and played a large role in the interface between the expeditionary force and AT&T. After the war, John Carty returned to his job full time as chief engineer of AT&T, later becoming vice president and retiring in 1930. But after the war, he always preferred to be referred to as General Carty.

**[0:09:27]**

**Mayer:** A last question for you. How did this one-year event help shape AT&T as a company?

**[0:09:32]**

**Hochheiser:** I think it learned lessons in how quickly and how thoroughly it could mobilize to meet urgent needs, and I think it convinced everyone in the United States even more of the centrality of the telephone or getting things done.

**[0:09:53]**

**Mayer:** Great answer. Dr. Sheldon Hochheiser, thank you for joining us on the show.

**[0:09:58]**

**Hochheiser:** My pleasure.

**[0:09:59]**

**Mayer:** Dr. Sheldon Hochheiser is the corporate historian for AT&T. Learn more about the company and its World War I history at the link in the podcast notes. It's time for Mike Shuster, former NPR correspondent and curator for The Great War Project blog. Mike, your post this week indicates a turning point for the spring offensive. Now, as Ed Langel pointed out previously in our round tables, the German goal was to split the French and the British armies and drive the British to the coast and off the main land. But it looks like that plan has failed. What's going on, Mike?

**[0:10:35]**

**Shuster:** Well, a lot's going on, Theo. The headlines read German morale is flagging. Disillusion among the Germans, they called a halt in their offensive. There's a growing American presence on the Western Front. An assassin dies special to The Great War Project. More and more American troops are arriving on the French battlefields during the final days of April a century ago. Among the major new elements, the first tank-on-tank battle of the war according to historian Martin Gilbert. A heavy British tank knocked out its first adversary, reports Gilbert, and the other Germans turned and fled. Seven British tanks then pushed forward into the German infantry positions. The Allies kill some 400 German troops. Many more are taken prisoner, and the Allies regain much French territory. But the British are vulnerable in the skies. A huge German air attack is underway. Nearly 100 German aircraft drop 700 bombs on Allied positions. Another German ground attack is underway on April 29 according to historian Gilbert. The Germans regain only a small portion of French territory they previously occupied. That night, the German command calls a halt in their attack. According to Gilbert, more than 30,000 German and 20,000 Allied soldiers were killed within the three weeks of Germany's on-again, off-again spring offensive. The goal of the German assault was to drive to the coast to cut off French ports from the sea. That goal failed. The German command was eager to defeat Russia and end the war on the Eastern Front. That it achieved earlier in 1918. Now the Germans believed they can move thousands of troops to the Western Front. It turns out there's an immense problem with the German troops who fought in the East. Our victorious army on the Eastern Front observes one German general became rotten with Bolshevism. We got to the point where we did not dare transfer certain of our Eastern divisions to the West. And as for the Americans, there still is no clarity on how the Americans will be deployed on the Western Front. Even when the issue became where to station the growing number of American troops at the front, General Pershing is unable to convince the French to use American forces effectively. According to historian Thomas Fleming, the French commander Marshal Foch goes behind Pershing's back and reaches out to President Woodrow Wilson. He argues that unless the president dispatches 600,000 soldiers to Europe over the next three months, unattached to any specific American divisions, to be used as replacement troops, then the war is lost. Reports Fleming, Pershing fought the Frenchman with his only weapon and the immense stubbornness and rocklike faith in his vision of an independent American army. This, the Battle of the River, is a turning point according to historian Gilbert, not only in German military fortunes but in Germany's battlefield morale. Many German soldiers were depressed and exhausted, seeing no further prospect of reaching the allied line. It is now four years since the war broke out, sparked by the assassination of the Austrian heir-apparent, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, in Sarajevo. Who could now remember the causes and sequences, twists and turns, the charges and countercharges, which had led to such a widespread and all-consuming war? Then, on April 28 a century ago, Gavrilo Princip, the Serbian assassin of the archduke, dies of tuberculosis in an Austrian prison hospital. He was 22, and that's some of the news from The Great War Project this week 100 years ago.

