

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:04,000

A granite shrine to a legendary brigade.

2

00:00:04,000 --> 00:00:09,000

The Germans out of fear called them the Harlem Hellfighters.

3

00:00:09,000 --> 00:00:13,000

A set of sculptures that speak to a strange event.

4

00:00:13,000 --> 00:00:19,000

They think this is a huge battle cry before they kill us all in our beds.

5

00:00:19,000 --> 00:00:24,000

And a towering summit at the center of another worldly tale.

6

00:00:24,000 --> 00:00:28,000

His work made us wonder whether we were really alone in the universe.

7

00:00:28,000 --> 00:00:33,000

Sometimes the greatest secrets lie in plain sight.

8

00:00:33,000 --> 00:00:37,000

These are the mysteries of the monument.

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00:00:44,000 --> 00:00:46,000

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

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00:00:46,000 --> 00:00:50,000

For Americans, this small town is hallowed ground.

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00:00:50,000 --> 00:00:54,000

It's the location of Gettysburg National Military Park.

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00:00:54,000 --> 00:00:58,000

The site of the largest battle of the Civil War.

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00:00:58,000 --> 00:01:01,000

And home to 1400 memorials.

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00:01:04,000 --> 00:01:08,000

But among these shrines to valor and sacrifice,

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00:01:08,000 --> 00:01:13,000

stands one monument that's linked to a shocking tale of peacetime controversy.

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00:01:13,000 --> 00:01:15,000

It's about 21 feet tall.

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00:01:15,000 --> 00:01:19,000

It's shaped like a pentagon and there's an eagle sitting on top of the monument.

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00:01:20,000 --> 00:01:23,000

This is the Excelsior Brigade Monument.

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00:01:23,000 --> 00:01:27,000

A tribute to five volunteer regiments from New York.

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00:01:27,000 --> 00:01:30,000

But according to author James Hessler,

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00:01:30,000 --> 00:01:37,000

the leader of this unit left a legacy that endures to this day in courtrooms across America.

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00:01:37,000 --> 00:01:40,000

Who was this controversial commander?

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00:01:40,000 --> 00:01:44,000

And how did he accidentally transform the U.S. justice system?

24

00:01:48,000 --> 00:01:51,000

1859, Washington, D.C.

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00:01:52,000 --> 00:01:56,000

New York Congressman Daniel Sickles is new to the Capitol.

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00:01:56,000 --> 00:02:00,000

But the 39-year-old lawyer is already a powerful political insider.

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00:02:00,000 --> 00:02:03,000

He had risen through the politics of New York City

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00:02:03,000 --> 00:02:08,000

and was considered a protege of the sitting president, James Buchanan.

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00:02:08,000 --> 00:02:11,000

So he was considered a guy with a big future.

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00:02:13,000 --> 00:02:16,000

Sickles frequently entertains Washington's elite.

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00:02:16,000 --> 00:02:20,000

At the Lafayette Square home, he shares with his young wife, Teresa.

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00:02:21,000 --> 00:02:27,000

Teresa is a very sophisticated, well-educated, passionate Italian girl.

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00:02:27,000 --> 00:02:33,000

The high society marriage adds glitter to Sickles' already gilded career.

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00:02:33,000 --> 00:02:37,000

But an explosive revelation threatens to tarnish it all.

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00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:44,000

One day in February, the congressman receives an anonymous message in the mail.

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00:02:44,000 --> 00:02:50,000

The letter basically tells him that his wife, Teresa, is having an affair.

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00:02:52,000 --> 00:02:57,000

What's worse, the note reveals that Teresa's lover is one of Sickles' trusted friends.

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00:02:58,000 --> 00:03:00,000

Attorney Philip Barton Key.

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00:03:00,000 --> 00:03:05,000

Philip Barton Key was considered one of the handsomest men in Washington society.

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00:03:05,000 --> 00:03:11,000

He was tall, athletic, dark-haired, considered to be the best dancer in town.

41

00:03:12,000 --> 00:03:15,000

The letter describes the details of the torrid liaison,

42

00:03:15,000 --> 00:03:20,000

including the secret sign that Key uses to communicate with Teresa.

43

00:03:22,000 --> 00:03:26,000

When he was passing by the Sickles' residence in Lafayette Square,

44

00:03:26,000 --> 00:03:30,000

Key would pull out a white handkerchief and he would twirl it slowly.

45

00:03:30,000 --> 00:03:34,000

And this was supposed to be his signal to Teresa to come out and meet him.

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00:03:35,000 --> 00:03:38,000

The news makes Sickles seethe with rage.

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00:03:39,000 --> 00:03:43,000

His wife has betrayed him with one of his best friends,

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00:03:43,000 --> 00:03:46,000

and apparently everybody in Washington knows about this except him.

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00:03:47,000 --> 00:03:48,000

Teresa!

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00:03:50,000 --> 00:03:55,000

The congressman immediately confronts his wife, who tearfully admits all.

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00:03:56,000 --> 00:03:58,000

Sickles can barely contain himself.

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00:04:00,000 --> 00:04:04,000

And three days later, the situation explodes.

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00:04:05,000 --> 00:04:08,000

He looks out the window of his house,

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00:04:08,000 --> 00:04:15,000

and Philip Barton Key is walking through Lafayette Square twirling this handkerchief.

55

00:04:17,000 --> 00:04:23,000

Moments later, Sickles grabs a gun and storms out to confront Key.

56

00:04:25,000 --> 00:04:26,000

Key!

57

00:04:26,000 --> 00:04:31,000

Sickles basically says, Key, you scoundrel, you've dishonored my house and you must die.

58

00:04:32,000 --> 00:04:33,000

Sickles!

59

00:04:33,000 --> 00:04:39,000

Key begs his friend not to pull the trigger, but the scorned husband is deaf to his cries.

