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Voiceover: The following is a production of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. Bringing citizens and citizen soldiers together through the exploration of military history, topics, and current affairs, this is *Pritzker Military Presents*.

Clarke: Welcome to *Pritzker Military Presents* with author Terrence Finnegan discussing his book *A Delicate Affair on the Western Front: America Learns How to Fight a Modern War in the Woevre Trenches*. I'm your host Ken Clarke. This program is coming to you from the Pritzker Military Museum and Library in downtown Chicago, and it's sponsored by the United States World War One Centennial Commission. This program and hundreds more are available on demand at PritzkerMilitary.org. WWI was the world's first modern war. Mass industrialization and new technologies meant that soldiers faced previously unseen tactics and weapons, the first widespread use of the airplane, chemical warfare, and high valiant weaponry. When American soldiers came over to Europe to help the Allied war effort in 1918, they were inexperienced and unprepared for these new tactics and weapons. A key test for these new soldiers was the early morning surprise attack at Seicheprey in France on April 20, 1918 the battle was intended as a German propaganda initiative to highlight the greenhorn Americans as weak and ill prepared for the horrors of modern war. Spearheaded by 3,200 elite German storm troopers and supported by modern weapons like aircraft, trench mortars, and heavy artillery, the brunt of the attack fell on the American 102nd regiment. The American forces fell back in disarray but counterattacked and retook Seicheprey by the afternoon. Yet the toll was great. The Germans had taken more than 100 prisoners and left over 650 Americans either dead or wounded. The Americans only counted 100 German casualties. On the border between success and loss, *A Delicate Affair* is an actual label applied by one US command report to the Battle of Seicheprey. Replaying heavily on primary sources, Terrence Finnegan shows how the battle had significance beyond its outcome. As the first engagement between US and German forces, this early battle serves as a jumping-off point to describe how all battles developed in the war. Through intelligence and minute-by-minute command decisions. Terrence Finnegan served for forty years in the air force reserve and department of defense as a senior level civil servant supporting NATO and NORAD alliances. He is the author of other books including *Shooting the Front: Allied Aerial Reconnaissance in the First World War*. Finnegan has written articles for *Studies in Intelligence Journal*, the books *Over the Top* and *Over the Front*, and was a contributor to the book *Images of Conflict: Military Aerial Photography and Archeology*. Please join me in welcoming back to the Pritzker Military Museum and Library Terrence Finnegan.

(Applause)

Finnegan: Wonderful to be back. I was here back in September 2016. I gave a talk on my first book *Over the Front--or Shooting the Front*, and it's about the aerial reconnaissance factor that evolved in the first war. At the same time I was researching this particular study on a battle that took place in an area called the Woevre. It's near Alsace-Lorraine. And what happened from that research was I uncovered a lot of things that folks had never really considered would involve the way the US military was to fight a modern war. And I'd like to share that with you tonight. This is the book cover. The painting is as accurate as it can be in sharing the dynamic moments of struggle in the village of Seicheprey. Why is it called *A Delicate Affair*? What you had from the introduction was one perspective. One of the greatest soldiers of the 20th century in the United States Military was George Marshall. George Marshall was an operations officer