**[0:14:15]**

**Mayer:** Mike Shuster from The Great War Project blog. The link to Mike Shuster's Great War Project blog and his post are in the podcast notes. Welcome to our segment America Emerges, military stories from World War I with Dr. Edward Langel. Now, Ed, Mike Shuster pretty much covered the fighting on the front here at the end of April, but your story this week offers us a wonderful and completely different perspective on the events in Europe and a very, very special person, the sweetheart of the doughboys, singer and entertainer Elsie Janis. What's her story, Ed?

**[0:14:51]**

**Langel:** Elsie Janis is largely forgotten today, which is a shame, although she has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. But 100 years ago right now, she was the biggest celebrity on the whole of the Western Front and in the process of making hundreds of thousands of doughboys fall in love with her. Elsie Janis celebrated her 29th birthday on March 16, 1918, by embarking on a tour of the Western Front to sing for the American doughboys who were preparing to march off for battle. Her dedication to their welfare earned her the name sweetheart of the doughboys, and she became a World War I pioneer for the USO that originated in 1941. Given the choice, I think the doughboys would gladly have elected Elsie Janis president of the United States. She was born Elsie Bierbower in Columbus, Ohio, in 1889. This future celebrity began stage acting when she was only two years old. Audiences dubbed her Baby Elsie and then Little Elsie. She caught the attention of then-Ohio governor and future president William McKinley, who would help her to get her start. She was guided by her attentive, or some said controlling, mother. She changed her last name from Bierbower to Janis, and she moved when she was only 10 years old to begin acting in Vaudeville. She was a small, spry, dark-haired young woman, and she demonstrated immense talent as a singer, comedienne, impressionist, and acrobat. She packed theaters all across the country and also drew the notice of the great producer Florenz Ziegfeld of Ziegfeld's Follies. By the time America entered the war in 1917, Elsie Janis had already achieved

international celebrity status and she was performing throughout America and Europe, especially in London and Paris, and writing books and appearing on silent movies. As American troops shipped overseas in 1917 and 1918, she decided to follow them and do her best to boost their morale for the challenges that lay ahead. Elsie Janis began her wartime European tour in early 1918 in London, and then she moved to Paris. While in the city of light, she and her mother witnessed and took shelter from German bombing raids on the city. In her diary, she depicted the Germans with great anger at the French civilian casualties that she witnessed in some of these raids. She had a patriotic desire to help to defeat Germany. In March, she departed for Paris with a small group and a pair of Packard Twin Six cars which would be the first of several tours of the front through the autumn of 1918. She was astonished and delighted by her reception. Although the doughboys had not yet seen serious combat, they sensed that big battles were coming up and they were hungry for entertainment. Through a series of French cities and towns, Elsie Janis performed multiple shows per day for thousands of soldiers, marines, and nurses. She liked to imitate Will Rogers in a rope show and sing songs and tell stories. She even made unscheduled visits to sick wards to chat and sing. On one occasion, she pretended that she had the mumps so that she could get into the hospital and to bid farewell to troops of doughboys in training for the front. Finishing her first tour at the end of March, during which she was commissioned an honorary brigadier general, Janis called it "the best circuit I ever played." In April 1918, she was back at the front, this time wearing a gray tweed suit, performing on behalf of the YMCA as close to the front as possible. She had a version of Over There which she called Over Here, and that became infectious. One soldier wrote home, "Elsie Janis entertained us a few evenings ago, and, say, if she couldn't make you forget all your troubles in a half minute, you might as well dig a six-foot hole and crawl in. She sang a few of Broadway's latest and told some good stories and kept us all laughing for an hour and a half. She even had us singing like a bunch of kids, including half a dozen generals in the front row." She imparted tangible strength to the doughboys. She would keep up her acts behind the front for several months in support of the doughboys she loved and whose hardships she wished she could share. A reporter for the Detroit Free Press summed it up like this: "It's really a pity that because of the laws and general orders and other masculine inventions, the government of the United States cannot commission Miss Elsie Janis and attach her to the AEF for the duration of the war with the title of chief of the pep division. By injecting her popful and pulchritudinous personality into the army camps she's visiting, she inspires every man who sees her perform with an overwhelming desire to turn cartwheels over and over all the way along the rocky road to Berlin."