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00:04:39,000 --> 00:04:46,000

Sickles puts a gun up to Key's chest and fires literally point blank.

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00:04:50,000 --> 00:04:51,000

Key is dead.

62

00:04:53,000 --> 00:04:54,000

Sickles!

63

00:04:54,000 --> 00:04:55,000

What have you done?

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00:04:57,000 --> 00:05:01,000

Sickles surrenders to authorities and is charged with murder.

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00:05:03,000 --> 00:05:07,000

There were numerous eyewitnesses, there was no doubt Sickles was guilty.

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00:05:08,000 --> 00:05:12,000

But the clever politician cooks up a scheme to get off scot-free.

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00:05:16,000 --> 00:05:23,000

Less than two months later, congressman Daniel Sickles stuns a Washington judge by pleading not guilty.

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00:05:25,000 --> 00:05:31,000

Although he readily admits to firing the fatal shots, he contends that his actions didn't amount to murder.

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00:05:32,000 --> 00:05:38,000

So the defense team put forward this argument that upon learning of the affair, Sickles' mind had become diseased.

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00:05:38,000 --> 00:05:39,000

Key!

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00:05:39,000 --> 00:05:40,000

Sickles!

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00:05:42,000 --> 00:05:46,000

And that he was literally acting upon uncontrollable impulses.

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00:05:47,000 --> 00:05:51,000

The defense declares that Sickles was temporarily insane.

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00:05:52,000 --> 00:05:55,000

It's an argument never before presented in court.

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00:05:55,000 --> 00:05:59,000

Yet the testimony appears to support this audacious claim.

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00:06:00,000 --> 00:06:09,000

The defense team starts calling witnesses to the stand, who in some cases go into fairly graphic detail of what Teresa Sickles and Key were doing.

77

00:06:09,000 --> 00:06:15,000

Hearing about his wife's tawdry behavior appears to leave Sickles deranged.

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00:06:15,000 --> 00:06:18,000

He burst into tears, he was sobbing.

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00:06:18,000 --> 00:06:25,000

He literally had to stop the trial at one point and he was forcibly carried out of the courtroom.

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00:06:26,000 --> 00:06:31,000

After three weeks of testimony, the case goes to the jury.

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00:06:31,000 --> 00:06:35,000

It took them only 70 minutes to reach verdict.

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00:06:35,000 --> 00:06:37,000

Not guilty.

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00:06:38,000 --> 00:06:44,000

The ruling is a victory for both Sickles and his unusual defense strategy.

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00:06:45,000 --> 00:06:57,000

He ultimately became a general in the Union Army, where he played a prominent role in a number of

battles, including the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863.

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00:06:58,000 --> 00:07:05,000

Sickles survives the Civil War and plays a major role in establishing Gettysburg National Military Park.

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00:07:06,000 --> 00:07:10,000

But his most lasting legacy may be his novel defense.

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00:07:11,000 --> 00:07:20,000

Not guilty by reason of temporary insanity, which goes on to gain legitimacy in the U.S. court system and continues to be used to this day.

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00:07:23,000 --> 00:07:33,000

The Excelsior Brigade Monument stands as a tribute to a controversial man who was unafraid to fight, both on the battlefield and in the courtroom.

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00:07:40,000 --> 00:07:45,000

Nestled in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains is Arcadia, California.

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00:07:45,000 --> 00:07:55,000

This scenic Los Angeles suburb is home to a sprawling botanical garden whose resident peacocks can sometimes be spotted wandering onto the streets.

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00:07:58,000 --> 00:08:04,000

Yet just a cross from these tranquil grounds is an attraction that appeals to a more boisterous crowd.

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00:08:05,000 --> 00:08:12,000

It's oval shaped and it's a mile in length. There's a grandstand, a clubhouse, a European style paddock.

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00:08:13,000 --> 00:08:16,000

It's just a beautiful venue and it's just a beautiful place to spend a day.

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00:08:17,000 --> 00:08:22,000

Drawing in over one million visitors each year, this is Santa Anita Park.

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00:08:23,000 --> 00:08:30,000

From almost a century, this legendary racetrack has hosted the country's finest thoroughbreds and greatest jockeys.

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00:08:31,000 --> 00:08:42,000

And as reporter Christina Bosenakis reveals, among them is a man with a tail so extraordinary it rocked the annals of both racing and medicine.

97

00:08:44,000 --> 00:08:51,000

This was unique, terrifying, but at the same time amazing. People still talk about it to this day.

98

00:08:51,000 --> 00:09:04,000

May 8th, 1936, San Mateo, California. The stands at the Bay Meadows Racetrack are packed for a two day tournament.

99

00:09:05,000 --> 00:09:09,000

However, the crowd's mood isn't one of excitement, but shock.

100

00:09:10,000 --> 00:09:21,000

A popular 19 year old jockey named Ralph Neves has been thrown from his horse and now lies motionless on the ground.

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00:09:23,000 --> 00:09:28,000

It was a very dramatic scene. The track physicians were doing everything they could to try to save his life.

102

00:09:29,000 --> 00:09:31,000

The spectators watch in horror.

103

00:09:32,000 --> 00:09:44,000

Ralph Neves was a fiery, intense competitor. His nickname was the Portuguese pepper pot and he was already one of the top riders on the circuit.

104

00:09:45,000 --> 00:09:53,000

But it seems that Neves' career has come to an end. After repeated attempts to resuscitate him, doctors give up.

105

00:09:54,000 --> 00:09:58,000

Neves' body is loaded onto a stretcher and transported to the local hospital.

106

00:09:58,000 --> 00:10:06,000

And the announcer told the crowd, we regret to inform you that Ralph Neves is dead. Please stand in silent prayer.

107

00:10:08,000 --> 00:10:13,000

The crowd was absolutely stunned. This was an awful accident and loss of life.

