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8 speakers (Theo Mayer, Mike Shuster, Paul Callens, Eileen Dumont, Indi Neidell, Richard Rubin, Jonathan B., Katherine Akey)

[0:00:07]

Theo Mayer: Welcome to World War 1 Centennial News. It's about World War 1 news 100 years ago this week, and it's about World War 1 now. News and updates about the Centennial and the commemoration. World War 1 Centennial News is brought to you by the US World War 1 Centennial Commission and the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. Today is June 14, 2017, and I'm Theo Mayer, the Chief Technologist for the World War 1 Centennial Commission and your host. We've gone back in time 100 years, and on June 14, 1917, it's Flag Day. It's a Flag Day like no other in history. The Washington Herald writes, "Never has there been such a Flag Day fete before, and it may be centuries before it occurs again, but the deed was accomplished despite the setting, the president has spoken". Though American had declared war on Germany, the real enemy on this Flag Day seems to be the weather. Storm gale winds and heavy rain threatens what is supposed to be a major event in the nation's capital planned with a 600 voice choir, a huge audience including government employees who have half a day off so they can join, all to frame a rousing speech by President Woodrow Wilson about the war. The herald article captures the moment with, "nature allied with the German autocracy yesterday in a futile effort to block the delivery of the most sensational war statement to the American people ever heard from the lips of a president". Streets flooded, flags were ripped out of their holders, and one man actually died in the gale while President Wilson braved the storm shunning an umbrella and delivering a rousing speech against the gale. It all seemed somehow prophetic and appropriate, then at the end of the day, it was announced that the Liberty Loan drive had not only met its goal, but had exceeded it. On Flag Day in 1917 it feels like nothing can or will dare stop the Yanks. We're going to pick up on the Liberty Loan drive by exploring this week's pages of the official bulletin, The Government War Gazette, published by George Creel, America's propaganda chief under the orders of President Wilson. We're pulling from Volume 1, Issues 27-32. The pages of the bulletin are filled with an all out, last minute effort in promoting the Liberty Loan Bonds, as this first national fundraising program comes to a close this week. Dateline: Monday, June 11, 1917. Headline: Bell's Ring Out, Call for Liberty Loan Subscriptions. The story reads, the US Treasury Department issues the following: The pendulum of time is to swing back to 1776 and once again the inscriptions on the old Liberty Bell proclaim liberty throughout all the land on to the inhabitancy thereof. It is to call Americans to service and the cause of freedom. In every city, town, village and hamlet, beginning today, Monday, the bells in churches, schools, courthouses, and town halls throughout the nation will toll every night at 9:00 reminding Americans that the time for patriotic support of the government through subscriptions to the Liberty Loan Bonds is drawing to a close. The bells will ring four times tonight indicating that four days remain in which to buy bonds. Tuesday, they will toll three times. Twice on Wednesday, and once on Thursday. That's quite a sales campaign, and that's just a part of it. Listen to some of the other fundraising headlines from just this week's issue of the official bulletin. We'll spare you the stories, but here are the headlines. Liberty Loan, Appeal Sent to Every Navy Ship and Station. June Brides Should Ask that Their Gift be Liberty Loans. Liberty Loan is a Golden Opportunity. Artistic Liberty Loan Bonds being turned out by Engravers Working Night and Day. Senate Leaders Urge Public to buy Liberty Loan Bonds. And on Friday, the day after the subscription period closes, the official bulletin pronounces, Liberty Loan oversubscribed. "It is a genuine triumph for democracy," says Secretary McAdoo. The government bond subscription target is set to raise 1.9 billion, and it's said to have raised 2.5 billion, which is over 52 billion in 2017 dollars. It's a huge win for the Wilson Administration. We'll continue with a couple of other stories about some of the no holds barred methods they used to achieve this. Dateline: Monday, June 11, 1917. Headline: Wealthy Creek Indian Seeking to Invest his Great Riches in Liberty Loan Bonds. Jackson Barnett, a Creek Indian, has nearly 800,000 on deposit in banks and treasury from rich oil lands once thought of little value allotted to him in Oklahoma. Wow okay. So, Native Americans stepping up to help the nation. Well, maybe not exactly. Now, the Native American community did step up, and step up big, during World War 1, but stepping up financially before Indian Casinos? Well, that was surprising and we thought there might be an interesting story there. So, we sent out one of our Commission summer interns, Lorenzo Rodriguez, to dig in to the story a little. Here's what we learned. Jackson Barnett, a full blooded Creek Indian, is given 160 acres of land in 1903 in Oklahoma. Well, in 1912, they find oil on the property that earns him between three and four million dollars over his lifetime. Of course, he's an Indian and in his 60s and illiterate, so the Creek County Court and the US Department of the Interior, declares him incompetent and arranges to become the stewards of his estate. It turns out that it was not actually Mr. Barnett's idea to buy nearly 700,000 dollars in Liberty Loans or to donate 50,000 dollars to the Red Cross. The good news is that Barnett is no fool, and later proves himself mentally capable of understanding his own actions and takes back control of his estate. There's a book about him called The World's Richest Indian: The Scandal Over Jackson Barnett's Oil Fortune. We've put a link to it in the podcast notes. Apparently, Secretary of the Interior Lane has control over quite a bit more than just Mr. Barnett's estate. In the same week's issue: Dateline: Wednesday, June 13, 1917. Headline: Secretary Lane Subscribes to Ten Million Dollars of Liberty Loan Bonds for the Accounts of American Indians. Secretary of the Interior Lane has subscribed to ten million dollars in Liberty Loan

