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7 speakers (Theo Mayer, Mike Shuster, Dr. Ed Langel, Steve Maury, James R Europe, Noble Sissle Jr, Dr. Threat)

[0:00:07]

Theo Mayer: Welcome to the World War I Centennial News Podcast. It's about them. What was happening 100 years ago in the aftermath of World War I and it's about now. How a world transformed by World War I is very present in our lives today, but perhaps equally important, the podcast is about why and how we will never let those events fall back into the mists of obscurity. So welcome to World War I Centennial News, episode number 111. This week on the show, we're opening with a walkthrough the headlines of the New York Times from 100 years ago. Mike Shuster reports on a humanitarian crisis spreading across Europe and the Middle East and what it means to America. Then Dr. Edward Langel offers a wonderful first person account of a "Y" Girl. A YMCA volunteer as she works to comfort the soldiers in war torn France. Steve Mall from the Pangolin Foundry in the UK gives us some insight into what it takes to create a large bronze sculpture like the one that we're planning for the National World War I memorial in Washington DC. And to honor their coming home to New York 100 years ago this week, we're going to have a musical treat from the 369th experience. The Regimental Tribute band made up of college students from around the country. Dr. Charissa Threat tells us about the story of 18 African American nurses who joined the Army Nurse Corps and much more, 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 & Library, The Starr Foundation, the General Motors Foundation and Walmart. I'm Theo Mayer, the chief technologist for the commission and your host. Welcome to the show. 100 years ago this week, the headlines of The New York Times are boldly announcing: Assassinations. Strikes about the unavailability of Beer. Bolshevik and Communist Threats all over. Wilson almost doesn't make it home, but once home promotes the League of Nations everywhere, and always more stories about beer. With that as a setup, lets jump into our centennial time machine, and go back 100 years to the last week of February 1919. Dateline: Saturday, February 22, 1919. Headline: CIVIL WAR BREAKS OUT IN MUNICH, PREMIER EISNER SLAIN, MINISTER AUER WOUNDED, CLEMENCEAU FEELING BETTER; BOLSHEVIST CENTRE FOUND IN PARIS. The story about Eisner's assassination includes: Heir Eisner, with Heir Merkel his secretary were walking along the Prannerstrasse to attend the opening of the Landtag where he intended to deliver an important speech. Suddenly Lieutenant Count Arco Valley, formally an officer in the Prussian guard, shouting "Down with the Revolution! Long live the Kaiser!" Fired at Heir Eisner from behind at a distance of a few yards. Two bullets penetrated the Premier's head and he fell dead on the pavement. The first news of the tragedy reached the Landtag when a Bavarian soldier holding Heir Eisner's blood covered spectacles in his hand entered shouting, "Eisner has been murdered!" A government spokesman stated: "Nothing shows the breakdown of order more clearly than when murder becomes a political weapon. If the sacrificial death of Heir Eisner has good results, they will be and bring us all together. To do away with evil conditions. It would mean the ruin of Germany if all did not take this view and join in the condemnation of this act." And on the same day back in the U.S. Headline: 181,000 UNION MEN VOTE TO STRIKE IF BEER IS OUTLAWED. Referendum of Seven Unions Against Prohibition Reported to Central Body Here. And on the next day... Dateline Sunday, February 23, 1919. Headline: SOVIET republic proclaimed in bolvarian outbreak, state of siege in munich, reds seek to avenge eisner, COMMUNIST REVOLUTION IS STARTED IN BUDAPEST. Wow! Oh Monday... Dateline: Monday, February 24, 1919 Headline: president's ship narrowly misses running a ground in fog, ankers saefly in boston harbor, wilson WILL SPEAK TODAY. Also on the same day... Headline: 14 MEMBERS OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS of the world arrested here for plot against president, bomb planned for wilson, reported that IT WAS TO HAVE BEEN THROWN AS HE SPOKE IN BOSTON. The next day the headline is filled with Wilson's words. Dateline: Tuesday, February 25, 1919. Headline: WILSON BRINGS HOME the worlds message of reliance on ameriaca, asks shall we disappoint that hope, wilson speaks IN BOSTON. The next day... Dateline: Wednesday, February 26, 1919 Headline: NO EXTRA SESSION UNTIL wilson again returns from paris, will be at capital after today to confer with members, SUMONS GOVENORS AND MAYORS TO SPEAK TO THEM THERE. Dateline: Thursday, February 27, 1919 Headline: president expounds league of nations to dinner guests, urges that present draft not be radically amended, sovereignty maybe deminished he says for the worlds good, however any nation may withdraw, NOT BOUND TO STAY IN THE LEAGUE AGAINSTS IT'S WILL, THE PRESIDENT SAYS. And wrapping up this incredibly tumultuous week, we're going to close with another headline about those who actually want to secede from the union because of beer and wine. Headline: CALLS FOR secession move to allow beer and wine, to permit this would be defying the constitution says leader of dries at albany, threat of federal jailing, anderson announces new political fight IF ENFORCEMENT MEASURE FAILS. And those were the headlines that were rolling across the front page of The New York Times 100 years ago this week. In a world trying to adjust to the aftermath of the war that changed everything. Its time for Mike Shuster, former NPR corespondent and curator for The Great War Project blog. Okay, Mike. So they stop shooting in the trenches, and empires fall, but your post this week points out that the world maybe in more danger right now than ever, and this time those who are going to suffer are the citizens of the disrupted nations, both the enemies and the allies alike. In danger of a devastating world famine and potential total chaos. Did this catch everybody by surprise?