at Seicheprey working with the 1st division. Folks remember the 1st division as the Big Red One. Well, that was the WWII label for that particular division. Back in WWI it was known as the Fighting First. So George Marshall had the ability to organize and operate unlike anybody else in the US army. His abilities were widely respected from Pershing on down. In fact, he became General Pershing's aid as the war concluded. So I wanted to bring into focus why this particular struggle was of interest, because George Marshall corresponded with General Pershing. And Pershing back in the late 20s, early 30s was writing his masterpiece that became a Pulitzer Prize winner about WWI. And he had an issue with the Yankee Division, which we're gonna talk about this evening. And George Marshall wisely shared with Pershing, "Let's not make too much out of this." And you can read the quote that you're seeing here--"The game is not worth a candle." So we're gonna talk about what has occurred at this particular time in the western front, because it opens up so many ideas to you thinking about how military evolves in a combat environment. First of all, where is this battle area? If you look at the brackets there you'll see in the lower right-hand corner a section called the Woevre. The Germans occupy that area in August of 1914. They held the ground for almost four solid years. The French fought battle after battle, and then the Americans were committed to that sector in early 1918. The 1st division was the first one to occupy ground there. So you can see the contemporary map showing the area between St. Mihiel and Seicheprey. Let's talk about the German leadership first. If we're gonna understand anything that goes on in the First World War, we need to pay credit to what the enemy learned from fighting in a modern war. And that's one of the things that's impressive about doing the research when you find German sources that have laid foul for a hundred years, most of the research on WWI was written by the British 'cause it's English and they also won the war, and for the most part they didn't want to take the time to translate the German documents that showed how the Germans were to fight that. That's now changing, thank goodness, in the research that's underway today. So one of the greatest generals that the Germans offered in the First World War was General der Artillerie, which is a three-star equivalent, Max Karl von Gallwitz. Gallwitz served in the eastern front in 1915 and some of the major operations occurring against the Russians' office at Warsaw. In '16 he was transferred to the Somme and then to Verdun, the hardest-hitting battles of that era. And then he became the second in commander down in the Woevre in '17. And the map you see here, you see Gallwitz in red, and his opponent is Pershing. And Pershing basically had to fight Gallwitz for the most part at St. Mihiel Offensive in September of '18 and followed up by the bloodiest of the combat operations that the Americans fought at Meuse-Argonne. Gallwitz was the German general that Pershing faced. So he understood warfare, and his tribute to the British soldier shown here was, "nowhere else have I seen such brave lions being led by such lambs." In other words, the command element of the British element wasn't as aggressive as Gallwitz thought they could have been. So that's his one comment. So you understand that he looks at warfare objectively. He wants to make sure that the war is fought to win and he wants to make sure that the enemy clearly understands that they are the casualty in this war. So when you go the Woevre today, what you see is the western front lineup of what the Germans were assigned. And if you see the blue star, that's the 78th reserve division, commanded by General Mayor Paulus von Stolzmann. Von Stolzmann was on the staff that helped the Schlieffen campaign in 1914, went to Russian in 1915 where he was a chief of staff for von Linsingen. And at that time he was awarded the Pour le Merite, which is the highest award; it's like the Medal of Honor for the German army. He in turn did incredible work in that respect. He was given a command, ended up in Verdun, and then finally his assignment was commander of the 78th reserve division at opposite of Seicheprey. The regiment that served under von Stolzmann was the 259th reserve infantry regiment. And

that was led by a major, major, Major Friedrich Bruns. You're looking at the nemesis of the US army in 1918. This is the officer that challenged the thinking of all the soldiers that were in the Woevre from January to June of 1918. This simple major, but his career was impeccable. And towards the end of 1918 he finally earned the Pour le Merite, and that's what you're seeing on his collar. The Allies were represented by the Yankee Division, which was a national guard division. It was the first full American division to serve in WWI. The 1st division was the first to arrive, but they didn't have their artillery contingent. The Yankee Division came in September of 1917 totally assigned to fight a battle. An American division at this time was 27,000 men--four regiments with a supporting artillery and such. And the Yankee Division was unique because it was the National Guard from New England. And you can see from the brackets there, you have in blue where the Yankee Division held ground, which was eighteen miles. And you'll see towards the left of the right side, you'll see a red bracket. That's where the 1st division held ground. Their first brigade was only responsible for five miles of the western front. And so when the 1st division was pulled out in late March, early April of 1918, the YD covered three times the ground on the western front. Probably greater territory ever covered by any division in the history of that battle--war. So the commander of the Yankee Division was Major General Clarence Edwards, a West Point graduate--an upperclassman to John Pershing. Clarence Edwards was a good person in that he cared for his soldiers. He wasn't brilliant. For those who were graduates of West Point, they like to remind you that he was the bottom of this class when he graduated. But the thing about Clarence, what's impressive is the fact is he was astute in understanding people. And he did get along with Pershing to the degree he had to, but there was some animosity between the two, probably from the West Point days. But Pershing also understood politque. Pershing had an advantage because his father-in-law was F.E. Warren, who happened to be on the Senate Armed Service Committee. The Edwards connection was that he was connected with the Taft administration. He was the military advisor to President Taft, and you see in the photo on the right here, the two of them seem to be chums, and they obviously were close for the rest of their time. But Edwards was a politician as well as a commander. What folks don't really understand about when we look at the American service in WWI, when we went to the front lines in the initial portions of that time and mainly in 1918, from basically January to June of 1918, we worked for the French command. So General Augustin Gerard was the commander of the VIII Arme, which served in the Woevre. He was the commander of American forces when they were assigned on the western front for those first six months. Under him was the corps commander, General Fenelon Francois Germain Passaga. In many ways, General Passaga was the godfather of the US army in WWI, 'cause it was under his leadership and tutelage, he helped them understand what it took to fight as an ally at the front. So Passaga is somebody who's been forgotten, but for the most part his legacy should be brought back to light. So Edwards and Passaga got along famously. Here's a photo of the two of them at an awards ceremony. And they were very respectful of each other, and they made things happen together. So the French were in command, and in this case the Yankee Division was the major division at the front operating independently. Under General Edwards was the 51st brigade commander that was responsible for the Battle of Seicheprey fighting that the 102nd involved, and that was Brigadier General Peter Traub. Peter Traub was a classmate of John Pershing. In fact in a long gray line, Pershing graduated one ahead of Peter Traub, so they knew each other intimately. Very close friends, and it helped Traub because Traub made mistakes in the course of the war, and Seicheprey was an example of some of the challenges that he offered. Probably one of the most interesting personages of the war that's been totally overlooked in Colonel John Henry "Machine Gun" Parker. He got the name Machine

