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6 speakers (Theo Mayer, Mike Shuster, Edward Lengel, Beth Baker, Richard Erie, Singer)

[0:00:07]

**Theo Mayer:** Welcome to World War one centennial news, episode number 122. The show is about then, what was happening a hundred years ago in the aftermath of World War One, and the show is about now. How World War One is being remembered and commemorated, written about and discussed, learned and taught, but most important, it's about why and how we'll never let those events fall back into the mists of obscurity. So join us as we explore the many facets of world war one then and now. This week we're going to bring you a navy led adventure as dramatic and arguably as significant as the flight of Apollo 11, a hundred years ago this month. Mike Shuster updates us further on the Paris Peace Conference treaty reactions being wrestled by Germany and even among and between the allies. Dr. Edward Lengel continues his top 10 selection of published personal accounts from World War One. This week, he's picked number six, American Hervey Allen's A Doughboys March Towards the Flame. And as a special treat this week, the Navy's Richard Erie, Director of Fleet Week New York and Beth Baker, the director of public affairs for Fleet Week New York, are going to join us as the big apple, the navy, and the commission. Get ready for this great week of events, all on this episode of World War One Centennial News, which is brought to you by the US World War One Centennial Commission, the Pritzker Military Museum & Library, the Star Foundation, the General Motors Foundation, as well as the good people of Walmart. I'm Theo Mayer, the chief technologist for the commission and your host. Welcome to the show. We have a big Navy and World War One theme going this month, and in our editorial planning meetings, a 100 years ago story jumped out that is so compelling and exciting that we thought we'd dedicate the whole segment to it. It's a story we've touched on in the past. The first successful Transatlantic plane crossing, and it happened in a US Navy flying boat known as the NC-4. So with that as a setup, let's jump into our centennial time machine and go back 100 years, as the postwar US Navy takes on the challenge of flying from the North American to the European continent. We've gone back a hundred years to early May, 1919. The newspapers all over the nation, small towns and large cities alike are all tuned into a play by play, day by day drama happening along the North Eastern seaboard, a Mid-Atlantic island chain, and over to Lisbon in Portugal. The papers are telling the story of three Navy planes that are bound and determined to be the first airplanes to fly across the Atlantic. Unlike the pilots who are competing for the grand prize for the first nonstop Transatlantic flight, The Navy is trying to demonstrate that their world war one developed technology can bridge the Pacific Ocean's chasm. The plane's designed by Glen Curtis and his team, and manufactured by the Curtis Airplane and Motor Company and is meant to serve as a US Navy submarine hunter. Now, a crucial strategic capability for the plane's deployment in World War One, is that it needs to be able to fly itself across the Atlantic to the European theater. You see, as America deploys an unprecedented number of troops to Europe, there is simply no cargo space available on ships to transport large planes. To be viable in the conflict, those planes need to be able to get where they need to go on their own. For Transatlantic Capability, the NC-4 sported four of the American engineered and designed 12 cylinder liberty engines. As it happens, the war ends before the plane can be put into service, but their design and capability is considered by the Navy and by Curtis to be groundbreaking. Well, maybe groundbreaking's the wrong phrase because after all, it is a flying boat. Now, the Navy wants to shed some light on what's been accomplished, and so it decides to show off it's new technology and capability by making the Navy Curtis flying boat the first plane ever to fly across the Atlantic. It's meant to be a huge public relations coup for the US Navy, Curtis, and the fledgling American aerospace industry. To do this, three planes are designated to make the voyage, the NC-1, the NC-3 and the NC-4. Now, NC stands for Navy Curtis, but everyone knew them as Nancy's. Okay. So, the Navy's gone all in on commitment and planning, and the multi-leg journey and adventure starts at the Naval air station at Rockaway Beach, New York, on May 8th, 1919. We're going to follow the events day by day, and it's a truly epic story. Tuesday, May 6th, 1919. This is the day before the scheduled departure, and there's a great deal of drama at Rockaway beach. An HS-1, a single-engine seaplane flying over the Naval Air Station has an accident which sadly kills both the pilot and copilot. And on the same day, there's a fire in a hangar which threatens to destroy two of the three transatlantic squadrons flying boats. One of them, the NC-1 one is damaged but repairable. Wednesday, May 17, 1919. Weather in New England and Nova Scotia delays the departure of Halifax, but gives the team time to fix the fire damage on the NC-1. Thursday, May 8th. The three plane squadron takes off for Halifax. Over the next nine hours, two of the three planes make it, but there's a lot of concern about the NC-4 which reports engine trouble around midday and then goes radio silent. As the day wears on, they fear she might be lost, but later, wireless dispatches report her limping safely into Chatham, Massachusetts. Now, radio itself is a new tool in the arsenal of long distance navigation. The Navy's posting ships along the route, both to act as navigational aids to the planes and to provide progress reports, and of course should the need arise, to act as rescuers. Because of the wireless communication, the run-up drama, the delays, the lost plane and the NC-4's eventual arrival in Chatham, these are all news playing out in near real time, as the grand adventure before an intrigued and absorbed nation and world. This is very new and groundbreaking all by itself. Saturday, May 10. The NC-1 and NC-3 take off from Halifax heading Northeast to Trepassy harbor. Now that's generally the most Eastern port on the North American continent. It's almost directly