**[0:20:24]**

**Mayer:** Dr. Edward Langel 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 and from a more European perspective, check out our friends at The Great War channel on YouTube. New episodes this week include Knocking out the Railway and another of the very popular Out of the Trenches episodes, where host Indy takes questions from the audience. And, finally, Felix, or Who Did What in World War I? See their videos by searching for The Great War on YouTube or by following the link in the podcast notes. It's time to fast forward into the present with World War I Centennial News Now. This part of the podcast isn't about the past. It focuses on now and how we're commemorating the centennial of World War I. This week in Commission News, we were excited to see that French president Emmanuel Macron brought a special guest to the White House during his visit to Washington, one that bears a great deal of World War I significance. It was a European sessile oak sapling from the Belleau Wood in France. Presidents Trump and Macron, ceremonial shovels in hand, planted the commemorative tree on the White House lawn. Now, the Battle of Belleau Wood is one of the most important American engagements of World War I. It was the first major battle for the US Marines during the conflict and is still viewed as a seminal moment in Marine Corps history. Fighting alongside the British and the French troops, America suffered more than 9,700 casualties. You can read more about this meaningful and symbolic gift and see pictures of the ceremonial planting at the White House by following the links in the podcast notes. For remembering veterans, as we've pointed out before, there are actually more veterans of World War I than just the soldiers and the sailors. As the men headed off to training camps and to Europe, the women of America needed to pick up the role of their missing men, especially when it came to feeding the nation. That's the story of the Farmerettes and the Women's Land Army. With us to explore that story is Elaine Weiss, journalist and author of multiple books including Fruits of Victory: The Women's Land Army in the Great War, as well as The Women's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote. Welcome to the podcast, Elaine.

**[0:23:11]**

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

**[0:23:13]**

**Mayer:** Elaine, feeding the nation and sending desperately needed food to our allies was strategically important. How did American womanhood stand up to the task?

**[0:23:24]**

**Weiss:** Well, they rose to the task. They saw a problem, and it was a very dire one. Of course, America didn't enter the Great War until April of 1917. It had been raging in Europe for three years by then. In Great Britain, women had organized themselves into a Women's Land Army. The men had been called off to war, and even the men who were left, as would happen in America, were going off the land, leaving the farms, and going to the better-paying war industry jobs. They were leaving the land to work in the mines, to work in the factories, and so rationing had begun in Great Britain already. American women saw this and corresponded with their sisters across the sea. So when American women saw the war coming even before we declared war in April, they organized themselves to train women, not rural women but city and small-town women, to take over the tasks of farmers and formed these exploratory training camps and organizations that would support a national movement of women taking over farming tasks from the men who were away.

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**Mayer:** How did the Women's Land Army experience play into the suffrage movement?

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**Weiss:** It dovetailed nicely, shall we say, because many of the women who organized the land army ... And may I just say here that the land army was never a government enterprise? It was always a private, grass-roots, women-organized, women-run, women-financed organization. Putting the word "army" in there did not mean it had a connection to the government throughout the war.

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**Mayer:** An issue of scale, right?

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**Weiss:** Yes, exactly.

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**Mayer:** Were they paid for their work?

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**Weiss:** Yes, they were. In fact, they demanded equal pay to male workers. The general pay was 25 cents an hour or \$2 a day for an eight-hour day. They also insisted on an eight-hour day, which was unheard of in industry, much less in agriculture.

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**Mayer:** What kind of reception did these women receive, both on the ground and by the farmers, the public, the government?

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**Weiss:** Well, the reaction evolved, shall we say. At first, there was great skepticism. Of course, farmers said, "These women are city women. They're not trained. They've never been on a farm before, many of them. How can they be helpful?" But through the training and through their enormous enthusiasm and commitment to doing their patriotic duty, they were able to overcome those initial fears about their capability. After a few weeks on the job, the farmers in a community would see that they really meant business. They could really be helpful. They really worked hard. And they became their fiercest supporters. But what happened at the governmental level is very different. In the spring and summer of 1917, they go into the summer of '18, which is the season, of course, before the end of the war, and it's their biggest season. They have about 25,000 women in uniform who are working on the land. So you had the farmers saying these women were great, but the Agriculture Department and the Labor Department really don't want any part of this. This is an unusual occupation for women. This is doing what was called men's work, which, of course, women did during World War I. They were taking on the more sweaty aspects of agriculture, because women had always worked on the farm, but they were the farm wife, sister, or daughter. They were not outsiders and they were not paid. just saw a way to both break those feelings of male-dominated professions but also to prove their patriotism, to prove that they were citizens who stood up when their country needed them and deserved to vote.