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00:10:14,000 --> 00:10:19,000

Though the mood is grim, track officials decide to carry on with the event.

109

00:10:20,000 --> 00:10:32,000

But that's not the end of the athlete's tragic tale. Soon after Neves' arrival at the hospital, an attendant enters the room where his motionless body has been placed.

110

00:10:33,000 --> 00:10:35,000

Only to make a shocking discovery.

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00:10:36,000 --> 00:10:40,000

To his surprise, the stretcher that Ralph Neves was on was found empty.

112

00:10:43,000 --> 00:10:45,000

The body is no longer there.

113

00:10:50,000 --> 00:11:02,000

It's 1936 in San Mateo, California. Celebrated jockey Ralph Neves is pronounced dead following a horrific accident on the track.

114

00:11:03,000 --> 00:11:07,000

But after his body is taken to the mortuary, it mysteriously disappears.

115

00:11:10,000 --> 00:11:17,000

Back at the Bay Meadows track, the crowd is still reeling from the tragedy when they hear a sudden commotion.

116

00:11:19,000 --> 00:11:23,000

A frantic, half-dressed figure is running onto the race course.

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00:11:25,000 --> 00:11:30,000

To everyone's amazement, it is none other than the fallen jockey Ralph Neves.

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00:11:32,000 --> 00:11:39,000

People couldn't even believe what they were seeing. Ralph Neves was back on the track running around and he was alive.

119

00:11:41,000 --> 00:11:44,000

Neves insists he's fit to ride.

120

00:11:45,000 --> 00:11:52,000

And incredibly, race officials eventually agree to let him participate in the remainder of the two-day event.

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00:11:53,000 --> 00:11:56,000

Neves' incredible resurrection stuns the crowd.

122

00:11:57,000 --> 00:12:06,000

In less than 24 hours after being pronounced dead, Ralph Neves won the riding title at Bay Meadows and was awarded \$500 and a gold watch.

123

00:12:07,000 --> 00:12:14,000

So how did the Portuguese pepperpot apparently come back from the dead?

124

00:12:16,000 --> 00:12:27,000

It is later revealed that when the jockey's seemingly lifeless body arrived at the morgue, a grief-stricken friend who was a doctor at the hospital rushed in to pay his final respects.

125

00:12:28,000 --> 00:12:37,000

So he sees Neves and whether it was because it's his friend, whether he just had an instinct, he decided to check for a pulse.

126

00:12:39,000 --> 00:12:43,000

And to the doctor's amazement, there was a glimmer of a pulse.

127

00:12:44,000 --> 00:12:52,000

Believing the unconscious jockey could still be saved, the physician reportedly administered a shot of adrenaline directly to Neves' heart.

128

00:12:53,000 --> 00:13:00,000

And Neves miraculously sits up and comes back to life.

129

00:13:02,000 --> 00:13:07,000

Before the stunned doctor could say a word, the jockey rushed out the door.

130

00:13:08,000 --> 00:13:12,000

Neves hailed a taxi and demanded to be taken back to the racetrack.

131

00:13:13,000 --> 00:13:20,000

Ralph Neves goes on to enjoy a long and prolific racing career.

132

00:13:21,000 --> 00:13:29,000

And in 1954, the Santa Anita Park presents him with one of the sport's highest honors, the George Wolf Award.

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00:13:30,000 --> 00:13:35,000

Throughout his career, Ralph Neves won over 3700 victories.

134

00:13:35,000 --> 00:13:47,000

Today, the Santa Anita Park stands as a reminder of the jockey who crossed life's finish line, not once, but twice.

135

00:13:51,000 --> 00:13:52,000

Paris, France.

136

00:13:54,000 --> 00:13:58,000

The legendary Latin Quarter is home to one of the world's oldest universities.

137

00:13:59,000 --> 00:14:08,000

And also at the heart of this scholarly district stands another imposing edifice that celebrates the country's greatest minds.

138

00:14:09,000 --> 00:14:21,000

It's 350 feet long, 275 feet high with 22 Corinthian columns, and inside are frescoes and statues honoring France's great heroes.

139

00:14:22,000 --> 00:14:35,000

This is the Pantheon, final resting place of the philosopher Voltaire, scientist Marie Curie, and writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

140

00:14:36,000 --> 00:14:47,000

But as author Andrew Rosgineau knows, this palatial mausoleum also houses the tomb of a lesser known Frenchman who enlightened a once powerless population.

141

00:14:48,000 --> 00:14:52,000

He may not be a household name, but his invention spread throughout the globe.

142

00:14:52,000 --> 00:14:59,000

Who is this man? And how is his ingenious creation essential to millions of lives around the world?

143

00:15:01,000 --> 00:15:04,000

1812, Couvet, France.

144

00:15:06,000 --> 00:15:11,000

In this small country village outside of Paris, daily life holds few surprises.

145

00:15:12,000 --> 00:15:18,000

Yet for three-year-old Louis Brie, every moment is filled with intrigue and wonder.

146

00:15:19,000 --> 00:15:23,000

Louis was curious and creative. He was really interested in how the world works.

147

00:15:25,000 --> 00:15:31,000

Louis' favorite place to explore is the shop where his father makes harnesses for horses.

148

00:15:31,000 --> 00:15:37,000

Louis loved nothing more than to go to work with his father. Every day he would go in there and sit and watch his father and his work.

149

00:15:38,000 --> 00:15:47,000

The back-breaking job involves punching hundreds of holes into leather strips, using a hammer and a sharp instrument known as an awl.

150

00:15:48,000 --> 00:15:52,000

Louis' father expressly forbids him from playing with the dangerous tools.

151

00:15:54,000 --> 00:16:00,000

But one day, when the harness maker's back is turned, the curious boy sees a chance to handle the instruments.

152

00:16:01,000 --> 00:16:06,000

He tries as much as he can and musters all of his energy to put holes into the leather.

