

FOCUS ON - The Non-Combatants of WWI (42m 8s)

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10 speakers (Theo Mayer, Joe Johnson, Dr. Elizabeth C, Nicole Milano, Lynn Heidelbaug, Robert Reid, Dr. Edward L., Elsie Janis, Dr. John Boyd, Patri O'Gan)

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Theo Mayer: Welcome to WWI Centennial News: The Doughboy Podcast, episode number 139. The Doughboy Podcast is about what happened 100 years ago during and after the war that changed the world. And it's not only about then, it's also about now, how World War One is still present in our daily lives in countless ways, but most important the podcast is about why and how. We're never going to let the awareness of World War One fall back into the mists of obscurity, so join us as we explore the many facets of World War One, both then and now. I'm Theo Mayer, the chief technologist for the commission and your host. Welcome to the show. This week we're excited to offer you our second Focus On episode. As you may remember from early August, we did our first in the series. It was called Focus On The War in the Sky. This week we bring you Focus On the Non-Combatants of World War One. It's a really fascinating and amazing subject when you dig into it and we found it to be so vast that the big challenge for this week has been what not to talk about. The Doughboy Podcast is sponsored and brought to you by the US World War One Centennial Commission and The Doughboy Foundation, dedicated to remembering those who served in World War One and to building the national World War One memorial in Washington D.C. Let's talk about that. You ever hear the phrase "no man left behind"? It's an important and deep-rooted sentiment in the US Military Services, but it applies to all people of honor. We don't abandon each other no matter what. So think about that. There are no US Doughboys still alive. The last American World War One veteran died in 2011. They can't speak for themselves and we can't leave them behind. As much to the amazement of most people when I talk to them that there is no national World War One memorial in our nation's capital, Washington D.C., there's nothing there to honor them. The District of Columbia built a nice rotunda to honor their own who served, but we, the American people, and all of those who come to our nation's capital see honors for World War Two, for Korea, for Vietnam, but not to the war that changed the world. We've been working our butts off for the last five years to correct this century old mistake. The US World War One Centennial Commission has been granted a wonderful site and is ready with a stunning design. We're ready and want to start construction this fall on transforming Pershing Park into a fitting location to commemorate our World War One veterans and as you'll hear about on today's show all those who served. We're so close to completing the funding for that phase. Close but not quite there yet. This podcast goes out to a group of loyal listeners and we're honored to bring you this show each week. That's made possible by our sponsors, the US World War One Centennial Commission and The Doughboy Foundation. Please help make their goal possible to honor our World War One veterans with this memorial. We need your help and we need it right now, this week, this moment. Look, you're already on a smartphone listening to this, right? Well, that means that you're using the same device that you can make a donation with. Just pause the show for a minute, open up your texting app and text the letters W-W-1 or W-W-I to the phone number 91 999. You'll get a link back that lets you donate any amount to help us break ground on the national World War One memorial in Washington D.C. Don't leave our World War One veterans behind. Any amount will help. And thank you. That's texting the letters W-W-1 or W-W-I to 91 999. Help us break ground this fall. World War One affected every aspect of our society. Yes we drafted millions of young men to send to Europe to fight in the war, but when we remember World War One, we really also need to remember all those who played crucial roles but didn't wield a weapon. This week we focus on the non-combatants of World War One, the crucial support services from logistics to communication, spiritual support, food supplies, morale and even entertainment, all a key part in the war that changed the world. Never before had the US Military been required to move men and supplies thousands of miles across an ocean, and in the millions no less. We had to figure out how and fast. Yankee ingenuity is no myth, and we quickly developed and refined systems of logistics to provide the means to make this happen. As Chief of Staff of the Defense Acquisition University, Joe Johnson is an expert on logistics and its history. He shares with us the challenges that the United States faced on entry into the war.

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Joe Johnson: We were not prepared for World War One and you have to think of the scale of the war. At its height, the union army in the Civil War was 600,000 soldiers. We sent three million soldiers across the Atlantic Ocean to France. A huge increase. Not only that, we had to supply them over extended lines of communication. In the Civil War, it was 500 miles. It was 3,000 miles just to get to the western ports of France and then you had to get the supplies to the fighting forces who were hundreds of miles inland.

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Theo Mayer: Before we could even begin to think about getting our troops overseas and supplying them with the arms, clothing, food and other needs, we had to organize our supply lines stateside.

