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7 speakers (Theo Mayer, Edward Lengel, Katherine Akey, Mike Shuster, Allison F., David Pietrusza, Neil Urban)

[0:00:08]

Theo Mayer: Welcome to our World War I Centennial News, episode number 96. It's about World War I then, what was happening 100 years ago, and it's about World War I now, the news and the updates about the centennial and the commemoration. Now before we get going today, I wanted to give you a heads up on what will be happening with the podcast over the coming few weeks. This week it's an overview and lead up to the armistice. Next week, episode number 97 coming out on Veterans Day/Armistice Centennial Weekend itself, we're going to provide some detailed perspectives on how we get to an actual signed armistice and we're going to take a deep dive into the deal itself, what is the armistice actually and literally. Then next week, for episode number 98, we're going to bring you the sacred service that we're holding at Washington National Cathedral on November 11th. It's a moving, beautiful and inspiring nondenominational service. The following week is Thanksgiving and we're going to take the week off. With that, let's jump into this week and World War I Centennial News, episode number 96. This week on the podcast, we start off with our overview round table for November 1918 with Dr. Edward Lengel, Katherine Akey, and myself. Mike Shuster reviews the maneuverings, both military and diplomatic, of late October 1918 then we'll head to Arlington, Virginia to hear about a county that has created a World War I Commemoration Task Force. Next, we're going to be joined by David Pietrusza who's going to give us more insight into the deadliest belligerent of World War I and one who did not sign the armistice. Neil Urban from Phoenix, Arizona tells us about how 100 Cities/100 Memorials inspired a statewide memorial initiative, and the buzz where Katherine Akey highlights some 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 US World War I Centennial Commission, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, and the Star Foundation. I'm Theo Mayer, the chief technologist for the Commission and your host, welcome to the show. One of our most popular features of the podcast is our monthly overview round table but how do you even do an overview of November 1918? Well, that was the question that Dr. Edward Lengel, Katherine and I undertook earlier this week. What follows is our conversation: Ed, how would you characterize November of 1918?

[0:03:14]

Edward Lengel: A couple of things. Conclusion and disintegration, and to some degree continuation. The conclusion is of the fighting on the Western Front, not the war, on November 11th at 11:00 a.m. The disintegration is the collapse of the German, Austria, Hungarian and Ottoman Empires which was going to have huge an ongoing impact in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Middle East, and of course the ongoing collapse of what had been the Russian Empire with the growth of the Russian Civil War. The continuation is that fighting and revolution which begins in Central and Eastern Europe even before the armistice is now going to continue well into the future. There won't be any clear resolution. There's fighting that continues in Africa; there's fighting that continues in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Central Europe; and new fighting that breaks out so there's no sudden peace.

[0:04:16]

Theo Mayer: Katherine, at the end of October into November, these are really fast sequence of events. Can you touch on that for us?

[0:04:24]

Katherine Akey: Yeah, it's all about the German Navy which has been cooped up for most of the war. Since the battle of Jutland in 1916, they really haven't seen much action other than the U-boats of course but the German Navy proper has been hold up and blockaded. Suddenly they're given a suicide mission to attack the British Imperial high seats which is a terrible idea, militarily speaking. Of course the sailors were frustrated and demoralized and half-starved mutiny against this idea.

[0:04:55]

Theo Mayer: There's a name for that, right?

[0:04:57]

Katherine Akey: The Kiel Mutiny, yes.

[0:04:59]

Edward Lengel: The mutiny begins in Wilhelmshaven on the 30th but the major mutiny begins in Kiel on November 3rd and spreads on the days that follow over several German port cities in the North.

[0:05:13]

Theo Mayer: In the meantime, Katherine, the Austro-Hungarians, they actually stopped fighting earlier, right?

[0:05:19]

Katherine Akey: Yeah, they signed a ceasefire with the allies on November 3rd so fighting against them dies down earlier in the month than fighting against the Germans. Interestingly one of my favorite tidbits from this month is that Charles I of Austria, on November 11th, he proclaims that he'll give up his absolute power in Austria. Two days later, he gives up his absolute power in Hungary but he doesn't formally advocate the throne because he's hanging around hoping that the people of either of these two new countries will vote to recall him. He's very optimistic about his chances of remaining in power over either Austria or Hungary.

[0:05:59]

Theo Mayer: In a British fashion or something else?

[0:06:02]

Katherine Akey: No. Both of those countries are moving forward to something further from monarchy, but I suppose he's hoping that they're loyal enough to him that they'll allow him to continue to remain in power in one form or another which he does not.

[0:06:18]

Theo Mayer: The both of you, in overview, in just this short period of time we have three empires collapsing in the period of a month after many, many years of terrible fighting but is that actually what's happening?

[0:06:33]

Edward Lengel: Well, it's an incredibly confusing process. I mean, you have these three Central European empires plus the Russian empire is already in collapse. You have moments such as the provisional Austrian government declaring its union with Germany on November 13th and then a couple of days later, well, "No, we're not United with Germany after all." At the end of the war there were up to a million German troops throughout what is now the Baltic States, Poland, Ukraine. They're still there when the armistice was signed. They begin to pull out in the days following the armistice but many of them get caught up in fighting with White Russian and Red Russian forces, with Nationalist forces. You have Polish national armies rising up and the armies of the Baltic States rising up. It's not like a puzzle falling hard; it's more like a chaotic maelstrom. Observers, all they can do is just watch and wonder where the pieces are going to fall.

