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### 5TH SIGNAL COMMAND SOLDIERS TAKE PART IN MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONIES IN FRANCE

By **LeAnne MacAllister**

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**FERE-EN-TARDENOIS, France** -- Minot Savage once said, "The brave never die, though they sleep in dust: Their courage nerves a thousand living men."

In a ceremony marking the 90th anniversary of World War I and Memorial Day, Brig. Gen. Jeffrey G. Smith Jr., commanding general of 5th Signal Command, told the hundreds who gathered at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery that these words ring true for

him everyday.

"Brave men and women, like the ones buried here, are what inspire us who wear the uniform today, and indeed, what led me to be a Soldier," Smith said.



LEANNE MACALLISTER

Soldiers from across 5th Signal Command represent U.S. forces in a Memorial Day ceremony at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery May 25, marking the 90th Anniversary of the end of World War I. The command's senior leadership and U.S. Ambassador to France Craig Stapleton also took part in the tribute, and participated in four commemorative wreath-laying ceremonies in the region northeast of Paris.

Fifty Soldiers from across 5th Signal Command represented U.S. armed forces in Memorial Day ceremonies in the region northeast of Paris, marking the 90th Anniversary of the end of World War I at various battle sites.

Wreath layings were held at the town's memorial square, Seringes-et-Nesles church -- a historic building rebuilt atop a hill at the location of a battle site, and Meurcy Farm -- a privately owned farm that was used as a medical station during multiple wars -- in addition to the American cemetery.

Twenty million service members and civilians lost their lives in what is known by the French as "The Great War," and Oise-Aisne American Cemetery is the final resting place for more than 6,000 Soldiers who perished in the area. 1st. Lt. Quentin Roosevelt, son of U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, was shot down in a field near the present-day cemetery.

During the ceremonies, Smith commented on the strong bonds that unite France and the United States, highlighting the relationship built through the Revolutionary Wars and world wars.

"Our collaborative observance of Memorial Day sends a clear message. It solidifies our mutual respect for the sacrifices made by one nation's people for those of another land. It also indicates that America and its friends stand united behind our armed forces, as we have in the past and will continue to do so in the future."

U.S. Ambassador to France Craig Stapleton also addressed the crowd, speaking in French about the monumental events here many years ago that shaped the world.

The 5th Signal Command color guard, honor platoon, salute battery and a bugler joined the command leadership -- Smith, Command Sgt. Maj. Roderick D. Johnson and Chaplain (Col.) James Agnew -- in the multiple ceremonies. A French honor platoon and a French WWI reenactment group joined the formation as the Soldiers marched in procession. The ceremony also included a U.S. Air Force flyover provided by the 48th Fighter Wing, Lakenheath, United Kingdom, and poetry readings by local high school students.

Following the ceremonies, the local community hosted a reception and tour of a historical collection for the many U.S. and French state, federal and military participants.

In closing, Smith spoke personally to French and American troops, reminding them of the tremendous importance of the ceremony and noting that years from now future generations will pay the same tribute to those who have died in more recent conflicts.

"There is no greater honor than to give honor to those who have served, to those who have fallen," he added.