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Joe Johnson: It reflects what was happening around the world. The latter part of the 19th century had been a period of heavy industrialization, and so logistics in World War One reflected that. We were now able to link all the factories across the country, have visibility over what was being ordered, get it to warehouses, get it to the port, so it really changed the way we would operate in the future. Nothing had happened on this scale before, but it did reflect the industrialization of the United States. It's interesting to know that we also focus on World War Two, the production lines. None of that would've happened without our experience and lessons learned in World War One. The problem the logisticians faced was daunting. In short order, after war was declared, they were told you would have to supply millions of troops. So what did they have to do simultaneously? And this is the real challenge. They had to construct the camps that you referenced in 60 days, or at most 90 days. They had to determine what it would take to outfit all of the weapons, the supplies, the equipment that this immense force would need. They had to get with industry and place these orders on industry. And they had to do it in a way where they would have priorities instead of every little supply agency ordering a few, consolidating it and setting priorities. They had to ensure that the railroads not owned but run by the government so that you could prioritize supplies and raw materials getting to the manufacturing firms and getting what was produced to the warehouses and then to the ports. They'd have to get enough ships so that the troops and all of the equipment that had been ordered could get overseas. They had to work with the navy to make sure those ships could safely get overseas, and once overseas they literally had to build up French ports to unload, store and distribute all that equipment. And they had to work all of these things simultaneously. An incredible challenge. I believe that what made it possible was those supply personnel and logistics personnel who were on the staff at the time, but they were augmented by many people from industry who joined the military. These people often would start as a major, Charles [Dar's 00:08:48] good example of that. Started as a major, ended up as a brigadier general. And they brought this industry knowledge to the logistical challenge so that we could get very organized and work very effectively with the factories in America to get everything produced. So really key in this war was getting industrialists in uniform or advising the war department and the department of the navy.

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Theo Mayer: Once our military was in place, it needed to communicate, and it needed to communicate effectively. The responsibility for secure and reliable communication fell to the army's Signal Corps. The Signal Corps' a bit of a unsung hero in American military history. It started simply enough during the Civil War, developing and implementing methods to use flags for signaling over distances. But the Signal Corps has always had an underlayer of innovation, extending far beyond communications. Now many of you may have heard of today's DARPA, the Defense Advanced Projects Research Agency. It was a wholly exploitive reaction by President Eisenhower when the Russians shocked us and sent Sputnik 1, the first artificial earth satellite orbiting over our heads. Eisenhower established DARPA as a government integration force acting as a connective tissue between industry, defense, university research, national labs and goals. We're going to put a link in the podcast notes for you to see how much of your life today is a result of DARPA programs, both the ones you know about and there's a bunch that you don't. Well, before DARPA, it was the US Army Signal Corps at the forefront of innovation and technology in the late 19th and early 20th century. The Signal Corps established what would become the National Weather Service in 1873. That alone played a significant part in allied success in World War One. It was the US Army's Signal Corps that championed the new technology of the airplane not long after its invention, ordering test airplanes from the Wright Brothers and developing military and reconnaissance applications. It was a new technology, and it was the US Army Signal Corps' culture and nature to explore how to apply it to military service. Of course, they applied the same technology application culture to all communications. The Signal Corps financed research into wireless and radio technology, a huge game changer. They fielded a core of imaging teams and very smartly included both still shooters and film shooters who worked together to bring us what we know about the war today. Those were still both evolving technologies. And of course there's the telephone. It played a crucial role in the war as the Signal Corps became the de facto telephone company for the AEF as General Pershing wanted American technology and skill in his communication systems in France. It became the Signal Corps' responsibility to recruit experienced American telephone operators with French language skills. These women became to be known as the Hello Girls. Dr. Elizabeth Cobb brought their story out of obscurity with her book *The Hello Girls: America's First Women Soldiers*. Dr. Cobb joins us to tell us a bit more about these intrepid women.