due South of the tip of Greenland. I didn't know the continent actually went that far East, but it does. As they take off, trouble strikes. The NC-3 has to go back to Halifax and fix a problem with its propeller, but she makes it to Trepassey before the day's end. Meanwhile, the NC-4 is still in Chatham, Massachusetts and is not ready to journey to Halifax yet. In other news from St. John Newfoundland, the navy announces that they have a dirigible, a lighter than air ship, the C-5, which is also going to try the ocean crossing after a test flight heading to Trepassey. The USS Chicago, the flagship of Rear Admiral Spencer Wood is deployed from New York to St. John in all haste with supplies and gas containers for the balloons attempt. Sunday, May 11th. Bad weather keeps everybody grounded. The NC-1 and NC-3 are getting prepped. The NC-4 hasn't made it out of Chatham yet, and the dirigible C-3 is getting ready to head to St. John. Part of the news of the day in the papers are reports about the new navigation technologies being used. They include an aerial sextant, a new instrument with a bubble in a curve tube that shows if the wings are flat to the horizon, if not, the plane is turning. Now that piece of tech is something that was still in a trainer. I learned to fly in, in the late sixties. With many of our listeners growing up in the age of GPS, in a world where you casually accept that you always know where you are, it's hard to imagine having nothing but the sun, the stars, a compass and a clock to tell you where you are and where you want to go. Next Day, Monday, May 12. Good weather is forecast and the NC-1 and NC-3 say they may not wait for the NC-4 if an opening arises. Tuesday, May 13. The NC-1 and NC-3 are ready and announce that they're not going to be racing across the Atlantic, but flying together. The NC-4 isn't there yet. The C-5 dirigible is ready to head North. In another unrelated airplane achievement story that sneaks into the headlines today, a professor David Todd, the head of the Amherst Astronomical Observatory, announces plans to take a plane up to 15,000 feet, now that's 2.8 miles up, to take what they expect to be unprecedented photographs of an upcoming solar eclipse. Wednesday, May 14. The dirigible C-5, now being called a blimp in the headlines, is heading to St. John. The NC-4 makes it to Halifax and the rest of the squadron, the NC-3 and NC-1 have decided to wait for the NC-4 in Trepassey. Thursday, May 15. The C-5 blimp is more than St. John and breaks away in a sudden gale and gets blown to sea. During the dramatic event, sailors are swept off their feet and a rope catches a local boy. One person is sadly killed in the incident and a short time later, the Navy C-5 dirigible goes down. A British ship finds her in the water and rescues the crew. On the same day, the NC-4 makes it to Trepassey, and the entire squadron is now assembled and ready to make a run for the Azores, which if you don't know where that is, is an island chain in the middle of the Atlantic, sort of due west of Portugal and Spain. Friday the 17th. There's a big headline in the New York Times that shouts the news. Headline, all three planes nearing the Azores, NC-4 was 800 miles out at 3:06 this morning. The Navy has staged 21 destroyers along the route from Trepassey to the Azores, providing the intrepid navy pilots with navigation help and constant communications, and news updates for us as they fly the stunning 1,350 mile leg of the journey. That's a brand new world today. Saturday, May 18. The results are in. The NC-4 makes the run to the Azores in 15 hours of solid flying and she's ready to head for Lisbon in Portugal. The NC-1 has troubles and she lands in the sea where she's found by a steamship who throws her a line and tries to tow her in. But, the line parts and the plane goes down to Davy Jones' Locker. Fortunately, the crew of six is rescued. Unfortunately, the NC-3 is missing somewhere in the fog and is being looked for by the Navy destroyers. Sunday, May 19. The NC-3 is still missing. There's grave concern for her safety. Destroyers are combing the seas. The crew of the NC-1 which sank yesterday is brought to port in the Azores. Meanwhile, the NC-4 is readying for the last leg to Lisbon, Portugal, the Eastern most edge of the European continent. And now we get a plot twist. In a competitive attempt to steal the thunder, so to speak, a British Hawker Sopwith biplane, with pilots Hawker and Grieve takes off from St. John, hoping to make the first nonstop Transatlantic crossing and beat the Americans to win the first crossing overall. Monday, May 20th. The British biplane with Hawker and Grieve disappears on their flight, and the British Admiralty fears that they're lost. But good news for the US Navy, 52 hours after disappearing, the lost NC-3 arrives in the Azores. It's a great story. Apparently, during a water landing to get their bearings a few days earlier, she was slightly damaged so that she couldn't take to the skies again, but being essentially a boat, the NC-3 fired up her engines and motored her way on the ocean surface to the Azores, much to the joyous and happy relief of the US Navy and her Navy comrades. Then things slowed down a bit. The weather intervenes and the NC-4 is stuck in the Azores by bad weather, delaying her attempt to reach Lisbon. On Monday, May 26th, good news. Hawker and Grieve, the British biplane pilots have been rescued mid ocean by an American steamer who found them. But having no wireless radio, the news of their rescue didn't get out until today. Hawker tells of his flight and rescue. They were aloft for 13 hours and in the ocean for two and a half before they were found. Meanwhile, the NC-4, you know, that plane that had all the trouble at the start and a heck of a time catching up with her squadron in Trepassey is now getting ready to fly the key final leg to Lisbon. Tuesday, May 27th, 1919. The NC-4, the Navy Curtis flying boat designed by Glen Curtis and his team, manufactured by the Curtis Airplane and Motor Company for the US Navy, sporting four US designed liberty engines and piloted by Lieutenant Commander A.C. Reid, are the first men in history to fly across the Atlantic in an airplane. It's a huge win for American capability. It's not only cause for big celebration, but it actually marks a moment in history that ushers in a new age. When within a couple of generations, a mere 100 years later, common citizens routinely travel to every corner of our planet safely and even cheaply without giving it much thought. Wow, what a story, what an adventure. And for me having dug into it this week, every bit is exciting, in its own way every bit is significant as the flight of Apollo 11. Hey Hollywood, are you paying attention? Great story here. And those are the headlines a hundred years ago this month, a direct result of the war that changed the world. Over the past weeks, Mike Shuster, former NPR correspondent and curator for the Great War project blog has been providing us with a series of posts that address the ongoing evolution in Paris surrounding the Versailles Peace Treaty terms. Mike, your

