

## Overtures for Peace & Baseball in WWI (48m 0s)

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**8 speakers** (Theo Mayer, Speaker 2, Mike Schuster, Dr. E. Lengel, Virginia Dilkes, Jim Leeke, Jo Bertoline, Patrick Murray)

**[0:00:08]**

**Theo Mayer:** Welcome to World War I Centennial News: The Doughboy Podcast, episode number 145. The Doughboy Podcast is about what happened 100 years ago, during and after the war that changed the world. It's not only about then, but it's also about now how World War I is still present in our daily lives in countless ways. But most important, the podcast is about why and how we'll never let the awareness of World War I fall back into the midst of obscurity. This week, as the show was in between seasons, we're going to reprise segments from a mid November, 2018 episode as talk of a peace begins, and the conflict in the middle East sounds almost like current events. It's a very pivotal moment 101 years ago, in the war that changed the world. We invite you to enjoy a replay taken from episode number 93, that includes a great segment on baseball in World War I, as we head towards the 2019 World Series. The Doughboy Podcast is brought to you by the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission and the Doughboy Foundation. I'm Theo Mayer, your producer and host. Welcome to the show. We're going to jump into our Centennial time machine, and go back 100 years this week. Where for the first time since the United States entered the war in 1917, there is open talk of peace. Not a peace treaty, which remains a long way off. But an armistice, which would end hostilities under certain terms until a final piece can be devised for the war that changed the world. We're back in 1918, in the second of week of October, and it's getting clear to a lot of parties that it's time to stop this war. But like so many things that one just falls into as they get started, how to stop this thing isn't simple. Who needs to talk to whom to stop the fighting? Look, many of the Central Powers would like to negotiate with President Wilson, but that's complicated. The United States is the last into this war, and the newest member in the conflict alongside a group of other nations. Now this is interesting, not allies, President Wilson is very careful not to call them that, but associated powers or co-belligerents. So who gets to speak on their behalf? Germany and her allied Central Powers would really like to negotiate with Wilson. They figured that he's probably the most fair minded of the opponents, not having directly destroyed his lands, or directly threatened his civilians. Besides, he put out those 14 points. Side note, see episode 54 and 55 for details. The leaders of France and of Britain, and Italy, and Belgium, and other nations, are definitely not ready to let Wilson speak for them. They might even worry a little, that the enemy could convince them to pull the United States out of the war too soon. Then there's the problem of the Central Powers, themselves. All of them realize that the war is lost, but some are more desperate to end the fighting than others. The Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, and the Bulgarians are all more or less just over it. Germany on the other hand, is still willing and capable of fighting for a while and probably has the most to lose in making peace. That's a problem back home, too. Peace talk is actually dangerous. The administration can't hide armistice discussions, but they need to keep everybody in a "war mood," determined to fight on as long as necessary in order to completely defeat the enemy. That concern is reflected in the headlines of the New York Times. "Dateline: October 7, 1918. Headline: Germany sends an appeal for peace. Allied capitals and people cold to it, quick rejection is expected." The story reads, "All signs in Washington tonight to a rejection by President Wilson of the latest peace notes from Germany, Austria, and Turkey. There is not a shred of evidence that the new proposal comes in any form that can be regarded as acceptable by the American government." Wilson doesn't immediately reject the peace notes. Instead, he confers with the leaders of France and Great Britain in order to discuss a possible response. Meanwhile, the U.S. Government, and particularly Treasury Secretary William McAdoo, fret that all the talk about peace is going to dampen interest in the latest Liberty Bond. That could be expensive. The next day in the official bulletin, the Government's Daily War Gazette: "Dateline: Wednesday, October 9. Headline: No Armistice While Totton Armies Occupy Invaded territories, President Tells Berlin." Robert Lansing, the Secretary of State officially replies to the inquiry for an armistice. We shortened it.

**[0:05:42]**

**Speaker 2:** "Sir, I have the honor to acknowledge on behalf of the president, your note of October 6. Before making a reply to the request of the Imperial German government, and in order that the reply shall be as candid and straightforward as the momentous interest involved requires, does the Imperial chancellor mean that the Imperial German government accepts the terms laid down by the president in his address to the Congress of the United States on the 8th of January latest? "The president feels bound to say, that with regard to the suggestion of an armistice, that he would not feel at liberty to propose a cessation of arms to the governments, with which the government of the United States is associated against the Central Powers, so long as the armies of those powers are upon their soil. The good faith of any discussion would manifestly depend upon the consent of the Central Powers immediately, to withdraw their forces everywhere from invaded territories."

