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7 speakers (Theo Mayer, Mike Shuster, Edward Lengel, Ted Lemen, Carolyn Timbie, James Arrington, Katherine Akey)

[0:00:08]

Theo Mayer: Welcome to World War I Centennial News Episode Number 95. It's about World War I then. What was happening a 100 years ago? And it's about World War I now. News and updates about the centennial and the commemoration. In this episode, a 100 years ago this week, although there are great hopes for peace, winter looms on the fighting front. And the generals prepare to fight for the coming year. Mike Schuster takes a look at the challenges for the advancing allied forces on the ground. Although the most known American general of World War I is Pershing, Doctor Edward Lengel profiles another very different general, who was essential to our victory in Europe. His name was Hunter Liggett. We'll head to Illinois to hear about a commemorative event from the Monticello Railway Museum. Then we'll be joined by Carolyn Timbie, the granddaughter of one of the most interesting Hello Girls, Grace Banker. Next, James Arrington, a music curator from the UK introduces us to his history of recorded music project. And the buzz, where Catherine Akey highlights some of the World War I centennial posts and stories from social media. All this week on World War I Centennial News, which 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 technician of the Commission, and your host. Welcome to the show. (music) After four years of arguably the most massive, brutal, and devastating human conflict in history till then, cessation is simply not an easy idea. So with that as a setup, we're gonna jump into our centennial time machine and go back 100 years to late October 1918. As the world teeters between peace and continued conflict. We're back in late October 1918. By now, the people of the Allied nations are allowing themselves hope that the war may be nearly over. King George the Fifth of Great Britain tells visitors on October 29th that, quote, "Victory is within our reach. And we are all agreed that it must be a complete victory." But when will this end be achieved? Immediately, now, later, next year? Well reports from Europe indicate that the allies continue to advance deeper into Belgium, driving the Kaiser's forces from the occupied lands. However, belligerence and stoic imperial posturing is up against deep seeded hatred and resentment. On the one hand, the Kaiser is imperiously willing to grant the Allies' cessation of fighting on his terms. While a deep seething hatred from many French, English, and Belgians wants to see the German Empire crushed to rubble. In the midst of all this stands Woodrow Wilson. Germany's chosen peacemaker, and criticized from all sides. And armistice may indeed not be possible at this time. From the pages of the New York Times: "Dateline. October 23, 1918. Headline. 'Hold out,' Prince Max asks. Tells Germans to prepare to resist a piece of violence." The story quotes Prince Maximilian, the imperial German chancellor, in a dispatch received from Berlin. Quote: "President Wilson's reply to the latest German note may perhaps bring definite certainty as to the results of the negotiations. Till then, we must prepare to resist a piece of violence. A government which acted otherwise would be left to the mercy of the fighting and the working people. It would be swept away by public opinion." Okay, sitting here in my centennial time machine a century later, I'm having a hard time tracking this posturing. But I think what the empirical crown prince is sort of double talking about is this. That they're not about to surrender to force because you know, that would be like losing. I suppose it would! Wilson's response to the Germans, written on October 23rd, and released to the American public the following day seems unequivocal. "Dateline, October 24, 1918. Headline: Wilson has but one word for Germany. Surrender." Meanwhile, and probably frustratingly, the U.S. Congress is not cleanly lined up behind Wilson. There are reports that some senators worry that continued fighting will produce social and political chaos in Germany. While others express furor that Wilson is negotiating at all, and demand nothing less than an outright policy of unconditional surrender. Now I think it's worthwhile remembering, just for a moment, that President Woodrow Wilson actually has a PhD in political science. He's literally the only president in our nation's history who's earned a PhD. He was the President of Princeton University for heaven's sakes. Now what I'm saying is that he's far from a dummy, and he's not coming from emotion. He knows his craft as a leader. At this very moment, Wilson decides not to call for unconditional surrender. But at the same time, he unambiguously closes the door to the German posturing. And supported by his allies, decides that the discussion with Germany will be carried on, but by his military on the battlefield. Elsewhere though, the end is really close. On October 25th, 1918, Austria, Hungary announces basically that they're ready for a speedy and unconditional submission. Now with the Germans silent for now, and a midterm election looming just like it is right now in 2018, Wilson makes what many believe to be a political miscalculation. Dateline, October 26th, 1918. Headline: Wilson asks for a democratic congress. Declares crisis is such that he must have an undivided support. And the story reads: "President Wilson today issued a formal appeal to the nation to elect a democratic congress in the election to be held on November fourth. Provided that the people approve his leadership and wish him to continue to be their spokesman in the affairs at home and abroad." Now although the president claims that this unity at home will upset the allies and make obtaining of peace more difficult, his proclamation cause a quote: "storm in the capitol." Unquote. And in the tried and true American tradition, political gaming continues as usual, even with a war on. Immediately after the President's proclamation, Democratic leaders issue dire warnings that a republican controlled Senate might very well block the ratification of any peace deal. And might even hinder post-war reconstruction. A lot