[0:08:22]

Mike Shuster: It seems to have Theo, our headline reads: FAMINE SPREADS IN EUROPE, MILLIONS GO WITHOUT, WHO CAN SOLVE THE GROWING DISASTER? IT FALLS TO THE UNITED STATES. This is special to The Great War Project. The power at the peace conference soon realize they have taken responsibility for vast areas of Europe and indeed much of the world. Rights historian, Margaret MacMillan, "It is a role they have failed to anticipate. The peace makers soon discovered that they had taken on the administration of much of Europe and large parts of the Middle East. Old ruling structures had collapsed." She writes, "An allied occupation forces and allied representatives were being drawn in to take their place. There was little choice, if they did not do it, no one would. Or worse, revolutionaries might. One example in Belgrade, a British admiral scrapped together a small fleet of barges and sent them up and down the Danube river carrying food and raw materials. This brought about a meager revival in trade and industry, but it was a stop gap measure. The war," MacMillan reports, "had disrupted the world's economy, and it would not be easy to get it going again. The war had left factories unusable. Fields untilled, bridges and railway lines destroyed. There were shortages of fertilizer, seeds, raw materials, shipping, locomotives. Europe still depended largely on coal for its fuel, but the mines in France, Belgium, Poland and Germany were flooded." Europe Historian MacMillan reports, "Came alarming reports of millions of unemployed men, desperate housewives feeding their families on potatoes and cabbage soup, emaciated children. When the first cold winter of the peace, Herbert Hoover then the American Relief Administrator warns the allies that some 200 million people in the enemy countries, and almost as many again in the victors and the neutral nations, they all faced famine. Germany alone needed 200,000 tons of wheat per month, and 70,000 tons of meat. In the old Austria Hungarian empire, hospitals had run out of bandages and medicine. In what became the new state of Czechoslovakia, a million children are going without milk. In Vienna more babies are dying than were surviving. People were eating coal dust, food shavings, and sand. The humanitarian case for doing something was unanswerable. So was the political one. So long as hunger continued to [inaudible] warned President Wilson, the foundations of government would continue to crumble. Surplus food is available, so are the ships to transport it, but where is the money? "European allies could not finance relief on this scale, but was needed. Germany had gold reserves, but the victorious allies, France in particular, blocked Germany's use of its gold for any purpose other than War reparations. That leaves the United States, but Congress and the American people are ambivalent about embarking on such an enormous task. President Wilson reluctantly agrees buy only if he can put Herbert Hoover in charge. Hoover has made a reputation for himself as a leader in distributing humanitarian aid despite the charge by some European leaders that Hoover would become dictator of Europe, but to Wilson and many Americans Hoover is a hero. During the war he had organized a massive relief operation in German occupied Belgium. For President Wilson, its Herbert Hoover or no one." And that's the news these days a century ago from The Great War Project.

[0:12:01]

Theo Mayer: Mike Shuster is the curator for The Great War Project blog. The link to his post is in the podcast notes. Dr. Edward Langel whose blog is called "A Story Teller Hiking Through History" is a regular contributor to the podcast. This week Ed offers a first hand account from a brave and really cool "Y" Girl. One of the thousands of young American women who fearlessly shipped out for war torn France to help. I find this an incredibly touching story of an admirable and really strong American woman, and a very appropriate lead into March, Women's History Month.