**[0:06:41]**

**Theo Mayer:** This is a pretty harsh response, but it leaves the door open to possible armistice discussions. While another headline on the same day reads, "Allies Smash Ahead, While Germany Pleads." And so, the March continues. As far as the United States is concerned, reports of Victoria's battles with heavy casualties over the next few days, ensure that the American people remain conscious that the war is still on in earnest and they must do their part to support it. Then a few days later when Germany replies to Wilson, it doesn't generate any real enthusiasm. "Dateline: October 13, 1918. Headline: Germany Says She Accepts Wilson's Terms, Is Ready To Evacuate To Gain An Armistice. Reply Rouses No Enthusiasm In Washington." And the story reads, "While Germany's offer indicates compliance with the general principles laid down by the president, the communication leaves the details open in a manner, which might negate the aims for which the American and allied governments are fighting. It is stated without qualification that the note from Germany is not regarded in well informed quarters as frank or straightforward." Although Turkey and soon Austria-Hungary would send even more conciliatory messages to Wilson, the administration and the public mood remains all for war. So for the foreseeable future, the fighting would go on, at least for a while. 100 years ago this week in the war that changed the world. It's certainly in the headlines today. I'm talking about a seemingly endless conflict between Syria, Turkey and rebel forces. Throw in other names like Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, and you have most of what was 100 years ago, The Ottoman Empire led by the Muslim Ottoman Turks. About this time in 1918, as World War I was heading towards a ceasefire, Commonwealth forces including British, Australian, New Zealand and Indian soldiers, now aided by rebels through what was known as the Arab uprising of Lawrence of Arabia fame, were the rebels in the region pushing the Ottoman Turks into a retreat in an allied coalition. But the Ottomans didn't go quietly. This week, Mike Schuster, former NPR correspondent and curator for the Great War Project blog brings us a story of terrible massacre and reprisal in those waning days of the war. A note of caution, this report contains graphic descriptions of violence that may be unsuitable for our younger listeners. Over to you, Mike.

[0:09:28]

**Mike Schuster:** Thank you Theo. The headline reads, "Horrible massacre in Syria. Scenes of unspeakable violence. Women and children spared, massacre begets massacre." This is special to the Great War Project. "Horrible developments these days a century ago in the Middle East in the last days of September a century ago, scenes of terrible violence. The British General, Edmund Allenby is leading his cavalry forces out of Palestine across the Golan Heights into Syria. Turkish and German forces murdered several hundred Arab women and children, according to historian Martin Gilbert, in an active cruel defiance for the successful harassment by the forces of the Arab revolt." "On the following day," reports Gilbert, "September 28th at Daraa in central Syria, where thousands of Bedouin had joined the Arab forces, wounded Turkish soldiers and prisoners were murdered as a reprisal, arousing violent anti Arab feeling. Indian troops fighting under the British entered the town while the massacres were taking place." According to historian Gilbert, Arabs murdered in cold blood every Turk they came across." That was the brief note in the fourth cavalry division's summary of events. Slowly the real details of the massacre emerge. The scenes are from the village of Tafas. British soldiers reached the village and discover the violence still fresh. "Everywhere were bodies, reports historian Scott Anderson. "Many hideously mutilated girls and women obviously, raped before being killed." Among the British soldiers who arrived in Tafas is the British officer and leader of the Arab revolt, T. E. Lawrence. In particular, reported Lawrence, he was to remember the sight of a naked pregnant woman. The details are too gruesome and horrible to report. Not surprisingly, Arab leaders who come from Tafas are with the British, and are shocked by the scenes of horror. One, "The head man from Tafas at the site of his ruined village gave a horrible cry," reports Lawrence. "Wrapped his head cloth about his face, puts spurs to his horse and galloped at full speed into the midst of the retiring Turkish column, and fell himself and his mare, riddled with machine gun bullets among their lance points." Lawrence instructs his lieutenants to take no prisoners. "The best of you brings me the most Turkish dead." Massacre begets massacre, and it's not clear where the cycles of killing will stop. "What ensued over that long day of September 27th, reports historian Anderson, "Was a merciless and one-sided slaughter." Quite quickly, the attacking Arabs separated the fleeing Turkish column of 2,000 to three isolated sections, then set to annihilating them one by one. Any Turkish or German who fell out wounded, or tried to surrender was swiftly cut down. Soon the pursuing Arabs were joined by villagers along the way, eager to strike against their oppressors of the past four years. Writes Lawrence, just days after the massacres. "Then we turned our machine gun on the prisoners that were taken, and made an end of them." That's the news from the Great War project, a century ago.