of Republicans get pretty steamed up by this. And the result is that the Republicans win a majority in both the House and the Senate for the first time in a decade. The elections are a major defeat for the progressives and Wilson's foreign policy agenda. And they foreshadow the Republican victory in the 1920 election, when the Republicans run against the expanded wartime government and the 14 points, and especially against Wilson's proposal for a League of Nations. The Republican victory leaves them in control of both the House and the Senate until 1930. All this when an Armistice needs to be hammered out. A 100 years ago this month in the war that changed the world. Mike Schuster, former NPR correspondent and curator for the Great War Project blog, picks up the theme of the show this week. There's a lot of arm wrestling about the Armistice, as the military commanders prepare for a harsh winter ahead, and a hard offensive in the spring of 1919.

[0:09:03]

Mike Shuster: That's right, Theo, so the headline reads, "Food shortages, clogged roads, hinder allied advance. Both sides plan to fight in 1919. German's flail back, their defenses broken. Allies need millions more soldiers from the United States." And this is special to the Great War Project. France and the United States are making plans for shipping enough American soldiers' ammunitions across the Atlantic for a campaign to defeat Germany, but not until the end of 1919 or in early 1920. So reports the story in Martin Gilbert. They agree to an accelerated shipping plan throughout the winter of 1918. That way by the following summer, they would have enough supplies for a major offensive. The agreement between France and the United States held out the hope of a considerable military advance in the early months of 1919. The troops under the American commander, General John Jay Pershing, struggled to regain the initiative lost just days before on the Mews River. Pershing too is planning what is needed for a successful and decisive offensive on the western front in 1919. According to historian Gilbert, the number of men involved, most of whom would be transported across the Atlantic in British ships was 3,360,000. Two million more than he had already. Meanwhile in mid October of 1918, the political and military leaders of Germany are studying the peace note issued by the American President, Woodrow Wilson. Wilson wants Germany to evacuate key occupied territory, including all of Belgium and the disputed territory of [inaudible] . Germany and Austria say no. This would make an end of our capacity for defense. And thus put ourselves at the enemy's mercy. When October 8th, Wilson rejects the German response to his peace offering. He in turn counters that a first condition of an Armistice was the evacuation of all occupied territories. The war would not end until there were no German troops on Belgian or French soil, and no German or Austrian troops in Serbia. On October 8th, a century ago, the British launch a new offensive on a 20 mile front line. They quickly take 10,000 prisoners and 150 guns. In 24 hours, Germany's key defense, the Hindenburg line, is finally overrun in its entirety. Germany's defenses are collapsing, reports the story in Gilbert. Battlefields from which the British had been driven in 1914 and 1915, and again earlier in 1918, were entered and crossed almost without pause. Every nation in the allied line was moving forward. On October 10th, the American First army under Pershing finally succeeded in driving the Germans out of the Argon Forest. But there was not satisfaction for the Americans that they had hoped. Ammunition, food, and other essential provisions were still being held up by the congestion on the roads. The shortage of at least a 100,000 horses was another serious obstacle. But Pershing and his first army fight on. They are not going to dissolve themselves or accept that they have been beaten by the problems of supply. Meanwhile, on October 11th, German forces began a systematic patrol from the western front. But they are not giving up the fight. Not just yet. And that's the news from the Great War Project. These days, a century ago in the Great War.

[0:12:30]

Theo Mayer: Mike Schuster is the curator for the Great War Project Blog. The link to his post is in the podcast notes. For our segment, America Emerges, military stories of World War I. Doctor Edward Langel introduces us to another key American figure in this war. Another general, who I personally didn't know very much about. But who played a crucial role in getting our troops moving in the Meuse-Argonne.

[0:12:57]

Edward Lengel: The United States fielded a mixed bag of general officers in World War I. Some were mediocrities. Others sought glory above all. Many were quietly competent, but never stood out above their fellows. Pershing possessed many merits, but showed flaws as a battlefield commander. The AEF's best general was perhaps also the most understated. A century ago, General Hunter Liggett helped turn the tide of the American effort in the Meuse-Argonne. Hunter Liggett was born in the Pennsylvania German industrial town of Reading, Pennsylvania in 1857. He graduated from West point in 1879, and as a brief combat service in a Spanish-American war in the Philippines. He also served as president of the Army War College. Promoted to brigadier general in 1913, and to major general in 1917, Liggett commanded the U.S. Army's first corp during the summer of 1918. Liggett was the quintessential manager. Intelligent, level headed, and confident, he balanced strong opinions and a willingness to state them openly with a magnificent sense of tact. Unlike many other American generals, he possessed an easy self confidence that precluded the desire which was typically born of an inexperienced military man's insecurity to denigrate his French allies. We found the French good comrades and good soldiers, remembered Liggett, whose corpulent physique betrayed his fondness for good food. He later described his technique for forging a strong bond with French General Jean [inaudible] , a somewhat vain and priggish man, much hated by other American commanders. "We gave every