[0:07:30]

Theo Mayer: Ed, here's an interesting thing. Suddenly this armistice is signed, I'm thinking not so much of the Americans because they're far from home, but I'm thinking of the French and the Belgians and the Brits. Don't they just feel like throwing down their guns and just walking home?

[0:07:45]

Edward Lengel: They sure do. For a day or two there's a sense first that they're stunned and then there's euphoria when they realized the war is finally over, and then that really difficult moment where they think what next, or when are we going to get back. The Americans have to assume they're going to be there for several more months and in fact that's the case, many of them don't get back home until April. The French, the British are very eager just to go back home to try to rebuild their lives. Of course their military authorities have to exert every nerve to keep their forces and being in the field. That's not easy.

[0:08:21]

Theo Mayer: I would imagine so. Was there a giant tendency towards desertion at that point?

[0:08:27]

Edward Lengel: Less than you would think. I think by this point the military discipline had sunk in so deeply particularly with British, that they continue to accept the military authority despite their own yearnings to go home. The French were a little bit more prone to just quit and go but at this point for a soldier, you realized you're not facing death in the field anymore and it would be ridiculous to desert and lose any hope you have of getting a pension, of getting any other postwar support.

[0:09:00]

Theo Mayer: Just shifting gears for a moment, if we come back and think about what's happening in the United States, there's an election on the fourth. What happens in that election?

[0:09:12]

Edward Lengel: Well, the Republicans win handily. It's ironic that the Republicans win this election so handily after Woodrow Wilson made this appeal to the American people to elect a democratic controlled house in Senate so that he can speak with one voice to the allies. Obviously, the American people are in a different mood. There are a couple of things that happened right after this. Just shortly after the election the British and French finally agree to, which are Wilson's 14 points in principle, but with some additions that Wilson has to agree to that they insist they have the right to discuss freedom of the seas in the peace conference, demand that the Germans pay war reparations which is big issue and is going to become a bigger issue, that Wilson has to accept. When the armistice actually takes place, Wilson makes a decision that he's got to go to Europe to be there for the Paris Peace Conference to make sure that there's not a punitive peace because he's trying to think big picture here; but then, he announces that the peace commissioners who were going to go with him will be all Democrats except for one Republican. Of course that causes outrage among the Republicans who feel like, "Look, we've just handily won this election. You need to respect that the American people want us to have a say in the peace conference." Wilson, he's terrified that the Republicans are going to block whatever he tries to accomplish over in Paris and so he's determined, no matter what, to keep the Republicans at arm's length.

[0:10:50]

Theo Mayer: Now, Wilson had stipulated in one of his responses to the exploration of an armistice, the German government and the military that had fought this war, that he wasn't going to negotiate with them. How does that play out and who is finally negotiated with?

[0:11:07]

Edward Lengel: There's a lot of back and forth through October between Woodrow Wilson and the Germans. In fact, he made the demand back in October that he would not negotiate with a nondemocratic German government and the Germans shut off communications for a while. In early November they reached a point of absolute desperation where they're willing to do anything. They send a delegation of civilians from the Centrist Party led by Matthias Erzberger who meet with the allies on November 8th but it isn't until the following day that the German chancellor who is a member of the royal family, Prince Max of Baden, hands over power to a socialist government in Berlin led by Friedrich Ebert and Philipp Scheidemann. Those two gentlemen are the ones who carry on the actual final negotiations that lead to the armistice.

[0:12:03]

Theo Mayer: When does that happen?

[0:12:05]

Edward Lengel: There are already delegates who are negotiating and campaigning with the allies on November 8th. November 9th is when chancellor hands over actual power in Berlin to the Socialist Party.

[0:12:19]

Theo Mayer: The next thing that happens is what?

[0:12:21]

Katherine Akey: The British announced that there's been an armistice to the British people around 8:00 or 9:00 in the morning. A couple hours later word starts to spread and then the fighting stops at 11:11.

[0:12:35]

Theo Mayer: Now, the fighting stops at 11:00, not at 11:11. It's on 11/11 at 11:00 a.m. Is that not correct?

[0:12:42]

Edward Lengel: That's right-

[0:12:43]

Katherine Akey: Yeah.

[0:12:43]

Edward Lengel: -although we need to be careful to specify the fighting really only stops on the Western Front.

[0:12:49]

Katherine Akey: Yeah. In fact there are Germans in Africa who don't get word of the armistice for several days and keeps fighting in Rhodesia up until about the 14th.

[0:13:00]

Edward Lengel: That's right, and German troops are continuing to fight in Eastern Europe as well and they will be involved in fighting for several months there.

[0:13:09]

Theo Mayer: Once the armistice is signed, what's the rest of the month about?