[0:12:54]

**Theo Mayer:** Mike Schuster is the curator for the Great War Project blog. The link to his post is in the podcast notes. This week for America Emerges: Military Stories From World War I, Dr. Edward Lengel brings us a detailed and graphic account of the actions that earned Sgt. Alvin York, the medal of honor in 1918. If you've not heard the story before, Ed's recounting is particularly engaging, providing a lot of nuance that I personally hadn't heard before. Again, a note of caution that this story contains descriptions of graphic violence that may be unsuitable for younger listeners.

[0:13:29]

**Dr. E. Lengel:** 100 years ago, on October 8, 1918, Corporal Alvin C. York stood with a group of Doughboys from the 82nd "All American" Division, guarding a group of German prisoners they had just captured in the Argonne Forest.

None of them realized that an enemy machine gun nest held them under observation from a nearby ridge, or that the German gunners were so trigger-happy that they had no compunctions about shooting down their own men. In the moments that followed, York performed deeds that led others to call him a hero. He just saw it as duty. The machine gun opened fire, sending out a stream of bullets that tore into American soldiers and German prisoners alike. York's closest friend, with whom he had spent long hours studying the Bible, collapsed before his eyes in a mass of blood and rags, his uniform torn nearly off his body. Several other soldiers fell, and everyone hit the ground. York took cover, then let his instinct guide him about what to do next. He was a woodsman from beautiful, remote Fentress County, Tennessee. His people loved storytelling, good food, fellowship, and music. They were strong in their faith. But they also understood violence. Nothing could intimidate them, or York. Dashing from cover to cover, York worked uphill until he could look down on the German machine gun nest. Gun pits filled with riflemen surrounded it, and the enemy infantry remained unaware of the single American soldier who had gained their flank. Unslung his rifle, York took aim and fired at the Germans one at a time. Each bullet found its mark in a head or neck, and the soldiers slumped dead in their pits one at a time. By the time the Germans located their tormentor it was already too late. He just kept picking them off. York killed and killed and killed again, until there were near 20 dead Germans, the machine gun barrel drooped down to the ground, and the hillside fell silent. As York paused and began heading back for the clearing, a group of Germans debouched from a nearby trench and charged him with fixed bayonets. A later story went that York picked the Germans off like turkeys, back to front, as they obligingly ran toward him in single file. But at the time York didn't much think about it. He just dropped his rifle, pulled out his .45 pistol, and killed, killed, and killed. Other Americans fired at the Germans too, and helped to break up the attack. The German platoon leader fell in front of York, a bullet in his gut, shrieking in agony. York wasn't near done. But Lieutenant Vollmer, the senior German officer, couldn't take any more. Taking his life in his own hands to save those of his men, Vollmer stood up and approached York. He was lucky the American did not turn around and shoot him between the eyes. But though York pointed his pistol at the lieutenant's head, he kept his finger still on the trigger. "If you don't shoot any more," Vollmer begged in thickly accented English, "I will make them give up." York didn't drop his gun. His staring eyes held all the hard-bitten toughness and cruelty of the Scots-Irish guerrilla fighters of the Tennessee hills. York told Vollmer he had better do what he said, and held his gun straighter, his gaze steady, to reinforce the sentiment. If the German had so much as flinched he would have perished on the spot. Vollmer carefully reached into his tunic, pulled out a whistle, and blew. There was tense silence for a moment as the lieutenant shouted in German. Of course, York couldn't understand a word. As shapes emerged from the trees above him to reveal German soldiers, one after another, hands in the air, York kept his pistol pointed at Vollmer's head. Then, as the remaining doughboys rose and lifted their guns, York backed off a little and pointed his pistol at the newcomers, his face still set hard and staring. One German soldier tried to be a hero. He had concealed a grenade behind his back, and when he got close he threw it at the pistol-wielding American corporal. York didn't even duck. The grenade sailed past his head and exploded behind him. Several Germans and Americans screamed, but York didn't hear them. He was too busy pumping bullets into the grenade-thrower's head. There was no more resistance after that. A strange procession assembled to depart the Argonne. Still suspicious, York kept Vollmer and another German officer at the front of the column, his pistol pointed menacingly at their backs. The rest of the Germans followed behind in columns of twos, carrying the wounded and guarded by the other doughboys. Before they left, Vollmer asked York how many men he had. "I have plenty," the Tennessean snapped. When the American hesitated over which route to take back to his own lines, Vollmer suggested they turn north. York promptly chose to take the opposite way, close to the one he had taken into the woods. As the men moved out, another German platoon appeared and the Americans leveled their rifles. Misjudging the number of doughboys guarding the column, the Germans dropped their guns and surrendered. Later another detachment led by a German lieutenant appeared and deployed for a fight. York shoved his pistol at the base of Vollmer's spine and held it steady. "Tell them to surrender," he ordered, or he would kill the lieutenant and all of them too. Knowing he would be the first to go down with his guts blown out in any fight, Vollmer talked his comrades out of the woods and convinced them to join the captives. All except one, a boy, who refused to drop his gun. York shot him to death. He didn't think about it until later. As he approached the tree line, York judged that the direct approach was the best, and led his column right out into the open. The rest of the battalion must have wondered why the German-held hill had gone quiet, but didn't do anything about it until the strange column appeared before their eyes and the Doughboys prepared to open fire. But they didn't. Maybe they were alert, or just too dazed and tired. Harassed only by occasional German artillery shells, the Americans and their prisoners made it across the clearing without incident. York took them up to the first American officer he saw, a lieutenant, saluted, and presented his prisoners. The lieutenant asked how many prisoners he had in tow. "Honest, lieutenant, I don't know," York replied. There were 132.