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**Mayer:** What became of the Farmerettes once the war ended, especially when the men came home?

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**Weiss:** Well, it's very interesting. The war ends, as you know, in November of 1918, but the farmers can see that their farmhands are not going to be returning anytime soon, and that's for a variety of reasons. It was going to be spring planting before anyone could really get home. So the farmers are yelling and saying, "We want the women back." So the Land Army actually does march back into the field in the spring of 1919, and the government begins to try to tap

this resource, and the Agriculture Department and the Labor Department try to take it over in a more bureaucratic sense. But by the fall of 1919 going into 1920, it pretty much disbands.

**[0:28:22]**

**Mayer:** Did the legacy of these women set a precedent for the second world war when it came around?

**[0:28:27]**

**Weiss:** Yes, it did. 20 years later, we enter another war. There is again a food shortage. Again, the government kind of scratches its head and says, "Gee, we don't know what to do. Where are we going to get farmhands?" and seems to have totally forgotten that there was this large movement of women in World War I. But the women themselves remembered. In towns and in cities across the nation, the veterans of the Women's Land Army from World War I began to organize their communities into land armies for World War I. But they had an advocate in the White House, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, and so this time it is a government enterprise.

**[0:29:14]**

**Mayer:** So, sliding forward in history, do you think all of this had an effect on the women's workforce today?

**[0:29:19]**

**Weiss:** It did in the sense that it was a great experiment to test women's capability and it was a training ground for leadership. So I think it really does when you look at women entering the workforce in different ways in our present day and in the decades where they had open doors to new professions. I think you do see a very strong and vibrant influence of their foremothers in the Land Army.

**[0:29:48]**

**Mayer:** Well, Elaine, thank you for coming and telling us this story. It's really great.

**[0:29:52]**

**Weiss:** My pleasure.

**[0:29:53]**

**Mayer:** Elaine Weiss is an award-winning journalist and author of multiple books, including the recently published *The Women's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote* from Viking Books. Read a rave review of her new book and learn about her work by following the links in the podcast notes. From our World War I centennial events register at [ww1cc.org/events](http://ww1cc.org/events), there's a great one at North Carolina State University on May 1. Back in episode 64, we spoke to Thomas , the landscape architect for the university; retired US Navy rear admiral Benny Suggs, the director of North Carolina State's alumni association; and US Air Force veteran World War I Centennial commissioner Jerry Hester. All three men are North Carolina State University alumni, and all were involved in the school's 100 Cities, 100 Memorials project. They told us about the restoration of the school's bell tower and about this upcoming rededication event. The event will include a full military ceremony with 21-gun salute and a flyover of F-15s from the 4th Fighter Wing stationed at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, North Carolina. It's an opportunity for all to learn about the sacrifices made by North Carolina State students and about the commitment that the school has made ever since its inception to military service leadership. Nearly 2,000 students and alumni served in World War I, and the bell tower includes the 34 who died in that service. So if you're in the area, be sure to check it out. We have links for further details in the podcast notes. In our international report, this past Wednesday, April 25, is a day of special remembrance that has its roots in World War I. It's known as Anzac Day, which stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, and whose soldiers are known as Anzacs. Here to tell us more about the past, the present, and the future of Anzac Day are Group Captain Peter Davis of the Australian Defence staff and Commander Peter Kempster of the New Zealand Defence Force. Gentlemen, welcome to the podcast.

**[0:32:05]**

**Kempster:** Thank you.

**[0:32:05]**

**Davis:** Thank you.

**[0:32:07]**

**Mayer:** I'm going to ask you both, and you can both answer, what's the story of Anzac Day and what's its origin?

**[0:32:13]**

**Davis:** Anzac Day commemorates the landing of Australian and New Zealand troops on the Gallipoli Peninsula on the 25 of April, 1915. What had been planned as a bit of a bold strike to knock Turkey out of the war quickly became

a stalemate for about eight months. At the end of 1915, the Allied forces were evacuated after both sides had suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships.

