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12 speakers (Theo Mayer, Nicole Milano, Indy Neidell, Mike Shuster, Edward Lengel, Rebekah Wilson, Andrew Capets, Harry Bellangy, Kathleen Wyatt, Katherine Akey, Speaker 11, Speaker 12)

[0:00:10]

Theo Mayer: Welcome to World War I Centennial News, episode number 82. Thank you for listening, and we also want to invite you to follow the show on Twitter at TheWW1podcast. You can ask us questions, make comments, get a link that you missed, see pictures from some of the stories, and even ask us to drop a note to one of our guests for you. That's @TheWW1podcast, because of course, it's more than just a show. It's a conversation about the events 100 years ago this week, and the World War I Centennial Commemoration happening now about the war that changed the world. This week, we explore the idea of ambulance, and especially the America Field Service, with archivist Nicole Milano. Mike Shuster gives us a powerful description of the trenches 100 years ago. Dr. Edward Lengel lines up what units are fighting where, and takes us to the front with the Rainbow Division and Douglas MacArthur. The new 2018 World War I commemorative stamp hits the post office, and we're joined by an old friend, Rebekah Wilson, who tells us about the early days of the commission, and how the stamp initiative got started. Citizen historian Andrew Capets is here to tell us about his book, Good War, Great Men. Kathleen C. Wyatt and Harry Bellangy share the 100 Cities, 100 Memorials project from Cape May, New Jersey, and of course, The Buzz, where Katherine Akey highlights the commemoration of World War I in social media. It's a jam-packed podcast that is brought to you by the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, and the Starr Foundation. I'm Theo Mayer, the chief technologist for the Commission, and your host. Welcome to the show. The scale of injury and physical trauma in World War I hit new, previously unimaginable heights in human history, as you'll hear from both Mike Shuster and Dr. Edward Lengel. In response, how the wounded were treated, and field medicine generally, completely transformed in World War I, but before you can treat a wounded warrior, you need to get them from the battlefield to the doctor, and that's the theme for this week's show. Our catchphrase is ambulance, and as you'll learn by the time the show's finished, the term itself has a history that predates vehicles. With that as a premise, we're going to jump into our centennial time machine and go back to the years just prior to World War I to see how a hospital in Paris was the foundation for how the wounded were transported from the battlefield in the war that changed the world. We've landed in pre-war Paris. It's very popular for wealthier Americans, as well as aspiring artists, to come here. It's exciting, it's cultured, and it's naughty, all at the same time. The expatriate, or the American overseas community in Paris is defined by the River Seine. On the Left Bank, you have the artists, musicians, philosophers, and writers. The Right Bank is inhabited by the Gilded Age upper class families like the Vanderbilts, Goulds, Morgans, Whitneys, and so on. Now, these Americans want American doctors and American medical care as well, so they come together to establish and fund a hospital in Paris for themselves. Our longtime listeners might remember our story about this hospital back when we ran it in early December of 2017, in episode number 49. Then we spoke with Anthony Easton, the director of the documentary film The American in Paris, which tells the story of L'hôpital Américain in and during the course of the Great War. Okay, so the hospital is paid for entirely with private donations, much of it coming from the Right Bank families. About \$10 million of individual contributions builds, staffs, and supplies the hospital, which opens to much excitement. Sterling Heilig of the Chicago Record-Herald describes it as, "The jewel of Paris, the most spic-and-span, luxurious, scientific, brand-new little hospital in Europe." Okay, back to history. Now it's August of 1914. A war breaks out because a crazed radical kid assassinates the Crown Prince of Austria. Nobody thinks of it as a big deal at the time, but Germany takes the opportunity to decide to roll through Belgium and push into France, expecting an easy military snap and grab of Belgium and France to expand their empire, because after all, that's how you expand empires. Well, in early September, the invasion gets to within 30 miles of Paris. That's when the French and the British muster up, counterattack, and stop the Germany advance with the First Battle of the Marne. It's a turning point that precedes four years of global mayhem that in retrospect will become known as World War I. Meanwhile, the hospital prepares itself to receive patients, but a problem remains. The wounded French are having trouble getting evacuated to the rear. Instead, they're being clustered in churches and farmhouses and little villages all across the Front. Hearing this, the hospital summons anyone with a car. Now, remember, in 1914, the car is a brand new idea. It's mostly for the wealthy and the totally leading-edge. Those that have them are gathered together, and they take off west towards the Front, including members of the Governors' Board. The cars arrive in the dead of night near the Front, and the volunteers bring back 34 soldiers on their first run, turn around, and immediately head out for more. With the railroads blocked or damaged, this by the cuff excursion serves as an example of what the motor car is capable of doing in the rough terrain of war. Now, a guy named A. Piatt Andrew, he's the former director of the United States Mint, and an assistant professor of Economics at Harvard. He volunteers as a driver for the American Ambulance Hospital in January of 1915, so that experience at the First Battle of the Marne, heading out to the Front for the wounded, that's unusual for the hospital in the first year of the war. Piatt finds himself primarily ferrying patients from the train stations in Paris to the hospitals around the city. However, he's a pretty sharp cookie, and quickly realizes that more can be done to save lives. In April of 1915, he successfully negotiates with the French Army to have some ambulance sections of the hospital who are closer to the

front lines of the battle. This is the birth of the American Field Services, also known as the AFS. The AFS becomes an absolute icon of the First World War, and it offers the opportunity for many Americans to serve in France, Belgium, and the Balkans before the U.S. Involvement in the war. Their Ford Model-Ts used to transport the wounded become known as "ambulances," and they shepherd hundreds of thousands of men to medical care in the course of the conflict. To provide us more insight, we've asked Nicole Milano, the head archivist and historical publications editor at the American Field Service Intercultural Programs, to join us and tell us more about the AFS during the war, and throughout the 20th century. Nicole, welcome to our history segment.