Gun--before that he was at the Spanish American war, and he basically commanded the Gatling guns, and it was an innovative approach to applying Gatling guns to that charge at San Juan, basically not firing directly at the enemy but indirectly, that gave the title to John Henry Parker that lasted, and then when they upgraded from Gatling to machine guns, John Henry Parker led the evolution of the machine gun into the US Army. He was awarded the command of the 102nd infantry regiment, which was the Connecticut militia, the Connecticut National Guard. In January of 1918 he served with them for a few months on the Chemin des Dames, and then in April of 1918 they transferred to the Seicheprey area. So what you're seeing is the view from the trench. You can see the barbed wire. It was ugly battleground. And in the background you can see the faint rise of Montsec, which we'll talk about, 'cause that's probably one of the most intriguing variables of how this war and this battle was fought. So the Yankee Division shows up in April, and the Germans commence major intelligence collection to find out what is this new adversary that they're now gonna fight in this sector in the Woivre. So you're seeing actual German aerial photography of the Apremont area. And you can see lines showing the no man's land between the north, which was the German lines, and the southern area, which was the American trenches. So the Germans fought a battle initially against the Yankee Division on their western sector. You're looking at eighteen miles of front, and to the west the five miles of front was served by the 104th infantry. Those were western Massachusetts and Vermont National Guardsmen. And the Germans conducted an offensive for four days, the 10th of April. They rested on the 11th, and on the 11th, 12th, and 13th they fought the two battles shown here, Blinddarm and Abgesprengten Waldchen. Excuse my German. What you see with that particular map is two major battles simultaneous, and the village of Apremont where the Germans held became the launching ground for the two offensives. But what happened was, General Shelton, who is shown here--he was the regimental commander--his command effectiveness was so important because he applied not only the infantry in the right format, he also had the artillery responding right away, so a lot of the Germans were destroyed trying to get across no man's land and attack the Americans at the 104th sector. So this battle occurred before Seicheprey. The French, recognizing what had occurred here, honored the 104th infantry with a Croix de Guerre, which was a regimental award. This was the first time that an American regimental unit was awarded a foreign award, so this happened in May of 1918. The sad story is the politiqe got in because the command staff that served Pershing were very offended by the French recognizing this regiment of the Yankee Division. So they made a policy after this award ceremony that no foreign award would be approved until after the war. But after the war, guess who was first in line to get recognized? The 1st division, which was regular army, and that was Pershing's favorite division. But you can see there were some issues associated with how American command interacted at this time. Aviation was also introduced. Yes, there were airplanes flying over the front, but America didn't control their aviation units until the Yankee Division came to Seicheprey. And the first of the reconnaissance squadrons was the 1st aero squadron. This particular squadron flew basically French rejects--in this case older SPAD two-seater airplanes which had a propensity--the motors would quit, so it made life kind of dangerous if you're flying and next thing you know you're on a glide path and you don't have a parachute. And that was the reality. But the French, you could understand, what could they offer the Americans? The Americans didn't have any aviation industry other than Jenny trainers. So what you see here is two of the pilots of the 1st aero, Billy Schauffler and Monty Harmon. And notice the flag emblem. That was the 1st aero squadron's flag emblem. The squadron commander for the 1st aero was, interesting enough, a New Hampshire National Guardsman who learned how to fly in 1915 and then in turn went over with the