spare moment to getting better acquainted," he recalled. "You can't know too well the man you are fighting beside. I had with me a cook I was willing to compare with the best cordon bleu chef of France. A Greek candy merchant from Seattle, who had been cook of the headquarters company of the 41st division. I entertained [inaudible] and his corp commanders and staffs as often as possible to that end. My headquarters was a pleasant chateau, the country home of a Paris businessman. And I permitted a hospitality not always practical in a war. Thus, the diplomatic benefits of a little good living." Another French general told Liggett that he preferred to serve under American command, that his own corp commanders were too inclined to annoy him with petty details. "The French," Liggett decided, "are a suave race." Liggett was not a brilliant man or a tactical wizard, but he'd been in the military since he was a teenager, and he understood his craft. Most important, he kept his head in a crisis, where other men, including good soldiers, degenerated into living wrecks under the constant pressures of command. Liggett sailed calmly forward. He kept regular schedules, and slept well as opportunity permitted. When problems seemed insoluble, as the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in the autumn of 1918, he often sat down to play solitaire. It helped him think. Every time he rose from the card table, he did so in a more peaceful and fertile frame of mind. When the 77th Metropolitan Division's Loss Battalion became cut off in the Argonne Forest in October 1918, Liggett carefully scanned his maps, stopped to play solitaire, and then returned to study his maps again. Recognizing an opportunity created by the successful advance of the First Division towards Exermont, east of the Argonne, Liggett's thoughts clicked into place. The 28th bloody bucket division, Pennsylvania National Guard, was in the vicinity, and although it had taken terrible casualties, it was still full of fight. The 82nd All American division, meanwhile, I had just entered into the lines. It was a green, all draftee national army division. But for whatever reason, Liggett thought he could trust it, alongside the experienced Pennsylvanians, to get the job done. Attacking side by side into the Argonne Forest's eastern flank, the 28th and 82 divisions would drive the Germans back and liberate the lost battalion. It was as if Liggett knew that Corporal Alvin C. York, whose exploits on October 8th would climax the all-American successful attack, would step forward at this critical time. Liggett's maneuver worked, and saved the lost battalion. Despite Liggett's success in seizing the Argonne Forest and the hard won capture of the German held Heights of Cunel and Romagne by the 32nd Red Arrow and 42nd Rainbow divisions. The American offensive and the Meuse-Argonne had bogged down by mid-October. The troops had taken brutal casualties, approaching 26,000 killed and a 100,000 other casualties. And desertion was on the rise. The dough boys were willing, but exhausted. Worse, General Pershing was nearing a nervous breakdown. One officer witnessed blackjack sitting in his staff car, sobbing and calling for his wife, who had died three years earlier in a tragic fire. Pershing now performed the most courageous and self-effacing act of his distinguished military career. He decided it was time for a change. Relinquishing his battlefield command, while remaining an overall command of the AEF, Pershing handed over control of the First Army to General Hunter Liggett. He could not have made a better choice. During the second half of October 1918, Liggett rested and reorganized First Army, essentially calling a halt to the offensive. Working to supply the troops, bring up adequate support weapons, including heavy artillery tanks and aircraft, Liggett focused on rebuilding morale among officers and men. And preparing for a renewal of the assault on November 1st. This one would end the war. (music)

[0:18:47]

Theo Mayer: Dr. Edward Langel is an American military historian, and our segment host for America Emerges. Military stories from World War I. We put a link in the podcast notes to Ed's post, and his author's website. It's time to fast forward into the present, with World War I Centennial News Now. (music) This part of the podcast focuses on now, and how the centennial of World War I, and the upcoming centennial of the Armistice are being commemorated. This week in Commission news, as we count down to the Armistice, we wanted to announce that we'll be streaming a number of events live between November 8th and November 12th. You'll find the streams and links to other places where you can see the live streams on our website at ww1cc.org. Here are some examples of what you'll be able to tune into. On Thursday, November 8th, at 11 AM eastern, The Nation's served, a Reclaimed Tribute to the States and territories, that includes a musical performance by Pershing's own brass quintet. At 2 pm eastern, women in war time. A tribute to the women of World War I. This event honors the women who supported the war effort and their taking on traditional male roles that paved the way for modern women rights. And the future service of women in the U.S. Military. It will include noted veterans and active duty women of various services, including Admiral Michelle Howard, U.S. Navy Retired, and Brigadier General Wilma Vaught, U.S. Air Force Retired. At 4 PM eastern, the heroic legacy. African Americans and Latinos of World War I. The event includes reenactments and theatrical performance by the Ebenito Boys, remarks by Gerald York, grandson of Sergeant Alvin York, one of the most decorated United States Army soldiers of World War I. And a wonderful performance by the 369th Experience band. A recreation of the 369th regimental band led by James Reese Europe. These African American and Puerto Rican musicians are credited with bringing jazz to Europe. And that's just on Thursday! We have great events planned. It'll be streamed live every day. Events that include Purple Hearts Reunited, Native Americans, The Sacred Service from the National Cathedral, and a lot more. The full schedule is at ww1cc.org, which is our homepage, with links to all the Armistice activities. Indeed, there are so many incredible events being planned around the country and actually around the world, leading up to and commemorating the centennial of the Armistice, that we could only highlight some random few selections to give you an idea of the breadth and the interesting stuff that's in store. But this is important. Everyone who's holding a centennial World War I related event is encouraged to put them into the U.S. National World War I events register, so that your commemoration is preserved in the national archive of the centennial events for posterity. So if you're