[0:20:07]

**Theo Mayer:** Dr Edward Lengel is an American military historian and our segment host for America Emerges: Military Stories From World War I. We put links in the podcast notes for Ed's posts and his author's website. Well, that's it for 100 years ago. Let's jump back into the present with World War I Centennial News Now. This part of the podcast focuses on now, and how World War I is being remembered, discussed, taught, learned, and commemorated today. This week, for our Remembering Veterans segment, I want to introduce you to a long time friend and volunteer of the U S World War I Centennial Commission, Dr. Virginia Dilkes. A member of the advisory board for the Georgia World

War I Centennial Commission, and co-editor of a book about her father's service in World War I called Remembering World War I: An Engineer's Diary of the War. Charles Edward Dilkes' story has been turned into a stage production called A Year In The Trenches, written by playwright James Raina. Virginia, you've been listening in as we produced the podcast since its genesis, as a coordinating conference for all the commissioners and volunteers way back. So it's really great to finally have you on the show. Welcome to the podcast.

**[0:21:32]**

**Virtinia Dilkes:** Well, thank you very much for this opportunity.

**[0:21:35]**

**Theo Mayer:** Virginia. Your father was an engineer, who kept a daily diary during a service and France. Tell us about that.

**[0:21:42]**

**Virtinia Dilkes:** Yes. He kept his daily diary from August 6, 1917, which was the day that he left the shores of the United States to fight the war in Europe, until April 19th of 1919, which is the day while serving in the army of occupation in Germany, he was granted a pass to Paris to visit with his sister which would be my aunt Marie-Louise. Combat engineers such as my father were told not to keep notes, because their notes may reflect troop movements and aid the enemy. However, he knew history was being made and he was a part of this historic event. So bearing in mind this responsibility, he would bury his notes in the soil of France before going into battle. He wrote his memoirs based on his diary, probably while he was serving in the army of occupation and completing it after he returned home.

**[0:22:38]**

**Theo Mayer:** Now, you and your sisters decided to turn your dad's diary into a memoir and publish it, then go out and talk about the book. How did that get started?

**[0:22:46]**

**Virtinia Dilkes:** Well, we started talking about it in 1999 and really got going in 2000. It seemed like the right thing to do with the upcoming centennial. However, progress was slow because we were all working, and we lived in three different areas of the country. We would try to arrange to meet as a family typically once a year, or we would meet at a national meeting of either the National World War I museum, or the World War I historical association. We went to the National Archives in College Park, Maryland and to the military library at Clemson University among other places. Our father used a lot of geography of France in his writing, and it took looking at old maps a good while in order to follow his footsteps. But we also made a decision to include at the end of each chapter, how historians have documented what he experienced, and that took a while too.

**[0:23:42]**

**Theo Mayer:** That's actually a really great approach. Now at some point in your journey, you met Sarah Cureton from the New Jersey Commission. Tell me about that.

**[0:23:50]**

**Virtinia Dilkes:** Yes. She has just been a wonderful contact. I was a volunteer for the United States World War I Commission, and as a volunteer, I asked the United States Commission if I may reach out to New Jersey because New Jersey is my native State. I called the New Jersey Historical Commission and talked with the Executive Director Sarah Cureton. Well, Sarah really was quite ahead with New Jersey's World War I commemoration plans, but she was not aware a National Commission was hard at work. I was able to connect the New Jersey Historical Commission with United States World War I commission. After my sisters and I published our book, my New Jersey sister asked if I'd be willing to travel to New Jersey, and do a book presentation at her local library. About the same time, I was in communication with Sarah Cureton, and I mentioned I would be doing a book presentation at a local New Jersey library if she would like to come, and she said she would. After my presentation, she bought my book. Well, a few months later, Sarah emailed me and said she wanted to develop her idea, to use the arts as a means to educate New Jersey's middle and high school students about World War I. She had been looking for a book written by a New Jersey author. So she asked if she could commission a play based on my father's book. His book turned out to be ideal foundation for the play, since he was in the war from beginning to end. This detailed accounts of his experiences in battle made it easy to inject other New Jersey World War I veterans into the story line. Because one of Sarah's goals was to showcase New Jerseyites, who made a difference in World War I. So James Rona and dramaturge Gayle Stahlhuth researched New Jerseyite World War I veterans who would have or could have encountered my father, Sergeant Dilkes. The play entitled A Year in the Trenches was performed at the Eastland Theater in fall of 2017, and spring of 2018. I would be remiss if I did not mention, the play was commissioned by not only the New Jersey Historical Commission but also the New Jersey State Council on the arts.