first wave of aviators. And in turn when the Battle of Apremont was fought on the 10th of April he fought several Germans in his battle eleven and came back alive, and so the French awarded him the Croix de Guerre with star. And Arthur Judge Coyle, his name was a significant leader in the reconnaissance world of the United States air forces at the time because he maintained control of the 1st aero up until the armistice. So here you are occupying eighteen miles of front line at the Woevre, and you're trying to maintain a readiness because the Germans know the territory. And you also have to resupply. On the 15th of April, the supply sergeant, a private first class Louis Ziegra, and two other guys in the supply wagon were heading towards the village of Xivray. It was about midnight. And they cross over to the bridge, a thirty-man German raiding party jumped them. Bullets were flying. Louis Ziegra shown here from--he was by the way from Deep River, Connecticut. He was a second generation German. His father left Germany, and in turn--Germans weren't exactly trusted in the American forces for some reason. But Louis basically, he took a bullet from under the chin, went out his left nostril. So he's bleeding profusely. The other guys that were driving the wagon and supposedly protecting the mission--they got hit with bullets, and they played dead. They rolled to the back of the wagon and just laid there. So it's Louis Ziegra versus thirty Hasaran invaders. Louis proceeds to beat the crap out of those guys single handedly. Fistfights, he breaks noses, blackens eyes. He did shoot one guy and kill one guy before they all jumped him. And after that skirmish they were able to knock him out and drag him across no man's land, where he held firm and in turn didn't testify to say who he was and so on. It really impressed the Germans. In fact, the quote you're seeing there is not from the Americans; it's from the Germans high command. One of the bravest men they had ever seen. And one of the saddest stories for me when I researched this is that we've never recognized Private Ziegra for singlehandedly taking on thirty-one enemy at one time. In fact, Gallwitz in his memoirs makes this comment. "An American of the 26th division captured at the southern front by Xivray had defended himself mightily and refused all testimony." That's the highest praise you can get. An enemy looks at what you've accomplished and makes it clear that that is something that no one else can do that capability in the war. So here we are at Seicheprey. The hardest thing about Seicheprey is pronouncing it. Seicheprey can be pronounced Seicheprey or Seich-e-prey. If you listen to video of old Sammies--some people call them doughboys. At the time they were called Sammies. American soldiers were Sammies. Sammies would call it Seach-prey, and everybody's mispronounced it since. A hundred years of that. Now let's talk about what the concepts are. The book I wrote was published in 2015, and it's detailed, and it goes over every possible source I was able to uncover. And I take great pride in saying that if you were to take the time to read what you have there, you'll find more descriptions on how the soldiers evolved at that time, what they actually went through in the battles. And one of the aspects of warfare is informational warfare. Now, that term came to light last month 'cause the Mueller investigation just indicted thirteen Russians for conducting informational warfare on the Americans with the elections and such. What is informational warfare? It focuses on command and control, communications and intelligence capabilities. It impacts your decision making at all echelons. What you'll see when we discuss Seicheprey is that this is the first introduction of informational warfare to the US Army in the 20th century. Look at what the Germans had to work with. They owned this battleground for four years. The Americans show up in January of '18, and the Germans had been there for four solid years. So every square inch, and here it is in photographs from 1916 of this entire sector, is photographed and analyzed. So they knew every bump and grind of the terrain. They knew where the artillery was. They knew where most of the machine guns were. They definitely knew where the lines of communication were, because they watched it evolve consistently.