[0:08:18]

Nicole Milano: Thank you for having me today.

[0:08:20]

Theo Mayer: Nicole, even though we just provided an overview of the AFS, can you tell us a little bit about the American Field Service during the war, and how it grew over the course of the war?

[0:08:30]

Nicole Milano: Now, AFS worked with representatives back in the U.S. To recruit ambulance drivers, and also raise money for their growing ambulance service. It was so successful that AFS ultimately broke away from the America Ambulance Hospital to become an independent volunteer organization with headquarters in the heart of Paris.

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Theo Mayer: Motorized vehicles were kind of rare at the time. How did the AFS decide that that was the way to go?

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Nicole Milano: That's a great question. AFS was really revolutionary in their use of the Model-T Ford ambulance, and particularly in their standardization of this vehicle. By standardizing the kind of ambulance, it just simply made more sense. The ambulances had interchangeable parts, which made them easier to repair. They were also small, meaning that they were quicker and more efficient at driving over the shell-pocketed roads. Officially, three stretchers, or four seated soldiers, could fit in the back of one of these ambulances, though they often squeezed in many more. We've even heard stories of some of them riding on the top of the wheels on the way out, just so that they could really evacuate as many men as possible. The volunteers had a very close relationship with these ambulances, and they often gave nicknames to them. Many of them actually slept in these cars during the war, and actually, there's an interesting story as well. What they did was they ran the motor very quickly, which made the water in the radiator boil, and they actually made something called radiator water cocoa from this water.

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Theo Mayer: It sounds like it would have a taste to it.

[0:09:58]

Nicole Milano: Yes, I would imagine. Maybe not the best cocoa you've ever had.

[0:10:03]

Theo Mayer: I imagine, under the circumstances, maybe it was. Well, we just got a question from our live audience. Henry Ford was publicly against the U.S. Entering the war. Did he ever change his mind and donate some of the ambulances to the AFS?

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Nicole Milano: That's a great question, and actually, we never got a discount from the Ford Motor Company for the thousands of ambulances that we purchased during the war. However, as a volunteer organization, our drivers were unpaid. We actually recruited and also fund-raised for money on the home front from communities and families like the Vanderbilts, the Fricks, the Whitneys, who donated money to buy ambulances during the war. We may not have had Ford himself, but we did have a lot of supporters that did help us.

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Theo Mayer: One of the fascinating things about the ambulance drivers is that we know the names of a lot of them. Can you tell us about that?

[0:10:52]

Nicole Milano: We had a number of famous AFSers, including several who belonged to the famed Lost Generation. The writer Harry Crosby and the artist Waldo Peirce both drove an ambulance with AFS. Also, Malcolm Cowley, who was actually a truck driver with AFS and not an ambulance driver, is often regarded as the unofficial historian of the Lost Generation. We also had a number of volunteers who went onto do other great things, and perhaps may not be

quite as famous as these Lost Generation writers. Now, one of the questions that I'm asked the most is whether Ernest Hemingway was an ambulance driver with the organization, and I have to say he was not. He was actually a volunteer with the Red Cross in Italy. Similarly, Dos Passos and E.E. Cummings were also volunteers with other ambulance corps during the war.

[0:11:37]

Theo Mayer: Now, some of the Lafayette Escadrille pilots, the pilots that flew for the French before America entered the war, some of those were AFS drivers first, weren't they?

[0:11:46]

Nicole Milano: Absolutely. Eight of the Lafayette Escadrille pilots were actually former AFS drivers, including James McConnell, who was tragically shot down in 1917 during aerial combat.

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Theo Mayer: What was the typical day in the life of an ASF driver?

[0:12:00]

Nicole Milano: The typical day could be long and tiring. They worked at dressing stations that were located around 800 yards from the first line trenches, and wounded soldiers were carried by French stretcher-bearers from the trenches to these dressing stations, where they would then receive basic medical attention before AFS transported them to hospitals farther along. The AFS volunteers couldn't use lights when driving on the road at night, for fear of an attack from above, and they also sometimes had to wear gas masks because they were driving through very difficult conditions. In Verdun, one of our drivers writes in his diary that he couldn't sleep for 35 hours due to the number of soldiers they transported.

[0:12:39]

Theo Mayer: The AFS operated ambulances again in World War II. What happened between the wars, and then what happened after?

[0:12:45]

Nicole Milano: That's a great question, because many people don't realize the connections between AFS and World War I, and AFS Intercultural Programs, an international organization of today. Between the world wars, AFS actually started a graduate fellowship program that sponsored graduate students to travel between French and American universities. One of our French fellows was actually Raymond Aubrac, who was a French Resistance fighter during World War II. Now, as you mentioned, AFS of course was reactivated as an ambulance corps during World War II, and at the end of World War II, the drivers from World War I and II got together and tried to decide what they could do with this organization. They had witnessed the horror of two world wars, and wanted to create an organization that might actually contribute to a more peaceful world. By working together, in 1946, they created an intercultural and student exchange organization that is now known as AFS Intercultural Programs, an international nonprofit organization that helps people develop the knowledge, skills, and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world. We still consider ourselves a volunteer organization, with 40,000 AFS volunteers around the world, more than 100 years after our founding.

[0:13:57]

Theo Mayer: That's great. From radiator cocoa-

[0:14:00]

Nicole Milano: To international exchange. Exactly.

[0:14:03]

Theo Mayer: I love it.

[0:14:05]

Nicole Milano: AFS does focus a lot on education now, and we did create a curriculum about these World War I volunteer efforts. It's available for free for secondary school teachers worldwide, so if they want to learn more about that, they can go to TheVolunteers.AFS.org.

[0:14:21]

Theo Mayer: Thank you so much for joining us today. It was a great interview.

[0:14:23]

Nicole Milano: Thank you for having me.