[0:13:14]

Katherine Akey: Well, in my mind it's about all of these new states declaring independence formally, mostly in Eastern Europe but also the continued dissolution of the German Empire as different nobleman advocate their power in sections of Germany but it's just this scattering of German power that happens and Czechoslovakia and Hungary and Austria and all of these other countries, Latvia declares independence from Russia. There's a lot of new states formed in this month mostly in the first two or three weeks.

[0:13:49]

Edward Lengel: The Russian Civil War is in full swing. Austria-Hungary is falling apart. A couple of other things that are important to German navy formally surrenders on November 14th and heads to Scapa Flow where it's going to be interned. Of course later on the Germans are going to scuttle the fleet which will cause a great deal of outrage.

[0:14:09]

Katherine Akey: The German army is pulling out of Belgium and France and withdrawing to Germany and at the same time allied forces are moving into Germany. The British and American forces entered Germany in the latter half of the month to be followed by French forces and the Belgians returned to Belgium. The king of Belgium, King Albert I, has been commanding an allied army group for a long time and he marches back in with his royal family into Brussels which has been held by the Germans until the armistice and it's a very, very poignant moving moment in Belgian history.

[0:14:46]

Theo Mayer: Do the allies occupy Germany?

[0:14:49]

Edward Lengel: Yes, they occupy Germany, West of the Rhine River. That's in the terms of the armistice plus they have a few bridges over the Rhine.

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Theo Mayer: What does the AEF do? I mean, so there's an armistice. What's the AEF reaction?

[0:15:03]

Edward Lengel: Well, the AEF launches its final offensive on November 1st. Enemies are gone and it's continuing to push forward right up to the very end of the armistice. In fact it's Pershing's insistence that the American troops keep attacking literally right up to the last minute. Instead of the fighting petering out, he orders American artillery to increase its bombardment leading up to 11:00 a.m. And the troops continued to attack. The last American soldier to die is Henry Gunther who was with the 79th Division. He had been accused of cowardice a few days earlier and disciplined and so he felt he had to redeem himself so he frontally attacked the German machine gun and he's killed right before the armistice. There's a false armistice celebration in the United States, I think November 7th, where everybody is convinced that an armistice has already been signed and there's wild celebrations in New York City and other places. Then it turns out there was no armistice yet.

[0:16:05]

Theo Mayer: To me this is brand new territory and really answers a whole lot of questions because I've heard a lot about all sorts of things but never about how this actually comes down and how it actually wraps up.

[0:16:17]

Katherine Akey: Everyone is still fighting until the last minute, right? Until the pen hits the paper, it's not a done deal so all the forces are still moving around on the ground, but once the armistice is signed, what happens when you have millions of men living in these weird artificial cities almost, right? You could think of the Western Front as a whole new country worth of people living somewhere with food being brought to them under very difficult circumstances and fuel being brought to them under very difficult circumstances, and that machine doesn't just shut off. For the following week or two, people stay put and they don't fight but they stay put and they keep the machine running. More importantly they turned towards cleaning up; getting medical attention, getting food and cleaning up the fighting front. Technically I supposed that process isn't finished. There are still unexploded ordinances and there are still about 50% of the soldiers killed in the war whenever recovered. There are still bodies out there that are being

discovered and being repatriated or being buried but for four years most of the bodies out in the Western Front hadn't been able to be buried.

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Edward Lengel: There's no sense of a clear conclusion to this. That's even going to be true after the Treaty of Versailles signed in 1919. There's really no settlement, no conclusion. What we're seeing is the beginning of what historians now recognize as a long period of wars. Some even combine World War I and World War II into one gigantic global World War with a brief interlude in the 20s and 30s that wasn't really much of an interlude. Although what we see from this perspective, we see the celebrations, we see the happiness of people knowing that this period of terrible bloodshed and tragedy is "over", it's not really over.

[0:18:19]

Theo Mayer: As we just brought up in our overview, there is an incredible mixed intention of aggressive fighting and anticipation of an armistice. Mike Shuster, former NPR correspondent and curator for the Great War Project Blog, picks up that story as October flows into November.

[0:18:35]

