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TWO BROTHERS : STORIES FROM THE FRONT LINES OF WWI LECTURE FINDING AID & TRANSCRIPT

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Video Description

From 2013 Press Release: Archaeologist and curator Timothy Kendall shares the story of his grandfather and great-uncle, who volunteered as ambulance drivers in the American Field Service during World War I. Serving in the Balkans and France, respectively, the Boston-born brothers documented their experiences in photographs and journals. Gloucester resident Abram Piatt Andrew founded the

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American Field Service with Beauport's Henry Davis Sleeper.

Transcript

Courtney Richardson 00:19

Welcome, welcome, welcome. I know we're very excited for this program. We've been waiting a year, more than a year. My name is Courtney Richardson, I'm Director of Education and Public Programs here at the Cape Ann Museum. This is a very collaborative effort today. So, I'm just extending my warmest welcome to you all. I also wanted to make a mention that there is a documentary filmed about some of the World War II ambulance drivers being filmed today at the museum, perhaps in this auditorium during the movie, so just for you to be aware of that. And if you have any questions, please ask me.

Other than that, again, welcome to the Museum. I want to thank all of our Cape Ann Museum members and also the Historic Committee members for being here and for helping them make an event like this possible. And I'll turn it over to Pilar Garro, the site manager of Historic New England's Beauport.

Pilar Garro 01:34

Well, good afternoon, we're thrilled to have you all here. It's so nice, there's a bunch of you here. So, we're really delighted to have this program this afternoon. And I just want to thank Courtney and everybody here at the Cape Ann Museum. We have partnered with them for about six years. So, this is really great that we can offer these programs together. Did anyone see the ambulance when you came in? So, if you haven't seen it, let me just give you a little sort of a glimpse of what this afternoon is going to look like. You probably got the information, you're like 1:00 to 4:30? Wow, that's very long. So, let me explain. So, we're going to have this wonderful lecture in just a few moments, followed by Tim Kendall's lecture, we're going to have some refreshments and then actually, you're welcome to either feed the meter or run outside and see the ambulance at that point. At 2:30 we're going to actually start the viewing of the movie, "Our Friend, France". And I also like to thank Nicole Milano, who's here, she's the head archivist at the American Field Service at the AFS Intercultural Exchange archives. And she has brought the movie, so we're really delighted to have this. This movie was used by Henry David Sleeper to actually recruit funds as well as volunteers. So, I haven't seen it, I am really excited. So that's why it's such a long afternoon. But without further ado, I would really like to, I'm honored to present our speaker this afternoon. And this is Tim Kendall and Tim is an

Egyptologist, archaeologist and former associate curator of Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Art at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston from 1974 to 1999. He is a graduate of Oberlin College with a Bachelor's Degree in Classical Archaeology. He received a master's degree from the University of Chicago in Ancient Near Eastern Studies, 1969, and a PhD from Brandeis University in Mediterranean Studies. He is the author of many scholarly articles, and several exhibition catalogs, and his work has been featured in National Geographic and Time Magazine. In 2003, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Khartoum, Sudan. And just this year, or last year, he was awarded a new five-year grant by the Qatar Museum in Europe. And learning from that story to complete the exhibitions of Jebel Barkal on behalf of the Sudanese antiquities department, so you're probably thinking an American field service, really? Well. He's going to explain all that right now.

Timothy Kendall 04:32

Highfalutin introduction ; thanks Pilar, more than anything, I'm just amazed that so many people showed up and showed up last year at the scheduled event. I apologize for having a heart attack; they wouldn't let me out of the hospital. But as I told Pilar, I've taken my pills today and I'm ready to go.

05:05

So, well a fascinating, but probably little-known piece of Gloucester history is that the city was home to the two founders of the American Ambulance Field Service in France and World War One, Abram Piatt Andrew and his close friend and neighbor, Henry David Sleeper. Sleeper's best known for his house Beauport on the Outer Harbor, which is now maintained as a museum by Historic New England, as you all know. Andrew's house, called Red Roof, was two doors down from Beauport, and it's now privately owned. The American field service, AFS, was really the brainchild of Andrew, who planned and organized the operation in France in 1915, only a few months after the European war had started. By mid 1916, it was being staffed and financed largely through the efforts of Henry Sleeper, who organized recruiting committees across the US and raised men and funds for Andrew's operation, the headquarters of which have been set up in a huge 18th century chateau in a posh suburb of Paris. American Field Service was one of several American volunteer ambulance corps set up by influential Americans living in France, to help the French army prior to the entry of the US into the war. Ultimately, the AFS became the largest, best organized and most famous of them all. The idea was that since the US was officially neutral, young Americans sympathetic to the Allied cause could volunteer in a non-combat role to drive ambulances at the front, to rescue and evacuate wounded French soldiers, and get them quickly to hospitals, where they could receive the best care.

The drivers were recruited by Sleeper from American prep schools, colleges and universities through lectures and film screenings, which he or his committees presented at the schools. These programs promoted the idea of volunteering to help France by driving an ambulance up front as the ultimate noble calling and humanitarian gesture, that extolled this role in which, in which a young man can find the glory, adventure, and escape; and in which he could gain knowledge of the world faster than by any other means. It was a proposal for a kind of ultimate semester abroad, in which one could actually get killed.