[0:14:26]

Theo Mayer: That's the story of how the transportation of the wounded changed the very definition of the word ambulance, the structure of battlefield medicine, and volunteerism 100 years ago, in the war that changed the world. Many thanks to Nicole Milano, the head archivist and historical publications editor at the AFS Intercultural Programs, and to our great research team here at the World War I Centennial News Podcast, for pulling the story together. We'll be posting imagines of ambulances and their drivers on our Twitter feed, which is @TheWW1podcast. We also have our research links for you in the podcast notes. As you heard a little earlier, Ernest Hemingway was not a volunteer ambulance driver for the AFS, but for the America Red Cross. This week, our friends at the Great War Channel posted a great story about him. Here's host Indy Neidell, from The Great War Channel on YouTube.

[0:15:20]

Indy Neidell: I'm Indy Neidell. Welcome to a Great War bio special about Ernest Hemingway and the First World War. Ernest Miller Hemingway was born July 21st, 1899, in Oak Park, a well-to-do suburb of Chicago. He graduated high school in June 1917, but did not go to university, taking a job instead with the Kansas City Star newspaper. He only worked there for a few months, but would use the paper's style guide as a foundation for his later writing. "Use short sentences. Use short first paragraphs. Use vigorous English. Be positive, not negative."

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Theo Mayer: Watch the entire clip by going to YouTube and searching for The Great War, or follow the link in the podcast notes. And now Mike Shuster, former NPR correspondent, and the curator for The Great War Project blog. Mike, your post this week directly confronts the human horror of the fighting at the Front, regardless of the uniform the soldier bears. It's a really powerful post, and you don't hold back, so a note to our listeners, especially if you have children listening. The following contains very graphic descriptions of violence.

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Mike Shuster: It was a horror, actually, Theo. The headline reads, "Intimate Pictures of War in the Trenches." An America flyer describes warfare on the ground. For one America officer, "Never have I seen so many dead men, but Paris is safe." Special to the Great War project. Fighting during these days in France on the Western Front 100 years ago has been called horrific by both sides, victor and vanquished alike. "Never have I seen so many dead men," one German officer writes, "nor so many wounded, the wounded on both sides being vulnerable and afraid." Writes one America medical officer, "Some of them cursed and raved and had to be tied to their litters. Some shook violently. Some trembled and slunk away in apparent abject fear of every incoming shell, while others simply stood speechless, oblivious to all surroundings." "For two days," writes historian Martin Gilbert, "it looked as if the Germans might make the final decisive breakthrough. In one sector of the Front, however, French gunners succeeded in knocking out all 20 of the attacking German tanks. In another sector, 3,600 American troops, outnumbered three to one, fought and held their ground in hand-to-hand combat. In the air, 225 French bombers dropped more than 40 tons of bombs on the bridges, which the Germans had thrown across the Marne. 25 of the bombers were lost, but the attack continued. In one sector, the Americans blew up every pontoon that the Germans threw across the Marne, gaining for itself the title Rock of the Marne. As the Germans continued to pour down to the Marne, American infantrymen and machine gunners were waiting for them and mowed them down." On July 18th, in one sector of the Western Front, the American flyer Eddie Rickenbacker provided an unusually intimate picture of the slaughter unfolding just below, in the American sector of operations. "The barrage," he writes, "seemed to be tearing up the earth in huge handfuls as it moved steadily nearer to the German trenches. To know that human beings were lying there without means of escape, waiting there while the pitiless hailstorm of shrapnel drew slowly closer to their hiding places, seemed such a diabolical method of torture that I wondered why men in the trenches did not go utterly mad with terror." According to historian Gilbert, "Rickenbacker watched while a shell fell directly into the trench in front of him, tearing it open and gutting it completely for a space of 30 feet. In the next instant, a German soldier emerges. He throws away his rifle and proceeds to run as fast as he can back toward the safer trenches toward the rear. Hardly had he gone 10 yards when a high explosive shell lit in front of him." As Rickenbacker tells it, "In the next moment, he was simply swept away in dust and disappeared as the explosion took effect. Not a vestige of him remained when the dust had settled and the smoke had cleared away." This had been a German attack. The goal, to reach Paris. "By nightfall," writes Gilbert, "on July 18th, the German threat to Paris was over." That's some of the news from the Great War Project in these days, a century ago.

[0:19:45]

Theo Mayer: Mike Shuster is the curator for The Great War Project blog. The link to his post is in the podcast notes. That leads to another segment of America Emerges, Military Stories From World War I with Dr. Edward Lengel. Ed explained to me that there's a sizable segment of the history audience intensely interested in which America units were involved in which specific actions and battles. Of course, the unit names are all described by numbers, so if you're not somebody who follows those details, just let the numbers wash past, because the story that Ed tells is

really fascinating, and you get another larger than life character, Douglas MacArthur, who becomes a general during this episode.