post this week once again tells of a process in turmoil, with inexplicable conflicting posturing within the allies, defiance from the Germans, and it seems, a great deal of controversy about the treaty itself.

**[0:17:11]**

**Mike Shuster:** That's right Theo. So our headline reads, Cracks In the Allied Side, Endless Threat of Starvation or Justice for the Dead. The ultimatum sign or the war starts anew, and it's special to the Great War Project. The German response to the proposed peace treaty has grown to more than 20,000 words. It puts some cracks into the unanimity of the allied powers. According to a story in Thomas Fleming, some now admit openly that they agree with Berlin's argument that it signed a contract to make peace on the basis of President Wilson's 14 points, and the treaty did not come close to doing this. Wilson's press secretary tells him the treaty is unworkable. Key figures in the American delegation including Herbert Hoover, who is in charge of feeding the starving people of Europe, decide to ask Wilson to revise the treaty. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George is now similarly changing his view of the treaty. It's time for Wilson to make some changes himself, including setting a specific amount for German reparations. At the moment the Draft Treaty is not specific on that issue, leaving Germany to fear it could be an unending demand. Hoover expresses fears that the German economy could face the endless threat of both starvation and Bolshevism. Wilson is unmoved Fleming rights. Facing a group of American delegates to the peace conference, Wilson listened more or less patiently. Most had quietly begun to change their views, but they were reluctant to challenge their leader. Only Hoover and a pair of other delegates speak out strongly against the treaty. Wilson dismisses all their objections exhorting them to do the just thing and support the treaty. The treaty was a hard one he argues, but a hard one was needed. Why this was so he did not say Fleming rights, whereupon he ducked into his refuge, The League of Nations. Everything would be solved to everyone's satisfaction. When Germany was admitted to the League, the treaty sought justice supporters, right? Justice for the dead, wounded, orphaned and bereaved, who had fought to free Europe from Prussian despotism. In a final insult to the liberals and socialists now in charge of Germany, they sneered that there was no guarantee that their current government represented a permanent change from Kaiserism. French PM Clemenceau, the revenge of secret personified, could not have written a more offensive response. Despite waffling on Lloyd George's part, others among the British are sharpening their attack on the Germans. And then comes a bombshell from the British side. Fleming goes on an ultimatum. Germany must sign within seven days or the war would be renewed. The German foreign minister now realizes there is only one move left, departure. It is now left to others from the German government to choose whether to sign the treaty or defy the allies. On the way back to Berlin the Germans formulate a response, the only one possible they believe, a rejection. They call the War Guilt Clause hateful and dishonorable, and condemn many other terms as unbearable and impossible a fulfillment. Meanwhile, the clock is ticking on the allied ultimatum. And that's the news from the Great War Project a hundred years ago these days.