[0:26:08]

**Theo Mayer:** Well Virginia, it's a wonderful story and you've been on quite an adventure. What advice would you give to other people who want to pursue their family's heritage?

[0:26:18]

**Virtinia Dilkes:** Well based on my own personal journey, first of all, I would tell them to use local resources such as your library. I found my library, as soon as they knew what I was trying to do, they went to all lengths to try to help me. Secondly, to read World War I references pertaining to where your relative served. For instance, even reading the autobiography of General Pershing, the two volume set was extremely helpful. Then I also would suggest get involved with World War I organizations, and build a network. For instance, we attended symposia on World War I, especially those presented at the National World War I museum, and we talked with curator Doran Cart, and archivists Jonathan Casey. Those two bent over backwards to help us find information on our father's service. But I also would say, don't be afraid to donate to these organizations and thank them for helping with your research, and give credit where credit is due. If your relative happened to serve over there, and you have the opportunity to go over there, visit the World War I American military cemeteries. Each is a treasure trove with the history of the battles fought nearby.

[0:27:32]

**Theo Mayer:** Well Virginia, this has been a wonderful interview. I want to thank you not only for everything you've done for the World War I Commissions and the whole centennial, but your dogged determination to get the story out. That's wonderful, thank you.

[0:27:46]

**Virtinia Dilkes:** You're welcome. Passion is the word.

[0:27:49]

**Theo Mayer:** Passion is the right word. Dr Virginia Dilkes is a member of the advisory board for the Georgia World War I Centennial Commission, and the daughter of a World War I veteran. Learn more about her, her father and his service at the links in the podcast notes. This week, for Speaking World War I, where we explore the words and phrases with their origins in World War I. This is the story of men over a decade apart, seeing opportunity and acting on it. Our Speaking World War I phrase this week is "the Teddy Bear suit". But before we can explore the Teddy Bear suit, we had to track down the story of the Teddy Bear. Fade out, fade up in 1902. Theodore Roosevelt invited by Mississippi Governor Andrew H. Longino is on a bear hunting trip near Onward, Mississippi. Well Roosevelt, a renowned big game hunter just didn't even spot a bear. It was just one of those things. So some well meaning assistants, went and cornered a small black bear and tied it to a willow tree, then they brought Roosevelt over to shoot the beast. Well, Teddy didn't think that that was very sporting and he refused to shoot the poor thing. Next thing you know, the story turns into a cartoon, published in the Washington Post. Showing a big old teddy and a big old gun and a cute little bear with a caption that read, "Drawing the line in Mississippi." Well, that 1902 meme went viral. Cut, fade up in Brooklyn, a candy shop owner and his wife, the Michtoms, saw the cartoon and had an idea to make a cute little stuffed toy bear, dedicated to the president who refused to shoot it, and they called it Teddy's Bear. Now that was the beginning of the Ideal Toy Company, as well as one of the most popular plush toy ideas ever, the Teddy Bear. (singing) Fast forward to the winter of 1916, a British Royal Navy Air Service pilot, a gentleman named Sidney Cotton, joined his fellow pilots as they scrambled for the mission. Now Cotton noticed that while his fellow pilots were freezing from the wind blowing through the seams of the clothing up there, he was feeling pretty cozy because he happened to have been in oil soaked overalls without seams when they scrambled. This gave him an idea. He took leave and went to London. There, he designed a one piece suit with three layers. A thin fur lining on the inside, a layer of air proof silk and an outside layer of light burberry material. The design was registered by Robinson and Cleaver on behalf of Cotton, and the suit was appropriately named the Sidcot suit after Sidney Cotton. Well, the Sidcot suit was a [inaudible], and with it made of light brown material and with the inner fur lining making you look all puffy and fluffy when you wore it, it wasn't long before it got a nickname. The Teddy Bear suit. A popular flight accessory for decades, until he did plane interiors. The Teddy Bear suit, this week's Speaking World War I phrase. Learn more at the link in the podcast notes. In our Historians Corner, join us for a deep dive into one of the most American of pastimes, baseball. It's World Series season, and joining us to tell us more about baseball during World War I is Jim Leeke. Author of the book, From the Dugouts to the Trenches: Baseball during the Great War. Jim, welcome.

