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8 speakers (Theo Mayer, Mike Shuster, Dr. Edward L., Col Arthur T., Dr. Jennifer Z., Ron Nash, Mother, Ruben)

[0:00:07]

Theo Mayer: Welcome to the World War I Centennial News Podcast, episode number 126. It's about then, what was happening 100 years ago in the aftermath of World War I; and it's about now, how World War I is being remembered and commemorated; but most important, the podcast is about why and how we'll never let those events fall back into the mists of obscurity. Join us as we explore the many facets of World War I, both then and now. This week on the show, with the recent 75th anniversary of D-Day, we explore both the similarities and the differences between American forces fighting in France 25 years apart. Mike Shuster offers another insight into the challenges of trying to make peace in Paris. Dr. Edward Lingle presents his second to last selection of published personal accounts from World War I. This week, Sigfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of George Sherston*. Colonel Arthur Tulak, U.S. Army Retired, the Chair of the Hawaii World War I Centennial Task Force joins us to talk about their centennial commemoration and their wrap up World War I symposium in Honolulu this month. Then, we explore World War I education in two parts. Dr. Jennifer Zobelein introduces us to the Commission's World War I Teacher's Toolkit Program. Ron Nash, from the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, tells us about their World War I Education Program. All this week on World War I Centennial News, the Doughboy Podcast brought to you by the US World War I Centennial Commission, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, the Starr Foundation and the Doughboy Foundation. I'm Theo Mayer, the Chief Technologist for the Commission and your host. Welcome to the show. In the last century, American Troops landed in force on the shores of France twice, a hundred years ago for World War I and a second time, essentially a mere 25 years later. This month marks the 75th anniversary of D-Day in World War II. We thought we'd draw some lines of parallel and some lines of contrast from World War I to World War II as we jump into our centennial time machine and take a look at both landings of American troops on the shores of France with a piece developed by podcast researcher and writer David Kramer. France is a country known for its wine, artists, and romance, but it's also known for some of the heaviest and the bloodiest fighting of the 20th Century as two world wars rolled across its landscape. In both wars, American troops traveled across the Atlantic to relieve battered Allied forces, but the circumstance of their arrival in France just two and a half decades apart couldn't have been more different. As we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion of World War II, we can't help but compare those events with the arrival of American doughboys on a different June day in 1917. It's not just the difference between entering a still free France in 1917 versus storming the staunch German defenses of a conquered France in 1944, but it's also America's position in the world that's changed so dramatically in the short 27 years between 1917 and 1944. In June of 1917, General John J. Pershing arrives with a small American expeditionary force of approximately 30 thousand men, then building the American soldiers in Europe to 2 million. From the very beginning, Pershing, with a neophyte and unblooded army, literally fights his allies to keep his forces together as a fighting unit rather than being amalgamated into the battered lines of French and British armies as just more cannon fodder. Look, he does compromise some on the matter, recognizing the value of European commanders' experience in the warfare on the Western Front, but essentially, he does not relinquish control of his army, with a couple of exceptions like African American units, but you get the idea. By contrast in 1944, even though relatively new to the European theater, it was obvious the United States is the leading force in charge. In fact, the man in charge of the entire effort is America's General Dwight D. Eisenhower. America has come a long way since 1917, and on the first day of the Normandy invasion, 73 thousand Americans fight their way onto the French shore against the legendary and withering enemy fire. Ultimately, more than 300 thousand allied troops arrive in France through the Normandy beachhead. Now, that's the contrast. Here's a parallel. Surprisingly, the total number of US troops to see action in Europe during World War II is just about the same as World War I, 2 million. Okay, back to the contrast. It's about weapons and equipment. In World War I, America comes in totally unprepared for large-scale warfare. The doughboys begin firing mostly British rifles, French artillery, and flying exclusively British and French airplanes. But, by World War II 25 years later, America's military-industrial complex could be described as the arsenal of democracy. We provide countless modern and powerful ships, planes, tanks, artillery pieces, rifles, and equipment. But importantly, what's absolutely the same in both cases, whether our American soldiers are facing the wire, mud and chaotic machine guns barking as the whistle blows and the boys go over the top into the uncertain survival of no man's land in 1918 or our boys are leaping into the chilly waters off Normandy Beach to face the hail of hell filled with bullets and shells in 1944; you know, it's the American soldiers' legendary courage, determination and their sacrifice that a grateful nation and a grateful world needs to remember and honor for all time. It was true then and it's true today. It's with thanks and gratitude that we salute them. With that as a look of making war, let's shift gears to making peace with Mike Shuster, former NPR correspondent and curator for The Great War Project blog. His series covering the machinations at the Paris Peace Conference have been fascinating and horrifying our listeners for weeks as we race forward to the actual centennial of the signing of the Peace Treaty this month. Mike, for me, your story this week is summarized perfectly by the cartoon that you have in your blog. It shows an angel of peace lying mortally wounded on a table covered by a scroll, obviously the Treaty, and being stabbed repeatedly by men in waistcoats with the quills of their pens.