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**Kempster:** I guess it's the first time that Australia and New Zealand troops fought together. The numbers that we're talking about are quite staggering as far as what the populations were of both countries. Every town in Australia and in New Zealand, no matter how big it is, has some form of monument to those that fell and didn't come back.

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**Davis:** The 25 of April, 1916, with this anniversary of the landing observed in Australia, that year the 25 of April was officially named Anzac Day by the acting Australian prime minister George Pearce.

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**Kempster:** It took us about three years, and a little town in New Zealand was the first one to do an Anzac Day commemoration. Since that, we've had an annual commemorative day for Anzac Day which not only includes those initial forces in World War I but also covers World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and all other conflicts that we've been involved in since.

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**Mayer:** It's generally become what our ... Originally Armistice Day became Veteran's Day, so a very similar history, I suppose.

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**Davis:** Yeah. It's similar to that and to Memorial Day that you commemorate in May of each year.

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**Mayer:** It's apparently also a very well-attended commemoration in New York. Do you know about that?

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**Davis:** Probably our main service is here in Washington, DC. The New Zealanders organized a dawn service at the Korean War memorial at their national mall, which is a very special place and reorganized a cathedral service at the Washington National Cathedral. They are both very fitting for the occasion, with ambassadors from both countries talking, heads of defense from both countries talking. From an Australian point of view, we support approximately 25 services across the country. We have military folks across about 31 states here in the US. In most areas, there is an Anzac Day commemoration, and their consulates in each area also have one. I know the consul general in New York organized quite a large event. , too, but that's the New Zealand side.

**[0:34:39]**

**Kempster:** Yeah, very similar. Most of the honorary consuls around the United States and Canada also vie for a military unit together in some sort of ceremony. The one in San Diego, I know from the naval point of view. There was one in Los Angeles as well.

**[0:34:55]**

**Mayer:** Let me ask each of you, what does Anzac Day stand for, for you personally?

**[0:34:59]**

**Davis:** From my perspective, it is a day to remember those who have fallen and made the ultimate sacrifice for other people. We also spend time to think of the families, and it is also a great way to bring the country together. The original Anzac landing was a defining moment in Australian history. We were still a very young nation. We had only become a federation in 1901, still very much tied to the old motherland, Britain. It was an opportunity for us to show that we could stand on our own and we didn't really need Mother Britain to support us anymore. I'm probably not speaking too much out of line, but Australians and New Zealanders were in the same place as when the British themselves. After that, I mean, we've been in charge of our own destiny, and today certainly have a lot more meaning from a national point of view than just commemorating the fallen in war.

**[0:35:56]**

**Mayer:** How about you, Peter?

**[0:35:58]**

**Kempster:** I guess from my point of view, it's evolved. As you get older, you reflect a little bit more. But initially, I think it started out as commemorating World War I, and then as the World War II veterans started to disappear as well, we started to realize that patrons of all of our wars, it was worth commemorating what had gone before us. To me, when

I was a kid, I can remember going to dawn services and the like. It was about World War I and commemorating what happened in Gallipoli and the Western Front. When I started a career in the services, it was about service and the servicemen. Now, it's more about families and ... Yeah, it'd be nice to live in a world where we didn't have to do that.

**[0:36:45]**

**Mayer:** Well, gentlemen, thank you very much for coming in and giving us some perspective on what Anzac means to both Australia and to New Zealand.

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**Davis:** Thanks, Theo.

**[0:36:55]**

**Kempster:** You, too.

**[0:36:57]**

**Mayer:** Group Captain Peter Davis is the assistant defense attache and chief of staff of the Australian Defence staff at the US Australian embassy. Commander Peter Kempster is the New Zealand naval attache to the US for the New Zealand Defence Force. Learn more about Anzac Day and the centennial organizations of both countries by following the links in the podcast notes. For 100 Cities, 100 Memorials, the \$200,000 matching grant challenge to rescue and focus on local World War I memorials, we're going to profile the World War I memorial project from Granite, Oklahoma. With us to tell us about Granite, Greer County, and their inspiring World War I story are Phil Neighbors, pastor of the Valley Baptist Church and native son of Granite, and Peter Hutchison, a retired army colonel and former professor at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth Officer Training School. Gentlemen, welcome to the podcast.