[0:31:40]

**Jim Leeke:** Thanks for having me here.

[0:31:42]

**Theo Mayer:** So Jim, when you look at the newspaper Stars and Stripes from 1918, or anywhere in that era, every single issue talks about baseball. How popular was the sport in the 1910s and what's different about the game then than it is today?

[0:31:57]

**Jim Leeke:** Well, back then it really was the national pastime. When America entered the war in 1917, they were the two major leagues of course, and there were 22 minor leagues. So it was a very healthy game.

[0:32:09]

**Theo Mayer:** For the second round 1918 military draft, unlike the film actors, baseball players were dropped from the draft exemption list and that caused the series to be played really early in September. Can you tell us about that series?

[0:32:21]

**Jim Leeke:** The regular season ended on Labor Day and the World Series started right after that. It was the very famous 1918, Chicago Cubs, Boston Red Sox series. The big thing that came out of that series came in game one, which was September 5th in Chicago. That was at Comiskey Park, where there are the smaller Cubs stadium. The star of the day, if not the game, was a young third baseman for the Sox named Fred Thomas. Who actually was in the Navy and was on leave from Great Lakes to play in the game. At the Seventh-inning stretch, a military band struck up the Star-Spangled Banner, which was not yet the national anthem, but it was very famous and popular nonetheless. The other players on the field turned to the flag and took off their caps, and put their hands over their hearts. Fred Thomas being in the service, snapped off a very correct military salute and this was noticed in the stands, and the fans began singing The Star-Spangled Banner. It got louder and louder until it was this overwhelming and almost chilling rendition, and that really was the start of The Star-Spangled Banner being played at American Baseball games. Not every game yet, but from then on, it was played each World Series game and opening day. Then in World War II, it began being played for every game. The other aspect of the 1918 world series was in Boston, game five, the players threatened to strike. That was a very controversial thing. Their share of the World Series had been cut, really without their input, and they weren't happy. On the train from Chicago to Boston, the players got together and decided not to take the field until they got a better deal. They actually had an argument, but it wasn't an argument they could make in that time at that place. The fans were in the stands waiting, among the fans were a number of wounded American troops. The players were in a no win position, and eventually cooler heads prevailed and they took the field. But they just got pummeled in the press. The players got pummeled, the owners got pummeled, the leagues got pummeled and nobody came out of it well, which is almost entirely forgotten today. Nowadays, the 1918 World Series is remembered fondly, because the Red Sox won it and didn't win it again for 86 years. At the time, it was very controversial and tainted in a way.

[0:34:55]

**Theo Mayer:** Well now regardless of the draft, a lot of baseball players volunteered, right?

[0:34:59]

**Jim Leeke:** A number of players did volunteer. More often, they waited for the draft notice, but there were quite a few who volunteered. The first active player to do that was Hank Gowdy. He was the catcher for the Old Boston Braves and the World Series hero for the 1914 Miracle Braves. Hank signed up in June 1917 and reported for duty the following month, and ended up as a color sergeant in the 42nd division, the famous Rainbow Division. He was in combat in France for quite a while. There were a number of former major leaguers who signed up as well, and a large percentage of those seem to end up in officer's training. Many of them went overseas as well. My favorite was a pitcher named Edward "Doc" Lafitte, who had played for the Tigers and the Brooklyn Tip-Tops in the Federal League. Doc was a dentist, he served in a plastic surgery unit in the Army in France and England. He helped repair soldiers ruined faces, very admirable and worthwhile endeavor there.

[0:36:05]

**Theo Mayer:** That leads us to about 100 years ago this week, when Captain Eddie Grant was killed in action. Can you tell us about him and how America reacted to his death?

[0:36:15]

**Jim Leeke:** Yes. Captain Eddie Grant, he was called Harvard Eddie when he played. He played 10 years in the big leagues. In fact, he was Harvard educated, he was a New York lawyer after he retired and he was one of the former players who signed up very early. He was in officer training by May 1917. He went to France with the 77th division, and I know you've dealt with this in previous podcasts. Harvard Eddie was killed in the Argonne forest attempting to rescue the lost battalion, which was commanded by a friend of his, Major Whittlesey. The newspapers called Eddy Grant Baseball's first Gold Star. That wasn't accurate. He wasn't the first former major leaguer that died during the war, but he was certainly the biggest name. His death hit the headlines in probably every sports section in the

country, and off the sports pages as well. An acquaintance of mine, the umpire Perry Barber, not long ago tweeted out, Eddie Grant lives. I'd use that myself since, #EddyGrantlives, because I think it's true. You saw the fairly widespread publicity last week on the centennial of his death. So it was one of the great, sad stories of World War I.