holding an event, large or small, please go to ww1cc.org/events. Click on the big red button and submit your event to the register. Here's some examples for you. A film, *Lost Voice of the Great War: Summit County in the First World War*, focuses not only on the men and women of Akron, Ohio, who served in the conflict, but how the city's community was affected and forever changed by the war's far reaching hand. Local stories in the film include that of co-founder of the Goodyear Tire Rubber Company, an African-American officer awarded the *croix de guerre*, and a woman who quit her job as a reporter to serve in the YWCA in France. The free premiere screening on Tuesday, October 30th, is at 7 PM in the main auditorium of the Akron Summit County Public Library in Akron, Ohio. It's followed by a panel with the creators. The film will also air on Akron's local PBS affiliate. Here's another interesting event that just happened in Monticello, Illinois. The Monticello Railway Museum commemorated the 100th anniversary of Monticello and Piatt County's first casualty from World War I. The October 20, 2018 event was with the Private Roy W. Hamm tribute train, and it marks the military museum's second Monticello encampment. Joining us to tell us more about the event and the story of Private Roy Hamm is Ted Lehman, chair of the Private Roy W. Hamm tribute train, and the advertising coordinator of the Monticello Railway museum. Ted, welcome to the podcast.

[0:23:56]

Ted Lemen: Well thank you, Theo, it's good to be here.

[0:23:58]

Theo Mayer: So Ted, tell us a bit more about the Railway Museum and its history. Who's behind it? What's your mission?

[0:24:05]

Ted Lemen: Years ago the Burlington Railroad ran steam excursions about once a month long after they dieselized their system. Just so that people could enjoy the sights now and sound of a steam locomotive, much of which had been retired by that time. When the railroad got a new president, they decided to stop these Saturday and Sunday trips. They were in the way, and they wanted to save money. So we started a campaign to fight the railroad. And even though we lost, and the excursions were stopped, we wound up with 250 members, and built our own railroad in Monticello, Illinois.

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Theo Mayer: That's fascinating! I just need to explore a little bit more about that. How did that get started?

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Ted Lemen: Well, three of us rode one of the last excursions that the Burlington Railroad was going to run. It was St. Louis to Hannibal in February of 1966. Rather than take protest signs and try to get people angry, we just walked car to car and signed up 110 people that day, at 50 cents apiece, who claimed they'd write the railroad. They'd write their newspaper, their congressman, their senator, to try to fight the railroad's ending these very well loved steam excursions. So we lost, but with all these members, we decided, after we were invited to Monticello by a local historical group, to examine building our new railroad on some abandoned right away at the Illinois terminal electric railroad, which ran all over the state at one time, but had abandoned their right away through Monticello about 1956.

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Theo Mayer: Ted, one of the things that struck us when we heard about your event, that it's so rare that anyone sent soldiers' bodies back during World War I. So who was private Hamm, and how did he die in battle, and how did his body come to be returned home?

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Ted Lemen: He was a young fellow. He was 20 years old when he was killed on September 29th of 1918 in France. Was apparently hit by an artillery shell. But his parents did request his body be shipped home. It was disinterred in France. It arrived home in August of 1921 on the Illinois Central Railroad tracks that our museum bought in 1987.

[0:26:19]

Theo Mayer: That makes sense then. Of course '21 is when they brought home the tomb of the unknown as well. How was the event? What was the guest experience?

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Ted Lemen: we had almost 300 people ride our train that day, which is well above our normal weekend when we run our 1907 steam locomotive. We had sort of a perfect storm. The family kept the shipping container for about 30 years and gave it to the historical society. And when we bought the tracks in 1987, they said, "This shipping container came in on the tracks that you now own, so it's yours." And they put a picture on top of it depicting the 1921 arrival of Private Roy W. Hamm's remains. We had a perfect storm because we had an engine, we had the railroad tracks, we had the shipping container, and we had a good association with the Illinois State Military Museum in Springfield, who

provided about 20 dough boys to recreate the exact picture on the depot platform in Monticello of what occurred in 1921. We decided to use 1918 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his death, rather than wait until 1921 when most of the commemorations of World War I will be over.