[0:12:39]

Dr. Ed Langel: Katherine Shortall, a young woman serving with the YMCA, didn't leave the United States until the war was already over. In fact, one of the first things she saw as her ship departed New York City in December 1918 was another ship pulling in, filled with doughboy excited to be home. The soldiers climbed the rigging and, catching sight of the outbound ship filled with young women in YMCA outfits, cheered deliriously. But Shortall's real mission was to the men still over there. Her sympathetic and determined character ensured that she would have an impact. The YMCA women landed in Liverpool in early January and were immediately tasked with staffing a formal dance for the many servicemen of all nations who packed the city. Shortall added her skill as a guitar player to a quintet of musicians. From there it was on to London, where she found the streets "absolutely flooded with men in uniform, soldiers of all kinds." She and her friends studied the men closely. "There were," she wrote home to her mother, "many Australians and New Zealanders, tall, lean men with weather-beaten faces and a certain attractive swagger which is augmented by their broad-brimmed hats turned up at one side." She admired the "British in their splendid uniforms with their unmistakable bearing," but thought "the most striking of all are the Scotch; perfect giants of men, in their kilts and plaids, bare knees and all." But Shortall's heart rose at the "many wounded, men wearing the blue hospital uniform, with arms and legs gone, heads bandaged, limping forth to get the air." And, most sadly, of everyone they met in the streets, "no one ever smiled. Faces were dull and joyless. Clothes were old. Shoes were shapeless and soggy. Everyone seemed hopeless rather than actively sorrowful." Katherine Shortall was a good listener. For many soldiers just returning from battle, that was just what they needed. On a train bound for Paris, she stopped to talk with a doughboy from Ohio who had seen action fighting alongside the British in Flanders. "As he described the battle line his face was drawn with the horror of it," she later wrote, "yet he had to talk about it, and I let him, hoping he would 'get it off his chest' that way." When he finished, the soldier grasped her hand in gratitude.

"You're the first honest-to-goodness American girl I've talked to for fifteen months," he said, and "I sure won't forget you!" In Paris, in the Place de la Concorde, Shortall was both fascinated and horrified to see the vast array of captured guns that had been put on display there. There were trench mortars—"ugly, chunky guns, particularly vicious looking," and field artillery lined hub to hub, "all camouflaged, mottled and streaked in green and brown." "It is bewildering to look at them," Shortall wrote. "They are a symbol, I suppose, of a great indelible mark in the book of history, but now, one little mortal standing in the presence of those recently silenced mouths, can only shiver and go away. It is too soon." Katherine Shortall was stationed in the tiny little French village of Pouillenay in eastern France, where troops of the U.S. 78th Division were stationed. There she and her fellow YMCA women set to work setting up a recreation tent where they distributed reading materials, coffee, hot chocolate, cigarettes, and doughnuts. A talented musician, Shortall also played ragtime piano. But she found that the main thing the doughboys there wanted was just to talk, laugh, joke, and flirt in the company of young women—just what they needed to help them forget the war and return to some idea of normalcy. Shortall convened a big celebration and concert for Valentine's Day, 1919. The movie projector she had planned to use broke down, but no one cared. In this pre-U.S.O. Era, the doughboys were delighted for any form of entertainment, and Shortall was happy to sing and dance for them. "There was I, alone, among all these great rough men!" she wrote. "Yet I don't know why I should call them rough. More sweet consideration was never shown anyone than was shown me that evening." She nearly broke down with emotion when a young soldier who had been gassed and lost his voice performed a beautiful violin solo. And so, Shortall and the YMCA women helped the days pass a little faster until the 78th Division was called home in the spring of 1919. A wave of loneliness passed through her as she visited Pouillenay for the last time, only to find it empty of men—its "soul departed." Sent back to Paris, she encountered a detachment of African American soldiers stationed with a labor battalion outside the city. Discovering that they loved music but that their one guitar was broken, Shortall repaired the strings for them—and then stayed to join them in an impromptu jazz ensemble that entertained troops in the area over the following several days. With the YMCA disbanding its operations that summer, Shortall resigned her position. But she refused to go home. Joining the French Red Cross's "Union of the Women of France," she changed the insignia on her uniform and departed to work in the war-ravaged villages along the old front lines, doing her small part to contribute to healing wars terrible wound.

[0:17:53]

Theo Mayer: Dr. Edward Langel, historian, WWI expert, author, and "Story teller Hiking through History." We have links to Ed's post and his authors website in the podcast notes. Okay its time to fast forward into the present with WWI Centennial News Now. As our regular listeners know, this part of the podcast focuses on the present and explores the ongoing WWI documentation and commemoration, education, exploration. Here is where we try to show you how the echoes of the war that changed are still very present in our everyday lives. Welcome to "A Hundred Years in the Making" about the national WWI Memorial that we're building in Washington D.C. This ongoing series of reports and interviews provides our listeners with rare insider view into the intricate and complex process of creating a national memorial. As many of you know, a center piece element of the memorial is a giant bronze sculpture called "A Soldier's Journey" by sculptor Sabin Howard, whose been on the show several times talking about his own journey in creating it. Theirs another aspect in creating a giant bronze sculpture, especially those very rare works of this size. At some point the artists vision needs to become manifest in metal, and of course you don't take out a giant block of bronze and a chisel and hammer and sculpt away. A bronze sculpture is cast from molten metal in a mold. You can start to imagine the scale, scope and challenges of doing that for something that's ft tall and 60ft wide. This kind of work is done in a foundry, and there are very few in the world that are able to take on a sculpture the size the WWI Memorial sculpture. With us today is Steve Mall, the director of one of the most esteemed and advanced foundry's in the world. Located just north of Bristol in the United Kingdom, its called "Pangolin Editions". Steve, thank you for joining us. Welcome to the podcast.