[0:08:05]

Mike Shuster: Some cartoon, huh?

[0:08:06]

Theo Mayer: It really is.

[0:08:07]

Mike Shuster: That does reflect the story, Theo. The headline reads, "American Troops in Asia? It's a Noble Duty, Not a Chance. Meanwhile, Mood Worsens in Paris." Then, "This is Special to The Great War Project." In mid-March a century ago, President Wilson's closest advisor, Colonel House, assures the other Allied leaders that the United States would undoubtedly take a mandate. Privately, the belief takes hold that the American's are seriously thinking it would be Armenia. British PM Lloyd George is delighted, according to historian Margaret Macmillan, at the prospect of the American's take on the noble duty. But House as he so often does, is exaggerating. Wilson warns the Supreme Council at the peace talks that he could think of nothing the people of the United States would be less inclined to accept that military responsibility in Asia. Macmillan concludes, "It is perhaps a measure of how far Wilson's judgment had deteriorated that when Armenia comes up at the Council of Four at Versailles, he agrees to accept a mandate, subject he adds, 'To the consent of the American Senate.'" The French are enraged. This mandate would effectively take territories from the eastern shore of the Black Sea to the Mediterranean in the west, earlier promised to the French. French leaders complain, "They must be drunk the way they are surrendering a total capitulation, a mess, an unimaginable shamble." Many other schemes for the Ottoman empire were floating around the conference rooms and dinner tables in Paris. What was left out was the inability of the powers to enforce their will. "They seem to think," observes Macmillan, "that their writ runs in Turkey, in Asia. Almost everyone in Paris would simply do as they were told." Britain's Lord Balfour sums it up, "I am quite unable to see why heaven or any other power should object to our telling the Moslem what he ought to think." "That," Macmillan writes, "went for the Arab subjects of the Ottoman empire as well." Meanwhile, the dickering at the Paris Peace Table is wrapping up. "On May 4," reports Macmillan, "the council of the Big Four gave orders that the German treaty should go to the printers." "Like so many of their countrymen," Macmillan writes, "the Germans at the peace conference thought President Wilson would ensure that the peace terms were mild. After all, Germany had done as Wilson himself had suggested and become a republic. That alone had shown its good faith. The country undoubtedly has to pay some sort of indemnity, but nothing toward the costs of the War. It would become a member of the League of Nations. It would keep its colonies. And the principle of self-determination would work in its favor." Historian Macmillan goes on, "In the first months of the peace, the Germans clutched at the Fourteen Points like a life raft, with very little sense that their victors might not see things the same way. There was also perhaps understandably a reluctance to think about the future. Especially the one that was being shaped in Paris." The two sides meet for the first time a century ago and promptly misunderstand each other. "This is the most tactless speech I've ever heard," Wilson says of the German foreign minister's remarks, "The Germans are really a stupid people. They always do the wrong thing." Things got worse after that. That's the news from The Great War Project these days a century ago.

[0:11:26]

Theo Mayer: Mike Shuster is the curator for The Great War Project blog. The link to his post is in the podcast notes. Okay, we've moved from the making of war to the making of peace. Now, we shift to reflecting on both with regular contributor, historian Dr. Edward Lengle. This week, we're on the second to last of Ed's top 10 selections from the many, many hundreds of published personal accounts from World War I. This week, Ed profiles famed poet Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of George Sherston*.

[0:11:56]

Dr. Edward L.: Siegfried Sassoon's poetry and prose captures war's personal cost in a way that no other writer of fiction or nonfiction ever managed. Informed by compassion, and laced with bitterness verging on despair, his testimony demands complete attention. The reader can not look away. Though Sassoon condemned the War, even as it took place, getting him in trouble with the British military authorities; his perspective remains tantalizingly ambiguous. So long as the War went on, he wanted to share it with his men, in or out of combat. Sassoon's slightly fictionalized memoir of World War I was published in three volumes: *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* in 1928, *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* in 1930, and *Sherston's Progress* in 1936; under the collective title of *Memoirs of George Sherston*. In that form, it stands #2 on my list of the finest personal accounts of the First World War. Born to a moderately prosperous Kentish family in 1886, Sassoon attended Cambridge and by his own admission enjoyed a shallow and frivolous youth. He entered military service eagerly at the beginning of World War I and eventually was commissioned a lieutenant in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. At the front, Sassoon's heroism was legendary. Danger drew him like a magnet until he became known by the sobriquet of Mad Jack. Yet Sassoon did not, unlike German Ernst Junger, value danger for its own sake. Totally devoted to his men, he seems to have sought action in a desperate attempt to do his personal best to bring the War closer to an end or die trying for Sassoon loathed war. Instead of ignoring or sublimating its horrors, he drank them in with all of his senses and then channeled them through his pen