07:36

Hundreds of young men answered the call. Most were in their late teens or early 20s. A few old men were nearing 30. In order not to anger Germany these men had to be pure volunteers. They had to buy their uniforms, clothing and personal equipment. They had to pay their own way from the US to France, and after their enlistment was up, they have to pay their way home again. However, once in France, all their needs were provided for. Between early 1915 and the time the US entered the war on April 6, 1917, the America Ambulance, as it was called, put 34 ambulance sections into the field along the 300-mile-long front lines in France and it even sent one section to the Balkans. Each was financed with private American money. Each was composed of about 20 model T Ford ambulances and 25 to 30 men. Each had a French officer and American chief, along with the traveling kitchen and ideally excellent French cooks. Each was assigned to a division of the French army. At any one time, the AFS numbered no more than about 2000 volunteers and at the war's end 126 of them have been killed in action.

09:06

When I first visited Beauport, about seven years ago, I came as a regular house tourist. I was vaguely aware of Henry Sleeper, as an interior designer and antiquarian and of his house simply as charming folly of a man of somewhat eccentric tastes and lifestyle. At the time, I had no idea that he had any connection with the American Field Service. But when we ended up in the library, Sleeper's role in it was mentioned and a few of his souvenirs were shown to the group.

09:47

One of the items passed around about the guide was this photograph, which shows Piatt Andrew and Henry Sleeper standing side by side in the middle of a group of 18 other men on the deck of a ship. The men were said to be some of the AFS volunteers. When I looked at the picture, you can imagine my surprise when I realized that the man standing at the left was my grandfather. I didn't know if any of the other visitors on my book work tour, had ever heard of AFS. But it was very well known to me. As a boy. I used to listen.

10:34

As a boy, I used to listen with rapt attention to my grandfather's stories, (I knew I was going to do this), driving ambulance in World War One. So, I suddenly realized that here was a story to research and piece together, and to link him up with these two eminent men in the middle. He also knew that my great uncle, my grandfather's brother, had joined the AFS year after he did, and the both of them for a time had served together in the same section driving ambulances near the front in Verdun. My great uncle had even been wounded doing this. And he'd also been hospitalized for two months with some horrible sickness, which may have been a form of the 1918 flu. I was pleased when Pilar proposed this program and asked me to present a lecture about these two brothers' experiences. Pulling together their stories, diaries and letters, was research that I needed to do all my life. And it was only an event like this, that was going to make me do it. Both brothers left extensive documentation. Both had carried cameras into the field, and took dozens of photographs. And both brought back loads of souvenirs, some of which still survive. For this talk, I've had to boil down a huge amount of material to stay within my time limit. But this outline, and the pictures will give you a snapshot what they saw and experienced. It will also give you a flavor of the attitudes of those days, when two brothers from a fairly well to do family dropped everything to join an ugly, dirty war that hardly concerned them. And it's hard to imagine anyone doing this today.

12:29

The two brothers were Francis Paton Kendall, known as Paton, my grandfather, and his older brother, Edward Dana Kendall, known as Dana. They were born in Cambridge to James and Etta Kendall shown here with the family about 1903 on the steps of their house in Auburndale. Their father, James and grandfather Edward Kendall, shown at right, were co-owners and managers of the Charles River Ironworks, manufacturers of steam boilers. Kendall Square in Cambridge is named for Edward and this factory which he had run since 1860. In 1906, Edward and his two sons sold the boiler business and they move back to his boyhood home in Holden Massachusetts, just north of Worcester, where the family owned 100 acres of land west of town bordering on Eagle Lake, that was and still is a magical place, which they call Paradise Hill. Still largely undeveloped, the best part of this property is now the Eagle Lake Wildlife Sanctuary of the Mass Audubon Society. In 1898, Edward built a summer house on top of the hill. In 1906, he and son James enlarged and winterized it and the family moved there full time. It was here the Dana and Paton spent most of their youth. Dana went to Worcester Academy and incidentally had as a dorm-mate the young Cole Porter. It was always Dana's dream to turn the Holden place into a working farm. So, he went to Massachusetts Agricultural College, Mass Aggie, which is now UMass Amherst to study farming and graduated in 1908. His father

doubted that the farm would ever pay for itself, but he' supported his son anyway in the venture. They added a big barn to the place, stocked it with dairy cows, raised chickens, turkeys and pigs, and hoped to turn a profit.