[0:20:11]

Steve Maury: Thank you Theo, great to be here with you guys.

[0:20:13]

Theo Mayer: So, Steve, tell us a little bit about Pangolin Editions. What kind of work does the company do and maybe you can describe the physical plant a bit as well, and the history?

[0:20:21]

Steve Maury: Well primarily we're a foundry that works solely on artwork. Most people imagine a foundry as being heavy industry cutting the pieces of engineering. We only focus upon art. We're by far the largest foundry in the U.K. We started a little over 35 years ago. Very humbly in the back garden of our founders green house in the back garden of their parents home. We have now grown to be a little under 200,000 square feet. We have a team of 180 craftsman and women, so we've grown to meet a need of a burdening art world, and one where they continue to find bronze and enduring material.

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Theo Mayer: An artist like Sabin needs to translate his vision, a very nuance vision, something that he lovingly shapes and renders with his mind, his eyes, and his hands into this gigantic process that involves moving tons of metal, molten dozens of processes and people. Can you help our listeners understand just how that happens?

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Steve Maury: One thing that is an important definition to make between ourselves and Sabin the artist is we do not consider ourselves the artist. We are artisans that work upon his work. So if you will we are a team of technicians and we follow processes. Sabin will make the artwork his own. Be created as you say by his own hand. What we will do is we simply processes to achieve that vision as accurately as possible in a given time to give Sabin back what he requires in a more permanent material.

[0:21:49]

Theo Mayer: A big part of what a foundry does involves craft and science that began centuries ago. But today as you mentioned theirs some technology that's becoming part of the process. Can you give us some insight into that?

[0:22:00]

Steve Maury: One of the things that we've been able to do with Sabin's project, with the memorial, is to use a process called "Photogrammetry". We've developed that in conjunction with another company that we work very closely with a photography studio called Steve Russell's Studios. We have essentially built what we call a "Photogrammetry Rig" and if you can imagine what it is, it is a large 15 ft diameter turntable with a rig built upon that houses 160 very high resolution cameras. We take a model, a real person, we put them into a uniform or a nurses outfit, however Sabin wants the pose to be and we shoot all of those cameras simultaneously. What those images do, we have special software which we developed which allows us to stitch all those images together to create a three-dimensional file. Which we can then put into a physical form and we use that as a very accurate armature for Sabin's then model upon.

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Theo Mayer: I also want to mention, just for our audience. Sabin started the process of design by using an iPhone camera and shooting pictures of models, and starting his sketching from that. So this is sort of the three-dimensional digital version of that amped up a lot.

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Steve Maury: It is. We talk about being an armature because for us something that is produced by machine can never really replace the artist. What we will create to give Sabin is actually a very accurate model of what he's shown from the actual physical model that he's chosen that we've put inside the camera rig. The reason we do that is obviously that these figures will be over life size and for Sabin to do it a traditional way with a steel armature, starting and an enormous bag of clay, it would be half of a lifetimes work to create all the figures required. So what we're doing is we're using technology to give him the head start.

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Theo Mayer: What material is the armature made out of?

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Steve Maury: The armature will be machined on a large 5-Axis CNC machine in a polyurethane foam. A high density foam.

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Theo Mayer: Then you send that to his studio, and he starts to put clay on it?

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Steve Maury: We send that to Sabin's studio, he puts clay on it. He creates the artwork, and then from then we go back into the traditional mold processes of the foundry casting which is to start by making a rubber mold.

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Theo Mayer: Walk us through the process a little bit of then what happens?

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Steve Maury: Once Sabin has finished the artwork and is happy with it, essentially we take that original positive that Sabin's created and we create a soft rubber negative of that original artwork. We then take that negative and we paint wax into that negative. That wax is liquid, its hot, we paint it into the mold. As the wax cools we're able to remove the wax from the mold, then if you like, is a holo copy of the original artwork that Sabin has created. We then take that holo wax, we cut it into pieces because we can't cast a the whole thing together. It needs to be broken into pieces.