**[0:20:29]**

**Theo Mayer:** Mike Shuster's the curator for the Great War Project blog. The link to his post is in the podcast notes. This week in our historians corner, regular contributor historian Dr. Edward Lengel continues his series of posts that profile his top 10 selections from the many, many hundreds of published personal accounts from World War One. This week Ed profiles American Hervey Allen's, A Doughboys March Towards the Flame. Ed's pick for best war memoir number six

**[0:21:02]**

**Edward Lengel:** Most of the best known English language personal accounts of World War One were written by Europeans, Australians and Canadians. Even in the United States, accounts by American soldiers and marines typically had very limited readership, which is a shame because so many good ones were written, like Harvey Allen's masterpiece Toward the Flame, A War Diary. A lieutenant in the 28th divisions 111th regiment, Allen intimately portrayed episodes from the summer of 1918, as his unit marched toward one of the hardest fought American encounters of the war, at the tiny French village of Thimert. His book, published in 1926, and reissued in a revised edition in 1934, stands number six on my list of the top 10 personal accounts of World War One. Born in 1889 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Harvey Allen graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1915 with a degree in economics. With war raging in Europe, he decided not to enter the workforce right away and instead joined the Pennsylvania National Guard. In 1916, he served under General John J Pershing along the Mexican border, where he took the first steps toward a literary career by writing a volume of poetry titled Ballads of the Border. Later, he would write the bestselling historical novel Anthony Adverse. When the United States entered World War One the following year, the Pennsylvania National Guard was organized into the 28th Infantry Division, in which Allen became a lieutenant. One of the first national guard formations sent to France, the 28th division became involved in heavy fighting in the summer of 1918, and soon earned a reputation as one of the finest formations in the AEF. Allen participated in this fighting and was placed in charge of B company after his captain was killed in action. The climax to Allen's experiences came along the Vesle River in August, 1918, where troops of the 28th division held positions on the South Bank of the river in theme, while also trying to cling to a little bridgehead in the village of Thimert on the North Deck. The Germans kept the Americans under almost constant artillery fire, while also launching frequent infantry attacks by flamethrower toting stormtroopers. In one episode described in Toward the Flame, Allen watched

the ugly nose of a German machine gun appear from a haystack, from which went up a faint blue haze and joined with other German machine guns in mowing down American combat patrols. Moments later, Allen's own post in Thimert was caught up in the inferno. The whole hill seemed to be alive with machine guns and artillery, he wrote. Such a barrage fell on Thimert that we were instantly driven from our posts into the dugout. In the yard beside us, shell after shell smashed. We closed the iron door to our cave to keep out the fragments, but the choking gas and the smell of high explosives came in. Above all, the roars suddenly sounded seemingly right above our heads. The sharp bark of our own single machine gun, brave lads they were still sticking to it in the Garret. We knew they had only one box of ammunition left. Houses along the street were blown up and disappeared inwardly in a cloud of dust and a sliding noise. I hopped out once to see major Donnelly at the big cave. "Hang on." He said. After what seemed an eternity, someone came and said our men were coming back. Then our own barrage fell, it was the greatest we had thrown around there. The hillside was tossed about for an hour and the German shells had ceased. As always when it lifted, there followed the silence of the dead. We were all breathing in relief when what was left of the other companies returned. It was a miserable remnant. The loss had been terrific. Some of the companies were down to a few men. The battle continued to a crescendo that lasted for several days, and ended with a climactic last stitch attack on a handful of American survivors that Allen brilliantly described in *Toward the Flame*. When did an action on returning home to the United States, embittered at what he called the losses of the many for the sake of the few. Allen became a lecturer at Columbia and Vassar and continued his writing career. He died in 1949 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