Mike Shuster: Thank you, Theo. The headline reads, "Take the border German territory, a new allied offensive. The thing left unsaid, surrender, especially to the Great War Project." Events we're moving quickly now as Germany continues to pull back its forces on the Western Front. Historian Martin Gilbert reports that on October 12th the German government accepted President Woodrow Wilson's conditions for negotiations, the complete withdrawal of their troops from France and Belgium. Excitement about the coming peace is premature, reports Gilbert. Before Wilson received the German acceptance of his terms, the British and French open a new offensive inside Belgium. In five days, the new offensive had advanced 18 miles taking 12,000 prisoners and 550 guns. Gilbert reports German troops continued to fight for the French cities under their control, unwilling to withdraw without a struggle from regions they had ruled for more than four years. On October 13th French forces drive them out of the city of Laon liberating 6,500 French civilians. According to Gilbert, the Liberation of Laon was a turning point, a city that had so often been within sound of the guns during earlier battles but had face the humiliation of occupation for more than 1,500 days. Not all the allied leaders favor an armistice. The British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, raises serious questions about it. He tells his senior military and political advisers of his fears that if the Germans gained a break, they might obtain time to reorganize and recover. According to notes of a meeting with his advisers, Lloyd George then raise for consideration whether the actual military defeat of Germany, giving to the German people the real taste of war, was not more important from the point of view of the peace of the world than a surrender at the present time when the German armies were still on foreign territory. Another British diplomat worried from a Persian-Switzerland that Germany would make peace too soon. It will be 1,000 PTC rites in mid October a century ago. If we are called off before we hammer the Germans completely on the Western Front, we ought to get them into their beastly country for that is the only way of bringing home to the Kaiser or to his population what war means. On that day, October 14th, among the Germans wounded at the Ypres Salient is Corporal Adolf Hitler, temporarily blinded by a gas shell. Hitler was evacuated from the front. The state of German forces is pitiful. One of the German leaders writes in a letter of the wretched condition of troops; short of artillery support; short of ammunition, fuel, horses and officers. He concludes, we must obtain peace before the enemy breaks into Germany. By late October, a century ago, President Wilson is making a clear and fairly blunt terms by his standards. According to historian Gary Mead that what was wanted from the Germans now was not offers of peace negotiations but surrender. Nothing Wilson writes can be gained by leaving this essential thing on set, and that's the news from the Great War Project a century ago during these days in the Great War.

[0:21:48]

Theo Mayer: Mike Shuster is the curator for the Great War Project Blog. The link to his post is in the podcast notes. For World War I war tech it seemed very appropriate to reprise the technology we covered in episode number 48. Now we know that 100 years ago this coming week the fighting stopped on the 11th day of the 11th month, and on the 11th hour. Now, how did that work with millions of troops involved? That's an interesting question. Well, as can be seen by a number of armistice film clips, the answer is the wrist watch. Wrist watches existed in some fashion since the 1500. The watches produced during the war were especially designed for the rigors of trench warfare with luminous dials and unbreakable glass. By the way, as a side note those luminous dials have a whole horror story attached to them about the young women who licked little paintbrushes as they painted with the radium laced brush points on the watch dials. Check out the buzz in episode number 19 for the story about the radium girls. Okay, back to our story. What made the very idea of timing an armistice to a particular hour of the day even possible to consider was the fact that there was a watch on nearly every commander's wrists. By this time, almost all enlisted men wore wrist watches as well. Now this isn't trivial. The ability to have synchronized timing as a part of your arsenal was as important as ordinance itself. It meant that shelling across a vast area could stop and start on a schedule. The troops could go over the top in multi-mile long trenches all at the same time and that you could create a tactic were literally bombardments would roll forward at a specified time of day while troops followed behind in synchronized attacks. Of

course, it meant that you could stop the fighting at a particular hour. The wristwatch. Something that most of us wear and a small innocuous but powerful technology that spread 100 years ago from the war that changed the world. We have links for you in the podcast notes. With that, we're going to fast forward into the present with World War I Centennial News now. 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. In commission news, many of you and the US World War I centennial commission are getting ready for a week of events and activities in Washington, online, and literally around the world. Our highlights include a week of special events in Washington. We're transforming the site of the future National World War I Memorial in Washington, DC with special commemorative events that will begin on November 8th and run through November 12th. A daily special feature there is the first look pavilion open to the public every day for a multimedia experience and introduction to the National World War I Memorial in Washington, DC at its future location. On Sunday, November 11th, we'll be holding a special sacred service to commemorate the Centennial of the Armistice at Washington National Cathedral. A part of that service is going to kick off the National Bells of Peace tolling at 11:00 a.m. Eastern, an initiative that has grown beyond our hopes with literally thousands of participants that may yet grow to tens of thousands. Many of our events are being live streamed. Of course, there are memorial re-dedications and special events happening all over the country, in fact all over the world. We've tried to package as much of this up for you as possible. Just go to our website at ww1cc.org. That's the letters W-W, the number one, and the letters C-C dot org or just Google World War I Commission. We're pretty easy to find. In our Remembering Veterans section, we're going to explore an interesting World War I commemorative organization. Let me set this up. In 2013, Congress created the World War I Centennial Commission as a national organization to recognize the 100th anniversary of the First World War. A majority of states also have created World War I commemorative bodies. For example, in 2016 the General Assembly of Virginia created the Virginia World War I and World War II commemorative commissions to recognize the 100th anniversary of the First World War and the 75th Anniversary of the Second World War. Now we get to a part that I haven't been exposed to a great deal. In Virginia, the County of Arlington appointed a World War I Commemoration Task Force. To talk about that, we're joined today by Dr. Allison Finkelstein, the chair of the Arlington World War I Commemoration Task Force from Virginia's Arlington County. Allison, thank you for bringing us this side of the World War I Commemoration that's both wonderful and a little unknown.

[0:27:09]

Allison F.: Thank you very much for having me today.

[0:27:11]

Theo Mayer: Allison, the formation of a county level task force, that's really great. Can you tell us about how that happened and what it is?