153

00:16:07,000 --> 00:16:10,000

But he's unable to get the sharp point to go through.

154

00:16:11,000 --> 00:16:13,000

Then suddenly, Louis loses his grip.

155

00:16:16,000 --> 00:16:18,000

The tool slips and goes into his left eye.

156

00:16:20,000 --> 00:16:28,000

Despite the efforts of local doctors, the wound develops into a raging infection that spreads to Louis' right eye.

157

00:16:28,000 --> 00:16:31,000

Unfortunately, the damage is irreversible and Louis becomes blind.

158

00:16:32,000 --> 00:16:34,000

The affliction is devastating.

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00:16:35,000 --> 00:16:40,000

At the time, French schools are simply not equipped to educate blind children.

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00:16:41,000 --> 00:16:44,000

So in the early 19th century, to be blind was to have no future.

161

00:16:45,000 --> 00:16:49,000

Most people that were blind at the time had lives as beggars in the streets.

162

00:16:50,000 --> 00:16:53,000

Louis knows this cruel fate may also await him.

163

00:16:56,000 --> 00:16:59,000

But seven years later, he's thrown what seems like a lifeline.

164

00:16:59,000 --> 00:17:06,000

A local priest secures a scholarship for him at the Royal Institute for Blind Youth in Paris.

165

00:17:07,000 --> 00:17:11,000

This was the only school of its kind, not only in France, but in the world.

166

00:17:12,000 --> 00:17:17,000

The elite academy offers classes ranging from math to science to music.

167

00:17:17,000 --> 00:17:22,000

Louis' imagination runs wild. He's picturing a library full of books, row after row after row.

168

00:17:23,000 --> 00:17:29,000

But when the ambitious boy arrives at the institute, he is sorely disappointed.

169

00:17:29,000 --> 00:17:34,000

He discovers that the school has just three books for blind readers.

170

00:17:34,000 --> 00:17:37,000

The existing technology to make books for the blind was called embossing,

171

00:17:37,000 --> 00:17:42,000

which was a process of pressing lead into wax paper in order to create raised letters

172

00:17:42,000 --> 00:17:45,000

that you would have to trace with your finger in order to read.

173

00:17:46,000 --> 00:17:51,000

The embossed type is so oversized that a single sentence is a single sentence

174

00:17:51,000 --> 00:17:56,000

that a single sentence often takes up an entire page, making reading laborious.

175

00:17:58,000 --> 00:18:06,000

Not only that, but fabricating such enormous books is so costly that precious few have ever been produced.

176

00:18:07,000 --> 00:18:13,000

This system had flaws. Louis realizes the current technologies that exist for the blind are not sufficient.

177

00:18:14,000 --> 00:18:16,000

Louis comes to a heartbreaking conclusion.

178

00:18:16,000 --> 00:18:23,000

Unless a better way to educate the blind is found, they are destined to remain on the fringes of society.

179

00:18:24,000 --> 00:18:27,000

In that moment, Louis realizes he's the one that's going to have to do this himself.

180

00:18:35,000 --> 00:18:41,000

It's the 1820s in France. Blind teenager Louis Bray is desperate to learn,

181

00:18:41,000 --> 00:18:47,000

but the system in place for teaching the blind how to read and write is woefully subpar.

182

00:18:47,000 --> 00:18:51,000

So what game-changing alternative is he about to invent?

183

00:18:54,000 --> 00:18:56,000

Couvret, France

184

00:18:56,000 --> 00:19:00,000

School is out of session and Louis has returned to his parents' village for the summer.

185

00:19:01,000 --> 00:19:07,000

But while the other children are playing outdoors, Louis spends most of his time in his father's harness shop.

186

00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:16,000

One morning, he picks up the awl, the very tool that injured him, and grips it in his hand like a pencil.

187

00:19:18,000 --> 00:19:20,000

Suddenly, inspiration strikes.

188

00:19:21,000 --> 00:19:28,000

Louis realizes that he can use this very same tool to poke dots into paper to create letters of the alphabet.

189

00:19:29,000 --> 00:19:33,000

But instead of recreating the large, embossed letters of his school books,

190

00:19:33,000 --> 00:19:37,000

the boy translates the alphabet into a simple code.

191

00:19:38,000 --> 00:19:43,000

Like a domino, Louis' system involved a series of dots, two by three.

192

00:19:43,000 --> 00:19:46,000

Each letter represented by one to six dots.

193

00:19:47,000 --> 00:19:52,000

To Louis' delight, his compact new system is much easier to read.

194

00:19:52,000 --> 00:19:56,000

Each letter could be read by a single finger as he moved it across the page.

195

00:19:56,000 --> 00:20:01,000

And he even had configurations for music, numbers and punctuations.

196

00:20:01,000 --> 00:20:08,000

Best of all, he knows that such a simplified code will finally make books for the blind more cost-effective to print.

197

00:20:10,000 --> 00:20:15,000

Louis presents his invention to his classmates, and it rapidly gains traction.

198

00:20:15,000 --> 00:20:19,000

Eventually, the French government would adopt the system and it would spread throughout the globe.

199

00:20:19,000 --> 00:20:25,000

This truly was now giving blind people the same access to knowledge that the sighted had had.

200

00:20:25,000 --> 00:20:32,000

To properly honor the 15-year-old student who created it, Louis' writing system is named after him.

201

00:20:33,000 --> 00:20:39,000

Even to this day, the code is called Braille, the English pronunciation of Louis' French name, Braille.

202

00:20:43,000 --> 00:20:51,000

200 years after his landmark invention, a bust of Louis Braille appears alongside his tomb at the Pantheon.

203

00:20:51,000 --> 00:20:57,000

A marble tribute to the man who delivered the world's knowledge to those who could not see it.

204

00:21:00,000 --> 00:21:07,000

Wyoming covers almost 100,000 square miles and is the 10th largest state in the Union.