What helped them more than anything else was the butte, about 400-meter high, Montsec. And here it is in the distance, and the cartoon you can see how the Allies thought about Montsec, because it was this big eye looking at them. In fact, I use the term from the Tolkien books, the eye of Mordor when I describe Montsec. It was ever present. And it also reminded folks, if you own the high ground you have the advantage. Here's Eddie Rickenbacker, our greatest ace from the First World War. What does he say about Montsec? "Not a machine could leave our field at Toul without being seen by those watchers atop Montsec. No wonder many of their photographic machines escaped us. Many and many a time we had to hurry out to the lines and answer to an alert only to find that it was a false alarm." So you get the impression from reading what Eddie Rickenbacker reminisces about that the value of this particular location was incalculable. They clearly rule the battleground in this sector thanks to Montsec. And aviation for the Germans was very impressive. They had several--talk about airplanes. It wasn't Fokker D7s that were the primary airplane. That's the sad statement about watching about how we understand the military history. We tend to go with what's popular, and obviously from our youth, Fokker D7s--in fact that was a term for all German airplanes back in WWI by the Americans. It's a Fokker. Well, no, you had a litany of very well built airplanes, two-seaters primarily, that did aerial reconnaissance, observation, oh, by the way, ground attack. They knew how to fly in support of ground operations. We'll talk about that. In fact one shot that I love is, you're seeing prior to the actual operation on Seicheprey the actual aerial coverage of the battleground two days before the battle. Folks, it don't get any better than that. I've never seen any source that comes out with this level of detail. And I discovered this in the Edward Steichen photo album at National Air and Space Museum many years ago. What you're looking at is the actual product that was developed by the fusion centers for the Germans in putting together the various photographs into the mosaic and showing where all the enemy points were, artillery and flak units and so on. So the plan that the Germans conducted was Kirschblute--cherry blossom. The welcoming of spring. And it was a reinforced raid, that's what Ersturmung means--on Seicheprey. And the date was 20 April-- 2018? 1918. It was a mistake. So when you look at this map, what you see is, you see a three-pronged attack that the Germans conducted. They already owned the villages Lahayville and Saint Baussant, but Seicheprey village is to the south, and you see to the west battalion Turlay, and then you see to the far right to the east battalion Seivon. And then in the center you have a mix of assault troops and Sturmtruppen, and we'll talk about that. Now we're going to go into more informational warfare in a second, but one thing that comes from this particular battle is the word Blitzkrieg as a part of our lexicon for 20th century warfare. What is Blitzkrieg? Close coordination of mobile armored forces and air power designed for open terrain. Primary asset was speed--swift breakthroughs and swift follow ups to prevent effective defensive counter. Folks, Seicheprey was the genesis of Blitzkrieg. Here you have the firepower array for the Germans at Seicheprey. You're seeing areas that are targeted both by using trench mortars--Minenwerfer is how they were known--and their long-range artillery. So the broken lines were Minenwerfer targets right up close to no man's land, and then the rear echelons are being hit by field artillery. And here is an example of how effective the artillery that the Germans fired on the Americans that morning at Seicheprey. This is a drumfire as they call it, a heavy artillery barrage. All those little puffs of smoke are artillery rounds hitting simultaneously. Intense, high explosive. Oh, by the way, not only was it high explosive rounds, they also had chemical warfare gas rounds. And they also had gas projectors, which brought out streams of chemical poisonous gas from the front lines. So here's your standard 77-mm field cannon. That was one of the major weapons systems that the Germans employed. And here's your Minenwerfer. Now you might say, "Hey, where's the tanks?" The Germans

only had one unit of tanks, and that was up in the British sector, and so they were woefully behind in developing armor. Well, they fixed that problem in the interwar years, and obviously Blitzkrieg personified their use of tanks. But instead of actual tanks, you had mobile trench mortars, such as what you're seeing here. You may ask, well, "Why is that significant?" Well, guess what, the impacts of the artillery rounds were hundred-fold thanks to the use of Minenwerfer. So the artillery duel, if you want to call it that, started at 3 o'clock in the morning, and it lasted throughout the day. And a painting from Connecticut shows how the Americans fought back. They were in gasmasks for almost the entire time of Seicheprey battle because the Germans were firing artillery rounds with gas at them to make life miserable, and not only that it kind of hung around, pervaded. The Americans fought back with this type of field gun, which was the famous French 75. And this particular weapon was the main gun that the Americans had for their 102nd artillery unit. To give you an impression of what their targets were, these are actual targeting maps used by the Americans in the Seicheprey area, and those circles represent a type of artillery, their known artillery battle position. The yellow coloring is what they could see from ground observations on the terrain. But for the most part what you're seeing there is detailed targeting. This is just the American side. You can imagine with the Germans, having all the information I'm talking about, what kind of targeting capabilities they had already in place. So you have a fast battle being set up. High-power fast artillery moving forward. You also have infantry running hard. Now, most of them did not carry rifles. They had hand grenades--handgranaten--as their primary weapon. Why? Because in the trench warfare, because the trench were convoluted in their makeup, a rifle just could not fire that far, so you had to use what worked best--in this case hand grenades. And that was basically four years of experience. So here's an actual map showing the German attack plan. What you're seeing here are the four congregation areas called nests, and you see the routes by which the Germans advanced. Now you're looking out basically a mile, so you're seeing German assault troops, Stosstruppen, with a few Sturmtruppen added in to basically, that was how it was effectively maintained. You see them advancing over no man's land. You see them encircling the village of Seicheprey, and that becomes the high water mark for the advance, and then they proceed into the town, into the village of Seicheprey, where it's hand-to-hand fighting. One of the things I'm very proud of is by doing the research I came across material that had never been seen in a hundred years. This is from the Vincennes archives in Paris. They had major folders on the American sector, and here you're seeing a campaign diagram of how they employed their soldiers and Minenwerfer and machine guns in an advance across no man's land. Basically you're seeing the quarterback plan for how they fought this war in 1918. And it shows a very comprehensive role for all the players. You had soldiers whose purpose was to carry sandbags so they could defend--set up the machine gun nest effectively as they advanced forward in no man's land or into enemy territory. So as the soldiers quickly advanced from their nest areas across no man's land into Seicheprey, you're looking at about ten minutes. And so fighting took place, the first wave basically engaged briefly but they had other waves showing up to take on the dugouts that were in place around the trenches that the Americans occupied. Now here's a question for all of you. In the lower right hand corner of the photograph of these German soldiers, do you recognize who that guy is here? Go ahead, shout out. Jay Leno.