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Edward Lengel: 100 years ago this week, the AEF went all in, and so did Douglas MacArthur. French forces with the U.S. 3rd and 28th Divisions stopped the Germans cold on the Marne River on July 15th. On July 18th, the U.S. 1st and 2nd Divisions assaulted alongside French Colonial troops at the Battle of Soissons. Simultaneously, the American 3rd, 4th, 26th, and 28th Divisions, with elements of the African-American 93rd Division, began the reduction of the German-held Marne salient. Then the men of the 42nd Rainbow Division wrote their page in the history books at Croix Rouge Farm. The U.S. 42nd Rainbow Division, the third National Guard formation to arrive at the Front, was one of the more colorful units in the AEF, pun intended. It was an amalgam of National Guard units from 26 states, plus the District of Columbia. Douglas MacArthur, who eventually commanded the Division's 84th Brigade, supposedly said that, "The 42nd Division stretches like a rainbow from one end of America to the other." The Division's four regiments all had storied histories. They were the 165th, originally New York's Fighting 69th, the 166th, the 4th Ohio, the 167th, 4th Alabama, and the 168th, 3rd Iowa. Though proud of their origins, the Rainbow Men believed that General Pershing and his officers disliked them because they were National Guard. They had a lot to prove. The Rainbow arrived in France in the autumn of 1917, but hadn't yet seen much action. Held in the second line on July 15th, it helped to break up the last stages of the German attack, but not much more. MacArthur, then serving as Colone and divisional Chief of Staff, received a Silver Star and was eager for more action. 10 days later, he got it, and a lot more. It was tough sledding for the four America divisions tasked with reducing the German Marne salient. While the 1st and 2nd Divisions attacked at Soissons, the 3rd, 4th, and 28th Divisions all moved forward slowly, and the 26th Yankee Division was badly blooded in repeated frontal assaults against German positions. Fresh support was needed. On July 25th and 26th, the America 1st Corps pulled out all three of its front line divisions, including the America 26th and 28th, and replaced them with one, the Rainbow Division. The 84th Brigade, which was the 167th and 168th Regiments, led the attack on July 26th against German-held Croix Rouge Farm, or Red Cross Farm, which was a well prepared position bristling with well sided machine guns. In their first attack, the green American troops clumped together in thick lines and took heavy casualties. They were beaten back. Later that evening, though, the doughboys spread out thinly and used combined arms tactics, wielding grenades, machine guns, and one-pounder light cannon as they advanced. Engaging the Germans in close quarters combat, they captured the farm. MacArthur remembered that, "We reverted to tactics I had seen so often in the Indian Wars of my frontier days. Crawling forward in twos and threes against each stubborn nest of enemy guns, we closed in with the bayonet and the hand-grenade. It was savage, and there was no quarter asked or given. Red Cross Farm cost over 1,000 America casualties." A short time later, MacArthur was promoted to Brigadier General, and placed in command of the 84th Brigade. He later remembered his first visit to the Front, writing, "I will never forget that trip. The dead were so thick on spots that we tumbled over them. There must have been at least 2,000 of those sprawled bodies. The stench was suffocating. Not a tree was standing. The moans and cries of wounded men sounded everywhere. Sniper bullets sung like the buzzing of a hive of angry bees."

[0:24:46]

Theo Mayer: Dr. Edward Lengel is an America military historian, and our segment host for America Emerges, Military Stories From World War I. Related to Ed's story, today there's a powerful and striking sculpture at the Croix Rouge Farm, and this week, there's a centennial commemoration there in France, being attended by some of my colleagues. We're going to post an image of the striking doughboy statue carrying a decimated victim, and run some stories about the commemoration on our twitter channel, @TheWW1podcast, and of course, we put those links in the podcast notes, including for Ed's post and his author's website. That's it for 100 Years Ago This Week. Pretty dense, but pretty interesting. Now it's time to fast forward into the present, with World War I Centennial News Now. As our regulars know, this part of the podcast focuses on now, and how we're commemorating the Centennial of World War I. This week in Commission news, there is a new Centennial commemorative collectible. Joining the U.S. Mint 1918 World War I Commemorative Silver Dollar, this week, the U.S. Postal Service issued the World War I Turning the Tide Forever Stamp. It's a really great-looking piece, so anyone who's into snail mail, or if you're into stamp collecting, or you want a really great commemorative collectible for your kids or your grandkids, head to the post office and snag a sheet or two of these awesome Forever Stamps. I did. The new stamp was offered to the public in a First Day of Issue dedication ceremony hosted at the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City. The stamp features a soldier wearing a steel combat helmet. In his right hand, he holds the pole for the America flag that he's grasping in his left. In the background of the stamp, you can see smoke and barbed wires against the yellow rays of the sky. Two World War I biplanes fly over the battlefield. The illustration is by artist Mark Stutzman, who's the same talent that created the renowned young Elvis stamp. According to the Postal Service, the World War I illustration was painted using an airbrush on illustrator board, a technique that evokes the propaganda posters used during World War I. It's a great look. World War I Centennial Commissioner Debra Anderson was a guest speaker for the ceremony, and mentioned the effort to gain the support for the stamp. "We knocked on as many doors as we could, and wrote as many letters as we could to help the veterans to be remembered. We're thrilled that the Postal Service has chosen to provide them with this honor." As Commissioner Anderson points out, a stamp doesn't just happen.

This grassroots campaign started at the fledgling U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, at their very first official meeting on October 29th, 2013, with a suggestion by Commissioner Jerry Hester. Joining us to tell us the story of this early initiative to get a commemorative World War I stamp is Rebekah Wilson, one of the original Commission staffers, and the former director of operations for the World War I Centennial Commission. Rebekah, welcome back for a chat. It's great to have you here.

[0:28:07]

Rebekah Wilson: Nice to speak with you too. I'm glad to be back.

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Theo Mayer: Rebekah, like most everyone involved with the Centennial Project, and the Commission, you started as a volunteer. Can you tell us a little bit about those formative days when things were just getting on their feet?

[0:28:22]

Rebekah Wilson: My journey into being a volunteer with the Commission started before it even existed. I am a war veteran with two tours in Iraq, and I moved to the D.C. Metro area, and on one of my first trips down to the National Mall, which is where all the memorials are, I came across the District of Columbia's local World War I memorial, which is right next to the National World War II memorial, and at the time, that memorial was in a state of disrepair. When I saw that, I thought about my fellow veterans, and those people that we have told that we're going to remember the sacrifices they made for our country, and here I was thinking, "We have forgotten, and of all the places we have forgotten is right here in Washington, D.C., amongst all these other great memorials." That night, I went home and I started doing research, and I found Edwin Fountain, who's now a commissioner, and started organizing cleanups for that memorial, twice a year, along with twice a year observances at the memorial. That memorial has since been restored to its original former glory, and through that process, I became plugged into World War I, and Edwin Fountain, so when the Commission was founded by Congress, I was one of the first to say, "Hey, I'm ready to volunteer," and I headed on down for the first Commission meeting down in Kansas City, where they put me right to work. Through that, just started to get more involved in organizing everything that the commissioners wanted to do for the Centennial.