205

00:21:07,000 --> 00:21:16,000

But despite its massive size, the 44th state has one of the smallest populations, a mere 500,000 people.

206

00:21:16,000 --> 00:21:23,000

But one imposing feature of this vast landscape now brings in just as many tourists.

207

00:21:23,000 --> 00:21:31,000

It's over a thousand feet high and the first thing you see about it is it's just covered with these vertical lines.

208

00:21:31,000 --> 00:21:35,000

Nature has been working on this a long time.

209

00:21:35,000 --> 00:21:37,000

This is Devil's Tower.

210

00:21:37,000 --> 00:21:44,000

In 1906, the striking monolith was declared America's first, and it was the first to be built.

211

00:21:44,000 --> 00:21:48,000

The first was declared America's first national monument.

212

00:21:48,000 --> 00:21:56,000

But according to author Mark O'Connell, it owes its popularity to one man's obsession with the unknown.

213

00:21:56,000 --> 00:22:04,000

His work propelled the popularity of Devil's Tower to unparalleled heights and made us wonder whether we were really alone in the universe.

214

00:22:05,000 --> 00:22:10,000

1966, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

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00:22:11,000 --> 00:22:18,000

Dr. J. Allen Heineck is a well-respected astronomer and scientific advisor for the U.S. Air Force.

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00:22:18,000 --> 00:22:28,000

With UFO sightings on the rise, Heineck has been charged with squashing the public's growing fear by any means necessary.

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00:22:28,000 --> 00:22:34,000

The Air Force employed him as a debunker. He was proud of that and he went after it with great relish.

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00:22:34,000 --> 00:22:42,000

Heineck's job is to convince the public that UFOs don't exist and that sightings are a result of natural causes.

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00:22:42,000 --> 00:22:47,000

To this end, he has developed an arsenal of excuses.

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00:22:47,000 --> 00:22:53,000

Dr. Heineck's job was to look at every UFO sighting report that came in and say,

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00:22:53,000 --> 00:22:59,000

no, we can set this one aside. That was clearly the planet Venus. That was clearly a meteor.

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00:22:59,000 --> 00:23:05,000

There was one case where Heineck says, oh, that was an atmospheric eddy, but there was no such thing as an atmospheric eddy.

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00:23:05,000 --> 00:23:08,000

It was something Heineck just made up for that case.

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00:23:08,000 --> 00:23:12,000

But his life is about to be flipped upside down.

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00:23:13,000 --> 00:23:20,000

On March 23rd, Heineck is sent to investigate a high-profile sighting in southwest Michigan.

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00:23:20,000 --> 00:23:27,000

Once he arrives, the skeptical scientist speaks to a local resident who claims to have witnessed the event.

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00:23:28,000 --> 00:23:35,000

A farmer in southern Michigan reported seeing a lighted craft land in the swamp north of his farmhouse.

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00:23:35,000 --> 00:23:39,000

It hovered, it moved up and down, and side to side.

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00:23:39,000 --> 00:23:44,000

But the farmer wasn't the only one to observe strange lights in the night sky.

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00:23:44,000 --> 00:23:50,000

An entire sorority at a nearby college claims to have seen something similar.

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00:23:50,000 --> 00:23:56,000

87 residents of a dorm watched very similar lights hovering in the arboretum outside the building.

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00:23:56,000 --> 00:24:03,000

By the end of his visit, Heineck has interviewed over 100 people, including local police.

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00:24:03,000 --> 00:24:08,000

They all confirm that they saw something in the skies over the town.

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00:24:08,000 --> 00:24:12,000

It's then that Heineck has an epiphany.

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00:24:12,000 --> 00:24:19,000

He started to wonder whether this case was credible. He realized that it was wrong to treat these people like they were kooks.

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00:24:19,000 --> 00:24:25,000

Back at his hotel, Heineck starts to think about his previous cases from the past two decades.

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00:24:27,000 --> 00:24:36,000

Heineck had spent an awful lot of time investigating some extremely strange UFO cases that had been reported by some extremely normal people.

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00:24:36,000 --> 00:24:43,000

It really caused him to question his assumptions and think long and hard what had really happened to these people.

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00:24:43,000 --> 00:24:48,000

It seemed clear to him that there was something more to this phenomenon than anyone had originally suspected.

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00:24:48,000 --> 00:24:57,000

The former skeptic now unequivocally believes that the lights in Michigan could actually be evidence of something otherworldly.

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00:24:57,000 --> 00:25:01,000

Heineck decides he needs to do something.

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00:25:01,000 --> 00:25:07,000

What Dr. Heineck really wanted was a serious scientific study of the phenomenon.

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00:25:08,000 --> 00:25:14,000

For the first time in 20 years, Heineck proposes to his boss, Major Hector Quintanilla,

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00:25:14,000 --> 00:25:20,000

that supposed UFO sightings deserve serious scientific study.

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00:25:20,000 --> 00:25:23,000

But he is immediately rebuked.

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00:25:23,000 --> 00:25:32,000

Hector Quintanilla had made it very clear to Heineck that he had to come up with an explanation quickly and that it had to be natural causes.

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00:25:32,000 --> 00:25:38,000

Vowing to pressure from his boss, Heineck reluctantly prepares a report.

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00:25:38,000 --> 00:25:45,000

In it, he dismisses the mysterious sightings as nothing more than swamp gas.

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00:25:45,000 --> 00:25:50,000

But the residents of Southwest Michigan don't buy it.

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00:25:50,000 --> 00:25:55,000

An angry and confused public demands a more thorough investigation into the sightings.

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00:25:55,000 --> 00:26:01,000

And Heineck is ordered to make a statement at a congressional hearing.

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00:26:01,000 --> 00:26:06,000

So with the nation and the Air Force watching, what will Heineck say?