(Laughter)

Finnegan: Yes, he's alive and well in a German uniform. So in the village of Seicheprey, the 102nd infantry was fighting with the D-company, Delta Company, and what you find in that particular scenario is they fought house to house. You're seeing the view from the southern end of Seicheprey village, and towards the--as you looks down the main drag

there you see one building to the right. That was the regimental--that was the battalion headquarters by which Delta Company fought. And then you can see the map showing the route of the Germans. So what you have is hand-to-hand fighting in that particular part of the village. Notice the gentleman in blue. Those are utility uniforms. He was not a member of the Yankee Division. When the 1st division regular army left this sector on the 3rd of April 1918 they had a gift for the Yankee Division. They gave them like twenty-five prisoners. These are derelicts who were like discipline-problems and such. Here, you take care of them. So when that--these guys are basically forced to fill in craters from artillery rounds and things like that. Their life was pretty miserable. But when this attack occurred, these guys rose to the occasion, fought hand to hand, finding whatever weapon they could be it rocks, shovels, and some got rifles. But that's how tenacious this battle was in Seicheprey village. Now the lore associated with this attack is that some Stosstruppen entered into the kitchen where the cooks were cooking away whatever it was, the morning meal, and unfortunately for those Stosstruppen, they were meat-cleavered, hacked to death in the process. And that's what folks like to remember Seicheprey with. Almost all the cooks in that area were killed. The Pioniere engineer folks came in and destroyed the kitchen, and obviously a few of the soldiers were wiped out. Oh, by the way, behind these German soldiers that were facing the cleavers were flamethrower units, so most of your folks were given that weapon as well. In the village you had Seicheprey and then to the east you had a little forest called Bois de Remieres. Charlie Company occupied that ground. And you see the map here showing the actual locations of the platoons when the battle occurred. You can see the little blue circles there. That's where the American soldiers were for the most part as this battle evolved. In the little OP to the north of that sector are the observation posts. You also had interspersed around the battle area the machine gunners. And the heaviest machine gunner fights between German Stosstruppen and a few Sturmtruppen took place in the southwestern sector of Bois de Remieres. So the painting that you're seeing here shows an actual moment in the Battle of Seicheprey. They're taking losses, but they haven't left their post. What's significant about this Battle of Seicheprey is, of all those machine gunners, is that John Henry Parker's theory on how to employ machine guns in the western front gets its first test. So he has machine gun units interspersed throughout the sector. Some were discovered and fought and destroyed, but some were never discovered. And what they did was, they were able to fire indirect fire, in other words up in the air and causing a barrage of machine gun bullets against German forces near the no man's land sector. That concept proved very successful in a few months. I'll mention that. As for the aviation, not only were they doing reconnaissance, but these folks were also your Stuka dive-bombers, and they were making life miserable. Any time they saw activity, not only were they reporting on that activity to the commanders for artillery or infantry, they were also throwing out bombs. They were strafing. In other words the German aviator at Seicheprey was 20th century leading on to the Second World War. So let's go and discuss informational war some more. What you find out when you look at the evolving battle is the commander of the 51st brigade General Traub is trying to figure out what's going on. And so he's getting that information when he can get it, and you have the village encircled by the Germans. And we'll talk about the communication lines, what happens to them in a few seconds, but here it is, the commander is trying to figure out what's going on, and he's ordering his soldiers to do this and that and respond accordingly. And they were thinking, hey, the Germans are gonna have a major second attack. There's a possible sighting of Germans amassing at this particular sector. So that caused consternation throughout the day of the Battle of Seicheprey. So what happens is because the communications are so ineffective amongst Americans, and that's because of the artillery and espionage and a whole bunch of other variables, you start