**[0:37:33]**

**Theo Mayer:** Jim Leeke is a World War I era baseball expert, and author of the book, From the Dugouts to the Trenches: Baseball During the Great War. Learn more from the links in the podcast notes, which include Jim's World War I baseball website, and his Twitter feed. Moving on to our 100 Cities, 100 Memorial segment, about the \$200,000 matching grant challenge, to rescue and focus on our local World War I Memorials. It's hard to believe that we launched this program in the spring of 2015, so long ago. But that's when this week's profile project got going. Veterans of Foreign War post 1437 from Springdale, Pennsylvania were having their monthly meeting, when somebody showed up with a current issue of the American Legion magazine, the headline read, "A Big Opportunity." Jump forward to today, and we're joined by Patrick Murray, quartermaster for VFW Post 1437, and the mayor of Springdale, Pennsylvania, Jo Bertoline. Gentlemen, welcome to the show.

**[0:38:37]**

**Jo Bertoline:** [crosstalk] Thank you.

**[0:38:38]**

**Patrick Murray:** Thank you, good to be here.

**[0:38:39]**

**Theo Mayer:** Patrick, starting with you, your post formed a World War I committee early on in the centennial period. How did that lead to your involvement with the 100 cities, 100 memorials project? And tell us about the project itself, if you would please.

**[0:38:51]**

**Patrick Murray:** Well like you said, that started with that American Legion article that was June of 2015. It was brought up in a meeting, because the World War II veterans that were in the post at the time wanted to do something about that memorial probably in the 1950s, but for whatever reasons it never materialized. When we seen this opportunity, we decided that we'll go in and see what we need to do to get it refinished. At first, we were going to have it taken off the wall and sent into Matthews Bronze in Pittsburgh to have it redone, but it was decided that that was too risky to try to take them off the wall without cracking it, or some damage to it. So we wound up getting a contractor, that in fact did work for Matthews Bronze, and they came out to the site and redid it. Along the way, they did the plaque that says Veteran's Memorial Field, too. We decided we'd do both of them.

**[0:39:45]**

**Theo Mayer:** Patrick, tell me a little bit about Veteran's Memorial Field. What is it?

**[0:39:49]**

**Patrick Murray:** Well, it started out as a baseball field and we researched where we could. It was originally Melon Field, and we still track it down when it was renamed to Springdale Veterans Memorial Field. We still haven't tracked that down good yet. We believe it was probably in the 1930s. Yeah, it started out as just a baseball field, now it's a football field. Anybody that attends the football games now, they can see the plaque hanging on that one wall down there, so we're hoping we keep bringing attention to it, more people will see it.

**[0:40:20]**

**Theo Mayer:** Well Patrick, Memorial Stadium in Los Angeles is a World War I Memorial, and so is Soldier Field in Chicago. So you're in good company.

**[0:40:29]**

**Patrick Murray:** Yeah, that's right. It's an honor to be in with those locations and names.

**[0:40:33]**

**Theo Mayer:** Patrick, you guys went to the City Council almost immediately, didn't you?

**[0:40:37]**

**Patrick Murray:** Yeah, we did because we knew that if we had to take care that off the wall, we just couldn't get out down here and do that. So we had to get the borough involved, and the city involved in it. That worked out good because they were all for doing this.

**[0:40:50]**

**Theo Mayer:** I was going to ask about the community specifically. What was Springdale's involvement in World War I?

[0:40:54]

**Jo Bertoline:** On the monument itself is 126 names on it- [crosstalk]

[0:41:00]

**Patrick Murray:** Right. Right.

[0:41:01]

**Jo Bertoline:** ... Of Springdale residence that served in World War I. I don't know what the population was way back then. Right now we have approximately 3,500 residents. It's just a small sleepy little town, so I'm sure we had a high percentage of our men and women serve in World War I. We just celebrated a centennial, so there's a lot of pride in our community and that wall. These veterans here at VFW Post, they instill a sense of camaraderie to us and it's all a good thing. It really is. It's an honor to be associated with our VFW here. There are great people here. I know our post goes up to the high school once or twice a year, and gives a little speech on the history of the war, especially from our town, and kudos to our guys here.

[0:41:48]

**Patrick Murray:** Last Saturday, September 29th, we went down to the cemetery in Washington, PA, here. On that plaque, the KIA is Thomas Edward's Whitesides. We had trouble trying to track down where his body was buried. We thought it was overseas, but we found out through the help of the STAR Group in the community here, his body was brought back to the United States in 1921, and he was buried in Washington, PA Cemetery. We went down there and put a wreath on it. We tried to get his date too, he was killed on September 26, 1918.