into some of the most searingly powerful war poetry ever written. In 1917, finally, Sassoon passionately and openly denounced the War in A Soldier's Declaration, demanding its quick conclusion to prevent further wastage of human life. Sassoon fully expected to be court-martialed for this act, and almost was. But, the intervention of his friend, fellow poet and author Robert Graves, ensured that he was sent to be treated for alleged "shell-shock" at Craiglockhart Hospital where he met and encouraged fellow troubled poet Wilfred Owen. Both men sought desperately to return to the front, and did. But while Owen was killed, Sassoon, despite his almost insane bravery, was wounded but survived to live a long postwar life. Despite the bitterness with which he had written about the War and the psychic anguish from which he continued to suffer to the end of his life, Sassoon refused to politicize his experiences and opinions. In the process, disappointing many of his friends. His Memoirs of George Sherston, the title character, of course, referring to Sassoon himself, represent the efforts of a highly sensitive artist to process and understand his feelings. Ultimately, the tragedy of Sassoon's account is tinged with self-deprecatory irony, where Junger thrilled to the perception of his own bravery. Sassoon, an equally brave man, described one moment where, as he described it, "After a short spell of being deflated and sorry for myself, I began to feel rabidly heroic again, but in a slightly different style, since I was now a wounded hero, with my arm in a superfluous sling. I felt that I must make one more onslaught before I turned my back on the War, and my only idea was to collect all available ammunition and then renew the attack while the Stokes-gun officer put up an enthusiastic barrage. It did not occur to me that anything else was happening except my own little show. My over-strained nerves had wrought me up to such a pitch of excitement that I was ready for any suicidal exploit. This convulsive energy might have been of some immediate value had there been any objective for it, but there was none. Before I had time to inaugurate anything rash and irrelevant, Officer Dunning arrived to relieve me. His air of competent unconcern sobered me down, but I was still inflamed with the offensive spirit and my impetuosity was only snuffed out by a written order from the Cameronian Colonel, who forbade any further advance owing to the attack having failed elsewhere. My ferocity fizzled out then." Now recognized as one of England's finest poets, Siegfried Sassoon never quite managed to plumb war's meaning, at least not to his own satisfaction before his death in 1967.

[0:16:34]

Theo Mayer: Dr. Edward Lengle's blog is called A Storyteller Hiking Through History, and it's filled with first-person perspectives and accounts that provide a nuanced insight into the era. We have links for you to Ed's posts and his author's website in the podcast notes. Okay, it's time to fast forward into the present with World War I Centennial News now. Now, this is where we explore how World War I is being remembered and commemorated today as we spotlight some of the many significant commemoration activities surrounding World War I and World War I themes. For remembering veterans, we're going to start in Honolulu. Hawaii has had a very active World War I centennial period and stood up a World War I Centennial Task Force building a website hosted by the Commission, participating in 100 Cities/100 Memorials program, holding a major armistice centennial event in Honolulu, and now wrapping things up with an academic symposium co-hosted by Hawaii's Pacific University, the Arizona Memorial Visitor Center, and the Task Force. With us today is Colonel Arthur Tulak, U.S. Army, Retired, who's the Chairman of the Hawaii World War I Centennial Task Force. Colonel, thank you for joining us.

[0:18:04]

Col Arthur T.: Thank you, Theo. It's great to be here.

[0:18:06]

Theo Mayer: Let's start by talking a little bit about the Hawaii Centennial Task Force, how it came together, and highlight some of the activities that you guys undertook.

[0:18:14]

Col Arthur T.: Yes, well, this all started in April of 2015 when Governor Ige directed the Hawaii State Department of Defense to put together a committee of some sort to take responsibility and the lead for planning Hawaii's World War I Centennial Commemoration. From May 2015, we got together a bunch of volunteers from academia, from veterans, and patriotic organizations to start developing a concept. This small group eventually became known as the Hawaii World War I Centennial Task Force, so that we've been working on these things ever since and conducted now over 35 events on the islands of Oahu and Maui.