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Dr. Elizabeth C: The Hello Girls were women who were recruited to be telephone operators. In World War One the technology was such that every command of fire or ceasefire to advance, to retreat, to get out of the way of friendly fire, was all delivered by telephone from army headquarters right behind the firing line into literally the trenches. But every single call had to be connected and it was connected by a woman. The Hello Girls connected 26 million calls, including most of the operational calls for World War One. By the way, 7600 women applied for the first 100 positions, and so half of the men in World War One volunteered and all of the women did, and these particular women were winnowed down to this tiny number because they had extremely rigorous language examinations to make sure that the women could understand, repeat, translate, connect calls instantly, and so they were doing this all the time and mostly speaking English, but yes, they were doing simultaneous translations as well.

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Theo Mayer: Although these women were outfitted by the army, told they were soldiers, wore uniforms, operated under military code and regulations and served in hazardous areas, after the war they were told that the army didn't have women in it, that they were only contractors and that they had no claim to veterans benefits.

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Dr. Elizabeth C: Yeah, totally crazy. So here the navy and marines recruited, officially inducted 11,000 women to serve at home, in safe occupations, here at home. The army recruited 223, took them across the ocean where they could've been sunk at any moment by a submarine, put many of them in harm's way, or at least a number of them. They were literally in France always being bombarded, they were working right behind the firing lines at the Battle of Meuse-Argonne and Saint-Mihiel. The army brings these 223 women home and says, "Who are you?" And they basically told the women no, you weren't actually soldiers. You took oaths, you were subject to court-martial, you were put in military review parades by the US Army, Pershing personally inspected you and you were told you're in the army now. And then they got home and they were told, oh, actually, you know what? You were civilians. And you don't get anything. You don't even get a flag on your coffin. And two of the women died in France. Well they fought it. Most of them were good soldiers, they buttoned up and said, "Yes, sir." But there was a handful of women who just couldn't take it lying down and probably because they'd seen women disabled in the service. Some of them got tuberculosis in France and had permanent disabilities and it killed them that they couldn't get their victory medals or hospitalization for their fellow soldiers, and so they fought it for 60 years.

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Theo Mayer: In 1978, the 60th anniversary of the end of World War One, Congress approved veteran status and honorable discharges for the remaining Hello Girls. As we all know, World War One wasn't much thought about nationally prior to the centennial, and it was during the centennial period that the story of these Hello Girls really came to light. Dr. Cobbs' book was followed by an award-winning documentary film by Jim Ferris, as well as an off Broadway musical called the Hello Girls, and today there are even bipartisan legislative bills in both the Senate and the House to honor these women with a congressional gold medal. We've put links to these bills in the podcast notes. The Hello Girls were part of the US Army's Signal Corps, a key branch of the service then and now, innovators and game changers, not wielding weapons, but wielding technology, innovation and application, all part of the crucial role of non-combatants that changed the war that changed the world. Another crucial important contribution to the war effort was medical services. In fact, medicine and World War One is a whole story on its own, which we don't have time to cover today, so that aside, all of the skilled doctors and nurses and the best stock-filled hospitals are of little use if the wounded cannot quickly be transported away from the frontline to treatment centers. And that was the job of the American Field Services and the American Red Cross. Let's explore the role of the American Field Services, the AFS. Now, well before America entered the war, there was a crisis in moving wounded French soldiers from the frontline to treatment facilities, and a big part of the solution came from the automobile and the people who drove them. Remember, in 1914, the automobile is a brand new idea. It's mostly leading-edge tech for the wealthy and the well to-do, but as they say, need is the mother of invention, which brings us to a guy named A. Piatt Andrew, the former director of the United States Mint and an assistant professor of economics at Harvard. His is an amazing story. He volunteers as a driver in January of 1915 and gains experience during the First Battle of the Marne, primarily ferrying patients from the train station in Paris to the hospitals around the city using borrowed private automobiles. A. Piatt Andrew is a pretty sharp cookie and quickly realizes that more can be done by reorganizing medical services and by using the automobile to save soldier's lives. In April of 1915, he successfully negotiates with the French Army to have some transportation sections of the hospital closer to the front lines of the battle and then using the automobile configured to ambulances to transport the wounded back to hospitals once they'd been triaged. This is the birth of the American Field Services, also known as the AFS. The AFS becomes an icon of the First World War and offers the opportunity for a lot of Americans to serve in France, Belgium and the Balkans well before the US enters the war. Their Ford Model Ts used to transport the wounded become known as ambulances and they shepherd hundreds of thousands of men to medical care in the course of the conflict. Here's Nicole Milano, the head archivist and history publications editor for the American Field Services to help us understand and appreciate the group's vital role.