[0:29:53]

Theo Mayer: Great story, Rebekah. One of the very early initiatives that the team took on was the stamp. Can you tell us about how that came around?

[0:30:01]

Rebekah Wilson: Sure. Like I said, we were down at that first Commission meeting, and there was a lot of spit-balling, like, "What are we going to do for the Centennial?" I remember, it was Jerry Hester raised his hand and he said, "We need a stamp. We need stamps, a series of stamps for the Centennial." Then in 2015, we decided to make it a priority, and we started doing research. How do we get a stamp? We found out that we were already late. Stamps decide what they're going to do three years in advance, but we didn't give up there. That's when we decided to start a campaign to get a stamp.

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Theo Mayer: How did you go about building the interest and getting people on board to get that done?

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Rebekah Wilson: There was different ways to go about it. The Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee, which are the people that decide what stamps we had, take in letters for what the citizens want for a stamp. We thought, "Okay, we can send in our own letter, but it's easy to ignore one letter. It's not easy to ignore a whole bag of letters, or a constant stream of letters coming in about World War I." We had a few options. Ultimately, it was decided that the most important thing is that we got a stamp for World War I, and the specific details, that was less important. I think one of the key things we did is said, "Hey, any volunteer, any organization who wants to, we encourage you to write a letter, but you tell them which World War I stamp you want, and why." Our volunteers in our organization, over the course of six to eight months, continued to push that, and we had a great response. The volunteers in the organization, like Congressman Cleaver's office, I think we even ended up hearing from the Army at the Pentagon, they all started getting involved in this process, and we just heard about more and more letters going into the Stamp Committee, and just kind of created this groundswell by constantly keeping it in the foreground and asking people to write this letter week after week, throughout that six to eight month period in 2015.

[0:32:01]

Theo Mayer: Now that the U.S. Postal Service has issued a stamp, what do you think of it? What do you think of the experience?

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Rebekah Wilson: For me, I don't think I realized the importance or the sweat equity that I had in to getting a stamp until I found out that they were announcing the stamp, and I found out through Meredith Carr. She sent me an email. For me, I really burst into tears, because I couldn't believe it. To put so much effort into something, and to have it come to fruition, I was really taken aback, just in awe of what we could do. Since then, it's become real to me, imagining people carrying it around or purchasing it, or just seeing it on letters. That's important to me, to have the Postal Service say that World War I is important, I think it says something about a tide turning for people commemorating the centennial of World War I. It really gave me hope for the Commission, and it really gave me hope for the National Memorial in Washington, D.C.

[0:33:02]

Theo Mayer: Well, we've got a coin. Now we have a stamp, and we're going to have a memorial. Rebekah, you tell a wonderful story, and it's been great talking with you.

[0:33:11]

Rebekah Wilson: Thank you. Thanks for having me.

[0:33:13]

Theo Mayer: Rebekah Wilson was one of the original members of the fledgling World War I Centennial Commission staff. The museum live streamed the First Day of Issue dedication ceremony, and if you'd like to see it, we've put a link for in the podcast notes. This week in Updates From the States, there's an exciting event coming up in Michigan, the Great Lakes State. The Maquette, the scale model of the National World War I Memorial Sculpture, is shipping out from the D.C. Area and deploying to the state of Michigan for their World War I Centennial event, Over Here! The event is being held in the village of Grass Lakes, and hosted by the Michigan Military Heritage Museum. It's going to take place during the weekend of August 3rd through the 5th. It's a commemoration, it's a fundraiser, and anyone who's in the region, it's a chance to get a personal look at Sabin Howard's amazing sculpture that will form the centerpiece of the National Memorial. The World War I Memorial Maquette Showing is being sponsored by the American Legion, AMVETS, the Commander's Group, and the Order of the Purple Hearts of Michigan. Links to learn more about the event, how to attend, and to learn more about the sculpture that's sure to become an American memorial icon are in the links in the podcast notes. This week for our spotlight on the media, we're joined again by Andrew Capets, who describes himself as an insurance professional by day and history geek by night. Andrew was on the podcasts in October of 2017 in episode 41 to tell us about the 100 Cities, 100 Memorials project in Trafford, Pennsylvania, but Andrew is a busy guy, deeply immersed in the Centennial, so this week, we're focusing on another aspect of his activities, talking about his book, Good War, Great Men, which details the experience of the 313th Machine Gun Battalion during World War I. Andrew, thanks for joining us again.

[0:35:16]

Andrew Capets: Hi, Theo. Thanks for having me back. I jokingly use that title because it's my lighthearted way of saying I'm not an expert, but I have a passion for this history.

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Theo Mayer: You certainly do. How did you develop an interest in the 313th?

[0:35:31]

Andrew Capets: It goes back a few years. Actually, before the National Museum was built for the Marine Corps in D.C., I was at a fundraiser in Pittsburgh at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall, and I was standing next to my father, and we were looking into a display where they had this 1917 Browning machine gun, and my father said, Oh, that's the type of machine gun my father shot when he was in France. It was a story I had no knowledge of whatsoever. I said, "This is interesting. I have to understand what this is about," and that led me down the road to doing the research on this battalion.

[0:36:07]

Theo Mayer: That was the battalion your grandfather fought in.

[0:36:10]

Andrew Capets: Yes, correct.

[0:36:11]

Theo Mayer: Okay. A sneak preview on the book. Tell us a little bit about the 313th. What were they made up of, and how did they serve?

[0:36:18]

Andrew Capets: Yeah, so the 313th Machine Gun Battalion, they're part of the 80th Division, called the Blue Ridge Division, and they were draftees, primarily from Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Virginia. A large contingency of them came from the Erie County, Pennsylvania, area, and I had a quote from one of the officers in the battalion. When he was writing home to his parents, he said, "I have a bunch of draft from Erie, Pennsylvania, and 32 of the 172 can't speak English." He says, "My first sergeant gives his orders in English, and then in Polish." I thought that was a great quote that came out of this research.