14:37

Dana's brother Paton who was eight years younger, wholly different, of a wholly different temperament. Throughout his life, he was always restless for adventure. He got into Harvard in 1914. And here you see him just as he was leaving for his freshman year. During the summer of 1915, he volunteered to work with Dr. Wilfred Grenfell, the famous missionary doctor of the Arctic, and sailed in a three masted schooner up to the hospital in St. Anthony, Newfoundland, to work with Grenfell. In the summer of 1916, he went to Colorado and worked as a cowboy breaking horses, fishing, camping and trying to write short stories of the Old West. In August, as planned, he joined up with Professor Wallace Atwood's Harvard geology class on a field trip through the Rockies, wrote a term paper and got credit for it. Shortly after returning to Harvard in the fall, he attended a recruitment lecture and film for the American Field Service, probably the same one will see after my talk. Recognizing the idea of volunteering with the AFS as a chance to avoid studying and to see something in the world, as well as do something for his fellow man, and to do something that many classmates were probably also doing, he considered signing up. In the fall of 1916, the US and still not entered the war. But American sympathies generally lay with British and French. The AFS offered the chance to help the cause but as a non-combatant, in this case, to drive a Ford model T ambulance on the frontlines and to evacuate the wounded. Convincing his parents that he should go to France to help the brave French boys, Paton got their blessing and full support and withdrew from Harvard on October 23. This is Harvard's letter to Peyton's father formally acknowledging the fact, he then obtained a passport and two weeks later, he went to New York with some of the other volunteers and boarded the French ship "Espagne" and sailed on November 11. And it's on the deck of the Espagne that this picture was taken. And accompanying them to France was Piatt Andrew himself. Henry Sleeper was present, apparently to see Andrew and the others off.

17:17

Although wary of submarines, they had an uneventful nine-day crossing and the ship arrived at Bordeaux the night of November 20. The men disembarked in the wee hours of the morning and wandered about on the docks until dawn, had a hurried breakfast at 6:30am then went uptown to the train station and caught the eight o'clock train to Paris. The train pulled into Paris about 5:30pm and they were driven to the Grand Field Service Headquarters at 21 Rue Raynouard where a splendid supper awaited them. There they were taken on a tour of the great house and gardens which dated back to the 18th century. Through his connections, and

with the help of Mrs. Anne Harriman Vanderbilt, Piatt Andrew has been able to find and rent this property from a French baron and his wife. It had offices for the staff, dormitories for the volunteers, and an infirmary for those who became sick or wounded.

18:19

Nearby was an assembly and repair yard for the ambulances. They were created with model T chassis and engines sent from the states which were then fitted with French ambulance bodies built in Paris. The new recruits resided at the headquarters for just over a month. They received typhoid shots, had their teeth checked by dentists, visited the American hospital and studied different types of wounds, both observing actual cases and those in photographs. And were given a rush course in handling war trauma victims. Many of the wounds were absolutely ghastly, and they were profoundly affected.

19:01

They were measured for their uniforms. And here you see some of the hat badges and the dog-tags. I guess, moths devoured the uniform shortly after the war. Then they studied auto mechanics and learned how to assemble, maintain and repair their cars. They were given driving tests and special driver's licenses, which proved they were neutrals and were affiliated with the American Hospital in Paris; naturally the license is in English, French and German.

19:48

They also became tourists in Paris, picked up a bit of French, visited all the sites, went to the opera many times, saw movies with Charles Chaplin, attended Garden Club [?] banquets, and heard speeches by the British and US amassadores. In this photo one of Paton's comrades poses with two French soldiers, one of whom has lost an arm. In late November Piatt Andrew called for volunteers for a new ambulance section bound for the Balkan front, in Northern Greece, where the Germans, Austrians and Turks faced the French at the intersection of the great Serbian and Albanian borders. This unit was to be known as section 10. It was funded by the New York Stock Exchange. It was to be attached to the Army of the Orient, and deployed almost immediately to Salonika, Greece. Paton immediately signed up.

20:48

(This is the place where I thought I would crack up.) Having told his father he would be volunteering to serve in France. He felt badly that he hadn't first informed him that he'd volunteer for a unit that was to go to Greece and Albania. So, he wrote his father, explaining that he was following the words of their minister, Mr. Carey in Holden, who had preached that "all men are brothers regardless of race, creed, or color." Patan wrote, "these brothers of ours

have just asked for another section to help carry their wounded to hospitals near Salonika. On the strength of what Mr. Carey said, I'm going where I'm needed. For, after all, this is what I came over to France primarily to do." I just found this letter.

21:48

"In your letter, you say you are glad and proud of me for being able to relieve the suffering. And in many cases to save the lives for the noble French boys. Won't you go one better, Father, and be proud of me for going where the (this is embarrassing) need is the greatest? You don't know how much it would mean to me if I knew he felt this way. For I'm determined to do this job right if it's the only thing I've ever do in my life; your loving son". So, what he meant was the Army of the Orient going to the Balkans was composed heavily of French colonial troops, which were Africans from Senegal, and Moroccans and Indochinese. So, Paton's letter expresses the desire to serve these men, regardless of race, creed, or color.

22:53

Eventually, the word came down and they would depart on the evening of December 26. On Christmas Day, the ambulances of Section 10 were reviewed. The morning afterward, men drove them over to the shop where they were boxed to ship to Greece. There was a farewell dinner with a fine speech by the American ambassador then they left in a heavy rain by auto for the Leon station to catch the 10:50 train to Marseilles. After about 24 hours, they arrived in Marseille, got to a hotel and took baths. Then on January 4, 1917, they boarded a transport ship called the "Lotus" bound for Salonika. Their rooms were in steerage shared with African troops. There was no water for washing and no sanitary arrangements. There were also 250 Russians on board as well as dozens of mules hauled up by derricks. It was so foul down below that they all slept on deck, using life-vests for pillows. The ship was accompanied by two small French cruisers and a French torpedo boat. They made a stop in Malta or Cole and the Lotus arrived uneventfully in Salonika harbor late in evening, on January 9.