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Nicole Milano: Now, AFS worked with representatives back in the US to recruit ambulance drivers and also raise money for their growing ambulance service. It was so successful that AFS ultimately broke away from the American Ambulance Hospital to become an independent volunteer organization with headquarters in the heart of Paris. The AFS was really revolutionary in their use of the Model T Ford Ambulance, and particularly in their standardization of this vehicle. By standardizing the kind of ambulance, it just simply made more sense. The ambulances had interchangeable parts which made them easier to repair. They were also small, meaning that they were quicker and more efficient at driving over the shell-pocketed roads. Now officially three stretchers or four seated soldiers could fit in the back of one of these ambulances, but they often squeezed in many more and we've even heard stories of some of them riding on top of the wheels on the way out just so that they could really evacuate as many men as

possible. The volunteers had a very close relationship with these ambulances and they often gave nicknames to them, and many of them actually slept in these cars during the war. Actually, there's an interesting story as well. What they did was they ran the motor very quickly, which made the water in the radiator boil, and they actually made something called radiator water coco from this water.

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Theo Mayer: The AFS never received a discount from the Ford Motor Company on any of the many vehicles purchased as ambulances, but the Model T was such an adorable vehicle as proven by the many farmers in the states who depended on them, that it continued to be the logical choice for this task. But the drivers were just as tough and reliable as the cars. Nicole shares some of their stories with us.

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Nicole Milano: We have a number of famous AFSers, including several who belong to the famed and lost generation. The writer Harry Crosby and the artist Waldo Pierce both drove an ambulance with AFS. Also Malcolm Cowley, who was actually a truck driver with AFS and not an ambulance driver, is often regarded as the unofficial historian of the lost generation. We also had a number of volunteers who went on to do other great things and perhaps may not be quite as famous as these lost generation writers. Now, one of the questions that I'm asked the most is whether Ernest Hemingway was an ambulance driver with the organization, and I have to say he was not. He was actually a volunteer with the Red Cross in Italy. Similarly, Dos Passos and E.E. Cummings were also volunteers with other ambulance corps during the war. Eight of the La Fayette Escadrille pilots were actually former AFS drivers, including James McConnell who was tragically shot down in 1917 during aerial combat.

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Theo Mayer: Whether famous and high-flying or not, these drivers faced a physically demanding day.

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Nicole Milano: The typical day could be long and tiring. They worked at dressing stations that were located around 800 yards from the first line trenches, and wounded soldiers were carried by French stretcher bearers from the trenches to these dressing stations where they would then receive basic medical attention before AFS transported them to hospitals farther along. Now, the AFS volunteers couldn't use lights when driving on the road at night for fear of an attack from above, and they also sometimes had to wear gas masks because they were driving through very difficult conditions, and then Verdun, one of our drivers, writes in his diary that he couldn't sleep for 35 hours due to the number of soldiers they transported.

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Theo Mayer: It's important to remember that all of these drivers were volunteers. None of them were paid for their service, and remarkably the AFS is still in existence today. With more than 40,000 volunteers, the AFS is now an international non-profit organization whose mission is to help people develop the knowledge, skill and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world. The morale of the American troops was considered a key goal for the American Expeditionary Forces, especially when you consider that many of these boys find themselves fighting in France and had never strayed very far from their home towns before. A letter home meant the world to them, and the United States Postal Service was going to make sure that that happened. Lynn Heidelbaugh of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum fills us in on how the postal service kept it all going both at home and abroad during the huge upheaval that resulted from America's entry into the war.

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Lynn Heidelbaugh: It's quite dramatic. The Post Office department had to coordinate with the war departments and the navy to handle a huge increase in the volume of mail. Also lots of changes in their employee and staffing as Post Office department employees were drafted or volunteered for service, which meant that they, for some of the first time, hired women to be city delivery carriers and many women also took over their husband's jobs as postmasters in small town communities, so it really changed some of the workforce for the Post Office department as their employees went into military service. And then they also selected members of the career professionals to go and help establish some of the postal stations overseas for the military as well. So they had to make great adjustments in how they carried out all of their work.

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Theo Mayer: Now, a lot of our guests over the last years have agreed that it's from personal accounts, including letters from which we gain our best understanding and our deepest insights into the war and its effects on those who lived it.