[0:36:57]

Theo Mayer: What's the most interesting, and maybe the most challenging part that you encountered trying to write this book?

[0:37:04]

Andrew Capets: I guess first off, I didn't consider myself a writer, so I first was more of a researcher, and I took many years just to dig up stories. The one interesting thing was the great men that were in this battalion. Many of them went on to become very successful men. Unfortunately one of them probably could have been just as successful, but his life ended early on the Meuse-Argonne battlefield. I'm from the Pittsburgh area, and I came across this gentleman named Joseph Duff, and I found out that Joe Duff was actually the head football coach for the University of Pittsburgh, and was the head coach for 1913 and also 1914, but he was a graduate of Princeton, he was an All-American at Princeton. After coaching, Joe Duff went into the Officers Reserve Training, and unfortunately for him, he was not commissioned, apparently due to a vision problem, but he was able to convince his local draft board to draft him, and he ended up in this Machine Gun Battalion. He apparently impressed the officers in this battalion, and he was then sent off and commissioned with the 125th Infantry. 10 days after receiving his commission he was killed in the Meuse-Argonne. His brother James, back in Pennsylvania, who later served as the Pennsylvania Attorney General, and was actually the 34th Governor of Pennsylvania ... I can't help but think that Joe Duff himself would have been as successful as his brother had he survived.

[0:38:33]

Theo Mayer: That really is one of the great tragedies of war. The people that we lost and the potential that we lost, we'll never know.

[0:38:40]

Andrew Capets: Absolutely. Many of these officers, just being well educated, Ivy League officers in this particular battalion, went on to do just great things, and unfortunately, the men who did not survive, you wonder what they could have done. Sometimes I feel that my research into this book is trying to tell the story of the men who didn't survive, and being grateful that my grandfather did survive so that I could tell the history of these men, so that people would not forget their sacrifice.

[0:39:09]

Theo Mayer: Great closing to a wonderful interview. Thank you, Andrew.

[0:39:12]

Andrew Capets: Thank you.

[0:39:13]

Theo Mayer: Andrew Capets, insurance professional by day, history geek by night, lecturer at various times, and author of Good War, Great Men. Learn more about his book and activities by following the links in the podcast notes. Moving onto our 100 Cities, 100 Memorials segment about the \$200,000 matching grant challenge to rescue and focus on our local World War I memorials, this week, we're headed to Cape May, New Jersey. Here to tell us about the project are Kathleen C. Wyatt, the administrator and secretary for the Greater Cape May Historical Society, and Harry Bellangy, president and historian of the Society. Kathleen, Harry, welcome to the podcast.

[0:39:57]

Harry Bellangy: Thank you.

[0:39:58]

Kathleen Wyatt: Thank you.

[0:39:59]

Theo Mayer: Kathleen, how did you hear about the 100 Cities, 100 Memorials program?

[0:40:03]

Kathleen Wyatt: It was a simple request. Harry and I decided to request the city to pass a resolution to refresh the memorial, clean it up a bit, and was written off by a local newspaper, and the headlines read, "Woman Wants Memorial Refurbished," and you saw the article on the internet, and you contacted me by email, inviting us to join in the 100 Cities, 100 Memorials application, and we were one of the first 50 to be selected the following September.

[0:40:38]

Theo Mayer: I remember being really excited, because we were trying to figure out how do we connect with people that are doing things, and let them know about this program, and came across the article. I think our director of communications might have passed it on to me, so I just called you up, or at least I just sent you an email.

[0:40:56]

Kathleen Wyatt: Yes, you did, and I said, "Harry, should we try this? We're a small organization," and he said, "Why not?"

[0:41:02]

Harry Bellangy: We grabbed the camera, went over to the monument, which is in a great location in Cape May. People go by this monument daily. Haven't got a clue what they're looking at. We started researching it, and we found out that yeah, it is World War I, it's the only one in Cape May County, and we were astounded.

[0:41:19]

Kathleen Wyatt: It took about two months to research the history, and we found the early days of the Progressive League and the John McCray Post. They were the two early founders of the memorial for the city.

[0:41:35]

Theo Mayer: Very interesting. Now, Cape May itself is a very special location. Your history predates the pioneers, and you played into U.S. History all along. Can you give us a brief overview of the history of the location?

[0:41:49]

Harry Bellangy: Our museum is a Colonial house. It dates to about 1730. It was moved three times. It was built by a paymaster of the Revolutionary War, Memucan Hughes. He also rented it as a tavern, and 1878 comes along, and Cape May has a major fire. Acres of Cape May are destroyed by the fire. This house was not. It was saved. About 1975, the bulldozers are warming up, not just for the Colonial House, but for Cape May.

[0:42:19]

Theo Mayer: Uh-oh.

[0:42:20]

Harry Bellangy: Literally. People came along. They're known as the Cottagers, also known as the Summer People, which we sometimes say. They brought in a wonderful woman, name of Carolyn Pitts, and she is a architectural historian, I believe, for the Parks Service. Fell in love with Cape May. 1976 comes along. She writes a nomination to make Cape May in its entirety, which is the only city that is a national historic landmark. The Colonial House is saved by the Greater Cape May Historical Society.

[0:42:51]

Theo Mayer: The city itself is actually a preservation at this point, isn't it?

[0:42:54]

Harry Bellangy: The city is a landmark in its entirety.

[0:42:57]

Theo Mayer: That's great. What was the region's role during World War I?

[0:43:02]

Harry Bellangy: We had Camp Wissahickon here, a Navy base, a Navy training center. We have the Garden State Parkway, which ends just about at Cape May, and Camp Wissahickon was located in that area. About 1917, the city assumed the appearance of a cantonment.