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Theo Mayer: That's a great thought. Bringing the events of a 100 years ago to life in communities, and to remind the communities of their heritage is a big part of what the Commission's supporting and encouraging. And you've certainly done that. What advice would you give other local heritage museums in supporting programs like that?

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Ted Lemen: We would not have done any of this if we didn't have an association with the museum in Springfield to get dough boys and of course next year do something for World War II. But having this little town of Monticello, it's less than 5,000 people. But at one time it was served by three different railroads. You could get out of town in almost any direction and get to either coast or New York or Florida or any place you wanted by taking a train from Monticello. So we're steeped in railroad heritage. And people think of the railroad as very important.

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Theo Mayer: Well Ted, thank you so much for coming in and telling us the story. You're doing great work, and it sounds like it was a wonderful event.

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Ted Lemen: Well, thanks very much for having us.

[0:28:35]

Theo Mayer: Learn more about the Monticello Railway Museum and their commemorative events at the links in the podcast notes. For those of you who don't know the story, the Hello Girls were the telephone operators from World War I. Recruited and signed up by the U.S. Army, sent to France to serve in harm's way, and on returning to the U.S., we're told that they weren't actually in the army, but only civilian contractors, because the Army didn't have women in it. And oh, by the way. That means that we're not giving you any benefits. They fought for 60 years to get their benefits, and finally did. During the centennial period, a book about them, from author Doctor Elizabeth Cobbs began to get noticed. Which then inspired a recently multi award winning documentary, and also a bipartisan congressional bill to officially recognize the Hello Girls. It's one of those wonderful stories that's now firmly set as an important part of the cultural lore about World War I and women's rights. Now with that as a background, I want to introduce you to a very special guest. Caroline Timbie is the granddaughter of the de facto leader and chief operator of the Hello Girls, Grace Banker. Caroline started to send us photos about her journey through France following her grandmother's footsteps. When she came back we asked her to join us on the show. Caroline, welcome to the podcast.

[0:30:01]

Carolyn Timbie: Thank you, Theo! Good to be here here.

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Theo Mayer: So Caroline, how much of your grandmother's story and service did you know about as you were growing up?

[0:30:09]

Carolyn Timbie: That's a great question. I always knew about my grandmother as a child. Probably in the mid 70s, and article came out about the Hello Girls, and my grandmother, Grace Banker. And it as an article that she had actually written years before. She had passed away in 1960, so she couldn't possibly have submitted it 16 years later. She actually sent this writing that she did to Merle Egen, one of the Hello Girls, who actually saw the 60 year fight to get their veterans status. So I always knew about her. I knew she was important. Under our basement stairs we had a turnkey in a closet with mothballs. We had her uniform. And it was one of those things. I just knew it was there, but not until two years ago, Elizabeth Cobb wrote her book on the Hello Girls, and suddenly I'm aware we have all these things that we just really didn't know what a treasure trove of items we had. And did not know the importance and significance of my grandmother. And I'm speaking for myself. My mother, of course, knew all about her mother growing up. But when I saw the book and read it, I was just blown away to hear all the very important things my grandmother had done. And I did want to just add that she went to Barnard College. She majored in history and French, and then after she graduated, she went to AT&T and worked in their long lines division, a long distance operator. And she was an instructor. And then for like a couple years she was there, and she saw the notice in the paper that they were looking for women, bilingual telephone operators. So that was something I knew of, but as I said, I didn't realize what a huge important role she played. And she actually was the chief operator of the first telephone unit in the signal corp that sailed over to France. So she played a very important role of being a pioneer along with the group of women that she oversaw.

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Theo Mayer: Well Caroline, you recently traveled to France to visit some of the places where your grandmother was stationed during the war. Tell us about that.

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Carolyn Timbie: That was an amazing experience. I went through the World War I museum, which sponsored it. So what I did was my grandmother has a diary. And that actually was a big part of this too, because we sent that to Elizabeth Cobb, so she could look at that as part of here book. I went through the diary, and I looked at all the places she served. So we made a point of going and looking at the places. For instance, the first place she was stationed was in [foreign lanugage] , and it was general Army headquarters, so she was near where General Pershing was. She lived in a stone house there, and the women were taken care of by the wives at UCA. They were set up in their village. And they would walk two miles each way to get to their work. So she did see general Pershing from time to time, and he did inspections. So we were at [foreign language] , and then we went on and traveled to Linge and [foreign language] , which was where they served. And they were near the front lines, where they worked very intensely. And it was quite an honor, these women working near to the front lines. And they actually handled the telephones that were known as the battle line. My grandmother would say, "I only had two hours of sleep in the last 48 hours." They worked very hard. So we went to that town, and I have to say, there was not much in the town. Not many stores. Old, old stone houses. The last place that was that most interesting is we went to the town of [foreign language] . And that's where they were stationed for the Meuse-Argonne battle. And a total of six women went there. They lived in these very old, leaky barracks. And the conditions were just not so great, but she talked about the thrill of being there and working with the officers, working close with the women. And they had such intense, hard work. When we were in the town, we didn't get to see the barracks, but we could tell where they would have been located. We had a lovely reception there. So when we arrived, the mayor of the town was notified that we were going to be there. So they have a nice museum in the First Army headquarters, and they had a whole display with my grandmother Grace Banker, set up, along with the other women. And it was a thrill to be there. And just be in the same location as my grandmother was just an amazing honor.