Bonds on behalf of the accounts of Indians whose money is in his custody. Secretary Lane states, "Most of these Indians reside in Oklahoma, and they're incompetent similar to Jackson Barnett who's account of 640,000 dollars in Liberty Bonds was subscribed yesterday. Most of the funds of these Indians are in deposits that are either low rates of interest or in the Treasury Department drawing no interest." The implication is that this is a favor because now the funds are in Liberty Bonds drawing three and a half percent interest, and maybe it was. So, in summary about the government getting in to the bond business, subscribing to the bonds became a symbol of patriotic duty in the United States running up to World War 1, and it introduced the idea of financial securities to many citizens for the first time. The Act of Congress which authorizes the Liberty Bonds is still the same law used today as the authority under which all US Treasury Bonds are issued. Speaking of issued, the amazing official bulletin, the Government War Gazette, is now being re-issued every day except Sunday on our website on the Centennial of its original, published date. If you're an educator, a researcher, historian, student of propaganda, or just interested in exploring the nuances of America's transformation in 1917 and the echoes that still ring in your life today, like US Treasury Bonds, we offer you this wonderful daily resource at ww1.cc.org/bulletin, all lowercase. Explore, exploit, and enjoy. It's kind of an amazing daily read about the war that changed the world. Moving on to our first guest, we're joined by former NPR correspondent, Mike Shuster, from The Great War Project Blog. Mike, human beings have this tendency to believe what they want to believe and from my readings, both the French and the Brits see America as this powerful juggernaut ready to sweep in and solve the wretched, miserable wearying war. Now, Pershing arrives in Europe, and the news he brings is not exactly what everybody wants to hear, right?

[0:09:48]

Mike Shuster: That's right Theo, that in a moment, but first these headlines and other developments for this week in the war a century ago. A Desperate Moment for the Allies, Pershing in London tells King No Aircraft on the Way. Soldiers Lay Their Rifles Down. This is special to The Great War Project. At this moment in the war, it is hard to resist the conclusion that in the war in Europe, there is no winning side. Every side is losing. The war on the battlefield writes the story and Martin Gilbert had become one of bizarre contrast. On both the Eastern and Western fronts, the savagery of the conflict was matched by mass desertions, mutinies, and fraternization. On the Easter front, one senior general writes in his diary, "An armistice was to all intents and purpose in being at many points, at other points there was fighting." Writes the story in Gilbert, mutinous French troops every where revealed their hatred of the war. Most French divisions between the front line and Paris are unreliable. In Britain at this moment in the war, anti-war sentiment is spreading rapidly. One thousand pacifists are in prison. Declares philosopher and anti-war activist Bertrand Russell, "by their refusal of military service, conscientious objectors have shown that it was possible for the individual to stand against the whole power of the state". Russell receives a huge standing ovation when he makes this declaration at an anti-war conference. The control of events is rapidly passing out of the hands of the militarist of all countries, a new spirit is abroad. Elsewhere, writes historian Gilbert, "the mood is not so optimistic. The will of governments to continue to fight, despite the actual horrors or trench warfare, despite the chaos in Russia, despite mutiny in France, did not dissolve." This is a crucial moment in the war, mid-June, 100 years ago, and no government is willing yet to declare opposition to the war. In fact the British government is hard at work planning a new offensive, despite a growing awareness in London that the French were finding it difficult to go on with their reserves physically and mentally exhausted. At this moment in June a century ago, is the British War Cabinet in London is planning their next offensive. The leader of the American Expeditionary Force, General John J. Pershing and his staff, reached Liverpool. Then the following day in London, Pershing meets with King George at Buckingham Palace. The King cites Britain's terrible losses, and he remarks there are rumors the US would soon have 50,000 aircraft in the air. According to Gilbert, Pershing is embarrassed to tell the King such reports were extremely exaggerated, and that we should not be sending over any planes for some time to come. At that moment, America had only 55 training planes, 51 of which were obsolete. Reports the story in Gilbert, on Pershing's second day in London, he learned that there would not be sufficient shipping to bring the American Expeditionary Force to France or to keep it supplied once it had arrived. Fifteen ships had been sunk in British waters alone during the eleven days Pershing was crossing the Atlantic. Indeed, to guard against the possibility of torpedo attack, his ship had not responded to any of the frequent distress calls it had received. It is truly a desperate moment in this war.