We surround those waxes in a refractory material, in this case it will most likely be plaster or ceramic, depending on the process we choose. That whole thing then sits inside a kiln or a large oven. The oven melts the wax out, which then leaves a space behind it, and that space again is connective of the original artwork. Into that space we pour a molten metal. There fore giving us the hard positive copy in bronze of the original artwork, which is the memorial.

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Theo Mayer: So theirs a lot of engineering involved in actually breaking the sculpture apart and reassembling it, isn't there?

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Steve Maury: Theirs a huge amount of engineering. We will be consulting with structure engineers to make sure that its strong enough. We'll be consulting, obviously, with the rest of the team building the memorial part in terms of foundation, fixings, cranes, everything else that goes into a major civil project like this.

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Theo Mayer: I'm just trying to imagine how much metal is poured into something like that. Is there any kind of a sense of that?

[0:25:50]

Steve Maury: Yes. At this stage about 15 metric tons, about 32,000 pounds.

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Theo Mayer: That's quite a lot of bronze! That's great. This is a big story and a big sculpture. How often is something this large made?

[0:26:03]

Steve Maury: Well we are a significantly large foundry. We make artworks all the time. Usually we make artworks that are for private collectors or galleries, not often do we make a memorial of this stature that this piece will be. We often make more contemporary work as well, and I think to occasionally have something with such classicism as this piece has is a real thrill for us.

[0:26:25]

Theo Mayer: It is gonna be a stunning piece and people have seen the 10 foot mockett. Clearly this story is as huge as is the sculpture and maybe we can have you come back later as the process continues. Would you?

[0:26:36]

Steve Maury: I would be absolutely delighted, yeah. Thank you Theo.

[0:26:39]

Theo Mayer: Steve Mall is the Director of Pangolin Editions, a premier foundry located in the UK and working with sculptor Sabin Howard on "The Soldiers Journey" for the national WWI memorial in Washington D.C. Learn more from the links in the podcast notes. Last week, Jason Moran the Artist Director for Jazz at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts talked to us about James Reese Europe, the famous band leader of the Harlem Hell Fighters 369th Regimental band. As a part of the Centennial commemoration, and with the help of the Coca Cola Foundation, and the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission, the 369th Experience was created. A tribute band of students from universities and colleges around the country, and for November 11th, 2018 on the Centennial of the Armistice, the band was brought to Washington D.C. And performed at the site of the future National WWI Memorial there. James Reese Europe the third, grandson of the band leader, and Noble Sissle, Jr grandson of Noble Sissle who was mentored by Europe, introduced the band and their music.

[0:27:49]

James R Europe: My name is James Reese Europe the third, and I am very proud and very happy to be here, and I'm happy that all of you are here as well.

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Noble Sissle Jr: I'm Noble Sissle Jr, and he's the grandson of my father's mentor James Reese Europe.

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James R Europe: They started out in 1913 as the New York National Guard the 15th and they used to march around the streets of Harlem with just broomsticks over their shoulders. Of course they had no weapons then. But eventually they were taken into the Army and they were sent over to France and they were re-designated The 369th. Now the 369th was known by many names. They were known themselves as the Harlem Rattlers because of the rattlesnake

on their flag. The French called them the "Men of Bronze" their German enemy referred them as "Fighting Men from Hell" and that gave them their most popular nickname, "The Hell Fighters". And as their commanding officer said they had the "Best damn band in the army." But they weren't just a band. They were a combat unit and they compiled an amazing combat accomplishment, they went 191 consecutive days at the front. That's the most of any American regiment in the war. They won 171 individual awards, as well as a Regimental Croix de Guerre the highest award that the French will give. Though they were less than 1 percent of the armed forces. At one point they held 20 percent of the front. The 369th were the first soldiers to touch the Rhine River as the Germans retreated back into Germany.

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Noble Sissle Jr: Our musicians are made up of students from 12 colleges and universities in 9 states. They answered the call on the internet. Sent in their videos for their auditions. They were selected, and then they waited until this moment.

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James R Europe: Its New Years day 1918, and the 369th come ashore in France for the very first time, and the very first piece they played, the French National Anthem, the La Marseillaise. They played it with such a jazzed up driven syncopated melody that it took 8 or 10 bars for the French to realize that they were playing their own national anthem. That was the beginning of France's love affair with jazz. Now the 369th, they played concerts all over France. Many of them were outdoor concerts. At one such concert, my grandfather finished the piece he was working on, he looked behind him and saw a little boy, no more than 10. A little French boy, and he was mimicking my grandfather and flailing his arms back and forth. He turned around and he called that little boy up to the stage. Handed the little boy his baton. My grandfather stepped back kinda quietly started the band going and that little boy just took off a big beaming smile across his face, and he just had the time of his life.