[0:27:17]

Allison F.: Sure. The Arlington County Board, which is the elected group that runs Arlington County, decided that they needed to recognize the anniversary of World War I in our community. To do that, they appointed our task force which is a citizen's committee. That means that we are all volunteers and we all represent a multitude of organizations across Arlington. You have people from the Arlington Historical Society, from the Arlington Sister City Association which has a sister city in Rome and France, we have people from the Arlington public schools, from our Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, and then from our historic preservation group. With all of those groups and many more, we have come together to basically run an official commemoration of World War I in Arlington which is a really important thing for our locality to do because Arlington is the home of Arlington National Cemetery, then the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, to those hundreds of World War I grave, to the Pentagon, to Fort Myer, the Marine Corps Memorial. I could go on and on. The Arlington County Board, I think, made a really significant decision to try and commemorate this war on the local level.

[0:28:24]

Theo Mayer: It is, and it's really interesting, I mean, in your community in specific. Now, your task force has been really busy. Can you tell us about some of your programs and activities?

[0:28:33]

Allison F.: Yes, we have been very busy and we continue to be busy in the lead up to armistice. Over the past 20 months, we were formed in March 2017, we have organized or participated in over 30 events. Some of those were done on our own, some of them were done with partner organizations in the county. We have had multiple talks with historians including Mitch Yockelson, [Jeffrey Simmons] , Michael Kazin, [inaudible] . I spoke once about my current book project. We have had a film series of World War I film at the Arlington Central Library. We have been at the Arlington County Fair. In fact this past summer, in August, we actually brought the Virginia World War I and World War II Centennial Commission Profile of Honor Mobile Museum to the county fair which is this really cool RV that they have rigged up to be a travelling museum about Virginia's role in World War I and World War II. We've done all sorts of programs to educate the community about World War I. Something that I'm really proud of that we've done is the

inclusion of community service and outreach to Veterans as the community part of our work. Last fall we organized a toiletry drive and we donated over 30 pounds of toiletries to a local veterans hospitals. In May, we had what I thought was one of our most moving events, one of our members, [inaudible], who is a member of John Lyon VFW Post 3150, organized an evening panel that talked about the history of PTSD in the World War I era from [inaudible] expert and then it concludes with the panel of today's veteran who shared their own stories about PTSD. In that way we were really able to bring the community together with our veterans and link it to World War I.

[0:30:19]

Theo Mayer: What's the community reaction been? Have you been getting good attendance?

[0:30:23]

Allison F.: We have been. I think Arlington is a very nerdy city which is probably why I live within there. We have had, I guess you could say, a group of followers. People who come to most of our events, just regular community members who we've gotten to know. We also have a lot of people who are veterans in Arlington of course who'd like to come to these events, people who are associated with their different organizations. For example, the sister city, they are able to attract a great part of people who are involved with their organization. People who wreck the county fair were just random Arlingtonians we found at the country fair and suddenly became interested in World War 1 because of our tour bus. It really depends, but I think the important thing has that been that we've diversified what we have done. We're not just sticking to history, we're not just sticking to the military side of things, but we've been trying to talk about civilians, today's veterans, and we've really been trying to link in the art and other initiative.

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Theo Mayer: Do you ever get together with the state organization and talk about plans or do you all do individual stuff?

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Allison F.: I believe that some of our country government employees who are working with the task force have been working with the Virginia State Commission. That's not something that the volunteers have done, but I do know that we've been in such a [inaudible]. Our biggest collaboration has been bringing that profile [inaudible] bunch of the county fair. If there's anybody from Virginia listening you should definitely look it up. You can apply to get the mobile tour bus to come visit you and it's really, really worthwhile. We thank the Virginia Commission for that.

[0:31:57]

Theo Mayer: What's coming up for the Centennial of the Armistice?

[0:32:00]

Allison F.: Well for the Centennial of the Armistice, like many other communities, we have a very big family plan but actually links up with the National World War I Centennial Commission. We were very fortunate to receive a grant from the 100 Cities/100 Memorials program to do a project at one of our local memorial. I believe we were actually the only entity in the Commonwealth of Virginia to receive one of those grants so we're very proud. Starting in June of this year, we have been very busy fundraising for that project. One of our members, Frank O'Leary, actually organized a major fundraising event on June 28th and we raised somewhere over \$15,000 to make those matching grants. With that money, we have been able to develop a project where we are creating interpretive panels to go around one of our local memorials. That memorial is the American Legion Memorial of Arlington. It's located in Clarendon which is a very busy, very popular and vibrate neighborhood in Arlington right by the Clarendon metro. If any of your listeners know that metro stop, you've probably seen a towering monument made out of stone with an eagle on top. Because it's such a busy area, I really noticed that a lot of people did not understand what that memorial was. In fact most people walk by it and they don't even notice it. The World War I history of that memorial was dedicated in 1931 and honors our Arlingtonians who died in the war. The subsequent wars, from World War I on, that it commemorates and memorializes those who were dead has really become hidden in the landscape so we're going to place a series of interpreted panels around it to talk about that memorial, to explain it, to teach our community about why they need to understand it. We're really hoping that we're going to have the first one of those panels ready on Armistice Day. It's looking good and we're going to unveil it at our ceremony. That ceremony is going to be at 10:30 in the morning on Veterans Day. Anybody is welcome to join. Please come on over to Arlington if you need a place to be. We're going to have a doughboy color guard, we're going to have a rifle salute, we're going to have singing from two singing groups. The unveiling of the panel features and I think it's going to be a really meaningful day to our community where we're able to link our own local project up to our 100 Cities/100 Memorials grant.