[0:13:01]

Theo Mayer: Thank you Mike. That was Mike Shuster from The Great War Project Blog. For our War on the Sky segment, last week we ran a story about US Marine Corps Medal of Honor Recipient Aviator Ralph Talbot, and about the collaborative research project being done across the Atlantic about him by two citizen historians. So, as a follow up, we've invited Eileen Dumont from Massachusetts and Paul Callens from Pittem, Belgium, also a member of the Flemish Genealogical Society to come on the show. Welcome to both of you.

[0:13:35]

Paul Callens: Thank you.

[0:13:36]

Eileen Dumont: Thank you.

[0:13:37]

Theo Mayer: Eileen, let's start with you. Can you tell us a little bit about Talbot and what made you interested in him?

[0:13:43]

Eileen Dumont: My hometown of Weymouth, Massachusetts has a unique distinction of being the home of five Medal of Honor recipients, and one of those men was Ralph. I went to Ralph Talbot Elementary School as a little kid, and when I returned to Weymouth to raise a family, I became really interested in local history, and I started to research all the Medal of Honor recipients. Ralph's story really struck me, for a lot of reasons, but for one being that everyone in Weymouth knew him and love him and admired him. He was a real golden boy. He was an All American football player, baseball player, track star, class orator, wrote poetry, and handsome, and everyone from little kids in the neighborhood to his teachers, they just adored him. So, his loss was not only a loss for his family obviously, but a loss for the town. Everybody really grieved his loss. It was just very poignant for me that he, despite his family coming from financial hardships, he was able to obtain a spot at Mercersburg Academy and then get on to Yale. He could have been anything, and his life was cut short by the war.

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Theo Mayer: So, how did the two of you get together on this project?

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Paul Callens: Well, over here in Belgium I went to the memorial service in Waregem, the American cemetery up there from the first war, and some of talking about Ralph Talbot, and I never heard about that, that he was a [inaudible] when he got his Medal of Honor. So, I started looking and I couldn't find anything, and the reason for that is that our village name is always misspelled in all the sources. So after a while, I could find on the Internet some information on Ralph and his buddy, Robert Robinson, so I tried to figure out more about him. Looking for people that could help me, I found Eileen over there. So, she already knew a lot of information on Ralph, and together we found back the relatives and we could see them like last year when we were over in the States. So they gave us a lot of information next to the information that Eileen already had.

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Theo Mayer: Eileen, how as somebody able to find you.

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Eileen Dumont: I received an E-mail from the New England Historic Genealogical Society, Paul must have contacted them looking for family, and I had created a pretty large Talbot family tree on the Ancestry.com, and the genealogical society assumed I was a family member because my tree was so vast. So they asked me if I would speak with Paul, and I said "sure". So, he contacted me, this was back in 2014 when his village up Pittem was going to put a plaque for a memorial ceremony, and he wanted information about Ralph, and his gunner guy, Robinson, at that time. So, after he did the plaque, and that was such a success, in 2014 he said, "you know, wouldn't it be great if we could get together again and get as much information as we can get together and possibly put on an exhibit later on in the year?" So, we tried to get together and hit the books and see how much research we could get together to create an exhibit.

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Theo Mayer: Paul, you came over to the US to meet the family, didn't you?