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00:26:10,000 --> 00:26:20,000

It's 1968. UFO debunker Jay Allen Heineck has spent the last 20 years convincing the American public that aliens do not exist.

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00:26:20,000 --> 00:26:25,000

But he's recently come to the stunning realization that maybe they do.

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00:26:25,000 --> 00:26:32,000

Now he faces a congressional hearing. Will Dr. Heineck reveal his extraterrestrial epiphany?

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00:26:34,000 --> 00:26:38,000

When the congressional hearing convenes, Heineck is called to the stand.

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00:26:38,000 --> 00:26:41,000

I have a dossier of 20 particularly...

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00:26:41,000 --> 00:26:48,000

In his statement, Heineck's proposal was to take the investigation of UFO cases out of the Air Force's hands

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00:26:48,000 --> 00:26:53,000

and put it in the hands of scientific teams at universities across the country.

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00:26:53,000 --> 00:26:58,000

It is a landmark moment and the press goes wild.

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00:26:58,000 --> 00:27:02,000

The fiasco made Heineck a superstar.

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00:27:02,000 --> 00:27:05,000

But his superiors aren't so impressed.

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00:27:05,000 --> 00:27:09,000

They were furious with Heineck for making that statement.

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00:27:09,000 --> 00:27:14,000

In the wake of Heineck's rogue statement, Project Blue Book is terminated.

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00:27:14,000 --> 00:27:18,000

And with it, his role in the U.S. Air Force.

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00:27:19,000 --> 00:27:25,000

Undeterred, in 1972, Heineck writes a book titled The UFO Experience.

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00:27:25,000 --> 00:27:28,000

And in it, he coins a new term.

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00:27:29,000 --> 00:27:34,000

Dr. Heineck introduced a new categorization system for UFO experiences.

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00:27:34,000 --> 00:27:37,000

He identified them as close encounters.

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00:27:37,000 --> 00:27:42,000

Today, the phrase is synonymous with extraterrestrial activities.

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00:27:42,000 --> 00:27:49,000

A close encounter of the first kind involves visual contact with an object less than 500 feet away.

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00:27:49,000 --> 00:27:54,000

A close encounter of the second kind includes physical effects.

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00:27:54,000 --> 00:27:58,000

So this could mean that a UFO causes a car's engine to die.

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00:27:58,000 --> 00:28:03,000

A close encounter of the third kind involves occupants of the UFO

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00:28:03,000 --> 00:28:07,000

and possible interaction between the occupants and the human witness.

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00:28:08,000 --> 00:28:12,000

Heineck's book becomes a runaway bestseller.

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00:28:12,000 --> 00:28:18,000

And in 1977, the now infamous term finds its way to the silver screen.

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00:28:18,000 --> 00:28:25,000

As the inspiration for Steven Spielberg's blockbuster hit Close Encounters of the Third Kind.

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00:28:26,000 --> 00:28:31,000

For the location of the film's finale, the director casts Devil's Tower

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00:28:31,000 --> 00:28:35,000

as the site of the climactic extraterrestrial encounter.

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00:28:35,000 --> 00:28:40,000

In the movie, several UFO contactees become obsessed with this image

282

00:28:40,000 --> 00:28:46,000

and then they become obsessed with getting to where this image is, which is Devil's Tower in Wyoming.

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00:28:46,000 --> 00:28:53,000

In a fitting nod of appreciation and respect, Spielberg even gives Dr. Heineck a cameo in the film.

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00:28:54,000 --> 00:29:01,000

And today, the iconic peak of Devil's Tower stands as a magnificent testament to mother nature

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00:29:01,000 --> 00:29:09,000

and a reminder of one man who risked his livelihood in the pursuit of ideas that were truly out of this world.

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00:29:11,000 --> 00:29:18,000

The New York City neighborhood of Harlem is a world-renowned hub of African-American art and culture

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00:29:18,000 --> 00:29:22,000

thanks to the great migration of the early 20th century.

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00:29:22,000 --> 00:29:28,000

During this time, more than 6 million people fled the South in search of a better life.

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00:29:29,000 --> 00:29:36,000

But standing on the north end of Fifth Avenue is an obelisk that commemorates a group of black Americans

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00:29:36,000 --> 00:29:39,000

who traveled far beyond the nation's borders.

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00:29:39,000 --> 00:29:48,000

It's 12 feet tall, 3 feet at the base, it's black granite, and like the men that it honors, this monument is largely unknown.

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00:29:49,000 --> 00:29:53,000

This is the 369th Infantry Regiment Memorial.

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00:29:54,000 --> 00:30:04,000

According to author Max Brooks, the soldiers immortalized here pushed themselves to the limit during an epic struggle for honor and equality.

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00:30:05,000 --> 00:30:11,000

In spite of tremendous adversity, this unit helped define a war, an army, and a nation.

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00:30:16,000 --> 00:30:19,000

April 1917, France.

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00:30:20,000 --> 00:30:23,000

World War I is raging.

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00:30:23,000 --> 00:30:29,000

America has just joined the Allies in the global conflict, and not a moment too soon.

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00:30:30,000 --> 00:30:35,000

By 1917, the British were teetering on the edge of exhaustion.

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00:30:35,000 --> 00:30:37,000

The French Army was at the end of its rope.

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00:30:37,000 --> 00:30:42,000

The question was, could the United States marshal enough men to save the Allies?

301

00:30:43,000 --> 00:30:54,000

General Jack Pershing, commander of the American forces in Europe, calls on President Woodrow

Wilson to send him one million troops.

302

00:30:54,000 --> 00:31:00,000

And by December, thousands of American soldiers have landed on French soil.

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00:31:00,000 --> 00:31:03,000

Among them is the 369th Infantry.

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00:31:05,000 --> 00:31:10,000

They are the first black combat soldiers America has ever deployed overseas.