**[0:37:55]**

**Neighbors:** Thank you.

**[0:37:57]**

**Mayer:** I'm going to start with you, Phil. In your grant application, you describe Granite, Oklahoma, as a small community of heroes. Now, that's an intriguing opening line. What did you mean?

**[0:38:08]**

**Neighbors:** Well, Greer County is a rural county. Our entire county has maybe 5,000 people in it. My hometown of Granite, Oklahoma has maybe 1,000 people in it. So we're not a large, populous area. When we received the grant, we were thrilled because we noticed so many of them went to places like Soldiers Field in Chicago and UFC Coliseum in Los Angeles. And then here's our little Main Street town in Oklahoma that gets a grant on the same level. We were absolutely thrilled. What I discovered in this research, which is a very personal story to me, which began with my great uncle, Bill Maxfield, that I was very close to as a child and as a teenage boy until he passed away. My uncle Bill would always breathe with a real heavy rasping sound in his chest with every breath. I remember asking my dad on one occasion. I said, "Dad, why does Uncle Bill breath like that?" He told me that Uncle Bill was in the war when he was a young man in France and he had breathed gas, and the rest of his life his lungs were scarred. Now, at that point, I was about 10 years old, and I'd never heard of World War I. But I later learned that Uncle Bill would serve in the 36th Infantry Division, which was a National Guard division created by putting together the Texas and Oklahoma National Guard. So they created a very strong regional unit. 90 percent of them were from Texas and Oklahoma. He was assigned to the 132nd machine gun battalion and served with the second platoon and was the number-one gunner in his section. I also learned in that process that 123 men from our little rural county in extreme Southwest Oklahoma were volunteered and joined the Oklahoma National Guard and then were placed in the 36th Infantry Division.

**[0:39:55]**

**Mayer:** That means that every family was involved.

**[0:39:58]**

**Neighbors:** Exactly right. 60 out of 123 were placed into the 132nd machine gun battalion. World War I was a machine-gun war, and their role was to provide suppressing fire so the infantry could move. When I mentioned that my little hometown was a hometown of heroes, I'm trying to help our little hometown realize that 100 years ago, everybody was talking about what those boys did. It turned out they were involved in one of the deadliest and bloodiest battles of World War I.

**[0:40:28]**

**Hutchison:** It's the Battle of . It follows the with the Second Division. They pull up to the mountain and take a mountain that the French had been fighting for four years. They had never captured the mountain, losing tens of thousands of men, and the Second Division takes it. But they're almost totally depleted. They became combat ineffective, and their general was adamant that he had to be replaced or he was going to lose the hill. The 36th was rushed in there without preparation and they had never been in combat, and this battle beings. Takes place in the valley of the town of San Antonio in France, three very intense days. Finally, the German artillery filled the valley with mustard gas and the Germans during the night withdrew from the battlefield. This particular battle is so strategically important because it finally breaks the back of the Germans, and General , their top general strategist, was watching the battle expecting to destroy this green division from Texas and Oklahoma. He in fact called them just cowboys and Indians. But they destroyed two of his divisions and he said, "Well, that's it." He left the battlefield. He got in his vehicle and went on back to Germany, and his staff followed close behind. So did the German army over the next two weeks. They pulled back to the line and the war was over.

**[0:41:43]**

**Mayer:** So, Perry, there's a real history story here that I don't think is very well known.

**[0:41:48]**

**Hutchison:** No, it's not. If the history professors of America ever did anything wrong, it was not reporting World War I. As we examine it today, we see it was a blueprint for World War II. Might have saved millions of lives by just looking at that history.

**[0:42:02]**

**Mayer:** Fascinating. Moving back from history a little bit to the present, America Legion Post 121 in Mangum, Oklahoma, is going to be placing a new monument in the World War Memorial Park in Granite. Can you tell us a little bit about that and the specifics?