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Noble Sissle Jr: Memphis Blues was one of the most famous songs made popular in Europe by Jim Europe, and the 369th. That was the most requested song. The next song is a 1918 song, and I know some of you who were probably born, I don't know in the 40s? This is our rendition of Ja-Da. We're gonna close out the show with a medley of songs that represent all the branches of service. We have a special conductor, he's the Chief Warrant Officer for the U.S. Army retired, but is also the Associate Director of the Washington Redskins marching band, Ed Green. And he's gonna wake you up if your falling asleep already.

[0:35:44]

Theo Mayer: Those were selected clips from the Armistice Centennial performance by the 369th Experience. A 369th Regimental Tribute Band made possible by the hard work of a lot of people, including the tireless Stephanie Neal. Band director Dr. Isrea Butler. Over 30 students from historically black colleges and universities. A whole bunch of friends, a grant from the Coca Cola Foundation and the support of U.S. WWI Centennial Commission. We have links for you in the podcast notes including a full length video of the performance. This week in our segment, "The Historians Corner" we're gonna talk about a subject that bridges our February's Black History Month theme with March's Women's History Month. We're going to talk about 18 African American Nurses that joined the U.S. Army Nurse Corp. To tell us about this, we're joined by Dr. Charissa Threat, Associate Professor of History at Chapman University. Dr. Threat is part of a growing group of scholars that are broadening the view of military history to include scholarship that explores the intersection of Civil Military Relationships that relate to race, gender, and conflict. Dr. Threat, thank you for joining us.

[0:37:01]

Dr. Threat: Thank you so much for having me, Theo.

[0:37:03]

Theo Mayer: I was going to mention that your an Associate of Dr. Jennifer Keene who was on the show with us a couple of weeks ago, aren't you?

[0:37:09]

Dr. Threat: I am. Brand new.

[0:37:11]

Theo Mayer: Oh, well it sounds like the subject of WWI African American participation and women's participation is seriously alive and well at Chapman.

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Dr. Threat: Yes, definitely.

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Theo Mayer: Okay, so Charissa, I'm fascinated by the story for a whole bunch of reasons. Let me start with gender. Did the Army actually recognize these Women as members of the Army?

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Dr. Threat: Well the easy answer to that is, yes and no. Because technically Army Nurse Corp was an auxiliary of the Army, meaning the nurses who served in the Army Nurse Corp served with the military but not in the military technically. So, while they were recognized as being part of the military, they had a very ambiguous relationship in terms of benefits and in terms of status.

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Theo Mayer: Did they earn Veterans Benefits?

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Dr. Threat: Most of them did not. As a matter of fact the U.S. Army Nurse Corp reduced its size considerably after WWI, and so a lot of nurses, even if they did want to stay in the military were essentially out after the end of the war by the time we get to 1919. There were very few benefits attached to that. Nothing like what we see later on in WWII with the G.I. Bill for example.

[0:38:23]

Theo Mayer: The women that we're going to be talking about, the African American women that served as nurses. They started serving post Armistice, didn't they?

[0:38:31]

Dr. Threat: Yes. For many months before the end of the war, from the summer actually of 1918, the army had kind of grappled with accepting black nurses, and there was an initial attempt to have at least 20 black nurses enrolled at the Army Nurse Corp in July, but that ultimately failed. What actually ended up happening was the influenza outbreak of 1918 really did lead to these nurses finally being accepted and what happens is the way that nurses are accepted into the Army Nurse Corp during WWI and during WWII is that they first enroll in the Red cross reserve and its from there that they move into the Army Nurse Corp. Once the influenza outbreak spread, and the reality is they needed more and more nurses to help with both the soldiers that were coming home, but also the influenza that was spreading into the civilian population. This is when the Surgeon General accepted the first 18 black nurses into the Army Nurse Corp officially in late November 1918.

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Theo Mayer: Yeah, its worth mentioning that the battle they were fighting killed more people than the war. So, it's a noble cause.

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Dr. Threat: Absolutely. Well, this is one of the strange and interesting things about the story of these black nurses. Although they were desperate, and really pushed for their acceptance into the Army Nurse Corp, during the war it really took a major health epidemic to get them into the Army Nurse Corp so that they could serve their country officially, because many of these women were actually serving in unofficial capacities with either the Red Cross or they were being hired as civilian nurses who were then working in military hospitals. There was a small group of black student nurses from the Tuskegee School of Nursing who ended up at Camp Sheridan, Illinois to help the influenza patients there during the early part of 1919. So you have that as well. There were many more nurses than just these 18 that were ultimately serving in military hospitals, but it's the 18 that we know were finally inducted into the Army Nurse Corp.

[0:40:46]

Theo Mayer: I understand that some accounts of these women only list 9 nurses who served at Camp Sherman, Ohio. Tell us about the discovery of the others.