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Lynn Heidelbaug: There were probably about 50 million letters that were exchanged in the first year alone being sent from the US and then back mainly from France and from the American Expeditionary Forces there, so that's quite a amount to pick from, and we're very lucky that so many families have kept and cherished these letters as well as turned them over to archives. One of the ones that always I come back to in a story that hangs on my heart and mind, Larry Bodes and his family shared a letter from their grandmother who was writing to her mother-in-law, and what she did was copy out a letter that her husband had sent her. He had been injured in the Second Battle of the Marne and he was in a French hospital, so he was not expecting to really be called up into battle. He was a cook by the name of Harry Stevanus, and during the battle he had been injured in the arm and also ended up having his leg amputated at a French hospital. The letter was transcribed by a French caregiver at the hospital and then his wife took it upon herself to copy out the entire letter to share the news with her mother-in-law, and she follows what Harry asked her to do is try to give her mother-in-law some hope about Harry's health and wellbeing and she really opens with a boosting and trying to give her mother-in-law a sense that everything will be okay. We do find out that the family had kept the whole series of letters once Harry was sent back to the US and was recuperating in hospital in the US.

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Theo Mayer: The Doughboys, far from home, suddenly in the midst of Frenchies, Pommies, Kiwis and Huns, crave American culture and news, and they got it from a publication they loved by American soldiers for American soldiers. It was called the Stars and Stripes. Now this all American funny and often irreverent publication may have done as much or more for morale than letters from home did. The Stars and Stripes has a great heritage. It was first published during the Civil War by union soldiers who discovered an abandoned printing press. They only managed to put out six issues, but it was restarted for World War One as a weekly publication authorized by order of General John J. Pershing specifically to support troop morale. Similar publications put out by other allied forces failed in part because the soldiers felt it was just more propaganda, but the Stripes succeeded and in part it was because it was so irreverent and Pershing ordered his officer staff to keep their mitts off and let them publish what they wanted. The paper published until June 13, 1919, then ceased for a while only to be started up again in World War Two. The Stars and Stripes is still publishing today and the current senior managing editor, Robert Reid, is here to tell us about why the paper was so important to the Doughboys.

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Robert Reid: To go back a little bit in history, the idea for Stars and Stripes grew out of concerns by the ADF Command about troop morale once American soldiers were actually sent to France in 1917. They went to a country that had already been at war for three years. There were no nice fresh barracks waiting for them, especially the closer you got to the front, and the winter of 1917 was particularly harsh, cold and rainy. Many if not most of the enlisting men particularly never been away from home before, so their lives were a mixture of lonely and bone-crushing boredom or abject terror, so the command was desperately looking for ways to boost morale. Enter this one young staff officer and former newspaper man named [Guy Diskoniski]. He had traveled around the ADF, talked to officers and enlisted men, and came up with an idea for a soldier's newspaper as a morale booster. So he formally pitched the idea November 1917, General Pershing signed off on the proposal and the paper rolled out two months later.

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Theo Mayer: Long before there was the USO or Bob Hope to boost morale with entertainment for the troops, there was Elsie Janis, also known as the sweetheart of the Doughboys. Historian Dr. Edward Lengel, the curator of the blog A Storyteller Hiking Through History, tells us more.

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Dr. Edward L.: Elsie Janis is largely forgotten today, which is a shame, although she has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, but 100 years ago right now, she was the biggest celebrity on the whole of the Western Front and in the process of making hundreds of thousands of Doughboys fall in love with her. Elsie Janis celebrated her 29th birthday on March 16th, 1918 by embarking on a tour of the Western Front to sing for the American Doughboys who were preparing to march off for battle. Her dedication to their welfare earned her the name Sweetheart of the Doughboys, and she became a World War One pioneer for the USO that originated in 1941.

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Theo Mayer: Janis was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1889 and began performing at the age of two. By 1917 she was an international star of Vaudeville and silent films. In 1918 she traveled with her mom to Europe where she would kick off a tour for the soldiers of the Western Front.

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Dr. Edward L.: In March she departed for Paris with a small group in a pair of Packard Twin 6 cars which would be the first of several tours of the front through the autumn of 1918. She was astonished and delighted by her reception.