24:07

And here's a snapshot of Salonika. Since there was no other lodging there, they pitched three large tents and stayed inside them. Although it was very crowded, it was also bitterly cold so they constructed stoves out of gasoline cans. Salonika was picturesque but appallingly dirty.

24:30

It featured mosques, minarets, 'Oriental types of people with queer uniforms', that's a quote, baggy trousers and tasseled shoes. Their camps attracted many beggars and women who would fight each other for scraps of trash or food. That was also a massive staging area for four

divisions of the French army. By early February, the cars and equipment of Section 10 arrived. When all was assembled on February 12, they left Salonika in convoy with the whole army, heading for the front lines about 150 miles distant over very bad roads and rugged terrain in the dead of winter. And here's the route. You can see Salonika on the east and they they're going over flatlands up into the highlands to that lake at the top, which is Lake Presba. It was here on the shores of Lake Presba that the section served until July 1917 when the first crop of drivers were replaced by new recruits from Stanford. So, the land that they pass through initially was flat and swampy, with water standing all over the land in great puddles. The country as a result was full of malaria. Gradually, they ascended into snow covered mountains with nearly impassable roads.

26:04

Section 10 accompanied company troops, cavalry and artillery caissons as they found their way slowly up the high mountainside west of Salonika through mud, snow, and freezing rain. The roads are narrow and crowded with hundreds of mules, horses, wagons, trucks, infantry. There were precipitous drop offs in sides of the roads and frequent accidents. The objective of all this effort was the south side of the great Lake Presba nearly 2800 feet high where the borders of Greece, Albania and Serbia have converged.

26:38

There's some troops, scenes on the way, the local people, accidents. As the troops and guns moved into position to join the forces already holding the line, Section 10 established positions from the lake edge to towns 30 to 50 miles further back where better medical treatment facilities were established, with the main hospital in the town of Koritza, Albania. The, the routine was that ambulances and relays would pick up wounded brought from the frontlines. They would then take them back to secondary and tertiary triage posts, from which they would be transported to main hospitals if they were able to travel. Almost daily, there were German planes circling overhead strafing the troops and dropping bombs and they cared nothing for the red crosses on the hospital tents. Everything was a target. The men spent interminable days and nights of driving back and forth with wounded, or sick or even dead or dying men of all types, and from both sides, between front lines and the main hospitals in Karista, Albania. Sometimes driving several hundred miles in a single day. The main hospital at Koritza was about 50 miles south of the front lines. There was also a hotel where the drivers could wash, eat and lodge with many other soldiers, Zouaves, Palaruus, Chasseurs d'Afrique, to drink and play cards and stay out of foul or freezing weather. My grandfather always the stamp collector. See, here's Lake Presba, there's the map, showing where the, see the little stars the blue stars. I think the low, this southernmost one is Koritza. And here you see them at the lake edge, the field

hospital near the lake. And then this is Koritza. And I was going to say that my grandfather always the stamp collector went to the local post office stamps issued by the new Albanian Republic and had the postmaster carefully postmark them. On March 19 the section camp at Zmlak, 30 miles behind the lines was bombed one morning by a German airplane, and their beloved chief, a man named Henry Suckley. About 30 years old from Rhinebeck, New York, he was injured so badly by shrapnel that he died within 24 hours. He'd been evacuated from to Koritza, but he couldn't be saved. This funeral was held March 20 in Koritza. He was buried in this little cemetery.

29:38

When I was about 10 years old, rummaging through cartons in my grandfather's barn, I found a piece of folded painted canvas emblazoned with the black Maltese cross. When I asked him what it was he said he cut it from the tail section of the German airplane which had come down near his position. This was sometime in April 1917. The plane, having engine trouble, had attempted a landing in an open field but the wheels caught a ditch, flipped the plane over and threw out the two crewmen who were unhurt. Members of the section rushed up, took them as prisoner and over the next several days, the men, French and Americans, cut the plane up for souvenirs. That that photograph is actually another wreck but not that one. Other things made from the plane was a finger ring, also made by a French soldier from a magnesium part, inset with a brass button. Another souvenir was a cigarette lighter made from a shell casing with a coin of Louis XVI soldered on top. Iron bits may have come from the plane. This life of driving hundreds of miles back and forth with wounded and sick men while being bombed and strafed by airplanes, or being bombed and shelled by artillery, or sitting for days with almost nothing to do but play cards and write letters continued until early July when Paton's six months tour ended. And the section was relieved by replacements all from Stanford University. So, he and his comrades, Paton and his comrades were then sent back to France on an overcrowded ferry from Corfu to Taranto. And from there, they went by train to Rome and then on to Paris. The day he arrived back in Paris he was stunned to run into his brother, who had also volunteered for the AFS and just arrived coming from the other direction. Fearing that he would be drafted in the States and would have no choice about what service he entered, Dana had decided to follow Paton's lead and join the ambulance service. Because at this point the US had joined the war on April 6, and was, had notified everybody that they were going to be drafted. So, here's Dana, full of regret with having to leave the burden of running the farm to his father and the hired hand, Dana left Holden on July 19, 1917. His suitcase and duffel bags bag packed and tied onto the front fender of the family Flipper. He drove off together with his father at the wheel and his mother in the back seat, in the backseat waving a large French flag. They drove to New York, where on July 23rd, Dana embarked on a French ship called the "Chicago" that sailed