[0:25:18]

**Theo Mayer:** Dr. Edward Lengel's blog is called *A Storyteller Hiking Through History*, and is filled with first person perspectives and accounts that provide a nuanced insight into the era. We have links to Ed's post and his author's website in the podcast notes. Okay, it's time to fast forward into the present with World War One centennial news. During this part of the podcast we explore how World War One is being remembered and commemorated today. Here's where we spotlight the surprisingly numerous and significant commemoration activities surrounding World War One and World War One themes. In commission to this, we have something very exciting. For our regular listeners, you may remember last July in episode number 80 when we brought on a guest named Deborah Dudek, who wrote a wonderful and wonderfully useful 100 plus page book called, *The World War One Genealogy Research Guide*, tracing American military and noncombatant ancestors. Well, Deborah is a wonderful supporter of the commission and the World War One commemoration, and we were able to make an arrangement for collaborating on an updated new edition of this excellent resource, which we're offering to the world for free as a digital download. That's right. You can get your own free copy of the *World War One Genealogy Research Guide* by going to, [ww1cc.org/guide](http://ww1cc.org/guide), all lower case. We're very proud of this team effort to help America and Americans find their World War One heritage, and we're really excited to be able to offer it to you for free. There are limited quantities available. So I want to encourage you to get your copy right now at, [ww1cc.org/guide](http://ww1cc.org/guide), all lower case, and please let us know how you like it. Now for another special treat. We've been featuring stories about the Navy and its role in World War One for weeks now, and clearly we've seen how the World War One story is intimately connected to both the Navy and to New York. So, Navy and New York. Well that adds up to Fleet Week. Since 1984, US Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard ships have landed in New York for Fleet Week, with events and celebrations in May that run through Memorial Day. It's become a traditional New York celebration of our Maritime Services and their special relationship with the city. To tell us more about Fleet Week New York, its history and what's happening in May of 2019, including World War One themed activities, joining us are the Navy's Richard Erie, director of Fleet Week New York, who's also better known by his fighter pilot handle as Corky, and Beth Baker, the director of public affairs for the Navy region Mid-Atlantic and Fleet Week New York. Both of you, welcome to the podcast.

[0:28:33]

**Beth Baker:** Thank you. It's great to be here.

[0:28:34]

**Richard Erie:** [crosstalk]

[0:28:35]

**Theo Mayer:** So Corky, let me start with you. Fleet Week is something the Navy has been doing now for decades, not only in New York but other cities like San Diego. What's the history of Fleet Week in the Navy and what's the idea behind the effort?

[0:28:47]

**Richard Erie:** Well Theo, that's correct. The navy has been doing events like Fleet Week around the country for decades. And right now the principal Fleet Weeks are up in Portland, Oregon with the Rose Festival, Seattle Seafair, Los Angeles has a Fleet Week, now it's just San Diego, and then on the east coast of course we've got Port Everglades, Florida. Every other year I believe we're doing New Orleans, and of course there's a Superbowl Fleet Weeks up in New York. And it's an important effort because the Navy as they say, is America's away team. So when

we're doing our job, we're not really being seen by the public too much because we're all overseas doing that hard work. So, it's important for the Navy and the Sea Services to get into the cities to highlight the capabilities of the ships and hardware and everything, but more importantly to showcase the sailors, marines and coast guardsmen. Whenever we do a big event like a Fleet Week New York, that is always the biggest and most important thing we do. And in fact that's the biggest crowd responses from just that average sailor, marine or coast guardsman walking around interacting with the public. So that's an important part of the Navy's outreach mission.

**[0:29:44]**

**Theo Mayer:** So Beth, you've been the public affairs officer for Fleet Week New York for a long time. When was your first fleet week?

**[0:29:50]**

**Beth Baker:** Oh goodness, I'd say I've kind of lost track of it, but probably about 15 years ago was when I first began working Fleet Week New York for the Mid-Atlantic region. And it's one of the highlights of what I get to do every year. And to bring the sailors and Marines and coast guard personnel, to have them experience Fleet Week is just really a thrill.

**[0:30:08]**

**Theo Mayer:** Well, Fleet Week New York is now basically an annual tradition. I'm sure it's been evolving. How did it evolve over all these years?