[0:18:54]

Theo Mayer: Let me ask you this. Most people don't think about Hawaii's role in World War I because it wasn't even a state yet. How did that all play out?

[0:19:01]

Col Arthur T.: Well, that's correct. It was a territory, but it had a territorial governor. What's really amazing about Hawaii's World War I history is the fact that we had the highest per capita voluntary rate of service or enlistment rate in the nation, so we had 9800 people who served in uniform either in the Hawaii Naval Militia, the Territorial National

Guard or who joined the federal services and even a small number who ended up serving in the uniform of our Allied nations on the battlefields in Europe.

[0:19:32]

Theo Mayer: Now, there is a World War I memorial in Honolulu. It's called the Natatorium. It's really unique. Can you tell us about it?

[0:19:39]

Col Arthur T.: Well, yes. It is a beautiful Beaux-Arts-style construction of a beautiful arch, which we used as the symbol for our World War I Centennial Commemoration program. We have the silhouette of a doughboy below it. That memorial was built through public support, and the American Legion here in Hawaii was one of the major movers and shakers and getting that thing done. It opened on August 24th, 1927, so it took several years, about 7 years to develop it. It was designed to be a living memorial to those who had served and also died in World War I. People enjoyed that outdoor swimming pool for many, many decades, but it closed in 1979 and remained closed. When we were able to use the World War I Memorial for the Commemoration, in many ways, it brought it back to life and it made it more of a vibrant place for the community here in Honolulu as we conducted several events there over Memorial Day, Veteran's Day and even commemorating other events like the Centennial of the Battle of the Somme that we did with our World War I Allies.

[0:20:48]

Theo Mayer: Well, you know, that's parallel to a lot of cities where people didn't even know that those venues were World War I memorials, so it sort of reawakened people to what it was. Is that true?

[0:20:58]

Col Arthur T.: Yes, it definitely brought attention because people have talked about what a shame it is that the pool had closed, but to remind everyone that we had the Peace Park, which is right in front of the Memorial, celebrating the peace; of course, the Memorial, itself, celebrating those who served, the 9800 in uniform, many thousands of civilians, also those from Hawaii who died, and of course, the many American soldiers, sailors, marines who died during the War as well.

[0:21:26]

Theo Mayer: You're planning a symposium coming up later this month. Can you tell our listeners a little bit about that?

[0:21:32]

Col Arthur T.: Yeah, we're very excited about it. This is the final culminating event for us. Having focused on entry into the War first with the Allies while we were out, then the initial events that were important to Hawaii (the sinking of the SS Aztec, a merchant mariner that had on board five Hawaiians who perished), then we've been covering all the interesting things here in Hawaii and the Pacific that happened during the War. Now, we're focused at the end of the War period, and a very interesting period when we're trying to establish a lasting peace, so there's a lot of diplomacy that's going on. There is the large-scale de-mobilization of military forces returning home. We had our own Hawaii Territorial National Guard that had the largest mobilization ever in its history in World War I, and therefore, the largest de-mobilization. We're going to be focusing on these kinds of things, including looking at the organizations, the veteran's organizations and military professional organizations that were formed at the end of the War, like the National Defense Industrial Association, the American Legion, Military Order of World Wars and a few others to give people here an idea of the complexity of that end of the War period and the transition into the peace with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

[0:22:47]

Theo Mayer: Colonel, if I wanted to come to Hawaii and participate in this, what's my experience going to be, what kind of things are going to happen?

[0:22:54]

Col Arthur T.: On the 26th, what is the first day of our presentations at the Aloha Tower campus, we expect about 180, and that's our seating capacity for the presentations. That evening, we'll be having our reception there hosted by Gordon Biersch Restaurant. The following day, we're going to be going out to the Arizona Memorial Visitors' Center where one of our members of the Task Force, the Chief Historian of the Arizona Memorial Visitors' Center, Park Ranger Daniel Martinez will be leading a tour around Ford Island in the Harbor in one of the Navy's boats to show what Pearl Harbor was all about in 1917 to 1919, which is a tour that's never been given before and that we're making available for those who register for the symposium. Also have a walking tour of downtown Honolulu showing people what was happening there in 1917 to 1919. Then, of course, anyone who comes out to Hawaii, you're not very

far away from the Hawaii Army Museum and all of the historic sites like the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific and Pearl Harbor.

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Theo Mayer: How expensive is it to attend the symposium?

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Col Arthur T.: Registration's only \$25.

[0:24:05]

Theo Mayer: When is the symposium, where is it and how can people find out more?