for France. And here you see the Holden house in the summer of 1917 flying two small flags, signifying that the family had two sons in the army. The ship arrived in Bordeaux on August 3 and the new volunteers marched smartly to the train station in the company of French soldiers while the townspeople cheered them on. They took a third-class car to Paris, were issued one meal of Army rations and got no sleep. The trip took 10 hours. Dana arrived in Paris the evening of August 4. He and his fellow recruits were escorted to 21 Rue Renoir, and placed in a barracks. The next day he would have been forced to sign on with a supply section as a truck driver, but incredibly that very morning, he ran into his brother who had just arrived from Greece. Through Paton's pull, he was able to get them both assigned to an Ambulance Section number 2, in which there were several new openings since a few men were leaving and two others had been killed in action. At the time section two was operating near the front at Verdun attached to the French army Second Moroccan division, which was made up largely Moroccans and Algerians. And here you can see the two of them side by side. Dana now sporting a moustache. The ambulances bore the famous Crescent and star emblem which also appeared on their French helmets. This was Paton's helmet; you see the crescent on the front. The infantry men wore red fezzes with a pin combining a crescent and numeral two, and this one Dana brought back.

34:16

After Dana picked up his new uniform, he and Paton got on a train headed east with the other replacements and got off at a town called Bar-le-Duc. About 30 miles southwest of Verdun on the front lines. The section was encamped on the hope that rest at a nearby village with its cars. Even from here they can hear the distant rumble of guns and see the flashes in the distance.

34:48

On August 16, the section broke camp and lined up the cars outside of the village and the people came out to give them flowers before they drove off. The roads on the front. were very dusty and the men were covered with white dust when they arrived at their next encampment.

35:08

As they arrived at the town of Souhesme about 10 miles from the front, they found it full of wagons and troops and the sky was full of French planes practicing maneuvers and target practice with machine guns and bombs. The section made camp right next to an airfield and men fraternize with the aviators. Some of the planes were SPADs, which you see here and some were Nieuports. On August 18th, and 19th section prepared for an offensive which was to begin the next day. German planes flew over the nearby village of Vadelaincourt and dropped some bombs. One landed in a barn and killed three horses. Another landed in a doorway and killed an

old woman. The field hospital there was bombed from the air and burned fiercely all night. In the next days, the section set up its postes de secours, that is rescue stations. And here you see the way it was supposed to be set up. The front lines are at the top. And they were frontline triage stations, the wounded were brought there. The ambulances went and relays picked up the wounded and brought them back behind the artillery, which you see and then the men were patched up and then carried further back, finally to the hospitals in the rear where they would be put on trains and driven to Paris.

36:44

On August 24, the big guns opened up Northwest of Verdun on Hill 304 where French had begun an offensive. That's the area of the dark area is now. Section two established its forward rescue station at the destroyed railroad station of Chattencourt, which was an area under constant bombardment. Wounded and dying men would be brought here where the road between the station and the bombed-out village of Marre, which was about a kilometer, they were about a kilometer apart and picked up by a relay of ambulances. Here's a, that's a shot at the Chattencourt Station where the wounded were brought.

37:32

When an ambulance had its load of wounded men from Chattencourt they drove back to the bombed-out village of Marre, the road about 800 meters was partly camouflage to minimize observation of the cars by German gunners. When things were really hot, the driving between the station and Marre could only be attempted at night without lights. The only problem was the night was the only time anything moved. So, the road was full of traffic and animals and troops, and accidents were frequent. Here's a picture of the Chattencourt station and I think that's a dead body in the foreground. You can see the hand. And here's a view from the station showing artillery going off in background.

38:29

The wounded were, the wounded were driven back to Marre. (okay) At each post, the men stayed in protected shelters or "abri" while waiting for a call to move up and pick up the wounded. Either having to spend the night there where they share these holes with large rats. While waiting in these, and here's the camouflaged road.

That's what that's the village of Marre and here's a little triage station. And you can see what a spot on the moon it looked like in the Verdon sector. This is a view of Marre and down at the end of the road where the arrow is pointing there's a shelter where the ambulance drivers wait until they were told they were needed. And there's one of the shelters.

39:55

While waiting in these outrigs, both Dana and Paton had their own respective close calls. In both cases, they were with their mutual friend Gordon McKenzie from Concord, Mass, a former Boston taxi driver who appears in most of their photographs, and that's Gordon McKenzie on the left and my grandfather on the right. And from the letter that I found in, one of my uncle's letters, he writes this: "Well for a little excitement McKenzie and I were at a post together a few days ago sitting in the shelter just opposite the door. The Boche were shelling the town, the shells go over us, about six a minute. This lasted about an hour. Strangely enough, the last shell landed opposite our door about 20 feet away. There was a flash, I shut my eyes as the smoke, dust, stones and [?] blew in the door. I felt as though I had been kicked in the chest. Mackenzie was knocked against the wall, hitting his head, which laid him out, I jumped up to find him unconscious in the doorway, blood running from his nose. I turned him over and gave him air. He soon came to, he was shaken up a bit. And otherwise we both were none the worse for it. McKenzie was much excited to find a piece of the [?] that buried in the wood about four inches from where it's headed." And here, this may be the place he was talking about, I think it's that same shelter, and then this is the before picture, and this is the after picture.