[0:40:54]

Dr. Threat: There are actually, and this is just a little quirk, there are actually two sets of 9 nurses serving each at both Camp Sherman, Ohio and Camp Grant, Illinois. So, there were actually two groups of nurses who were officially inducted. We more about the Camp Sherman nurses because theirs a lot more written about them, and we have a couple of the nurses themselves who served at Camp Sherman who would go on to write their own memoirs and who stay in nursing for many years so they continuously tell their story, but there are another 9 set of nurses who end up being at Camp Grant, Illinois and their names are widely available if people look for them, because their names were published in places like The American Journal of Nursing, Nursing World...all of these professional nursing

magazines did list these nurses when they were inducted and where they went, but if you don't know where to look, it's hard to find them.

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Theo Mayer: Is there a book that's been written about all this?

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Dr. Threat: There are a couple earlier books, so Darlene Clark Hine is a historian, an emeritus professor at this point who wrote one of the first well known books about black nurses and the racial challenges they face in a book called "Black Women in White: Racial Conflict and the Nursing Profession." And she talks extensively about black nurses and their fight for professional recognition and as part of that conversation she does talk about these nurses who did serve in WWI, but there's not a one single large scale book that's been written just about the black nurses in WWI. There usually included in other books, like my own, as part of a larger story about racial conflict and civil rights activism.

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Theo Mayer: Well, what's the name of your book?

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Dr. Threat: So my book is titled, "Nursing Civil Rights: Race and Gender in the U.S. Army Nurse Corp" it focuses largely on WWII through Vietnam, but it does also talk about WWI and it really highlights both the racial conflict that was happening within the Army Nurse Corp, but also interesting enough, white male nurses who were also barred from acceptance in the Army Nurse Corp, really until the 1950. It highlights kind of both conversations about race but also gender in the nursing profession and with the military.

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Theo Mayer: So from your point of view. What are the most important elements our listeners should take away from the story?

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Dr. Threat: For me, I think the listeners should understand that black nurses were fully aware and wanting to participate in WWI. That when calls came they were available and they did step up to the plate. There's one black female nurse who's served in WWI, Eileen Coal, writes...she says, "We had no opportunity for service above and beyond call, but we also served with dignity when we could." Just kind of my paraphrase of what she wrote.

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Theo Mayer: Well thank you that is a great story.

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Dr. Threat: Thank you.

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Theo Mayer: Dr. Charissa Threat, Associate Professor of History at Chapman University where she researches and teaches classes in U.S. and African American history, war, and society. To learn more, we have links for you in the podcast notes. Welcome to our segment called, "Speaking WWI." Where we explore the words and phrases that are rooted in the war. For this week, first a little background. As America entered the war, less than 15 years after the Wright Brothers first powered flight at Kitty Hawk in 1903, many prominent people including the airplane pioneer, Orville Wright, believed and campaigned strongly that airplane power and dominating the skies was the solution for ending the war in Europe. Orville Wright famously wrote, "When my brother and I built and flew the first man carrying flying machines we thought we introduced into the world an invention which would make further wars practically impossible." He continued with, "If the allied army's are equipped with such a number of airplanes as to keep the enemy planes entirely back of the line, so that they are unable to direct gunfire or observe the movement of allied troops in other words, the enemy's eyes can be put out, it will be possible to end the war. This is also taking into account what might be done by bombing German's sources of ammunition and supplies." He concludes with, "to end the war quickly and cheaply, the supremacy in the air must be complete as to end the enemy." However, at the time German air technology and capability was unquestionably superior. To counter this, the U.S. Congress passed a bill in July of 1917 just a few months after we declared war, called the Aviation Act of 1917. It allocated an incredible 640 million dollars to build up American aviation program. But you got to take it in context of the times. What is 640 million from 1917 worth in 2019 dollars? Well it's almost 14 billion bucks, and at the time it was the single largest government appropriation for a program in the company's history. Turns out that developing, designing, engineering, and building airplanes in volume, it's so easy, and although the government subsidy was used to develop the foundation of what became the post war U.S. Aerospace industry, still dominates today. During the war, America never actually