seeing mistakes happening. And sadly one of the greatest, saddest legacies of this battle is fratricide, friendly fire, where a heavy artillery unit, the 103rd field artillery, starts firing barrages into the village of Seicheprey after the Germans have left and are killing Americans. And they were firing barrages all day. The Germans were there from basically 5:30 in the morning until about 7, and then they departed. There were a few northern trenches where they held ground, but the sad thing is that we were not able to get the information to our artillery units to cease fire at this sector, advance the fire towards the no man's land sector 'cause that's where the Germans are now. So the 103rd field artillery had to live with that for the rest of their time. In fact the soldiers used to call them the Kaiser's Own, and it was a sad legacy. And you find from reading the journals afterwards that they were always trying to come to terms with that. But it wasn't because they were incompetent; it's just because they had no data. So what you see here is the real adversary of Seicheprey that has never been brought out before. And that's the listening post and the wire-tapping unit. These guys had every sector of com-lines tracked. In fact here's General Edwards discussing the battle with General Traub. "Issuing orders over the telephone, incidents took place that would be hair-raising to you as they were to me of which I did not want to worry you at the time." This is Edwards telling this to Traub. "That will account for some of my remarks to you." When Traub's headquarters element called Grizzly Bear was talking to Edwards' people, someone would cut in to the wire, mention my name Edwards and mention your name Traub and tell who they were, German, and give contrary orders to let you know that they were on the situation. And they all knew our code words for the places. This is outstanding intelligence. Oh, by the way, this is application of informational war to the battle. "The SOBs are listening right in, and they hear me talk, and you can expect any moment to have a chap break in and say yes, and that is the situation of our wires." These are the general officers talking during the actual battle. After the war, General Parker, he was promoted when he retired, reminiscent about that particular time, makes the comments about the telephone calls between Traub got--being harassed by the Germans, taunting him, telling him things that convinced Traub it was a German and one of the enemy speaking to him. And that's slang for the time--can you tie that? Yes, the Germans did tie it. So also did they penetrate into all the secrets of the Yankee Division. It was excellent work. Folks, this is the story of Seicheprey that's never been told. I've referred to it in my work, but this is recent analysis, and that's what I wanted to share with you tonight. As for me, my grandfather is on the left. He was a medic at Seicheprey. My father was an aviator for the B-24s. He flew the longest B-24 combat sortie over the northern Pacific in 1944. And he became an air force officer in his career, and he raised eight kids. One kid was a three-star general in the CIA. He retired. One's a retired colonel in the air force. He flew F-15s, one of the best sticks in the air force. And there's me and a couple others. Point is, I have a legacy, and I'm proud to share it with you. And here's the book. And this month *Over the Top* is gonna publish a Reader's Digest version of the raid. We're gonna talk more about Blitzkrieg and informational war. It will be available through PDF electronics. I'll get it out to you folks. And with that, I have a website. If you want to read more about WWI, all my published works are available on that site. Feel free to tap into it, take it, and you've got the two books. So in memory of that legacy, you have four regiments of the Yankee Division, and here they are--the 101st, 102nd, 103rd, and 104th. And the question is, who's gonna remember your heritage a hundred years from now if you're in the military if you don't remember it for everybody? And with that, I say thank you very much. Any questions?
(Applause)

1: You credit this battle extensively for the informational warfare aspect. Do you--do you suggest that previous conflicts just didn't use information at all, or could you elaborate on what you mean by that?