41:27

On September 27, the American ambulance units were officially transferred to the authority of the US Army, and Section 2 became Section 626. At that time, all the men were offered the option of staying on as ambulance drivers or joining some other branch of the service. Dana decided to stay on. Paton, having already done this for a year, chose to return home mainly because he wanted to make sure that no one else stole the affections of his girl Mildred, my future Grandma. Watching all the planes in the air also made him yearn to fly, so he wanted to return home and join the US Army Air Corps. So here, here they are. Dana was sad to see him go but he perfectly understood.

42:21

As the winter and spring of 1918 wore on the section followed the allied armies ever closer to the borders of Luxembourg and Germany. As the German lines began to break under the new power of the American army, huge numbers of German prisoners would be taken and many of them were impressed in the service as stretcher-bearers. The ambulances were also hauling the wounded on both sides. And here you see Piatt Andrew visiting the front. And here are the German prisoners in the spring of 1918. Germans impressed as stretcher bearers. In mid-May, meanwhile, troops in both opposing armies were beginning to be felled in large numbers by mysterious disease which they called Algerian fever. This was possibly a strain of the dreaded

1918 flu from which many were dying. Dana himself succumbed; lay for days surrounded by dead and dying men in crude hospitals, but eventually was evacuated to 21 Rue Raynouard and he managed to survive. But he spent six weeks in recovery and could not be sent back to his section until July 4. Meanwhile, on June 22, his beloved friend Gordon McKenzie was killed by a shell exploded beside his ambulance. And then on August 22, during an offensive, Dana was himself wounded in the arm, for which he received the French Croix de Guerre for heroism under fire.

43:56

And here you see Dana's metals with the piece of shrapnel they took out of his arm. It's about it's about 2 inches long. It went right through his arm and lodged right at his wrist.

So, he was, it took him a long time to recover from this because it kept getting infected. But in September, he was well enough to go back to his unit. Sorry, he was well enough to use his hand to write his mother an account of the incident. And he said that, "at six o'clock the barrage opened up, and what a noise it made, the whistling of shells overhead, rushing through the air and dropped on the Bosches. The tanks proceeded the infantry we watched the battle from the hill, but not, not long for about two hours the artillery was getting ready to move up and we were moving up to get the wounded. The attack that morning was a great success. We kept moving up further all day, and such a great number of prisoners were brought in, repulsive looking creatures. I was wounded about four o'clock in the morning. An enemy plane flying overhead evidently saw us. As three of us were preparing to leave, I didn't pay much attention to the first bomb. But when I heard the second coming I dropped, but not quick enough, and got a piece in my right arm. The third and fourth were almost on top of us. But as we were close to the ground, we were not hit. I was the only one hit. One of the boys took me back to our central post and I was fixed up and then evacuated and here I am now. The wound is healing up slowly but surely. My fingers are somewhat stiff as you can imagine for my writing arm is sore." But he was not released from the hospital until October 22, 27th. And he rejoined the section just two weeks before the armistice was declared. Of course, desperate to get home that he was forced to remain in part of the army and occupation in southern Germany until March. Dana was happy to get back to Paradise Hill, to build to rebuild the farm with his father's help. And for time even Paton pitched in. But by 1927 it did become clear that the farm was never going to pay for itself. Their father, James, who kept the place afloat with his investments was financially destabilized by the depression. And by 1934, he could not make payment on the loan and the bank took the house and the farm leaving the family ruined and embittered. Having lost his job in 1931, Dana was forced to go to work for the Civilian Conservation, a New Deal public works program, in Pittsfield State Forest, which took him away from his family. For weeks at a time, he was quite unhappy for much of his life. Peyton on the other hand always pushed the

envelope. After finishing Harvard and working for time as a traveling salesman, he took up aviation as a career in 1927. And through the Depression held down two jobs at the Boston Airport as a pilot for several fledgling airlines and for the Massachusetts National Guard. Although forced to retire as a commercial pilot by 1940, he found new opportunities in early 1942, when Pan American put out the call for retired airline pilots to volunteer to fly unarmed military aircraft to China. Naturally Paton found this cause irresistible. He got to see Brazil, Central Africa, the Middle East, Iran and India, which is as far as he got before, they sent him back to get more planes.

Here he is, in flying through Central Africa, and he managed to, to ride a giraffe. That's in Maiduguri Nigeria.

Well, he retired for good in 1950. And when I was a kid, I used to spend part of every summer with him and my grandmother that they're in their little house in Norway, Maine.

And this is what they look like when they came back from the war.

48:26

Well, that's it.

Pilar 48:46

That was amazing. Tim, thank you so much for sharing that really emotional part of your family history. But we have a few minutes for questions. So, does anyone want to...

Unknown48:58

You touched on this briefly about having picked up casualties from the other side as well. What did you find reference to picking up civilian casualties? And also, did you find evidence of the moral and practical dilemmas of treating you know, not just your own, but others and the tradeoffs that go along with that?