**[0:42:18]**

**Neighbors:** Post 121 is sniper Paul Garrett, who was the first soldier from Greer County, Oklahoma, to die in World War I. He sadly died of disease, as many did. We are going to refurbish our World War I doughboy and sailor statues and erect a new monument to honor the 36th Infantry Division and particularly the 132nd machine-gun battalion 100 years later, hopefully on the very day, that's our plan, of that battle occurring. Also, in this process, we're going to honor two men from Oklahoma: Harold Turner and Samuel . Both won the Congressional medal of honor for taking Hill 140, high point of the ridge. I believe it was 38 men received distinguished service cross and two received the medal of honor for that one fight. Now, what makes that interesting is that Sergeant York, 25 miles to the east, will win the Congressional medal of honor on the very same day: October 8, 1918. What Sampler did was very similar to what York did. He personally took a machine-gun nest, killing several of the enemy and capturing about 30 or 40 Germans single-handedly. We contacted the Sampler family. They're going to be in attendance. They're thrilled and we're thrilled to be able 100 years later to put the spotlight on our little town of heroes.

**[0:43:37]**

**Mayer:** Phil Neighbors is a pastor of the Valley Baptist Church and a native son of Granite, Oklahoma. And Perry Hutchison, retired army colonel and former professor at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth Officer Training School. Learn more about the 100 Cities, 100 Memorials program by following the links in the podcast notes or by going to [www.1cc.org/100memorials](http://www.1cc.org/100memorials). It's time for our weekly feature Speaking World War I, where we explore the words and phrases that are rooted in the war. Now, we're going to stick with our Anzac theme. New Zealand, as were all the dominion nations of the British Empire, was thrown into World War I by Britain's own declaration of war on August 4, 1914. Now, when the New Zealanders arrived in Europe, their uniforms were emblazoned with badges, emblems, and insignias of kiwis. And, no, we don't mean an egg-shaped, fuzzy fruit. We're talking about the big, flightless, and quite unique national bird of New Zealand. It's one of our two Speaking World War I words this week. These soldiers were instantly nicknamed the Kiwis. As for the Australians, also a dominion nation, their World War I soldierly nickname, and that's stuck ever since, is our second Speaking World War I word this week: Aussies. It's kind of obvious and you know it, but I bet you didn't know that the nickname came from World War I. Kiwis and Aussies, nicknames earned during the war that helped cement these two nations and their identities, and this week's words for Speaking World War I. For World War I War Tech this week, we're headed underground to learn about a sonic invention of necessity. Within just a few months, after the first construction of a trench, the tangle of an estimated 25,000 miles of trenches spread from the English Channel to the Swiss border. Now, the only way to attack an enemy was through a costly offensive through No Man's Land, or, and I didn't know this, underground via a system of tunnels. This method of offensive mining quickly became a standard in some areas, and so a device that could detect an enemy's digging patterns would prove immensely valuable. It was a Professor Jean Perrin, the Sorbonne University in Paris, who provided just that type of device with his invention of the geophone in 1915. It was basically a specialized stethoscope-like device that could amplify sounds traveling underground, a sort of earth sonar, enabling a skilled listener to detect the distance and the location of German tunnels. Some imaginative soldiers