[0:24:10]

Col Arthur T.: Well, the symposium is taking place 26 through 28, June at the end of the month at the Aloha Tower Campus of Hawaii Pacific University. If you go to the events section of the Hawaii webpage on the National World War I Centennial website, you'll see it. We're really looking forward to this. This is an excellent way for us to really reflect in detail on the complex issues at the end of the War and in the transition to peace.

[0:24:40]

Theo Mayer: Well, Colonel, thank you for coming in and talking to us about this. It's a great excuse to go to Hawaii.

[0:24:46]

Col Arthur T.: Oh, yes, indeed. We're hoping people will fly out from the mainland to hear these presentations.

[0:24:51]

Theo Mayer: Colonel Arthur Tulak is the Chairman of the Hawaii World War I Centennial Task Force. We have links for you in the podcast notes to the Hawaii World War I websites and more importantly, to the symposium if you're interested in either going or for submitting a paper for discussion. But, hurry. There's just barely enough time to get it submitted. What a great excuse to go to a wonderful place. Next, we're going to talk about World War I and education. As we were discussing this during our editorial planning meeting we started wondering about education, not about 1919, but in 1919, some interesting stuff. Let's start with the literacy rate in the era. By definition, literacy can be defined as the ability to read, but it's not that simple because definition of literacy had changed over time, so statistics get a little bit fuzzy. But, it seems that around 94% of Americans age 14 and older could read in 1919. On the other hand, as a heavily immigrant nation, that doesn't necessarily mean read English. The literacy rate among foreign-born people, recent immigrants was lower at about 87%. For comparison, the US literacy rate in 2019 is almost 99%. What about teachers in those early years of the 20th century? Well, many of those teachers were women and most schools were one-room school houses. Higher education was rare before World War I. Less than 1/10th of 1% of adults attended college. While there was no GI bill for college education, as there would be after World War II, college attendance did pick up after World War I thanks to radical ideas in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania that made extension classes available to thousands more students than before the War. In contrast, today, approximately 25% of the population graduates from college. In 1919, what was it like for those who planned to graduate from high school and move onto college? Well, the equivalent of today's SAT tests for college admission would probably frighten today's students. Well, while there's still an essay today, most of the tests consist of multiple choice questions. A hundred years ago, there were no fewer than six essays, a lot of them requiring 500 words or more. Although knowledge of Shakespeare may be a given, you had also better be up to speed on your Milton, Tennyson and a host of other writers. You were expected to carry the knowledge of poetry, philosophy and other writings in your head and answer questions about them without the aide of the work being printed on the test page. Of course, Jim Crow Laws ensured that most schools north and south were segregated racially. Opportunities beyond elementary school for black Americans was very limited. But as with so many other things, World War I, the War that changed the world and established the foundation for the modern age, change in education was no exception. If you're interested, we have links for you in the podcast notes to learn more. Which brings us to today and to this week. Each year nearly 3 thousand students with their families and teachers gather at the University of Maryland College Park for a week-long event. It's the finals of National History Day. In 2019, the finals are running from June 9 to June 13 as these enthusiastic groups gather from all 50 United States, Washington DC, Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico; and international schools in China, Korea, and South Asia. Last year the US World War I Centennial Commission brought together an education partnership or consortium that includes the Commission, National History Day, the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. Our next two guests are part of that initiative, as we're first joined by Dr. Jennifer Zobebelein, who's a special projects historian at the National World War I Museum and Memorial, and recently took on directing a Commission project to create a series of World War I focused Educators' Toolkits generally sponsored by the Andrew Mellon Foundation. Then, we're also going to speak with Ron Nash, who's a

senior education fellow at the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, to explore their part in the education initiative, but first, Dr. Zobelein. Jennifer, welcome to the podcast.

[0:29:43]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: Thank you, Theo, thank you for having me.

[0:29:45]

Theo Mayer: Jennifer, let me start with a moment of reflecting on your career and your work. Now, you've done some really interesting project with the museum with the National Parks Service, with the New York Historical Society. What inspired you to become so involved with history and what are some of your favorite projects that you've done?

[0:30:02]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: I was very fortunate growing up as a junior high and high school student to have really great history teachers, and I really credit them with making me the historian that I am today. They just instilled in me a passion for history and enthusiasm for history, and I've always carried that forward with me regardless of the subject matter. I truly enjoy sharing that history with people, with the public, with students, with an array of audiences. Probably my favorite project that I've ever worked on was while I was with the National Park Service at Fort Sumter in Charleston. I was very fortunate to be there during the sesquicentennial of the firing on Fort Sumter in 2011. To be part of something like that, to be at a site like that exactly 150 years after that momentous event was truly something wonderful. I don't know that I'll ever be able to repeat something like that throughout the rest of my career.