[0:34:21]

Theo Mayer: That's terrific. So we have a combination interview here of 100 Cities/100 Memorials and the county. That's fantastic.

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Allison F.: Yes.

[0:34:28]

Theo Mayer: Allison, thank you for coming in.

[0:34:29]

Allison F.: Thank you so much for having me.

[0:34:31]

Theo Mayer: Learn more about the Arlington World War I Centennial Task Force and their commemoration events at the links in the podcast notes. If there are other county level organizations out there in our listenership, we'd love to hear from you. The Centennial of the Armistice looms large right now, but is the fighting on the western front came to an end? November 11th, 100 years ago, one of the fiercest and deadliest enemies did not come to the table, did not sign the Armistice and went on killing without mercy. There was no Armistice to be had with the Spanish flu. Earlier this year in episode 70 we spoke to Kenneth Davis, author of the book "More Deadly Than War: The Hidden History of the Spanish Flu and the First World War." Today we're going to take another look at the flu and its devastating effect on soldiers both during and after the fighting at the end of the war. Historian David Pietrusza has been on this show before, specifically in episode number 77 when we had a really illuminating interview about Teddy Roosevelt. David, welcome back to the podcast.

[0:35:39]

David Pietrusza: Good to be back.

[0:35:41]

Theo Mayer: David, you've been working on an article about World War I and flu. Tell us about that.

[0:35:46]

David Pietrusza: Well, I was engaged to provide some material for an online course for students, younger kids, and one of the topics I got to pick from was the World War I Spanish flu. I knew a little bit about it. One of the advantages of doing an article is to learn more and I decided, "Hey, why don't I call the folks at the podcast and see if I could share this information and reach their listeners on it as well."

[0:36:13]

Theo Mayer: Okay, diving to the subject itself. In October and November of 1918 soldiers are fighting at full tilt to cross the world, but the flu is still also going full tilt. Why is the flu picking now?

[0:36:25]

David Pietrusza: There are a lot of theories as to why the flu starts or where it starts. One of the theories is that an army camp, Camp Funston in Kansas, that it spreads from there. These camps are tremendously overcrowded and when you get this new strain of flu it spreads like wild fire and then into, not just the overcrowded camps There's a camp grant in Rockford, Illinois where they take a thousand dead just at that one camp and then you pack people into the trenches on both sides of the war, whether it's allied or central powers, particularly into the troupe ships where it keep people apart from each other on the ships. That doesn't really work and they are just dumping these bodies into the ocean. Also, where the man are weakened from being out in the elements because doctors are dislocated into the armed services and away from the home front, this thing doesn't only affects soldiers, it affects civilians. It's a World War and it's a worldwide pandemic. The country which is hit the most is India. I've seen 7 million, I've seen 14 million and I've seen 20 million. That's consistent with lack of precision in numbering the worldwide casualties which number from 50 million to 100 million in the third world segment of this whole case. Even in America, the accounting and the bookkeeping breaks down after a while and then there's a question of, "Okay, did they die from the new horrible Spanish flu or did they die from pneumonia afterwards?" It's one and the same but God knows what they put down on the forms.

[0:38:16]

Theo Mayer: What effect was it having on the war itself?

[0:38:18]

David Pietrusza: Well, on the war itself it's going to hinder the movement of troupes from America to Europe. Also in 1918, Ludendorff puts on a big push. He can't capitalize on it because at that point the flu has spread across the tranches into Germany and is really wrecking it's havoc more on them than on the allies which had hit before. There's a first wave which isn't too bad, there is a second wave which is the most deadly, and then there's a third which is

again sort of weak. As it moves around the world, it hits different places at different times so it's going to move from America to Europe and then it's going to hit Africa and India and even the Pacific Islands, and even beyond the Arctic Circle. There's a terrible case. People go into a village, they find this little settlement and they look in the window hoping to find survivors and they find a pack of wild blood dogs just chewing on the bones of people who have died on that. They have to shoot these dogs through the window. There's just one horrible story after another.

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Theo Mayer: This flu, this pandemic, whether it's 50 or 100, it killed tens of millions of people and it's not that long ago. How did the world get amnesia about this?

[0:39:40]

David Pietrusza: I think that people are so shell shocked by the whole thing they want to block it out of their memory. It's like waking up from a nightmare. Because people do not really know how it started or how to stop it, it really does get forgotten.

[0:39:56]

Theo Mayer: This global amnesia about something that's so close to us just fascinates me.

[0:40:00]

David Pietrusza: We haven't had 50 million or 100 million dying, but we have had our pandemic scenes, like the Hong Kong flu where we've lost up to a million people and we don't even think about that. I mean it's, "Oh, it's just the flu."

[0:40:16]

Theo Mayer: David, this article that you created, is it aimed at high school students?