**[0:30:15]**

**Beth Baker:** Well, it has, and the ships have gone primarily into Manhattan for a number of years. And we've really expanded the outreach of the Navy into the communities and the boroughs in New York even further. We expanded into Staten Island who was just an amazing port to visit at the Sullivan's pier, and we extended our outreach into Brooklyn the last several years. It's difficult for us to get into all the boroughs, but we've also reached out into the US Merchant Marine Academy and the SUNY Maritime. So we're trying to cover all of the boroughs as much as we can, but not only the Navy ships that have come in, the extended outreach entered the boroughs beyond ships. 'Cause we recognize not everyone can get to the Piers to see their Navy Marine Corps and Coast Guard team. So we take that team, the Sea Service, out into the community where we do aviation events at parks throughout the week and the weekend. We have community relations activities and engagement in Rockefeller Plaza in Times Square. We're really all over the boroughs. So you'll see sailors and marines doing a whole lot of different things, and we've extended and expanded our community outreach with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Meals on wheels. Whenever we go into a port, whether it's here or at home or abroad, it's always important to give back into the communities that we're visiting. So where we can do engagements and give back to our communities, like painting a home or community center for Habitat for Humanity, or delivery Meals on Wheels, or visiting veteran centers or VA's or hospitals. It's really something that the service members really enjoy doing. So, I'd say that's really expanded and grown over the course of the many years.

**[0:31:48]**

**Theo Mayer:** Beth, you had also started to reach down into schools, aren't you?

**[0:31:51]**

**Beth Baker:** We do. From kindergarten through high school is really a great outreach effort. We do a big event at Staten Island where all the schools in Staten Island could come out and watch an aviation exhibit and listen to the navy band, see a coastguard demonstration by the Silent Drill Team. So those school children hopefully see those activities going on and maybe it inspires them to join one of the Sea Services at some point in their lives. And also we teach STEM activities. We've got robotics and activities where we can get into classrooms and do some things in schools to showcase that science and math and technology is for students, that there are great careers in the Navy or Marine Corps coastguard. If you're not necessarily a sailor per say, it's more than just being on the high seas or defending freedom, there's a whole lot of activities that reach all kind of different spectrums across the board.

**[0:32:39]**

**Theo Mayer:** Now, Corky you're an ex fighter pilot, aren't you?

**[0:32:42]**

**Richard Erie:** That's a true statement. Yes. That was my misspent youth.

**[0:32:45]**

**Theo Mayer:** Well, in the process of putting this together, you're also dealing with a lot of hardcore logistics. It's a pretty complicated endeavor. Can you give our listeners some idea of what is involved in all the agencies that you have to deal with in New York?

[0:32:58]

**Richard Erie:** Absolutely. Upwards of 12 ships pulling into the five boroughs of New York can get massively complex, just from the ship support side of it. Obviously there's what's called the husbanding services, where the ships need to have all the services Pier site provided, and the fendering, and the bowers and ramps to get people aboard. But also you're dealing with on the shore side. Pretty much every agency in New York, whether it's the Office of the Mayor, or Office of Emergency Management, NYPD, FDNY, several of the corporations that run the waterfronts, and you're also trying to pull together all the support logistics. We have a staff of about 520 or so, active duty and civilian folks are what I'd term staff, working up in New York to execute the event. Each of those sites of the five sites that I've talked about has a command center, if you will, that's connected by computers and communication to a main command center in Manhattan. So just putting those together is logistically a monster. And then of course you've got all the hotel support and vehicle support and everything like that. So, it's really kind of a year long planning effort. You're kind of looking at those long range logistics for quite a while, trying to make it all come together because up until about three weeks out, all of the things we're talking about are kind of theoretical. Then everything starts to turn real. Everything starts to show up and alive, deliveries are made, and then it transitions very quickly into a build phase, trying to put it all together just before the ships arrive. And it's a lot of people doing a lot of work for a lot of months just to get the plan in place, and then everyone's got to go up to New York and start building the frame of the house before the ship show up. And you have to kind of keep your brain on a swivel as we say, because you're always faced with all kinds of challenges. And differences, and pop up challenges and problems. But for the most part, what makes the job easy frankly, is the city of New York and all the agencies and the citizens are so very cooperative. I mean, they go above and beyond the call for us in any number of ways you care to mention. From NYPD basically flooding our Piers with police officers to help us provide security, to FTNY doing all the EMS coverage on the Piers and things like that, to a man and woman, they want to support as much as they possibly can and it will go well above and beyond the call of duty for their Navy and their Marine Corps and their coastguard.