[0:30:53]

Theo Mayer: That's great. Bringing history to life.

[0:30:55]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: Yes, absolutely. It's very important and it makes it relevant for people today.

[0:31:00]

Theo Mayer: You know, Jennifer, a lot of people who actually go over to France and go visit the locations there say the same thing, there's something that happens and it has to do with just being there.

[0:31:10]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: Absolutely, absolutely.

[0:31:12]

Theo Mayer: Well, let's talk about the World War I Educator Toolkits. What's the concept and what is the program look like?

[0:31:18]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: The goal here is to create a series of toolkits, a series of topics that address various social issues related to World War I. These range from influenza to immigrants and immigration to looking at women and African Americans participation in the War. The idea here is to create a resource for educators and for their students, drawing on both existing resources and resources that are yet to come and to create something that is truly fantastic and that can really continue this knowledge of World War I as we move past the centennial.

[0:31:55]

Theo Mayer: Well, clearly one of the strategies and a really smart one is that by educating the educators, the story, this history and the meaning of World War I is going to get perpetuated for a long time. Is that the focus here?

[0:32:07]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: Yes, absolutely. Our primary focus is for the teachers out there, and this is primarily high school teachers, but it could also be college professors as well. There are plenty of college professors out there who have to teach surveys and are not necessarily an expert in World War I. The resources that we provide will help them help their students to really gain a better understanding of this conflict, why it was so important, the issues that it raised, what this meant for American society and what this meant for the United States in the early 20th century.

[0:32:40]

Theo Mayer: Well, you know, we stopped calling it the Forgotten War and we stopped calling it the Great War. We started calling it the War That Change the World. It's really true.

[0:32:47]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: Absolutely, and that's something that really needs to be pushed because, I think especially in the United States, they don't realize that importance, they don't realize how much weight this war carries.

[0:32:57]

Theo Mayer: You're testing your first efforts in this initiative at National History Day this next week. Why there?

[0:33:02]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: We were very fortunate in some of the earliest conversations we had with National History Day regarding what they could bring to the table, their resources. Obviously, they create great educational activities for teachers and for students. We were granted the opportunity to present this material at one of their workshops that they are hosting next week. We're going to be testing our first Toolkit, Women in World War I. We'll be showing our video that we have for that toolkit; possibly if there's time, getting them to listen to part of the podcast; showing some of the educational activities that we've produced; and just overall getting feedback; is what we've produced so far, does that work, is this what teachers are looking for and if not, what can we do better, how we can we make it better as we work through the rest of the Toolkit project.

[0:33:51]

Theo Mayer: Well, asking the users is really smart, so that makes a great deal of sense.

[0:33:55]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: Yes, exactly, exactly.

[0:33:58]

Theo Mayer: I know you're still in the early stages of development, but have there been any surprises so far?

[0:34:03]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: You know, for me, this whole experience is a new experience for me. I've never directed a project like this before, so perhaps the best way to answer that is just, rather than saying it's a surprise, more of a learning experience for me, but really having an opportunity to work with some really great people from a lot of great institutions and organizations, to take all these really fantastic resources and put them out there in one place, and just really create something special for teachers.

[0:34:30]

Theo Mayer: Jennifer, our listeners are obviously interested in both history and in World War I, but a lot of them are really good storytellers in their own right, so with these Toolkits, will they be made available to the public history community as well as to formal educators?

[0:34:44]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: Absolutely. The Toolkits are going to live, for lack of a better word, on a website. We're going to create a standalone website for this project. Yes, absolutely, this is something that is definitely accessible for the general public, and I hope that people out there are going to use this. Maybe they're not going to look at the educational activities, although parents that homeschool their children, they might be able to use these resources as well. But, I really do hope that this is something that people who are interested or people who had a family member participate in World War I, maybe they want to learn more about women in the War or immigrants in the War. They can kind of look at our videos or look at some of the narratives, find it a great source of information and link them to so many great things that are out there.

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Theo Mayer: Any closing thoughts on World War I education and your project?

[0:35:33]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: I guess the best thing I would say to kind of close this all out would be to remind people that just because the official centennial is coming to an end, does not mean that World War I is going to suddenly disappear under the rug again. Projects like this and other initiatives that are out there are really important. It continues that narrative and it continues to remind people not just in the United States but elsewhere as well just how important World War I is. I think at the end of the day, that's really what we want to drive home.

[0:36:01]

Theo Mayer: Well, Jennifer, thank you for coming in and giving us head ups on the program. As you guys progress, are you going to come back and tell us more, please?

[0:36:08]

Dr. Jennifer Z.: Absolutely. I'd be happy to.