Tim49:22

Um, you know, I think they were pretty even handed. They would and they picked up anybody who was who was desperate. There were terrible, terrible wounds that they dealt with where it was clear that the person could never survive. I mean, there were there was one incident I remember him telling me about where, where an artillery barrage landed on a cannon that just been set up and the entire artillery crew had been devastated by this direct hit, and one man had, had his had his whole jaw, his lower jaw blown away. And, and he was alive. But he could not. There's no way to treat this kind of thing. And the wounded were in agony when they were moved, when they would have to drive over these horrible roads for long distances. These guys were in terrible pain. I mean, it must have been awful. But they didn't discriminate, again. I

mean, of course, the cars can only hold what 2,3,4 I think they could. They could they could hold sitting wounded men, men who were, four sitting on stretchers. Yes. And we can see the ambulance, George can demonstrate.

50:48

Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Unknown50:51

Did you say that Section 10, which was the one that wanted to Albania was sponsored by the Wall Street Journal?

Tim

It was. It was funded by the by the by the Stock Exchange.

Unknown51:17

Did anyone get captured by the Germans?

Tim

I never heard of it. I don't think so.

Unknown51:23

Yeah, I had to step out to feed the meter. But in your grandfather's correspondence, was there any mention of the Eddie Rickenbacker? Who started his, who prior to his activity as our greatest Ace was an ambulance driver?

51:41

No, he doesn't. He didn't. I mean of course knew him later, you know, but, but no, not at the time.

Okay

Tim

Did you have a question?

Unknown51:52

Yeah, I have a question about the legal status of Americans serving [?]. I was told once there was some law against Americans going overseas to serve somebody else. So, they had to do some legal gyrations?

Tim52:13

I think you could volunteer to do as a free agent, you could volunteer to do a non-combatant role. And then by April of 1917, you know, then America was at war with Germany, and then nobody cared.

Unknown52:27

Before that.

Tim

Yeah. But before that, you had to be a pure volunteer.

Unknown

So, it had to be noncombatant to join the Legion as well,

Unknown

There were men who volunteered to join the Foreign Legion as well, but they found some loophole like they were able to join the French Foreign Legion. It wasn't technically allowed. So, noncombatants were fine. But joining that, like...

Tim52:59

Anything else? Good.

Pilar 53:03

I quickly just want to say this is George King, who brought the fantastic ambulance, a recreated ambulance that he brought from World War One. And so, he can actually chime in on a few of these questions.

Tim53:20

I have a question. How far did you drive it?

George53:22

Off the trailer to the other end of the parking lot.

Tim53:26

I mean, it is. It's amazing. When you hear about these cars driving hundreds of miles and these horrible roads. What an amazing car this must have been in for.

George53:37

I've put several hundred miles on it in less than a year.

Tim53:41

Did any of you see that? That special about Henry Ford. That was on American Experience, crazy story.

George53:53

But there are a couple of questions that I could expostulate upon if I may. We're looking at two portraits up here. The one on the right is Piatt Andrew. And the one on the left is Leslie Buswell. Buswell was a driver in Section two, which is the same section that your first, Paton, drove for. And Buswell published the first one of the first published diaries of the American Field Service. And in his diary, he addresses the question about taking German wounded to the hospital. He's up there stationed at the poste de secours and the doctor says, "I have to take these three". And Buswell says, "Well, this one's German". He says, "Yes, but he's wounded more severely than the other Frenchmen, so you must take him first". And this was the attitude of the French. As soon as they were wounded, the German was out of the picture as being an enemy. If he needed help you gave him help. So that was a very noble gesture at the time.

54:58

There was another question that I wanted...

55:05

Oh, Ed Rickenbacker.

Yes,

George55:09

The ambulances that were sent over in 1914 to early 1917 for the American Field Service were sent over as just chassis from Detroit. It was shipped over in crates and some were brought to Paris at the Rue Pasteur and assembled there at least early on. Then later they came into Bordeaux, where they assembled the chassis. So then, they were driven up to Paris to a carriage shop. There was a carriage building by the name of George Kellner and Sons. And they build

some very high end like coronation coaches for Napoleon and folks like that. So, they got to making the ambulance bodies for the French for the ambulances, like the one out here. Kellner also built the SPAT 13s, which is the Plane of the record that could float. So, there there's that tie there. Now there were a lot of people that were ambulance drivers that went into aviation, and this is not by coincidence. One of the founding members of the American Field Service was a Dr. Gross. He also happened to be a founding member along with Dr. [?], for instance, the Lafayette Escadrille. So, he knew all the drivers and he'd go up and say, "Listen, when you get done in six months driving an ambulance here, we can teach you how to fly one of those planes". So, 17 of the original members of the Lafayette Escadrille were former ambulance drivers of the American Field Service. What's interesting, if you want to get a chance to see the ambulance that's in your slide, is showing ambulances from Section 2 that were made in 1916. That's what my ambulance is, 1916. And some of them, I noticed the details of the lights being up on the roof. That means that they were built in May, which is the same month, the original ambulance 255 was constructed. So, when you go out, look for the taillight way up high on the roof, those were only the early 1916's. Which you have some photos of. It is wonderful.

Unknown57:08

How did you come to have the ambulance? Was there something that attracted you to it or did you know these people very well?