delivered any complete fighter planes. We did deliver a great engine it as called the 'Liberty' engine, and we did create an Air Force under the Army called the U.S. Army Air Service that by the Armistice on November 11th, 1918, had a 170,000 men and 20,000 officers in it and training. They mostly flew British and French planes. At home we built up a really build supply of airplanes that just never got deployed. Those hundreds of pilots that we trained, wanted to keep flying. Flying with was a passion. Many joined as pilots for the newly developed air mail service from the U. S. Postal service. While others embraced this week speaking WWI. They started barn storming, you see you, you could buy a surplus airplane from the U.S. Government for only 200 dollars. That's about the equivalent of 4,000 today. The price of a used car beater, now most Americans had only heard about airplanes, but they had never seen one. They flocked to see these daring young men in their flying machines whip through the skies and perform stunts like flying through the open doors of a local barn, you know, 'barn' storming. Acrobats would often carried out feats of daring while standing on the wings of the airplanes, and as competitions grew stiffer, pilots began to resort to more and more dangerous stunts to stand out. That led to a lot of accidents and the government got concerned. So by 1926, the Congress passed the Air Commerce Act which established the idea of basic air traffic rules, and limited how low a pilot could fly during an exhibition. Now these regulations, pretty much marked an end to this weeks "Speaking WWI Word" Barn storming. But they also lay the foundation for the early airline industry, and the Federal Aviation Administration. Barn storming. Daring young men and their flying machines, thrill rural America with war surplus planes a hundred years ago in a world transformed by WWI. To learn more we have a link for you in the podcast notes. This week in "Articles and Posts" where we highlight the stories you will find in our weekly newsletter, the Dispatch. Headline: LETTERS HOME FROM AFRICAN AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN WWI. During Black History Month we've been bringing forward a number of little known unique stories about the experience of African Americans in WWI. This includes a remarkable article created by Mr. Calvin Mitchell that gives a broad insightful overview of the experience of those 360,000 African Americans who served based on their letters home. Headline: PETER JACKSON'S NEW FEATURE FILM ALSO CARRIES WWI THEME. On the heels of his enormously successful WWI documentary "They Shall Not Grow Old." Jackson continues to contemplate a world transformed by WWI, and in this case, his own world as well. The director has just released the first trailer of his upcoming JRR Tolkien biographic feature film. The new movie explores how the horrors of WWI stimulated Tolkien to write what he called, "A fantastical adventure story about good and evil. Destiny and prophecy. Which we now know is The Lord of the Rings trilogy. Headline: COAST GUARD SAILOR AT SEA IN WWI. A Coast Guard man's photos and letters home provide a from the deck played view of patrol service in the Atlantic. In this article from Navel History Magazine, but Commander Stephen Cerco, U.S. Navy retired, you'll learn more about this first person account of Fredrick Richard Falks just 4 days after enlisting in the U.S. Coast Guard in 1917. Headline: TROOP SHIP RESCUE FROM FIRE ISLAND. In the early morning of January 1, 1919 surf man reported sighting the USS Northern Pacific a few miles south east of Fire Islands coast guard station number 83. Unbeknownst to Smith. His initial report was the beginning of an 18 day saga that remains one of those most amazing, yet often forgotten rescues stories of WWI. Did into all these amazing stories through the links in our weekly Dispatch new letter. It's a short and easy guide to a lot of WWI news and information. A subscription to this wonderful weekly guide, its free! You can subscribe at ww1cc.org/subscribe or follow the link in the podcast notes. And that wraps up episode 111 of the award-winning WWI Centennial news podcast. Thank you for listening. We also want to thank our greats guests, our crew and supporters including: Mike Shuster, curator for The Great war Project blog. Dr. Edward Langel, Military historian and author. Steve Maury, Director of Pangolin Editions in the UK. Dr. Charissa Threat, Professor of History at Chapman University. James Reese Europe the third, Noble Sissle Jr, and the 369th Experience orchestra. Thanks to Mac Nelson and Tim Crow our interview editing team. Cats Lazlow the line producer for the show. J.L. Misho, and Dave Kramer for research and script support. And I'm Theo Mayer your producer and host. The U.S, WWI Centennial Commission was created by Congress to honor commemorate and educate about WWI. Our programs our to inspire a national conversation and awareness about WWI, including this podcast. We're bringing the lessons of 100 years ago to today's educators, to their classrooms and to the public. We're helping to restore WWI Memorials in communities of all sizes across the country and of course we're building America's National WWI Memorial in Washington D.C. We want to than the commissions founding sponsor, The Pritzker Military Museum & Library as well as our other sponsors, The Starr Foundation, The General Motors Foundation, and the people of Walmart. The podcast and a full length transcript of the show can be found on our website at ww1cc.org/CN You'll find WWI Centennial news, and all the places you get your podcasts, even using your smart speaker by saying, "Play WW1 Centennial News Podcast." The podcast twitter handle is @TheWW1Podcast, the commissions Twitter and Instagram are both @WW1CC and we're on Facebook at WW1Centennial. Thank you for joining us, and don't forget: Keep the story alive for America by helping to build the memorial. Just text the letters: WWI or WW1 to the phone number 91999. The Castle House Rag One Step was written by James Reese Europe. Thank you for listening. So long!

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