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Theo Mayer: Now of all the things that you learned as you pursued the story, what would you say stuck with you the most? Or affected you the most, as a person and as a woman?

[0:35:13]

Carolyn Timbie: I'm just so immensely proud of her. She was this amazing woman who had the unique ability to be funny. She was kind, she was well respected by everybody. She did get awarded the Distinguished Service medal. And that was in May of 1919.

[0:35:32]

Theo Mayer: Okay, I want to ask. Is there a comment that you think Grace would leave us with as we close the interview?

[0:35:38]

Carolyn Timbie: The first thing she would say is, "Oh really? Not all this fuss on me!" She was an amazing woman, but did not want to be in the limelight. And that's really what it came down to. She was intensely thrilled to be a part of working with all these officers with the women. And be part of the greater whole.

[0:35:58]

Theo Mayer: Caroline Timbie is the granddaughter of Hello Girl Grace Banker. Learn more about her grandmother and the other Hello Girls from the links in the podcast notes. In our historian's corner this week, we're joined by a very passionate public historian, James Arrington. James in the driving force behind a project called Centuries of Sound, where he's gathering the music for every year of recorded sound, and curating an audio mix for every one of those years. His project started with 1860, and his goal is to produce a mix tape for every year of recorded sound. Now the scope of his project includes not only music, but also spoken word and other sounds. James has published up to 1907, but is joining us today to give us a preview and a taste of the music during the World War I era. From 1914 to 1919. Welcome, James.

[0:36:56]

James Arrington: Thank you.

[0:36:57]

Theo Mayer: So James, what an undertaking. Is it passion? Is it madness? Why are you doing this?

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James Arrington: Little of both, I guess. Maybe they're the same thing. The reason I did this, I've always made mix tapes, since I was seven years old, I think. Just something I've always loved doing. And then when I was 26 years old, I moved to China. I used to travel and teach. Then I got married, and I stayed in China for a lot longer than I'd anticipated. And there's not the musical community that I grew up within China. It's just not such a big thing there. So I put all my passions about music into making mixes. And I made theme mixes at first, and then I decided to make a mix for every year. And that's how I've got to where we are now.

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Theo Mayer: Well, you've answered the question of how you got started, but how do you do research?

[0:37:44]

James Arrington: There were a few years where I was trying to work out how to make this work. So I built up a kind of database of information about how to find the audio that I need. For the first, let's say until 1910, it's a matter of trolling the web. There's so much available as far as free audio downloads go because it's all out of copyright. And there's several amazing websites. Archive.org, it's got a lot there. The University Of California in Santa Barbara has free music archive, and there's a website called Russian records, which has 10, hundreds of thousands of records from Russia. So there's a lot of things out there. And about 1910, I realized that I couldn't do that anymore. I had 3,000 MP3s to sort through for a single year. I started looking through recommended lists. For example, this website called Radio Music, there's one called Acclaimed Music, there's various other sites making lists of best music from this time or from other times. So this stage I'm going through those. Still most of the music is feely available. But buying compilation CDs now as well.

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Theo Mayer: What stage is your World War I era now? When do you think you'll be publishing 1914 to 1919 mixes?

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James Arrington: There's one going out every month, and the first month [inaudible] so that 1908 one will go out in a couple of weeks. So 1914, that will be March or April next year.

[0:39:10]

Theo Mayer: A year a month. That's ambitious.

[0:39:13]

James Arrington: Yeah, that's the schedule I set myself. It didn't seem ambitious when I started. It does seem a little too ambitious now, perhaps. But that's what I was thinking too. And I'm listening a year ahead. So I'm currently listening to 1920. So as far as what I've released has gone, I'm still pre-war, but as far as what I'm listening to goes, I'm now post-war.

[0:39:34]

Theo Mayer: Let's talk about the World War I years. In America, the music in that era was literally the cultural echo at the time, sort of reflecting current events and interests of politics and culture. Was that global? What role was music playing in Europe and other places?