George57:17

Well, I restore Model T's and I had I was visited a museum in Stow Mass, the Collins Foundation. They have airplanes, and they had cars and they had World War One ambulance stuck up in the corner. And it was a very mixed bag of parts from 1912 to 1923. So, I wanted to write a proposal to the museum to restore it to 1917, which is what they display it as. So, I, being a historian, I had to research it before I put in my proposal. And I started studying the story of the American Field Service. First, I got very angry with myself because I had never heard of it before, especially the Model T part. And I said, you know I've been playing with Model T's since 1963. Why don't I know this? then I came to the realization that if I didn't know about it there probably a lot of people that didn't know about it. So, the best way to tell the story was to build one. So that's what I did. This is replicate, a replica of the ambulance that was donated by the Groton School, prep school in Groton, Mass, to the American Field Service. And went into service by May 1916.

Pilar 58:29

Okay, I'm so sorry, in the interest of time, we're gonna to take a break. You can go and see the ambulance. We're going to have refreshments. But before we do that, I do want to give a really

warm welcome to two very special people that are here today. We have two drivers, ambulance drivers from World War Two. We have Art Howe and Ward Chamberlain.

59:17

We are we're just so honored to have you here. And is Ginny Cohen here? There's a wonderful woman who lives in Gloucester who was supposed to come. She has been a host family for the AFS International Student Exchange Program. And she has she actually brings students to Beauport all the time. So, Ginny, wherever you are...

And at this point, let's take a break. Go feed your meter, go see the ambulance and we'll be back in about 20 minutes to show the film.

[End]

Subject List

People

Francis **Paton** Kendall 1895-1982
Edward **Dana** Kendall 1888-1978
 James and Etta Kendall, parents of Paton and Dana
 Edward Kendall, grandfather of Paton and Dana
 Mildred Kendall, wife of Paton
Pilar Garro
Nicole Milano
Henry Davis Sleeper
Abram Piatt Andrew
Cole Porter
Dr. Wilfred Grenfell aka "Doctor of the Arctic"
Professor Wallace Atwood
Mrs. Anne Harriman Vanderbilt
Henry Suckley
Gordon Kenneth MacKenzie
George King III
Henry Ford
Leslie Buswell
Edward Venon
Eddie Rickenbacker
Napoleon
Dr. Edmund Gros
Norman Prince

Arthur "Art" Howe, Jr.
Ward Chamberlin
Ginny Cohen

Armed Forces

Allied Army of the Orient aka Armee de l'Orient
German, Austrian, Turks vs. French Colonial troops (French Senegal, Morocco, other African countries, French Indochina, Russia)
US Army Air Corp
Massachusetts National Guard
Lafayette Escadrille
Zouaves
Chasseurs D'Afrique

Places in the USA

Beauport, Gloucester, MA
Red Roof, Gloucester, MA
Cambridge, MA
Auburndale, MA
Paradise Hill, Holden, MA now Eagle Lake Wildlife Sanctuary of Massachusetts Audubon Society
Harvard University
Worcester Academy
Massachusetts Agriculture College now University of Massachusetts Amherst
Rio Grande Pyramid, Colorado
Rhinebeck, NY
Stanford University, CA
New York City, NY
Concord, MA
Pittsfield State Forest, MA
Norway, Maine
Stow, MA

Places abroad

Chattencourt Train Station, Verdun, France
The Balkans
St. Anthony Hospital, Newfoundland
21 rue Raynouard, Paris, France AFS Headquarters
Northern Greece
Germany
Austria
Turkey
Serbia

Albania
Lyon Train Station, France
Marseilles, France
Salonika, Greece
Malta
Lake Presba, Macedonia
Kiritza, Albania
Corfu, Greece
Taranto, Italy
Rome, Italy
Bordeaux, France
Bar-le-Duc, Meuse, France
Nancois-le-Grand, Meuse, France
Les Souhesme-Ramport, Meuse, France
Vadelaincourt, Meuse, France
Marre, Meuse, France
Luxembourg
China
Brazil
Central Africa
Middle East
Iran
India
Maiduguri, Nigeria

French Planes

Spad
Nieuport
Spad 13

Ships

George B. Cluett 3 masted schooner
S. S. Espagne
Lotus transfer ship
French cruisers
French torpedo boat
The *Chicago* a French ship

Ambulances

Ambulance 255 Project
AFS Ambulances Section 2
AFS Ambulances Section 626
Detroit, MI Model T chassis

Movies

Our Friend France

Our American Boys in the European War

Organizations

Historic New England

American Field Service Intercultural Exchange Archives

American Field Service International Exchange

AFS American Ambulance Field Service in France WWI [first named American Ambulances]

Civilian Conservation Corp aka CCC

America Heritage Museum at the Collings Foundation, Stow, MA

Groton School, Groton, MA

Businesses

Edward Kendall & Sons: Charles River Iron Works--Steam Boilers and General Plate

Iron Work

Triangle Film Corporation

New York Stock Exchange

Georges Kellner Jr. Carriage Builder

Misc.

Tin Derby (helmet)

Fez (red felt hat)

Croix de Guerre (Cross of War) "for heroism under fire"

1918 Influenza