[0:40:20]

David Pietrusza: It really is aimed at high school students and then there are little questions and answers afterwards to see if they've been paying attention. We're working on web base resources and we're working on American history which tends to be so often forgotten.

[0:40:35]

Theo Mayer: We've got a question from our live audience. Bill Benton from California asks, "Have you found, given new DNA technology, that there's more evidence about the origins of the Spanish flu?"

[0:40:46]

David Pietrusza: One of the results of studying the flu was they came across the discovery of DNA itself where, I had mentioned, this flu spreading around the world to these very remote areas. They were able to find people buried in the permafrost which still had the virus and they were able to do studies on this within the last 10 or 15 years. Flus mutate and they mutate very quickly which is why we have to have different flu shot every year. The thing that has to be learned from it is when this rears its head again is isolation. Because of war time censorship, this was not possible in many cases. There was a terrible situation where they should have called off a liberty war bond parade in Philadelphia. Philadelphia ended up the hardest hit city in America. The one place on earth where it did not hit, where no one died was American Samoa because the governor of American Samoa paid attention to the fact that people in isolated communities around the world were particularly susceptible to new strange of disease and he quarantined the whole island territory and nobody died. The next territory over, Western Samoa, which was under the new Zealanders did not pay attention to that and paid a terrible price.

[0:42:14]

Theo Mayer: David Pietrusza is a historian and author of several books including "TR's Last War: Theodore Roosevelt, The Great War, and a Journey of Triumph and Tragedy." Learn more about David Pietrusza's work and his books at the links in the podcast notes. Next we're going to profile another 100 Cities/100 Memorials project. Now that's our \$200,000 matching grant give away for ailing or even missing local World War I memorials. This week we're headed to Sunny Arizona as we're joined by Neil Urban, capital planner for the Arizona Department of Administration. Neil was on the podcast back in August of 2017 profiling the 100 Cities/100 Memorials project, the veterans of World War I of the USA, located within the Arizona State Capitol Mall Complex. Now he's joining us for an update. Neil, welcome back to the show.

[0:43:08]

Neil Urban: Thank you, Theo. It's certainly been an interesting area in Arizona in terms of World War I. We did reach out to cities and towns around the state in place of where we managed to do some research and found that there were some memorials. I know when we talk to the City of Springerville we said, "Would you guys be interested in

participating in a grant to restore your World War I memorial?" They said, "Oh, we have a World War I Memorial?" We said, "Yeah, go over on the corner there by the Rexall Drugstore and across from the library and you should have a plaque on there. It's mounted on some petrified wood." Somebody went out there and said, "Oh, yeah, yeah. So that's what that is." They really got behind it. They are very remote where they are in Springerville in the White Mountain so they ended up actually shipping their plaque back to a restoration firm in Pennsylvania where they got it restored and they shipped it back and they reinstalled it. They are planning a couple days of events in their city around the re-dedication of the memorial. They're also going to do a screening of Remembering Arizona Heroes of World War I. It's a documentary that has some connection to the centennial commission as well. They're making a whole weekend of the re-dedication so they're quite excited about that. We also reached out to Mohave County and they have a doughboy memorial in front of their courthouses. Actually, two doughboys which is quite impressive. That's been on the lawn there since the 30s and it's been subjected to a lot of irrigation sprinkler so the whole bottom of the memorial is all white and it was in pretty bad condition. It took them quite a while to figure out what exactly they can do to restore and preserve the finish on memorial. They finally figured that out and they're going to have that ready next weekend. They are getting it done now. I also see that the City of Yuma has submitted their own grant and received their own grant from the World War I Commission as well for their monument. Arizona didn't have a big presence in World War I. I think we sent about 10,000 troupes. Obviously the most renowned is Frank Luke Jr. Who was the first aviator to win the distinguished flying cross. We do have a memorial of Frank Luke on the capitol grounds which, in a separate effort, we recently restored as well. In September, on the 100th anniversary of Frank Luke's death in combat we had a ceremony at the memorial on the capitol grounds with personnel from Luke Airforce Base in the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame remembering Frank Luke and his contribution to the war effort.

[0:45:44]

Theo Mayer: I remember that when we talked at our first interview that finding the memorial that you started with when you first put in your grant application was almost happenstance. You noticed something was missing from a statue.

[0:45:56]

Neil Urban: On Wesley Bolin Plaza which is across from the state capitol. The state has almost 40 memorials and monuments to various people and movements and events in the state's history. One of them was this grey granite monolith about six feet tall that was dedicated by the veterans of World War I of the USA to all the veterans of before. It had, above the inscription on this monument, was two holes. You look at it and you see something is missing but nobody really knows what it was. We started doing some research and we actually were able to turn a photo from the newspaper, archives from the day it was dedicated and we found this it has this little six-inch plaque on it which was the copy emblem of the veterans of the World War I of the USA. It was on by happenstance that I was trolling on eBay for World War I memorabilia just to see and we found an exact copy of that plaque that was originally dedicated on the monument so I bought it very quickly and we have it here. What we've done in the restoration, as we've taken that plaque in March because the veterans World War I was a very frugal organization and the plaque was really tiny compared to the rest of the monument so we enlarged it a bit to put it into a better scale and we're going to be installing that and rededicating it on November 11th. In addition, the Arizona Veterans Hall of Famers and United Arizona Veterans came to us and said that they would like to use some enhancements, it will help World War I in a greater context. The memorial reference is World War I but there is no real interpretive information about what happened or what was it about or anything. They proposed [inaudible] granite columns on either side that would have a narrative about World War I and some of Arizona's involvement in the war as well as on the other one, an inscription of the Flanders Fields poem. We're going to be installing those next week and then on November 11th we're going to have a re-dedication ceremony for the existing monument and for the enhancements that the veterans have proposed for it.