[0:43:18]

Kathleen Wyatt: Cantonment.

[0:43:19]

Harry Bellangy: This was the former Henry Ford's farm, and that was selected for Camp Wissahickon. It was made ready for Naval training and reserves, along with new avigators, including airships. Hangars, barracks, and a base hospital were rushed to completion. The southern point was selected by the Navy because of our strategic location on the Delaware Bay and River and the ocean. Shipping channels, or course, go up the Delaware to Pennsylvania, so we went from a small city to this bustling, war-oriented, in many ways, community.

[0:43:51]

Kathleen Wyatt: We did that twice.

[0:43:52]

Harry Bellangy: We did it in World War I, we did it in World War II.

[0:43:54]

Kathleen Wyatt: Yes.

[0:43:55]

Theo Mayer: Here we get to the Centennial, and the Armistice, and I was looking back through your records and so forth. You have some rededication plans for 11/11, don't you?

[0:44:05]

Harry Bellangy: We do.

[0:44:06]

Kathleen Wyatt: We have agreed with the city to have a fairly decent sized memorial service on 11/11, and that is on Sunday. We expect to have a number of reenactors who will, if we find them, and they fit into the costumes, will be here, as a nurse or as a doughboy. We are inviting speakers from the state and from the local area, and folks who actually participated with us on a number of projects that made this a reality for us, and it is just a thrilling event, and we're also planning to have a number of suffragettes to march with us, because in the next two years, we're going to be celebrating the suffragettes, women getting the vote.

[0:44:48]

Harry Bellangy: That's going to be part of this rededication also. Get them out there with those signs.

[0:44:53]

Kathleen Wyatt: Yes.

[0:44:54]

Theo Mayer: Thank you so much. Thanks for coming on.

[0:44:56]

Kathleen Wyatt: Thank you, Theo.

[0:44:57]

Harry Bellangy: Thank you.

[0:44:58]

Theo Mayer: Kathleen C. Wyatt and Harry Bellangy are from the Greater Cape May Historical Society. Learn more about the 100 Cities, 100 Memorials Program by following the link in the podcast notes. Following our theme of ambulance this week, the team suggested that we combine Speaking World War I, which explores the words and phrases from the war, and World War I War Tech, because they both line up with the theme, so why not? Here we go. Ambulance originally comes from the Latin word *ambulare*, which simply means, "To walk or move." The word was used in a medical military context from very early on. For example, in the 1400s, Spain's Queen Isabella organized support for the wounded in battle. According to historian John S. Haller, the Spaniards used transport wagons and field hospitals known as *ambulancias*. As we head into the 1800s, a French military surgeon named Dominique Jean Larrey pioneered modern battlefield medical practices and brought the word into the French military lexicon. Not only did he invent and coin the term triage, but he also organized ambulance *volantes*, or flying ambulances, which were a system of men, supplies, and horse-drawn carriages designed to move wounded soldiers from the battlefield as fast as possible. Meanwhile, for English speakers, the word ambulance came to mean just the vehicle part, a development that Haller calls a corruption of the word. As the British and the Americans corrupted the word ambulance, the subject referred to also underwent an evolutionary leap. The first motorized ambulances debuted in Chicago in 1899, signaling the end of the horse-drawn version. On the battlefield, while there are some disadvantages and very rough terrain, the motorized ambulances proved to be faster and easier to support

than a horse. Early on in World War I, ambulances were often regular cars retrofitted to carry combat wounded. Later, military and volunteer ambulance services such as the Red Cross, the American Field Service, and the Norton-Harjes Ambulance Service operated especially designed ambulances, produced by some of the world's foremost automotive manufacturers. According to the U.S. Army's official history of the Ambulance Service in World War I, Ford, Fiat, Peugeot, and General Motors Company ambulances were severely tested under combat conditions that demonstrated their advantages in speed and patient comfort. While Peugeot and Fiat ambulances could carry more men, their weight and complexity became a problem the closer one got to the Front. When you were near the fighting, the road conditions were poor, and the Model-T based Ford ambulances proved to be light, maneuverable, and amazingly robust, according to Professor Chris McDonald. It's Yankee ingenuity at work. They served the American Field Service, and later the U.S. Army Ambulance Service, extremely well in adverse conditions. In a letter from a young driver, Kent Hagler, found in a book by Professor McDonald, he describes, "The half-obliterated roads covered by all manners of debris that drivers had to navigate. The ambulance motors sometimes choked on the poisonous fog of gas, forcing the drivers to move their wounded to the nearest shelter and wait for the day." On a particular mission, Hagler and his unit were quite literally drive to exhaustion, rescuing the wounded in the midst of poisonous gas and relentless artillery fire for days on end. At the end of the letter, Hagler noted that his car was practically unharmed, and after it had some minor repairs and had been washed of all the blood, it was as good as new, remarking proudly that he carried more wounded than any other car by a considerable margin. Ambulance drivers like Hagler ferried a staggering number of soldiers on the French and the Italian fronts. The American Field Service estimates that their volunteers drove more than a half a million wounded men. The work that these men and women did not only avoided the permanent loss of a soldier's service but maintained the morale of those who remained to fight. A wound in combat, even a serious one, was no longer an automatic death sentence, and injured soldiers survived at a much greater rate than in past conflicts. World War I is frequently, tragically, a story of unprecedented slaughter, but the story of the ambulance is quite the opposite. It's a story of a recent innovation, the automobile, turned to save lives. The ambulance, an interesting word, an interesting war tech, and an interesting topic. We have links for you in the podcast notes, and pictures for you on our Twitter feed, @TheWW1podcast. This week in Articles and Posts, where we highlight the stories you'll find in our weekly newsletter, The Dispatch. Headline. "Washington Memorial Chapel at Valley Forge Becomes Bells of Peace Partner." On November 11th, 2018, at 11:00 A.M. Local, everyone is invited to toll the bells in their community, to commemorate the Centennial of the Armistice. Bells of Peace is our initiative to promote this remembrance, and signing up last week was the Washington Memorial Chapel at Valley Forge, who will proudly toll their National Patriots Bell Tower, featuring 58 bronze bells weighing in at 26 tons. We thank them for signing up. Headline. "'Heroes or Corpses?' Captain Truman and World War I" is a New Exhibit at the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library. Read more about the extraordinary exhibit at the Truman Presidential Library. "'Heroes or Corpses?' Captain Truman in World War I," which tells the captivating story of Truman's service in the Great War, through never before exhibited photographs, personal letters, and more than 40 artifacts from Truman's personal World War I collection. Headline. "Centennial of the Sinking of the USS San Diego off Long Island, New York." This week marks the Centennial of the sinking of the USS San Diego, off the coast of Long Island. Mysteries surround the sinking to this very day. Read the story created by the staff of the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command about the history of the San Diego, the tragedy of her sinking, and how her wreck off Long Island remains a dangerous place to visit for divers 100 years later. Headline. WWWrite Blog, "F. Scott Fitzgerald and World War I: The 'Crack Up' Essays." This week on the WWWrite Blog, former Army infantryman in Afghanistan and writer Colin D. Halloran discusses Fitzgerald's painful experience by looking at the lesser known "Crack Up" personal essays, published in Esquire in 1936. Halloran, who explored PTSD and post-traumatic growth in his works, Shortly Thereafter and Icarian Flux, walks us through Fitzgerald's post-World War I emotional journey. Headline. This week's Featured Story of Service is Charles Wesley Darrow. Read the story of Charles Wesley Darrow, submitted to our Stories of Service page by historian Tracy Tomaselli. Charles Wesley Darrow was born in 1898 in Wallingford, Connecticut. He joined the National Guard in 1916 in New Haven, Connecticut, at the age of 17, and served patrolling the Mexican border against raids before serving in France in World War I. Finally, our selection from our official World War I Centennial merchandise shop. Our featured item this week is our custom key tag, inspired by an original World War I poster. This key tag features the dramatic image of a bayonet advance on the enemy, with a U.S. Flag in the upper corner. The link to our merchandise shop and all the articles we've highlighted here are available in our weekly Dispatch newsletter. Subscribe at ww1cc.org/subscribe. You can also send us a tweet at TheWW1podcast, and ask us to send you the link. That brings us to The Buzz, the Centennial of World War I this week in social media with Katherine Akey. Katherine, what did you pick this week?