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00:31:10,000 --> 00:31:15,000

But while these men may be new to Europe, they are no strangers to conflict.

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00:31:16,000 --> 00:31:25,000

Back in the U.S., where segregation and racial violence against African Americans is rampant, they live under constant threat of attack.

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00:31:26,000 --> 00:31:33,000

The conventional wisdom in 1917 among white Americans was that the African American was a lesser breed of human.

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00:31:34,000 --> 00:31:39,000

But by fighting for their country, the young men see an opportunity to finally prove their worth.

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00:31:40,000 --> 00:31:43,000

As black men, they wanted to prove themselves to their community.

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00:31:43,000 --> 00:31:48,000

And as Americans, they wanted to prove that they had a right to share in the American dream.

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00:31:49,000 --> 00:31:54,000

Yet the Army's high command crushes their aspirations before they had their chance.

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00:31:55,000 --> 00:32:01,000

The top brass thought that the 369th were not worthy of the battlefield.

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00:32:01,000 --> 00:32:07,000

This unit was kept completely separate from whites, and they were made to do manual labor.

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00:32:08,000 --> 00:32:16,000

Instead of heading to the front lines, the 369th are put to work unloading ships in French ports.

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00:32:17,000 --> 00:32:20,000

These were combat troops. They were trained to go into the trenches.

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00:32:21,000 --> 00:32:25,000

And to suddenly be made to offload ships could not have been a greater insult.

317

00:32:26,000 --> 00:32:33,000

The mood was grim. The mood was angry. They were described as orphans left on the stoop of France.

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00:32:34,000 --> 00:32:39,000

So will the 369th infantry ever get their chance to fight?

319

00:32:44,000 --> 00:32:47,000

It's 1918 and World War I is raging.

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00:32:48,000 --> 00:32:55,000

When an all-African-American unit is sent to Europe, they see it as an opportunity to prove

themselves as first-rate soldiers.

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00:32:56,000 --> 00:32:59,000

But upon arriving in France, they're told they're not allowed to fight.

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00:32:59,000 --> 00:33:04,000

So will these men get the chance to show the world what they're truly made of?

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00:33:08,000 --> 00:33:13,000

The 369th fear they'll be relegated to the sidelines for the rest of the war.

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00:33:14,000 --> 00:33:20,000

But then they get some unexpected news. Not from the American Army, but from the French.

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00:33:21,000 --> 00:33:23,000

The French were desperate for anybody who would help them.

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00:33:24,000 --> 00:33:28,000

Suddenly there was a unit of American troops that was willing to get into combat, and the French didn't think twice.

327

00:33:29,000 --> 00:33:30,000

They took them with open arms.

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00:33:31,000 --> 00:33:33,000

It's the chance they've been waiting for.

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00:33:34,000 --> 00:33:38,000

They were given French helmets, French gear, French rifles.

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00:33:39,000 --> 00:33:46,000

In September of 1918, the 369th Regiment arrives on the front lines in northeastern France.

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00:33:47,000 --> 00:33:51,000

The battle they fight comes to be known as the Muse Argonne Offensive,

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00:33:52,000 --> 00:33:56,000

an arduous campaign to push enemy forces out of France for good.

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00:33:56,000 --> 00:34:02,000

It was a bloodbath. They had to endure shell fire. They had to endure machine guns.

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00:34:03,000 --> 00:34:05,000

They had to endure poison gas.

335

00:34:06,000 --> 00:34:12,000

Day after day, the men of the 369th Regiment bravely risk their lives.

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00:34:13,000 --> 00:34:20,000

You have men charging into shell fire and never retreating, never losing a foot of ground, never losing a man to capture.

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00:34:21,000 --> 00:34:28,000

The soldiers are so ferocious and unyielding on the battlefield that the enemy even gives them a nickname.

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00:34:30,000 --> 00:34:34,000

The Germans out of fear called them the Harlem Hellfighters.

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00:34:36,000 --> 00:34:39,000

This was the unit you did not want to cross.

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00:34:41,000 --> 00:34:48,000

And in November of 1918, Germany surrenders to the Allies, signaling the end of World War I.

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00:34:49,000 --> 00:34:54,000

The Harlem Hellfighters set out to prove their mettle in combat, and they did it with honor.

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00:34:55,000 --> 00:34:58,000

They became one of the most decorated regiments in the entire U.S. Army.

343

00:35:00,000 --> 00:35:03,000

Reports of their fearless feats make it back to America.

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00:35:04,000 --> 00:35:08,000

And in February of 1919, the men return home as heroes.

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00:35:09,000 --> 00:35:13,000

Over a million New Yorkers lined Fifth Avenue to welcome them back.

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00:35:19,000 --> 00:35:28,000

While a long fight for civil rights still lay ahead, the men of the 369th Infantry Regiment took a courageous and historic step forward.

347

00:35:29,000 --> 00:35:35,000

The road to equality is made up of many stones, and one of those stones was laid by the Harlem Hellfighters.

348

00:35:36,000 --> 00:35:51,000

And this monument, commemorating the Harlem Hellfighters, stands as a fitting testament to a brave group of men who battled hatred on two continents and emerged victorious.

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00:35:55,000 --> 00:36:03,000

The town of Wyndham, Connecticut was once home to the largest thread mill in North America, hence its nickname Thread City.

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00:36:04,000 --> 00:36:14,000

But just downriver from the former mill's waterfall, a collection of unusual landmarks spins a far more chilling tale from the region's earliest days.

351

00:36:15,000 --> 00:36:23,000

They're 11 feet tall, they're blue-green, they're made of bronze, and they have huge bulging golden eyes that are a little bit creepy.

352

00:36:24,000 --> 00:36:28,000

And when you see these things, you wonder, what are they doing on the bridge?

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00:36:28,000 --> 00:36:39,000

This quartet of four-legged amphibians holds court on each end of the Thread City crossing, a 500-foot bridge that spans the Willimantic River.