[0:48:04]

Theo Mayer: Well you know, Neil, our goal for the 100 Cities/100 Memorials program was to find some way to use the very limited funds we had to stimulate thought and process and remembrance. It sounds like in your state you guys took that and really run with it, congratulations.

[0:48:23]

Neil Urban: Thank you very much. It did exactly what you intend to do. It got us thinking about it and we got people involved and we got people excited about remembering and honoring the veterans and the soldiers that fought and died in the war.

[0:48:37]

Theo Mayer: Well, Neil, thanks for coming on and sharing the story. It's fantastic.

[0:48:40]

Neil Urban: Thank you very much.

[0:48:42]

Theo Mayer: Neil Urban is the capital planner for the Arizona Department of Administration. Now we're going to continue with the profile, the submitting teams and their unique and amazing projects on the show over the coming months. Learn more about the 100 Cities/100 Memorials program at ww1cc.org/100memorials or by following the link at the podcast notes. That brings us to this week's Speaking World War I where we explore the words and phrases rooted in the war. Now, the most basic military defensive position is a whole dug into the ground for protection against enemy fire. This simple but effective fortifications, long and essential infantry tactic acquired their nickname during, you guess it, the First World War. According the Oxford English Dictionary that nickname is "The Fox Hole." With the proliferation of heavy artillery and machine guns in World War I defensive positions became even more vital for the survival of infantry man. Here are a couple of examples of the words usage from our wonderful go-to Lexicon resource, the slang of the American expeditionary force, "Foxholes, dug by little hand spades, shell holes or natural protection are taken advantage of against cannon and machine gun fire." The attack was met with torrents of rifle fire from American line, from shell holes, foxholes, and brush. The foxhole. Originally simply a term for the dug in den of our widely little pointy eared K9 friends, taking on a whole new meaning on the machine gun and artillery latent battle fields and this week's word for speaking World War I. Learn more at the links in the podcast notes. That brings us to the buzz, the centennial of World War I this week in social media with Katherine Akey. Katherine, what are the posts this week?

[0:50:44]

Katherine Akey: Well, we're getting close to Armistice Day, and if you want to keep track of different events in Armistice Day stories on social media, the best and fastest way to do that is to use the hashtag "countdowntoveteransday." If you search for that tag, no spaces in between the words, on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram you'll pull up hundreds of posts, photos and stories from all across the country. You can also add your post to the story by adding the tag so that it will be included in the growing collection of posts as we head towards Armistice Day. Finally, some exciting news. Warner Brothers has acquired global distribution rights for Peter Jackson's new film, "They Shall Not Grow Old." This means we may see screenings of the film in the United States and on the big screen too. Keep an eye out on the news for more and learn more about this acquisition at the link in the podcast notes. That's it for the buzz this week.

[0:51:41]

Theo Mayer: That wraps up episode number 96 of the award winning World War I Centennial News podcast. Thank you for listening. We also want to thank our guests, Dr. Edward Lingel, military historian and author' Mike Shuster, curator for the Great War Project Blog; Allison Finkelstein, chair of the Arlington World War I Commutation Task Force; Dr. David Pietrusza, historian and author; Neil Urban, from the 100 Cities/100 Memorials Project in Phoenix, Arizona; Katherine Akey, World War I photography specialist and line producer for the podcast. Many thanks to Matt Nelson and Tim Crow, our interview editing team; to JL Michoud for his research, to Rachel Hurt, our fall intern. I'm Theo Meyer, your producer and host. The US World War I Centennial Commission was created by Congress to honor, commemorate and educate about World War I. Our programs are to inspire a natural conversation and awareness about World War I including this podcast. We're bringing the lessons of 100 years ago to today's educators in their classrooms. We're helping to restore our World War I memorials in communities of all sizes across our country and of course we're building America's National World War Memorial in Washington, DC. We want to thank the commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library and also the Star Foundation for their support. The podcast and a full transcript of the show can be found on our website at ww1cc.org/cn or Google World War I Centennial News. 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 at the [ww1podcast](https://twitter.com/ww1podcast). The commission's Twitter and Instagram handles are both at [ww1cc](https://twitter.com/ww1cc), and we're on Facebook at [ww1centennial](https://www.facebook.com/ww1centennial). Thank you for joining us. Don't forget to share the stories that you're hearing here today about the war that changed the world. Thank you for joining us for today's show. So long.

[0:54:29]