Although the Doughboys had not yet seen serious combat, they sensed that big battles were coming up and they were hungry for entertainment. Through a series of French cities and towns, Elsie Janis performed multiple shows per day for thousands of soldiers, marines and nurses. She liked to imitate Will Rogers in a rope show and sing songs and tell stories. She even made unscheduled visits to sick wards to chat and sing. On one occasion she pretended that she had the mumps so that she could get into the hospital and to bid farewell to troops of Doughboys in training for the front. Finishing her first tour at the end of March during which she was commissioned an honorary brigadier general, Janis called it "the best circuit I ever played".

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Elsie Janis: (singing)

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Dr. Edward L.: In April 1918 she was back at the front, this time wearing a gray tweed suit performing on behalf of the YMCA as close to the front as possible. She had a version of Over There which she called Over Here, and that became infectious. One soldier wrote home, "Elsie Janis entertained us a few evenings ago and say, if she couldn't make you forget all your troubles in a half minute, you might as well dig a six foot hole and crawl in. She sang a few of Broadway's latest and told some good stories and kept us all laughing for an hour and a half. She even had us singing like a bunch of kids, including half a dozen generals in the front row." She imparted tangible strength to the Doughboys. She would keep up her acts behind the front for several months in support of the Doughboys she loved and whose hardships she wished she could share. A reporter for the free press summed it up like this: "It's really a pity that because of the laws and general orders and other masculine inventions, the government of the United States cannot commission Miss Elsie Janis and attach her to the AEF for the duration of the war with the title of Chief of the Pep Division. By injecting her potful and pulchritudinous personality into the army camps she's visiting, she inspires every man who sees her perform with an overwhelming desire to turn cartwheels over and over all the way along the rocky road to Berlin."

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Elsie Janis: (singing)

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Theo Mayer: There's little else in the human experience that's more profoundly about life and death than war, and to deal with killing and dying means dealing with men's spirituality and their spiritual wellbeing. Attending to the soldiers' spiritual life is the job of the Chaplain's Corps. Dr. John Boyd, historian of the US Army Chaplain's Corps, spoke with us about the role of chaplains and especially the role in World War One.

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Dr. John Boyd: Chaplains had actually been with the United States Army officially since the 29th of July 1717, and we talk about their core competencies. They are to nurture the living, care for the wounded, and honor the fallen. Or as some chaplains like to say, bringing soldiers to God and God to soldiers.

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Theo Mayer: Now, at the top of the show, Joe Johnson, the Chief of Staff at the Defense Acquisition University, pointed out how the US was logistically unprepared for waging war at scale but quickly came up to speed. Well, so did the chaplains.

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Dr. John Boyd: There are 74 active duty chaplains and 72 national guard chaplains. That number's actually going to shoot up to literally over 1,250 by the time all this is done, at least for the chaplains in France, so you've got a lot of people that have not been in the Chaplain's Corps that don't know anything about the army. It's just like the army itself that we've got. It's trying to stand up quickly and train and it's got all the diversity that you can imagine. Predominantly, of course, this is all Protestant, Christian or Catholic in its orientation, but the army actually is, this is part of the progressive era and the army is very progressive in this sense. The people filling these ranks bend over backwards to try to put different denominations and face into the ranks. Eventually, even by a congressional action, which occurs twice, you will find them putting Rabbis and Mormons and Christian scientists and others into the ranks too. There are even Salvation Army chaplains that join the ranks. They're going there to minister to the soldier regardless of their faith.

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Theo Mayer: Now, they say that an army runs on its stomach, and one of the most crucial parts of the American participation in World War One was how to feed the troops. It's the army Quartermaster Corps that's responsible for the chow. That's no small feat in the face of enemy shelling, inclement weather and trenches filled with mud and vermin. Innovation and non-combatant toil played a huge role in this. Hardtack has been used for literally centuries

for sailors and soldiers. It's a simple kind of biscuit or cracker made from flour, water and sometimes a bit of salt. It's cheap to make and it lasts a really long time. It'll keep you going in the absence of better put perishable foods, but it's not very tasty or delectable. So one of the innovations for World War One was the Field Bakery, capable of delivering warm, fresh bread to the troops in the field. But there's more. During the war, the Salvation Army sent women to France to lift the spirits of the soldiers and to serve them comfort food. Their food of choice: hot donuts. The women became known as Donut Girls. Smithsonian Researcher Patri O'Gan tells us that the donut was as American as apple pie, so it was a natural treat for the Doughboys. But it's hard to say whether it was the donuts or the lassies that made the biggest difference to morale.