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Paul Callens: I came over last year to the US to meet Eileen and see some places up there that were related to Ralph, and we also met the family up there in New Hampshire.

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Theo Mayer: So, your collaboration wound up generating an exhibit of some kind. Tell us about that.

[0:17:04]

Paul Callens: Well, we had to put up something that we could use on both sides of the ocean. So it had to be in Dutch for over here, and it had to be in English for over there. So, in the exhibit, first we give some information on the places where it's all about, a bit of history of the war, and then we give information on Ralph, and we had information of his family. We could figure out what they did in the battles and all things like that, and we also had information on his shooter, Robinson. But we also asked the people up there, when we were there, at Ralph Talbot Elementary School, that the children from there would make some drawings on Ralph Talbot and the first war. So, children up there did that, and the same thing we asked over here in Pittem and Egem, that's a subdivision of Pittem, and these

children over here also made some drawings. So, these drawings are also part of the exhibit, so you can see them in Belgium and you can see them in America.

[0:17:56]

Theo Mayer: That was Eileen Dumont from Massachusetts and Paul Callens from Pittem in Belgium about the trans-continental collaboration honoring US Marine Aviator Ralph Talbot. Our friends at The Great War Channel on YouTube produce videos about World War 1 one hundred years ago this week. The show's produced in Europe, so it comes from a more European perspective. This is Indi Neidell, the host of the show.

[0:18:22]

Indi Neidell: Attention World War 1 Centennial News listeners, I'm Indi Neidell, host of The Great War YouTube Channel. America is preparing to send its forces over there, but if you want to know more about what's been going on over here for the past three years, you can check out all of our previous episodes and our summary episodes over at our YouTube Channel.

[0:18:40]

Theo Mayer: One of their new clips this week is called The Top Ten Stupid Moves of World War 1 from Mid-1915 through 1916. Indi offers a real interesting perspective on some of the strategic blunders of the time seen through that sharp, sharp lens of hindsight. The link is in the podcast notes, or search The Great War on YouTube. We're going to close out World War 1 one hundred years ago this week with a follow up to last week's report about June 5th, registration day for the selective service. That's the subject of our new segment, the storyteller and the historian with Richard Rubin and Jonathan Bratton.

[0:19:20]

Richard Rubin: Greetings, this is Richard Rubin, storyteller, the author of Last of the Doughboys, and back over there.

[0:19:26]

Jonathan B.: And this is Jonathan Bratton, historian.

[0:19:30]

Richard Rubin: On May 18th, 1917, the Selective Service Act was signed in to law. On June 5th, 1917 the first round of registration for what was then euphemistically called selective service, was implemented. In all, a total of nine million American men would register for the draft in World War 1, and of those, three million would be called to service. One of those nine million men who registered, and one of the three million who was eventually called up to service, was my own grandfather, Abraham Rubin who had immigrated to this country in 1906 at the age of 15 and was 27 when he was drafted in to the American Expeditionary Forces. From what I understand, he was none too happy about it. He ended up serving with the 77th Division which was composed of almost entirely draftees from the city of New York. He saved everything including his original draft notice which I now have. I don't think we can overstate how strange this was, I think to Americans back then. The Secretary of War, Newton Baker, chose the phrase selective service, because the term 'the draft' had some very negative, residual connotations going back to The Civil War. You may recall in 1863 there were convulsive and traumatic riots in the city of New York because of the institution of a draft for the Union Army in the Civil War.

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Jonathan B.: And the American South also had very bad memories of the draft considering that the Confederate States of America had also instituted a far more harsh draft and early then the United States. So there's this legacy, when one thing's impressment in to military service, a legacy from the Civil War, a legacy that even goes back to the War of 1812 with the British policy of impressing American seamen in to the Royal Navy. So, when they came up with this policy in 1917 because they just weren't getting enough enlistments to field a type of army they were going to need to bring to Europe, there was actually surprisingly less public resistance than one might think given the severity of the topic.

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Richard Rubin: Well, I think that that's due to a few things. First of all, there is the term selective service, which is a euphemism to say the least. It almost sounds like a lottery, which the draft was a lottery, but not the kind I think you'd hope to win, but also the most odious part of the Civil War draft was eliminated by the Selective Service Act of 1917, and that was the ability of anyone who was called upon to serve to pay 300 dollars to hire a substitute to go off and fight in his stead. This was the case both in the Union and Confederate Armies, and it led to the cry of rich man's war, poor man's fight, which was really the cause of those draft riots in 1863. So, that at least was removed from the equation, and I think that assuaged a lot of people that this was a draft that was going to be applied to everyone, and

if you read newspaper accounts, and quite frankly propaganda from that area, you hear all kinds of stories about the sons of Wall Street millionaires serving side by side with the sons of poor farmers and factory workers and loving it.