[0:35:00]

**Theo Mayer:** Well, New York does love Fleet Week, it really does.

[0:35:04]

**Richard Erie:** They really do.

[0:35:05]

**Theo Mayer:** And Beth, this year there's a World War One component that's part of the theme, how's that manifesting?

[0:35:11]

**Beth Baker:** We're really excited about that. So, we were able to theme the Fleet Week this year with the commemoration of World War One. And New York has a rich history with World War One that we're going to tell that story to the general public and the masses throughout a whole lot of different activities. We've got World War One reenactors that are going to actually be on the Piers, on the ships talking to the public, and that's tens of thousands of people, hopefully, we have good weather. We're going to be in Times Square and Rockefeller Plaza, we're going to be on media, we're going to be all over the place. In the World War One monument in DC, we have a Marquette, which is a mock up of that monument, will be on display at various locations throughout the city for everyone to kind of see and learn a little bit more about their history and the ties to New York specifically. So, it's a great opportunity to tell the story and the rich connection that the city of New York has with World War One.

[0:36:00]

**Theo Mayer:** I have two short last questions for both and for each of you. The first question is, in the years that you've been doing this for the Navy, what do you personally got to remember most about Fleet Week? You know, what are you going to tell the grandkids about? Beth you're first.

[0:36:15]

**Beth Baker:** So for me, I would have to say the wonderful hospitality that the city of New York extends to our sailors, marines and coastguard personnel, and really all of our armed services. I've grown up in a Navy town here in Norfolk my entire life. So I see the sailors every day, but the people of New York, the visitors, and the people who live there don't see that. And they stopped sailors and marines on the street and pose for pictures, and to get selfies, and just chat them up and they tell them thank you, which is not something they get here at home. It's just sort of a given. But the hospitality and the red carpet that the city of New York rolls out is something that you have to see to believe, and it really is amazing.

[0:36:56]

**Theo Mayer:** Corky?

**[0:36:57]**

**Richard Erie:** I would echo Beth's comment obviously about the reception from the city of New York and the citizens. One of the things though for me doing several large events a year, what I tend to notice most and remember the most are what I call little vignettes that I see occur during an event of that scale. They're not really big and not a whole lot of people notice them. Two of them in particular from Fleet Week are my favorites. On my first or second Fleet Week I think it was, I was walking around Times Square just kind of watching the show, seeing how things are coming together and two young sailors were walking down the sidewalk, and they couldn't walk more than 10 feet without someone wanting to take their picture with them. And so I was kind of standing close to them as they were doing like their 10th or 15th selfie with a bunch of citizens or members of the public, and the one guy says to the other guy, "Man, we're rock stars." I said, "You guys are rock stars." And it was really neat to see something they don't get a chance to experience very often. You know? So that's one angle that I really appreciate, is the impact it makes on the sailors as well to be treated so nicely in New York. And then of course the other is, there was a time when we had an elderly gentleman, Marine Corps veteran in a wheelchair. He had his marine jacket on, and his ball cap from Vietnam and he was pretty old. He came up to one of the ships, one of the amphibious ships that has a bunch of marines on it and was told, "Unfortunately sir, you can't have a wheelchair on a ship. [inaudible] do those." And there were a bunch of marines who said, "I will take care of this." They picked the gentleman up, carried him to board the ship and they gave him his own personal guided tour. So, that's kind of neat to see that young kid link up with an old veteran like that and just kind of take care of a fellow marine that, you know, may have left the service a long time ago, but he's still one of them.

**[0:38:22]**

**Theo Mayer:** Well, great stories from both of you. Okay. One more wrapper question. It's a tough one, but it's a really short answer. Can you describe Fleet Week New York in one phrase? Corky, you're first.

**[0:38:33]**

**Richard Erie:** Fleet Week New York is 12 to 14 Navy and coastguard ships carrying upwards of 2,600 sailors, marines and coast guardsmen to all five boroughs of New York City, executing over 130 events in six days.

**[0:38:47]**

**Theo Mayer:** And Beth, how about you?

**[0:38:49]**

**Beth Baker:** So for me I'd say, Fleet Week New York is the opportunity for us to tell the Navy, Marine Corps, Coastguard story to the people of New York to highlight what their Navy, Marine Corps and their Coastguard do for them day in and day out to protect our sea lanes, protect commerce, and to just be the away team on a regular basis, and just the importance of those Sea Services to the American people.

**[0:39:13]**

**Theo Mayer:** Wonderful speaking with you both, thank you for joining us and telling our listeners more about Fleet Week and Fleet Week New York in 2019.