[0:39:49]

James Arrington: There's a few genres of music which are very dominant at this tie. There's band music, which is incorporating ragtime by this time. You've got these marching bands that are now performing ragtime-ish music. You've got opera, which is huge. Bert Caruso is still the biggest star in the world. Now he's Italian, of course. So you can call that World Music. And Vaudeville, you could say. And in England, we don't have Vaudeville, we have musical, which is kind of the same thing. With more songs, less comedy. But it's basically the same thing. Further afield there's a lot of local music that's been untouched by the record industry. So there's kind of ethnographic recordings going on. Those kind of things are still going on now. They haven't changed that much. If you can imagine a world music compilation where they're going to an isolated drive some where, there's a lot of recordings like that as well.

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Theo Mayer: One of the key aspects of World War I was that it was a gathering of nations unlike anything previously. It was a mashup of cultures. We see this all the time in a segment that we do call Speaking World War I where trace how language shifted back and forth. Was there a reflection of that in music at the time?

[0:40:55]

James Arrington: There were songs that kind of go on the theme of war. As far as shifting culture girls, I didn't really see much so far. For Russia, their recording industry has disappeared over the course of the war. So much of Europe is the same. In the UK, we have the musical performers performing their, quite often, wartime based songs. Not a huge shift so far, but I believe as the Americans joined the war, especially with James Reatty Europe coming to Europe with the Hell Fighters band. And I believe that was an influence on the growth of jazz in Europe, and especially in France. I haven't listened quite far enough ahead to be getting into French jazz quite yet. But that's the nearest thing I can see. We have the original Dixieland jazz band. They were the first jazz band to make recordings, and probably set the sound of jazz. And they embarked in a British tour a couple of years after the end of the war, and we still have a kind of, we call it trad jazz, tradition, that kind of comes from that. There's still bands around in England playing very early style of jazz. Which it seems like a British thing now. Though I don't really hear that elsewhere. But it's still around.

[0:42:01]

Theo Mayer: Any closing thoughts or requests from you to our listeners? They are very World War I focused. Anything they can help you with?

[0:42:09]

James Arrington: I'm always on the lookout for new recordings. It was easier to troll everything when I was in the earlier days of recording. In later days, especially around this time, I'm going with the narrower list of compilations and things like that that I have. So if anyone knows of any interesting different recordings around this time, I have plenty of early jazz. And that kind of thing. [inaudible] world recordings around this time because it was being held back in a sense because of all the trouble. But there were artists going to the USA and making recordings. There's an amazing Armenian singer called [foreign language] who's making recordings in New York at this time. But there's a form on my website that they can suggest recordings. It's always welcome to hear more of those.

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Theo Mayer: And we did put the link to that in our podcast notes so that people can do that. And people could also send us a tweet at our Twitter handle, which is @theww1podcast. That's theww1podcast. So if you want to get a hold of James, or have a question for him, send us a tweet, we'll get it to him. So James, can you give us a recommended tune to go out on, please?

[0:43:16]

James Arrington: Your listeners will probably be familiar with the early jazz music that was being made at this time. But I'd like to play something from further afield. Of course at the time of the first world war, there were terrible events having in Turkey and Armenia, and this is Armenian singer [foreign language] who has come over to the USA making recordings. And as you should be able to hear, it's a song of great passion. And very emotional song. And you can only imagine what kind of things the singer has seen, and what kind of world she's come from. She lived to be nearly a 100 years old in the USA and died fairly recently. So this is [foreign language] . (music)

[0:44:16]

Theo Mayer: James Arrington is the creative and driving force behind the Centuries of sound blog and project. You can learn more about it by following the links in the podcast notes. And thy brings us to this week's Speaking World War I. Where we explore the words and phrases rooted in the war. Daily life in the trenches and battlefields of World War I were not particularly cheerful to articulate in letters to loved ones. Now most men didn't want to reveal the true hardship and nature of their lives, and so a phrase became popular that's still with us today. And it's this week Speaking World War I. It's nothing to write home about. Journalist Lance Corporal Ward Muir. A volunteer with the Royal Army Medical Corp, was the first to note the idiom in writing. In 1917, Muir observed an orderly using the phrase at an English war hospital. Now this made the journalist wonder and realize just how popular the phrase had become. Many sources confirm that the phrase's use began with the British in World War I, and then spread to the other forces from there. Nothing to write home about. Something we still say today. And this week's phrase for speaking World War I. You can learn more from the link in the podcast notes. This week for World War I War Tech, hindsight is always 20/20. And while we know today that the fighting in World War I would end mid-November, commanders were preparing for war to rage on for at least another year. And another sad truth is that the rage of war stokes the fires of innovation. Towards the end of 1918, Americans were just starting to flex the full might of technological prowess in their new arsenal. The U.S. Navy and the Air Corp in particular were adamant that top notch tech would ensure American victory. American Yankee ingenuity had both the impetus and the funding to stretch. The opportunity and the edict to defeat the enemy, not just with moral grit, but with military innovation fit the American character well. And really has never let up since. It was not only the development of military technology, but also rapidly putting it into large scale production that was the challenge of the day. On October 26th, 1918, a quote from Secretary of War Daniels refers to an innovative new railway gun that came into production but never really saw action in the war. Quote: "Work at all these plants preceded night and day, and the material and completed mounts and cars were produced in record time." The railway guns were the epitome of innovation, and were coined as the