Finnegan: Well, what you have with this particular battle is they commanded the communication so effectively. Yes, I'm sure if you go through the annals of history, I imagine in the Roman era there were some battles that had that. But what don't understand is informational warfare had its genesis for the modern era when they controlled the communication lines. And you have the generals trying to make decisions, and they're getting posttraumatic stress 'cause they can't make reasonable decisions 'cause they're being harassed. They're on the lines with their colleagues. They're trying to make commit force say here, here. That dynamic really happened. Oh, by the way, the lessons learned--and this is a sad statement--yeah, the generals talk about it, but I've never found anything that the American Expeditionary Force did as a senior staff to—how are we gonna address this problem. I think it occurred when the 1st division was there, but they didn't talk about it. They didn't mention it, but it happened so egregiously at Seicheprey that you find that folks recognize that command and control was so vulnerable that it aided the Germans' ability to conduct that battle. Does that answer your question?

2: You mentioned George Patton.

Finnegan: Yeah.

2: How close was where he was to Seicheprey?

Finnegan: Okay, when you read the book, I have one grenade with the pin pulled, and that's George Patton was on Pershing's staff at Chaumont. So at the night of the 20th of April was the nurses' dance at Chaumont. Guess where Patton was? Yes, he was dancing with the nurses 'til three in the morning. It's out of his own diary. So—listen, he is one of the greatest commanders of the 20th century. But that's what annoyed me because they weren't committed to supporting the Yankee Division when they were fighting for their lives. Patton should have been there. And oh, by the way, when the 1st division, the regular army was there, oh, boy they were all there. But when the militia was holding the ground, eh, we've got more important things to do. Hey, the dance is tonight. Seriously, it blew me away. It's in the book.

3: Did the army consider that time using curriers when they knew their phones were being tapped that time?

Finnegan: Well, runners were the only way to communicate. In fact, when you have the fratricide with the artillery they had only runners to communicate. So they didn't get decisive information, and if they got information, I figure there was some deceptive actions done by the wire tapping guys, saying, "You need to hit this target in Seicheprey 'cause they're still there." That isn't recorded anywhere, but it only reinforces the fact that fratricide was ongoing throughout the day. And Major Rowe, the battalion commander, was screaming, "You're killing us. What are you doing about it?" They said--they did research--they did an after action report saying, "Well possibility that French heavy artillery 155 had a sighting problem." Well, I think also informational warfare applied. But runners were the only thing they could have, 'cause one line existed between headquarters and the rear echelon that hadn't been tapped or destroyed when the barrages started. But you can see--and oh, by the way, running was a risky business. A lot of guys were killed trying to get the message across. And the Germans knew that. They fought that ground for four solid years. They knew exactly what the terrain was like. And oh, by the way, they had spies, and they were going around and checking out what the various trench networks were, 'cause they put on American uniforms. So you're in a battalion and some guy walks up to you and says, "Hey, I just came from the other sector. What's going on here?" You don't know the other guys. And that didn't just

happen with the Yankee Division; that happened with the 1st division, too. Oh, yeah. Yeah, so there was a lot of chemistry here associated with how we as a fighting force had to grow up and had to grow up fast, 'cause what you see in Seicheprey is some of the hardest hit weapons of the war. High explosive, chemical, not to mention any of those. Yes.

4: It's portrayed--it looked like the first wave of the Germans in the Blitzkrieg, the soldiers had a grenade in each hand. So was that really all the weaponry they had? And what would they do when they threw the two grenades?

Finnegan: Well, that's just it. One shot showing the Sturmtruppen, they carried a big satchel bag of handgranaten. And it wasn't just a stick grenade, a potato masher as we used to call it, it was also egg grenades and so on. Yes, there was some role for the rifle. In fact, I didn't show it in the discussion here, but one German memory of the battle is Germans were fighting with rifles. But that wasn't the standard back in 1918. And so obviously you're advancing on the enemy outpost, and oh, by the way, it's a trench network that's convoluted. It isn't just straight there, and maybe you need to throw a grenade over. By the way, the Germans learned very quickly how good the Americans were in throwing, because they're baseball players. They could throw a good grenade better than the Germans could.

(Applause)

Clarke: Thank you to Terrence Finnegan for an outstanding discussion and to the United States World War One Centennial Commission for sponsoring this program. The book is *A Delicate Affair on the Western Front: America Learns How to Fight a Modern War in the Woivre Trenches*. To learn more about the World War One Centennial Commission, visit WorldWar1Centennial.org. To learn more about the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, visit in person or online at PritzkerMilitary.org. Thank you, and please join us next time on *Pritzker Military Presents*.

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(Theme music)

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(Theme music)

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