[0:53:42]

Katherine Akey: Hi, Theo. I picked two stories in particular this week. The first is an article coming from the website Verdun 1916. The article tells the story of the construction of American cemeteries and the repatriation of American soldiers' bodies after the First World War. The article includes a number of videos showing the construction of American cemeteries across Europe, which was a big debate that formed in America at the time, as in Britain, as to what to do with soldiers who fell so far away from home. One point of view was to repatriate the bodies. The other was to leave them in Europe, but then rebury them in designated cemeteries. Teddy Roosevelt, who lost a son, Quentin, in the war, very publicly supported the latter point of view, saying, "We feel that where the tree falls, there let

it lie." Roosevelt's endorsement gave a powerful boost to the non-repatriation effort. Read the article and learn about the establishment of American cemeteries after the war by following the link in the podcast notes. Last for the week, the American Experience from PBS shared a great short video, including clips from their documentary, The Great War. The video focuses on American flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker, who died this week on July 23rd back in 1973.

[0:55:03]

Speaker 11: Eddie Rickenbacker was America's leading ace in the Great War. He shot down more enemy aircraft than any other. He was arguably the most famous American of the war. Rickenbacker was very much a working class hero. He grew up poor. His father died when he was young. He had to quit school to raise the family, and he became a race car driver. He actually raced in the Indy 500 four times. By the time Rickenbacker and the Americans joined the war, the air war had changed. What you're seeing, really, is the emergence of the Air Force.

[0:55:40]

Katherine Akey: Watch the whole video at the link in the notes, and that's it this week in The Buzz.

[0:55:49]

Theo Mayer: That's episode number 82 of World War I Centennial news. Thank you for listening. We want to thank our guests, Nicole Milano, head archivist and historical publications editor at the American Field Service Intercultural Programs, Mike Shuster, curator for the Great War Project blog, Dr. Edward Lengel, military historian and author, Rebekah Wilson, former director of operations for the World War I Centennial Commission, Andrew Capets, author of the book Good War, Great Men, Kathleen C. Wyatt and Harry Bellangy, from the 100 Cities, 100 Memorials Project in Cape May, New Jersey, Katherine Akey, World War I photography specialist, and line producer for the podcast. Many thanks to Mac Nelsen, our wonderful sound editor, who makes us all sound lucid and clear-minded, and a special shout out to World War I Centennial Commission intern JL Michaud, who really stepped it up this week with some great research on our topic, ambulance. I'm Theo Mayer, your host. The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission was created by Congress to honor, commemorate, and educate about World War I. Our programs are to inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War I, and that includes this podcast. We're bringing the lessons of 100 years ago to today's educators and their classrooms. We're helping to restore World War I memorials in communities of all sizes across the country, and of course, we're building America's National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C. We want to thank the Commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, as well as the Starr Foundation, for their support. The podcast, and a full transcript of the show, can be found on our website at ww1cc.org/cn. You'll find World War I Centennial news in all the places you get your podcast, and even using your smart speaker by saying, "Play WW1 Centennial News Podcast." The podcast Twitter handle is @TheWW1podcast. The Commission's Twitter and Instagram handles are both @WW1CC, and we're on Facebook at WW1 Centennial. Thank you for joining us, and don't forget to share the stories that you're hearing here today about the war that changed the world.

[0:58:11]

Speaker 12: (singing)

[0:58:30]

Theo Mayer: So long.

[0:58:31]