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Jonathan B.: Right, and then the other side is this fascinating work that has to be done by the war department and then all the agencies running selective service of who's going to be exempted and who's not because you can't take everybody, you have to have some people left around for essential services. You can't pull people from quote unquote war industries, so your munition plants, ship building sites, the factories, everything like this. There was so much that had to be done in that brief period of time from April 6th to when the war was declared to May 28th when the Selective Service Act was signed in to law to June 5th when you get the first registrations. Then that summer, the men start showing up. So it's really a colossal undertaking.

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Richard Rubin: Well, also in that time you needed to get working on building camps to train all these men in. Why don't you tell us just a little bit about the state of the United States Army before April 6, 1917.

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Jonathan B.: Oh, it was terrible. You only had about 130,000 US troops scattered on posts all across the US and around the world.

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Richard Rubin: It's something like the 17th largest army in the world behind Serbia or something like that?

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Jonathan B.: Yeah absolutely ridiculous. Not what you would call a world power, but all of a sudden with this draft is this surge of energy across the US to build cantonments in pretty much every state to harbor all these draftees that are going to start showing up.

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Richard Rubin: Well I think the fact that the United States Army was so small, and what we now call preparedness, was so low, I think that really speaks to how unpopular the idea of the United States entering this war was before April of 1917. People really wanted no part of it. Not everybody, Teddy Roosevelt sure wanted a big part of it, but a great many Americans were grateful for that enormous ocean that separated us from the battlefields of the Western front. They didn't want anything to do with war, that included having a standing army.

[0:25:24]

Theo Mayer: That was the storyteller Richard Rubin and the historian Jonathan Bratton talking about the 1917 Selective Service Act. We've moved forward in to the present with World War 1 Centennial News now. News about the Centennial and the commemoration. From the US National World War 1 Centennial Events Register at ww1cc.org/events here is our upcoming event pick of the week. Decoding the Great War is a panel discussion that will take place on June 20th at the National Cryptologic Museum in Maryland. If our story from last week about the Choctaw code talkers, or the use of knitting as a covert communication interested you, this panel is a great opportunity to learn more about the role of codes and ciphers during World War 1. The panel discussion includes experts in the evolution of intelligence collection, radio intelligence, code making, and the first code talkers. Check out the US National World War 1 Centennial Events Register for things that are happening in your area at ww1cc.org/events, and when you're on the site, you'll also find a big red button there so you can submit your own upcoming events. As we've mentioned in the past, June is PTSD Awareness month, and as we did last week, we want to bring you another story about the disorder in World War 1. One hundred years ago, Lieutenant Charles Whittlesey was known around the war, as was the battalion he led, during World War 1. The so-called Lost Battalion was surrounded by enemies and cut off in the Argonne for days. Then they were saved when their famous messenger pigeon, Cher Ami, aptly named dear friend was able to relay their position for help. Commission friend and author, Rob Laplander, wrote a book called Finding the Lost Battalion. Links to his book and additional information from his research on the Lost Battalion is available at www1cc.org/lostbatallion, all lower case, all one word. So, the war ended a month after the indictment, and Whittlesey and his comrades were hailed as fabled heroes for their exploits, but the war lingered on in the Lieutenant Colonel's mind. In 1921, just a few years after the war, Whittlesey committed suicide. Whittlesey is by no means alone in this fate. In a 2014 study, the Veteran's Administration reported that 20 US veterans commit suicide every day. There's a detailed article about Whittlesey's suicide in the Berkshire Eagle, and we've put a number of links in the podcast notes for you. Please keep our veterans in your minds and in your hearts as PTSD Awareness month continues this June. This week in education, we want to let you know about the World War 1 Centennial education newsletter released every other month. Each issue includes an extensive selection of articles, lessons, teaching guidelines, and primary sources that can be used freely all vetted by professional historians and educators. This new issue is themed Animals at War and includes