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Patri O'Gan: Well, I think it was both in a way. I mean, I think that women who were with the welfare service organizations, the YMCA, the Salvation Army and others like that, they really strove to be positive, to be comforting, to kind of provide the comforts of home in very difficult situations. A lot of times they were embedded with the troops even up on the front lines, so they experienced the deprivations that troops did. They had trench foot, they had lice, but they knew that they were there to help the soldiers, to be a respite in the middle of war, so I think it was who they were and what they represented and I think it was also just having a tasty donut and a nice cup of coffee.

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Theo Mayer: Donuts and fresh bread were great, but the army didn't stop there. Field carts were created to deliver hot meals to the trenches. American Doughboys often received allocations of dairy products and even candy that the troops of the other nations typically had to do without. But when it wasn't possible to deliver such wondrous fare, there were the ration tins loaded with complete meals, the forerunners of today's MREs: meals ready to eat. Innovation and the willingness of the US Government to spend as much as 26 cents per day per soldier to ensure a healthy diet made the American soldiers the envy of all the other allied troops. And there you have it. From mail to meals, from trenches to treatment, from communications with headquarters to communing with the soul, it takes a lot of non-combatants to support an army to fight effectively. So, when you think of those who served in World War One, it's important and appropriate to remember that the boys that went over there were accompanied, supported, cared for, nurtured and enabled by an equally and probably even larger army of dedicated, committed and hardworking men and women who were every bit as much a part as they were in the war that changed the world. And that wraps up episode number 139 of the award-winning WW1 Centennial News, the Doughboy Podcast. Thank you for listening. We want to thank all the contributors, talented crew and supporters who made today's episode possible, including Joe Johnson of the Defense Acquisition University, historian Professor Elizabeth Cobb, Nicole Milano from the American Field Services, Lynn Heidelbaugh from the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, Robert Reid from the Stars and Stripes, historian Dr. Edward Lengel, the US Army Chaplain's Corps, Dr. John Boyde, Patri O'Gan from the Smithsonian Institution. And thanks to Matt Nelson and Tim Crowe, our editing team, Juliette Cowall, the line producer for the show, Dave Kramer for research and writing, JL Michaud for web support, and I'm Theo Mayer, your producer and host. The US WW1 Centennial Commission was authorized by Congress in early 2013 to honor, commemorate and educate the nation about World War One on the occasion of the centennial of the war. For over half a decade, the commission, the commissioners, staff and our many associates and supporters have labored to inspire a national conversation and awareness about World War One. We've brought the lessons of 100 years ago to today's educators, their classrooms and to the public. We've helped restore World War One memorials in communities of all sizes across the country. Now that the Commission's chartered to honor, educate and commemorate the centennial of World War One has been successfully accomplished, the full focus of the Commission is turning to its capstone mission, to build the national World War One memorial in Washington D.C., that after a century of being MIA in the nation's capital will finally stand in this important international nexus to honor the memory and sacrifice of the men and women who served this nation during those transformative years of World War One, including the non-combatants. We want to thank the Commission's founding sponsor, the Pritzker Military Museum Library, as well as the major contribution of The Starr Foundation. Thank you to our podcast sponsors, the US WW1 Centennial Commission and The Doughboy Foundation. The podcast and a full transcript of the show can be found on our website at ww1cc.org/cn. That's Charlie Nancy. You'll find WW1 Centennial News the Doughboy Podcast in all the places you get your podcasts, including iTunes, Google Play, TuneIn, Spotify, Radio on Demand, even on YouTube, asking Siri or on your smart speaker by simply saying Play WW1 Centennial News Podcast. The Commission's Twitter and Instagram handles are both @ww1cc and we're on Facebook @ww1centennial. We want to thank you for joining us and don't forget, as we told you at the top of the show, we need your help to keep the story alive for America with a contribution to the memorial which is going to stand in Washington D.C. For generations to come. Just text the letters W-W-I or W-W-1 to the phone number 91 999.

[0:41:25]

Elsie Janis: (singing)

[0:41:25]

Theo Mayer: Thank you for listening. So long.

[0:42:05]