[0:36:10]

Theo Mayer: Dr. Jennifer Zobelein is directing a Commission project to create a series of World War I focused Educators' Toolkits. The project website will be coming online soon, and we'll update you with the links as soon as it goes live. Next for our focus on education this week, we're going to speak with Ron Nash from the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, now celebrating its 25th year as a non-profit organization dedicated to K-12 history education, with a mission to promote the knowledge and understanding of American history through educational programs and resources. Ron is a senior education fellow at Gilder Lehrman, joining them in 2009, with a rich background in history education including 35 years as a high school history teacher. Ron, thank you for joining us.

[0:37:02]

Ron Nash: Thank you.

[0:37:03]

Theo Mayer: Ron, I'm fascinated about the history of history education in our country, so let me start with a question about that. We had a teacher on who pointed out that the STEM education initiatives really de-focused a lot of history education over a period of time. Can you talk about that a bit?

[0:37:20]

Ron Nash: Yes, a little bit. These things go in cycles. I take us back to 1958, the NDEA, the National Defense Education Act. Similar to that time, 1958 to the late 60s, the nation focused on emphasizing science and math, which is nothing wrong with that, but to the detriment of other disciplines. I think we're seeing a lot of that with the STEM program, so history is an afterthought in some communities, especially at the elementary level, but if something's not emphasized thought testing, sometimes that's what happens in terms of the whole framework of educational focus.

[0:37:56]

Theo Mayer: Can you tell us a little bit about the background of Gilder Lehrman and its mission, how'd it come to be?

[0:38:00]

Ron Nash: Sure. Our two founders, Richard Gilder/Lewis Lehrman, two entrepreneurs who, independent of each other over the years, collected a significant number of primary-sourced documents. At some point in the late 80s, began a series of discussions, which then lead to the formation of the Institute. Again, you can even simplify the mission statement to promote the study and love of history. The idea was to bring these unique documents, 70 thousand documents in total, but anything from an original letter from Columbus to the King of Spain in 1492 all the way down to 20th-century documents. Oh, by the way, we since the incorporation and development of the Institute in 1994, we've continued to expand our holdings, so all of these holdings, these unique documents are held, digitized and made available to schools, but they're held at the New York Historical Society. That's one element of the mission, having this repository of primary sources and making them available to schools and to the general public. We've got a lot of other programs, not the least of which is the Hamilton Program. We're speaking the last of the student performances that, you know, we have a program where we have outreach to schools, and at this point, over a hundred thousand school students have seen the play either in New York or someplace where the traveling group is taking the play across the nation. This is actually another program attached to that called EduHam, where students are exposed to primary-sourced documents from the Founding Era as a platform to understand what's happening in the play, and then having the opportunity to go see the play.

[0:39:39]

Theo Mayer: How did you personally get involved in both Gilder Lehrman and the World War I project.

[0:39:45]

Ron Nash: Well, first with Gilder Lehrman, as a teacher I applied to attend one of the seminars that we have. We have numerous seminars that we have for teachers in the summer. The first seminar that I applied to was the Age of Lincoln taught at Oxford University by a British scholar who happened to be a Civil War and an Abraham Lincoln scholar. That was in 2005, and that was my introduction to Gilder Lehrman. I'm also a retired Army officer, and with a lot of experience in planning and a lot of experience in working some other strategic decisions, but as a result of that, I was asked to coordinate two Gilder Lehrman seminars in 2009, just before I joined the Institute full-time. Both of those topics involved the Cold war. With that kind of background and with that kind of experience, both a classroom teacher and a military strategy planner; Gilder Lehrman, one of our vice presidents here asked me to consider the fact that there was a position opening up in the Education Department. I said, "I think I would enjoy that very much," so I joined the Institute in 2009.

[0:40:51]

Theo Mayer: With the World War I program, how's it gone, what's been accomplished, what are the plans for the coming years?

[0:40:56]

Ron Nash: We wanted to bring it in the form of one-day professional development programs, but we used something called a teaching American history model, where we would have a scholar, the scholar would have the morning to be able to present content; and following a lunch period and in the afternoon, having a pedagogical session, but using resources that we, Gilder Lehrman, would be developing and then make available for the teachers. Over the course of April, May, June, July of last year; we began the process of developing five unique lessons plans, and looking and exploring the War through ways that the textbook tradition, well, maybe focusing more on military or diplomacy. We would look outside of that box and focus on how art reflected World War I, the participation of immigrants, women in World War I, similarly African American in World War I.

[0:41:50]

Theo Mayer: Ron, World War I's often referred to as the Forgotten War. As an educator's educator, why do you think that is?