operating geophones underground would often interpret strange things from the noises that they picked up. One listener swore he had heard a horse eating oats, which the author noted could only have been true if that horse had been a prehistoric fossil. The report went on to detail the exhausting process of piecing out all of the sounds a geophone operator could hear while operating underground and determining which ones were harmless and which ones signified hostile activities. The geophone, the subject of this week's World War I War Tech, and we've put links in the podcast notes for you to learn more. For articles and posts, here are the highlighted features from our weekly Dispatch Newsletter. Headline: Building a World War I Tank in the Garage. Read an interview with two of our friends who have a pretty unique weekend project. They're building a World War I tank in a garage. Actually, we should say that they're building another World War I tank in a garage. They already completed one earlier last year. Headline: Pennsylvania World War I Centennial Committee Sets World War I History Symposium at the US Army History and Education Center. Read about this exciting symposium event, which will feature four unique and engaging presentations by retired US Army major Kurt Sellers, retired US Army lieutenant colonel John D. Shepherd, author Gloria J. House, and genealogist and history researcher Barbara . Headline: Write Blog in a Lonely Forest. This week's write blog post features one writer's quest to uncover the story of World War I era lyricist Joseph Rust. Headline: Story of World War I Code Talkers Told in Reims Event in France. Read about a special April event in Reims, France, where the story of the Chok Tok code talkers was presented to the local audience. Headline: Help Sought to Return World War I Medal Unearthed in New Jersey Woods to Vet's Family. A medal detector recently unearthed a World War I service medal. Read about its discovery and the efforts to return it to its original owner's family. Headline: the story of Otho Bradford Place. This week's featured doughboy MIA is second lieutenant Otho Bradford Place, a native of Bremen, Indiana, who died in battle during an attack along the River. Finally, our selection from our official online centennial merchandise store. This week, it's a small item, the centennial commemorative pin. Now, proudly wearing the World War I 100-year lapel pin is a fantastic way to start a conversation. The question, "What's that?" can lead to a great discussion about the centennial, the commemoration, and World War I. Wear the pin and let the world know it's the centennial. Those are the headlines from this week's Dispatch Newsletter. Sign up for the weekly dispatch at [www1cc.org/subscribe](http://www1cc.org/subscribe). Check the archives at [ww1cc.org/dispatch](http://ww1cc.org/dispatch), or follow the link in the podcast notes. That brings us to The Buzz, the centennial of World War I this week in social media with Katherine Akey. Katherine, what's this week's pick?

**[0:49:57]**

**Akey:** Hi, Theo. This past week, we had a lot of commemorative events happen and we've shared images and video from them on our Facebook page that you can see in the podcast notes. Events included the dawn Anzac ceremony at the Korean War memorial in DC and the dawn Anzac ceremony at New York City's Vietnam Veterans Memorial Plaza. French president Macron participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the tomb of the unknown soldier, and there was a commemoration of the Battle of in Connecticut. You can also see some great images of Anzacs in the field in World War I on our Instagram, [@ww1cc](https://www.instagram.com/ww1cc), including a photo of some Aussies camped out at the foot of the Great Pyramids with their mascot kangaroo. Also shared on our Facebook page this week was a historic video from ECPAD, a French archive of historical defense audiovisual material. The video shows soldiers and prisoners of war fashioning various objects from leftover military supplies like spent shells, shrapnel, and broken wooden pallets. These trench artists created vases, buckets, decorative mementos, toys, pipes, and musical instruments from the detritus of war around them. They also repaired clothing, boots, recycled old wax into new candles, and more. You can watch these improvisational artisans working by following the link in the podcast notes. That's it this week in The Buzz.

**[0:51:26]**

**Mayer:** That wraps up the last week of April for World War I Centennial News. Thank you for listening. We also want to thank our guests, Dr. Sheldon Hochheiser, corporate historian at AT&T; Mike Shuster, curator for the Great War Project blog; Dr. Edward Langel, military historian and author; Elaine Weiss, journalist and author; Group Captain Peter Davis of the Australian Defence Staff and Commander Peter Kempster of the New Zealand Defence Force; Peter Neighbors and Perry Hutchison from the 100 Cities, 100 Memorials Project in Granite, Oklahoma; Katherine Akey, World War I photography specialist and line producer for the podcast. Many thanks to Mac Nelson, our sound editor, as well as John , our intern, and Eric Marr for their great research assistance. I'm Theo Mayer, your host. The US World War I Centennial Commission was created by Congress to honor, commemorate, and educate about World War I. Our programs are to inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War I, including this podcast. We're bringing the lessons of 100 years ago into today's classrooms. We're helping to restore World War I memorials in communities of all sizes across the country. And, of course, we're building America's national World War I memorial in Washington, DC. We want to thank the Commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum 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). Search WWI centennial news on iTunes, Google Play, TuneIn, Podbean, Stitcher, Radio On Demand, and Spotify, or using your smart speaker just say, "Play WWI Centennial News podcast." Our Twitter and Instagram handles are both [@ww1cc](https://www.instagram.com/ww1cc), and we're on Facebook at [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. You know how we always do a closing joke, typically about our Speaking World War I word? Well, when I was researching jokes about Anzacs, here's what

came up in Google. An unwritten law in Australia and New Zealand is don't make jokes about the Anzacs. You can joke about almost anything except the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. That's pretty funny, and we won't. So long.

**[0:54:32]**