heaviest, most destructive rifles ever tried in land warfare. Similar stories of innovation and war technologies on the brink of deployment abound in naval, air, and land combat. Sadly, the upcoming Armistice did not result in these swords being beaten into plow shares. Instead, in less than another generation, these innovations would find use in application in an even larger human tragedy. In articles and posts where we'll highlight the stories that you'll find in our weekly newsletter, The Dispatch. Headline: University of Illinois, Chicago holds 11 days of World War I remembrance, symposia, and multimedia events. The event is called the war that made today. And it's being held at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The interdisciplinary conversation and event will explore the war that transformed our contemporary world. It sounds like they've taken our slogan, a war that changed the world, seriously. Go Chicago! Headline: New hello girls musical in New York City debut. This Hello Girls story has really taken root, including a new American musical being produced at the 59E59 Theater in New York City. And showing from November 13th to December 22nd. Writer and artistic director Cara Rikel and co-writer Peter Mills, have created a musical play to bring the story to life in another medium, theater. So if you're in New York City, go see Rikel and mills' musical immersive event about the pioneering Hello Girls. Headline: Nebraska football players will wear leather helmets to commemorate World War I. To commemorate Veteran's Day, Memorial Stadium, and the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, the Nebraska football team will wear uniforms intended to look like the uniforms Nebraska wore when the Memorial stadium opened in 1923. The modern helmet is decorated to look like a leather helmet. Go Cornhuskers! Headline: Taskforce urges review of minorities. World War I Valor awards. With the American Legion, the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Brain Trust, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Park University, and others, this group of organizations is proposing the first ever review of World War I veterans who may have been denied a medal of honor due to the racial and ethnic discrimination of the time. Established by the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, the valor Medals review taskforce is starting with the records of approximately 70 African American soldiers. The taskforce will look at the records of other minority veterans as well, trying to address oversight from the legal structure of segregation from those times. Finally, our selection from our official World War I centennial merchandise shop. Our featured item this week is our canvas and leather tote. Function and style are combined in this lightweight and compact canvas and leather tote. You could show your American pride while carrying this Made in the USA dark khaki tote. Plenty of room for keys, wallet, tablets, documents, and more. A distressed U.S. Imprint is prominently displayed on the bag. And an exclusive fabric garment label commemorates the U.S. Centennial of World War I. Links to our merchandise shop and all the articles we've highlighted here are in our weekly dispatch newsletter. Subscribe at ww1cc.org/subscribe. You can also send a link request with a tweet to @theww1podcast or follow the links in the podcast notes. And that brings us to the bugs. The centennial of World War I this week in social media with Catherine Aikey. Catherine, what are your posts this week?

[0:51:15]

Katherine Akey: The first comes from Wired, and is rather high tech for a World War I story. The story focuses on the west of Belgium, near the French border, where a highway ends in a four lane, unfinished overpass. What's stopped the highway from continuing when it was built was the insight that this land contained some of the most heavily trenched, mined, mortared, bombed, gassed, pillaged, burned, and bullet ridden places along the western front. Archeologists have been using lidars, something like sonar but with lasers. And planes with lidar to survey the area and get a glimpse of the structures of the battlefield out of sight of the human eye, underneath these fields. You can read more about it at the link in the podcast notes. Last for the week, from military.com comes the story of one veteran's journey to right a wrong for his great uncle Garrett Anderson, a Marine veteran of Fallujah, recently got his great uncle's headstone at Arlington National Cemetery updated with his correct date of death, November 12, 1918, one day after Armistice. Read about it in the links in the podcast notes. And that's it this week for the buzz.

[0:52:27]

Theo Mayer: Well, that wraps up episode number 95 of the award winning World War I Centennial News podcast. Thank you for listening. We want to thank our guests, Mike Schuster, curator for the Great War Project blog, Dr. Edward Langel, military historian and author, Ted Lemon, from the Monticello Railway Museum. Caroline Timbie, granddaughter of Hello Girl Grace Banker. James Arrington, from the Centuries of Sound Project. Catherine Aikey, World War I photography specialist and live producer for the podcast. Many thanks to Mac Nelson and Tim Crow, our interview editing team. To Jay [inaudible] for his research. To Rachel Hurt, our fall intern. And I'm Theo Meyer, your producer and host. (music) 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. That includes this podcast. We're also bringing the lessons of a 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 our country. And of course, we're building America's national World War I memorial in Washington, DC. We want to thank the Commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, as well as the 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 podcasts, 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 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. (music)
Thank you for listening to this week's show. So long.
[0:55:11]