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00:36:40,000 --> 00:36:50,000

And as author S. E. Schlosser can attest, these beguiling statues speak of a harrowing incident that left the people of Wyndham hopping with fright.

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00:36:50,000 --> 00:36:57,000

There was a tale of terror that left a peaceful community convinced that they were on the brink of destruction.

356

00:37:01,000 --> 00:37:10,000

Wyndham, Connecticut, 1754. This agrarian community of 1,000 English settlers has fallen on hard times.

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00:37:11,000 --> 00:37:19,000

It is in the throes of a parching drought, and the people live in constant fear of being attacked

by neighboring Native Americans.

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00:37:20,000 --> 00:37:23,000

If Wyndham had been attacked at this time, period, they wouldn't have survived.

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00:37:24,000 --> 00:37:30,000

To protect the town from this grim fate, local lawyer Colonel Elephant Dyer forms a plan.

360

00:37:31,000 --> 00:37:40,000

Dyer was very aware that the town was vulnerable to a possible attack, so he started recruiting for militia out of the farmers and the other workers in his community at the time.

361

00:37:41,000 --> 00:37:45,000

And the Ragtag Group will be called into action sooner than they think.

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00:37:46,000 --> 00:37:52,000

One night in June, the settlers are asleep when a strange chorus pierces the night.

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00:37:53,000 --> 00:37:56,000

This sound comes out of nowhere.

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00:37:57,000 --> 00:38:05,000

It was thunderous. It was shrieking and screaming and roaring. It woke everyone up in town.

365

00:38:05,000 --> 00:38:15,000

They think the Indians must be massed outside our village, and this is a huge battle cry just before they come and kill us all in our beds.

366

00:38:16,000 --> 00:38:18,000

The villagers descend into all-out panic.

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00:38:19,000 --> 00:38:25,000

Women were screaming, and little kids started crying. People were huddling in their beds. They were diving for cover.

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00:38:26,000 --> 00:38:30,000

As the townsfolk cry out in terror, Dyer quickly assembles his men.

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00:38:30,000 --> 00:38:37,000

The militia are grabbing any kind of weapon they can get their hands on. Pitchforks, guns, rolling pins, whatever they can get.

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00:38:38,000 --> 00:38:43,000

They brace for the onslaught. But the attack never comes.

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00:38:44,000 --> 00:38:47,000

They're exhausted from terror, and nothing's happened.

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00:38:48,000 --> 00:38:54,000

By morning, the horrific cries have died down, but the villagers still don't know if they're safe.

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00:38:54,000 --> 00:38:59,000

So Colonel Dyer forms a posse and sets off into the woods to investigate.

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00:39:01,000 --> 00:39:08,000

They're looking behind every rock, every tree, and every shrub expecting to find warriors waiting to attack, and there's no one there.

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00:39:09,000 --> 00:39:14,000

They are totally baffled. What in the world is going on? Where's the enemy?

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00:39:15,000 --> 00:39:23,000

But a few miles out of town, as the men near the crest of a hill, the bizarre cross, the men are all in the same place.

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00:39:24,000 --> 00:39:26,000

The cries return.

378

00:39:28,000 --> 00:39:31,000

They think they're about to be attacked or terrified.

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00:39:38,000 --> 00:39:47,000

It's 1754 in Connecticut. The villagers of Wyndham are searching for a tribe of Native Americans who they believe were shouting battle cries during the night.

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00:39:48,000 --> 00:39:52,000

But what's really behind these mysterious nocturnal noises?

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00:39:55,000 --> 00:40:02,000

As Dyer and his men creep up the hill towards the source of the noise, they brace themselves for battle.

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00:40:04,000 --> 00:40:08,000

But when they reach the peak, they encounter an eerie sight.

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00:40:10,000 --> 00:40:15,000

They get to the top. There's nothing there. No enemy.

384

00:40:17,000 --> 00:40:20,000

Instead, all they see is a half-empty pond.

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00:40:21,000 --> 00:40:26,000

As they're walking towards the pond, they look down and look around.

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00:40:28,000 --> 00:40:35,000

They see hundreds and hundreds of dead bullfrogs all over the ground.

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00:40:37,000 --> 00:40:42,000

And the frogs that are still alive are making a kind of roaring sound at each other.

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00:40:44,000 --> 00:40:47,000

The embarrassed militia men breathe a sigh of relief.

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00:40:51,000 --> 00:40:59,000

But the question remains, why are there so many dead frogs?

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00:41:00,000 --> 00:41:13,000

The theory is that because of the drought, many colonies of frogs from several areas all decided that night to migrate to the only source of water that was left in the area, which was this mill pond.

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00:41:14,000 --> 00:41:22,000

Windomites believe that when there wasn't enough water to satisfy the frenzied mob, a massive and deadly battle ensued.

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00:41:23,000 --> 00:41:33,000

Their battle cries, multiplied by hundreds and hundreds of frogs coming from many directions, were what caused this huge sound that seemed to surround the town.

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00:41:34,000 --> 00:41:42,000

Two hundred and sixty years later, the legacy of a bullfrog battle endures as a piece of local folklore.

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00:41:44,000 --> 00:41:53,000

They actually put the frog on their town's seal. When they were minting their own money, they had pictures of the battling frogs on their one dollar bill.

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00:41:54,000 --> 00:41:58,000

And they've even created monuments to the frogs at each corner of the bridge.

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00:41:58,000 --> 00:42:12,000

And so today, these whimsical frog sculptures greet visitors to Windom, a reminder of the case of mistaken identity that terrified an entire town.

397

00:42:15,000 --> 00:42:22,000

From a jilted spouse to a resurrected jockey, a blind inventor to a bullfrog battle.

398

00:42:22,000 --> 00:42:27,000

I'm Don Wildman and these are the Mysteries at the Monument.