[0:41:56]

Ron Nash: Our approach is to have teachers, students, you know, anybody engage with a couple of things, not the least of which is primary sources. Going back to the question, Forgotten War because if you allocate 10 pages in a text of a thousand pages, you don't get a lot of exposure to the War. I don't think the way historians dealt with the War, say, within the last 20 years, would have allowed to have student explore, have teachers explore all of the other dimensions that are there, you know, in terms of how the War can be approached.

[0:42:27]

Theo Mayer: If I'm a teacher and I want to participate in the program, how do I get involved, who would I reach out to, how does that work?

[0:42:35]

Ron Nash: Well, as far as the program that we've developed for the one-day PD sessions, the resources are completely available. If somebody goes to our Gilder Lehrman webpage, they are able to see what we're doing, they are able to have access to the five lesson plans, and they also have access to folks like myself and the Office. The idea is to have the resources available to download or to use in the classroom. Another one of our programs is fascinating and there's a World War I dimension to it. We have traveling exhibits, so they're museum-quality exhibits that can be used either in a school setting or in a library, community-based settings. We have several of these traveling exhibits that, again, somebody can book through our Education Office. Then, they can have the access to the exhibit for two to three weeks, and then it moves on to someplace else. But, we have a World War I exhibit. It has six panels, and it looks at the War from the beginning, the origins of the War to the conclusion of the War at the Treaty of Versailles.

[0:43:37]

Theo Mayer: After this experience, what comes to mind for you as a top line idea that history teachers should remember to teach their students about World War I?

[0:43:46]

Ron Nash: Sure. Just World War I, I think, complexity and perspective. Also, World War I in terms of America's involvement in the world, the role of America in the world really was framed by the idealism of Wilson. The conduct of the War and the outcomes of the War, I think that's important. I think also you looking at some of the transformations in terms of how government involves itself in the lives of citizens and how war transforms them. When we talk about history, the root word of history is historia, which is inquiry. I think that not enough people understand that history's not just studying some information about the past, but it's a constant asking of questions that lead to possible answers, and then reframing those questions, and more questions, and more answers.

[0:44:36]

Theo Mayer: What a great closing. Thank you, Ron.

[0:44:38]

Ron Nash: Okay.

[0:44:39]

Theo Mayer: Ron Nash is a senior education fellow at Gilder Lehrman. We have some links for you in the podcast notes about Gilder Lehrman and their World War I program. That wraps up episode number 126 of the award-winning

World War I Centennial News Podcast, the Doughboy Podcast. We want to thank our great guests, crew, and supporters including Mike Shuster, curator for the Great War Project blog; Dr. Edward Lengle, historian, author and speaker; Colonel Arthur Tulak, U.S. Army Retired; Jennifer Zobelein, historian and special project lead; Ron Nash, historian, teacher and educator. Thanks to [Mac Nelson] and [Tim Crow], our interview editing team; [Kats] Laszlo, the line producer for the show; Dave Kramer and JL Michaud for research and script support. I'm Theo Mayer, 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 have been to inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War I including this podcast. We're bringing the lessons of 100 years ago to today's educators, their classrooms, and the public. We're helping to restore World War I memorials in communities of all sizes across the country, and, of course, we're building America's National World War I Memorial in Washington, DC. We want to thank the Commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, as well as our other sponsors, the Starr Foundation and the Doughboy Foundation. The podcast and a full transcript of the show can be found on our website at ww1cc.org/cn. You'll find World War I Centennial News in all the places that you get your podcasts, and even using your smart speaker by saying, "Play WW1 Centennial News podcast. The Commission's Twitter and Instagram handles are both @ww1cc, and we're on Facebook at WW1 Centennial. Thank you for joining us and don't forget, keep the story alive for America by helping us build the National World War I Memorial in Washington DC. Just text the letters WWI or WW1 to the phone number 91999, and please make a contribution.

[0:47:14]

Mother: How is it that you appear to know so much about jazzing around, as you call it, and painting the town and this here parlez-vousing, whatever that is.

[0:47:30]

Ruben: Oh, I see. Well, you see, Mother, now, a way ... Gosh, I guess I put my foot in it. Why, you know what? Why, I hear this [Ethan Credway] talking about it.

[0:47:43]

Mother: Oh, you did?

[0:47:44]

Ruben: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[0:47:46]

Mother: Well, excuse me Reuben.

[0:47:46]

Ruben: Oh, that's all right, Mother. That's all right. Mistakes are bound to happen in the very best of families. (singing).

[0:48:37]

Theo Mayer: Thank you for listening to this week's show. So long.

[0:48:40]