**[0:39:20]**

**Richard Erie:** Thank you.

**[0:39:20]**

**Beth Baker:** Thank you so much.

**[0:39:21]**

**Theo Mayer:** Richard Erie AKA Corky is the director, and Beth Baker is the director of public affairs for Fleet Week New York. Closing this week with articles and posts. Here are some of the highlights you'll find in our weekly newsletter, The Dispatch. World War One mobile museum is on the move. Keith Collie is the proprietor of the incredible World War One mobile museum. Keith, a longtime friend of the World War One centennial and his museum have been very busy telling the World War One story. Keith spoke with Commission Director of Communications, Chris Isleib last week and filled us in on what he's been doing. The article's posted on the commission website. Marines dedicate Panzer Kaserne parade ground as Devil Dog Field. The US Marine Corps has long been associated with the Battle of Belleau Wood, and its role in stopping the German advance on Paris in June of 1918. But Belleau Wood was only the beginning of the story for the corps in World War One. To commemorate their service and sacrifice across the battlefields of Europe, a memorial dedicated on the parade grounds in front of the Marine Corps forces Europe and Africa headquarters, renames the field as Devil Dog Field, the World War One German nickname for the marines. The unlucky life of Nebraska's own Private Ryan in World War One. Private Clifford Ryan lived a cursed life, right up to the moment his commanding officer sent the Nebraska boy charging over a bloodied

river in France. Matthew Hanson of the Omaha World Herald newspaper writes, Clifford T. Ryan is the full name of the 24 year old infantry man sprinting across a bridge on November 11th, 1918. Cliff's mother died when he was four. He grew into a man and married his first love, Loretta. His wife died giving birth to their first child, and his baby girl died as well. He enlisted in the army. Then just as luck would have it, soon found himself stuck for three months on the brutal front lines. Already you can suspect that this tale won't end well. The link to the story is in the dispatch. Camp Sherman looked back, a proud Chillicothe warrior. Austin P. Story must have been puzzled when he checked the mailbox at his Caldwell street home in early November, 1975. Peeking out of the top, was a large manila envelope addressed to him from Colonel James B. Agnew of the Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Tucked away inside was a lengthy 44 question survey inquiring about Austin's experience in World War One. The 84 year old veteran had been discharged nearly 60 years earlier and you can read his reply. And that's just a little of what you'll find when you subscribe to the weekly Dispatch newsletter. It offers a quick read series of short paragraphs that act as an easy guide to Great World War One news and information. You can subscribe to this great free weekly guide at [ww1cc.org/subscribe](http://ww1cc.org/subscribe), or follow our link in the podcast notes to the Dispatch newsletter subscription. And that wraps up episode number 122 of the award-winning World War One centennial news podcast. Thank you for listening. We want to thank our great guests, crew and supporters including, Mike Shuster, curator for the Great War Project blog. Dr Edward Lengel, historian, author and speaker. The Navy Fleet Week New York's Corky Erie and Beth Baker. Thanks to Mac Nelsen and Tim Crowe, our interview editing team. Kat Laszlo, the line producer for the show. Dave Kramer and J.L. Michaud for research and script support, and I'm Theo Mayer, your producer and host. The US World War One Centennial Commission was created by Congress to honor, commemorate and educate about World War One. Our programs are to inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War One, including this podcast. We're bringing the lessons of a hundred years ago to today's educators, their classrooms, and to the public. We're helping to restore World War One memorial in communities of all sizes across our country, and of course, we're building America's National World War One memorial in Washington DC. We want to thank the commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum & Library, as well as our other sponsors, the Star Foundation, the General Motors Foundation, as well as the good people of Walmart. The podcast and a full transcript of the show can be found on our website at [ww1cc.org/cn](http://ww1cc.org/cn). You'll find World War One centennial news in all the places you get your podcasts, and even using your smart speaker by saying, play WW1 centennial news podcast. The podcast Twitter handle is [@theWW1podcast](https://twitter.com/theWW1podcast). The commission's Twitter and Instagram handles are both [@WW1CC](https://twitter.com/WW1CC), and we're on Facebook at [WW1centennial](https://www.facebook.com/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 and make a contribution.

**[0:45:22]**

**Singer:** Oh joy, oh boy, where do we go from here? One fine night at [inaudible] had an awful time, took a bunch of ladies to [inaudible]. When the waiter came around the ladies all just whined, Patty stretched his head a bit and hollered not for [inaudible]. Where do we go from here, boys where do we go from here. After that I'll take my hat and quickly disappear. My mouth keeps saying something but my pocket [inaudible]. Oh joy, oh boy, where do we go from here.

**[0:46:01]**

**Theo Mayer:** Thank you for listening to this week's show, so long.

**[0:46:04]**