articles and links for different grade levels about the role of animals in World War 1. Some famous individuals are featured like Winnie the Pooh and of course Sergeant Stubby, as well as lesser known characters like Jackie the baboon. Perhaps the most surprising critter featured is the glowworm, who played a useful if unexpected role in World War 1. You can register to receive the newsletter and read past issues by following the link in the podcast notes. And now for our updates from the states. From Texas, there's a news story from Houston about the flooding aboard the USS Texas. The Battleship Texas survived World War 1 and went on to survive World War 2. Now we hope she'll survive the month. Periodic leaks have plagued the aging ship since 2010, and a large new one sprung up over this past weekend. By Monday June 11th, the ship was listing 8 degrees and by Tuesday, 12. She needs help. Previous needed repairs were postponed because of the high cost. There's no news yet about how extensive the current damage is, but it's certain to be expensive. We hope a solution is found soon so that this 103 year old historic vessel can resume its role as a site for educating the public and school children about the World Wars. Learn more about it by following the link in the podcast notes. From the District of Columbia is a story about an American Legion Post. Last summer, as The Smithsonian Museum of African American History prepared to open, some local archivists and educators began working to save the history of an African American, American Legion Post in northeast D.C. The James Reese Europe Post 5 was first established 100 years ago during World War 1. Named for the noted bandleader of the 369th Infantry, the Harlem Hellfighters, what's left of the post house is mostly just boxes of documents and photographs. So, the post has teamed up with American University educators and Prologue D.C. To research, archive, and preserve what's left of the post. Read more about the story and more about the project at the link in the podcast notes. From Maine's World War 1 Centennial website, a story about an unlikely war poet, Ralph Moen, a civil engineer from the town of Waterville, Maine. World War 1 is noted for the incredibly evocative war poetry it produced, notably from such soldier poets as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. However, very few of these people were actually American poets. Ralph Moen served in the 133 Infantry Regiment, part of the 26th Yankee Division, made up of entirely of New England units. He returned home to Maine in 1919 as a corporal to find that he'd been awarded both the French Croix de Guerre and the Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery. Now that he was home, he gathered his memories of the war and its devastation in to himself, channeling it in to poetry. Though he never spoke of his experiences aloud, even to his family, his experience of the war lived on in his writings. Read the story on Maine's World War 1 website at www.1cc.org/maine, all lower case. This week in our international report comes a wonderful story about two young British men and the violin that brought them together across a century. Private Richard Howard began making his violin before the outbreak of World War 1, planning to finish it on his return. Sadly, he died in the fighting on the first day of the Battle of Messines Ridge in June of 1917. The violin passed from person to person being put together and finished over the course of decades. It wound up in Sam Sweeney's hands, a British folk musician, who somehow knew that it was something special. Inside the violin, there was a date, 1915, and Private Howard's name. So, Sweeney tracked down the young soldier and his descendants. In a recent ceremony, Sweeney played the soldier's violin at his grave as Howard's family looked on. The family hadn't known much of anything about Howard. His granddaughter saying, "I knew nothing at all about my grandfather, I was very interested to learn about him because I had heard nothing except your grandfather died in the war. People in those days didn't talk about it for fear of upsetting someone. My mother Rose, was 11, when he died. I have to say the news when it got to me just blew me away". Sweeney continues to tell the instrument's unique story in his show, *Made in the Great War*, which he's touring across the United Kingdom. In our spotlight on the media, the headline reads, *Wonder Woman Smashes Domestic Box Office Record for Female Directors*. So, on the one hand we have a hit movie, but on the other hand we have kind of a little mystery. The *Wonder Woman* in DC Comic Book Issue 1, that came out on July 22, 1942, was originally set in World War 2, but this summer's early blockbuster is set in World War 1. We had to ask why. So we put another one of our Commission's intrepid summer interns, Paul Birkholzer, to chasing down the mystery, and here's the story. Theory One, from an IGN interview with producer Charles Roven, Roven said that "the film was set in World War 1 because it adds a culture shock aspect for Diana, the main character *Wonder Woman*". Diana romanticizes war, trains in hand to hand combat, she believes that combat is an honorable competition between warriors. World War 1 Roven explains was, "the first major conflict where the combatants didn't even see the people that they were killing". In the film, *World War 1* introduces the extreme suffering of modern warfare to *Wonder Woman* driving her to seek a solution. Now, a second theory. The filmmakers wanted to set themselves apart from their rivals at Marvel Comics with characters like *Captain America* whose story is set in World War 2. Theory three comes from *Breitbart*, putting forth the theory that World War 1 sets a more politically correct agenda. The writer who wrote the article in January of this year predicted that the film would be strongly anti-war, and that World War 1 would be a better foil for that because World War 2 had such clear villains like Hitler. I don't know about that. When I saw the film last weekend, I didn't feel that it was much of a political statement at all, it just seemed like a really well made summer blockbuster. A real fun ride in entertainment and a really strong female lead. What do you think, and if one of the people from the film hears this podcast, we'd love to know the truth. And in our Write Blog which we host on our Commission's website which explores World War 1's influence on contemporary writing and scholarship, this week's post is titled *More Gentle than Grim, Letters Home from World War 1*. The post is from author, editor, and award winning teacher, David Chrisinger. Chrisinger is the editor for *See Me for Who I Am*, a collection of essays by veteran students that seek to undermined three main media created stereotypes. As super humans, as broke and disabled and traumatized, or as dangerous ticking time bombs. In this post, he discusses a World War 1 project he just completed with a new student veteran at the University of