[0:42:21]

**Theo Mayer:** You rededicated your honor roll plaques around the anniversary of America's entry into the war, can you tell us about that?

[0:42:29]

**Patrick Murray:** We had a nice little thing done at the field, and what was nice about that, there were some young kids down there, which then made it worthwhile too. We just want to make sure that the word got out that the memorial was done there, and what it represents to the community.

[0:42:42]

**Theo Mayer:** Mayor, a project like this reminds a community of its heritage and its history. Now why does that even matter?

[0:42:49]

**Jo Bertoline:** History matters quite a bit. I'm currently doing an ancestry thing with my side of the family, and it's very important. Especially, being from an old town like this, we have generations of family that lived in this town. The younger generations, they're interested in our past. I would have to say that the patriotism in our little town is probably second to none. We've had a team of residents, they call themselves the STAR Team, which stands for a Springdale Team of Active Residents. They got together and they put up military banners all along our main street, and that got people really fired up about the vets. Because flags are going up all over the place, and it's just a beautiful thing, it really is. I'm just proud to be a mayor of this town, I truly am.

[0:43:38]

**Theo Mayer:** Any special plans for the centennial of the armistice coming up on Veteran's Day?

[0:43:43]

**Patrick Murray:** We're going to be in D.C. On Veteran's Day. We're going to put a wreath down at Porter Street Monument to mark the end of World War I. What we did down at the field was, a couple of weeks ago, we put flags up, over each plaque, American flag, POW/MIA flag and put a centennial World War I flag above each plaque done at the field. We're going to be in D.C. And we're hoping that we can stand alongside the Los Angeles Coliseum, and hear our name read out as one of the winners of the award.

[0:44:12]

**Theo Mayer:** Fantastic, then I'd get to meet you live. I'm going to come out as well.

[0:44:16]

**Patrick Murray:** We're hoping to do here in Springdale, is the bell ringing too at the monument down there. We're trying to get that completed, so that'll be done on the on that Sunday, November 11th.

**[0:44:26]**

**Theo Mayer:** Well thank you both, and the borough for remembering World War I, and everything your community is doing for their involvement.

**[0:44:32]**

**Patrick Murray:** Thank you.

**[0:44:32]**

**Jo Bertoline:** Thank you very much.

**[0:44:34]**

**Theo Mayer:** Joseph Bertoline, mayor of Springdale, Pennsylvania and Patrick Murray, quartermaster for VFW post 1437 in Springdale, Pennsylvania. Learn more about the 100 cities, 100 memorials program by following the link in the podcast notes. With that, we wrap up episode number 145, a reprise of an October 2018 production from the award-winning WWI Centennial News: The Doughboy Podcast. We want to thank all contributors, talented crew and supporters, who made today's episode possible. Including: Mike Schuster, curator for the Great War project blog. Ed Lengel, military historian and author. Dr. Virginia Dilkes, citizen historian and researcher. Baseball historian and author, Jim Leeke. Joseph Bertoline and Patrick Murray from Springdale, Pennsylvania. Many thanks to Katherine Akey, World War I photography specialist and line producer for the podcast. Mac Nelson and Tim Crow, our interview editing team. To JL Michaud for his research, to Rachel Hurt our fall intern. I'm Theo Mayer, your producer and host. The U.S. World War One Centennial Commission was authorized by Congress in early 2013 to honor, commemorate, and educate about World War I on the occasion of the centennial of the war. For over a half a decade, the commission, commissioner, staff, and our many associates and supporters have labored to inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War I. We've brought the lessons of 100 years ago to today's educators, their classrooms, and to the public. We've helping to restore World War One Memorials in communities of all sizes across the country. Now is the commissions charter to honor, educate and commemorate the centennial of World War I has been successfully accomplished. The full focus of the commission is turning to it's capstone mission: to build the Nation World War I Memorial in Washington D.C. We want to thank the commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, as well as the major contribution of the Star Foundation. Thanks to our podcast sponsors, the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission and The Doughboy Foundation. The podcast and a full transcript of the show, can be found on our website at [www.1cc.org/cn](http://www.1cc.org/cn). You'll find World War One Centennial News, the Doughboy Podcast in all the places that you get your podcasts, including: iTunes, Google Play, iHeartRadio, TuneIn, Spotify, or radio on demand. Even on YouTube, asking Siri, or 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. This has been a reprise of episode number 93, from November of 2018. Thank you for listening. So long.

**[0:48:04]**