Wisconsin. Don't miss this post describing the surprising and insightful discoveries. Read more about the project by visiting The Write Blog at www1cc.org/wwrite, and if World War 1's influence on contemporary writing and scholarship is of particular interest to you, sign up for the blog at the same link. That brings us to the buzz. The Centennial of World War 1 this week in social media with Katherine Akey. Hi Katherine.

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Katherine Akey: Hi Theo, this week we got a glimpse in to a nondescript warehouse in Northern Virginia that houses an incredible collection of art and artifacts. The building is the center of military history. Remember that scene at the end of Indiana Jones in the Ark of the Covenant where the ark is put away in a wooden box among thousands of other boxes in a massive warehouse? That is very truly what the center looks like, only there's no mystical objects there at least not that we see in this article from BuzzFeed. What is there however, is still very cool. The center houses uniforms of famous generals and soldiers, weapons and gear from every American war since the revolution, and an incredible collection of art. World War 1 was the first time that the US Army commissioned official war artists to document what they saw during combat, and many of the pieces of work produced by them are included in the 16,000 piece art collection. Notably, there's also works of art seized from the Nazis, even some watercolors by Hitler. If you're wondering like I did, wow why can't the public access all of these incredible artifacts? The center is in fact hoping to raise money to open a museum to house and display the collection. You can follow the link in the podcast notes to take a look for yourself inside the center of military history. Finally, this week I wanted to bring attention to a photo we posted to our Instagram feed. On June 13, 1917, Pershing disembarked at Boulogne in France, and we shared an image of him walking down the gang plank surrounded by French officers. He's pictured mid-stride, one hand on his sword, the other swinging forward as he stares firmly, jaw clenched. You can certainly feel his stress and resolve coming through the image. It's no wonder so many people found it engaging. The photo reached 30,000 people in the last two days, and I hope you take a moment to go to our Instagram feed at [www1cc](http://www1cc.org) to take a look yourself.

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Theo Mayer: Thank you Katherine, all of Katherine's stories have links in the podcast notes. And that's World War 1 Centennial News for this week. Thank you for listening. We want to thank our guests Mike Shuster from The Great War Project Blog, Eileen Dumont and Paul Callens researching Aviator Ralph Talbot, Richard Rubin author and storyteller and Jonathan Bratton, historian, with their new segment The Storyteller and the Historian, Katherine Akey, the Commission's social media director and also the line producer for the show, and I'm Theo Mayer your host. The US World War 1 Centennial Commission was created by Congress to honor, commemorate, and educate about World War 1. Our programs are to inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War 1. This show is a part of that effort. We're bringing the lessons of 100 years ago in to today's classrooms. We're helping to restore World War 1 memorials in communities of all sizes across the country, and of course we're building America's national World War 1 memorial in Washington, D.C. WE rely completely on donations, no government appropriations or taxes are being used. So please give what you can by going to ww1cc.org/donate, all lower case. If you're listening to the show on your smartphone, you can text us a donation of any size. Just text the letters ww1 to the number 41444. We want to thank the Commission's founding sponsor, the Prizker Military Museum and Library for their support. The podcast can be found on our website at ww1cc.org/cn. It's on iTunes, Google Play, TuneIn, Podbean, and all the other places you find your podcasts. Our Twitter and Instagram handles are both @ww1cc and we're on Facebook at ww1centennial. Thanks for joining us and don't forget to share what you're learning here about the Great War that changed the world. So long.

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