Marie Edmee LeRoux Grave Dedication Ceremony Fort Lincoln Cemetery

Brentwood, MD

May 3, 2024



10:45 a.m.

PRE-CEREMONY MUSIC AND 27 FLAGS DISPLAY

AEF Headquarters Brass Band Quintet American Legion Post 109, Arbutus, Maryland

11:00 a.m.

EMCEE

Phyllis Wilson, President, Military Women's Memorial

NATIONAL ANTHEM

AEF Headquarters Brass Band Quintet

INVOCATION

Rev. Anne Weatherholt, Epiphany Episcopal Church

PRESENTATION OF PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATE

Matt Ouinn, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs

PRESENTATION OF FLOWERS

Lourdes Tiglao, Director, Center for Women Veterans, Department of Veterans Affairs

GUEST SPEAKERS

Daniel Dayton, WWI Centennial Commission
Anthony Woods, Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Maryland
Kimberly M. Jackson, Chief of Staff, Department of Veterans Affairs
Catherine Bourgin, Granddaughter

PRESENTATION OF PLAQUES

Catherine Bourgin and Daniel Dayton

MUSICAL SELECTION

"Making History" from The Hello Girls: A New American Musical by Peter Mills
AEF Headquarters Brass Band Quintet

"In a way we are all making history ev'ry moment. In a way we have a role to play. In the hardships we go through, in the small things we do, we're making history every day. Every person here is making history. We all have a share in where this goes. With the lines of battle drawn, do you know what side you're on? Will you make History? Will you answer the call?"

PRESENTATION OF WREATHS/FLOWERS

Kirsten Hillman, Ambassador of Canada to the United States and
Maj.-Gen. Michel-Henri St. Louis, Embassy of Canada
Colonel Arnaud de Vachon, Embassy of France
Kimberly M. Jackson, Department of Veterans Affairs
Daniel Dayton, WWI Centennial Commission
Richard Azzaro, The Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
Mike Delaune, Military Order of the World Wars
Jill Lehr Cook, Freedom Hill D.A.R. Chapter

MILITARY HONORS

Maryland National Guard Honor Guard

TAPS

Amy McCabe, Bugler

BENEDICTION

Rev. Anne Weatherholt Epiphany Episcopal Church

OVER THERE

AEF Headquarters Brass Band Quintet

Marie Edmee LeRoux (1895-1945)

Born in 1895 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. When she was about 10 years old her French-Canadian family moved to Providence, Rhode Island where later in 1910 she was a student at Rhode Island School of Design. Passionate about her music/singing studies and won a scholarship to study in Paris. Then World War I intervened and changed the course of Edmee's life and so many lives.

Edmee postponed her music studies and instead answered the call of the U.S. Army Signal Corps. She went to France by serving her nation as a bilingual telephone operator with the American Expeditionary Forces under General Pershing's command. She was stationed in Paris and Tours, France. Upon her discharge in June 1919, she remained in Paris to study music and singing.

In 1939, the Second World War again changed the course of Edmee's life when she had to flee France from the Nazis with her 4-year-old daughter in tow. They went to St. Tropez and somehow found their way to Lisbon, Portugal and gained passage on the SS Excalibur in December 1941 for New York City.

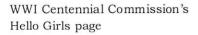
She lived on two continents. She was a veteran of WW1, a survivor of WWII, a singer, a mother and a patriot of her time. All the women of the U.S. Army Signal Corps were patriots and what they accomplished for their time as America's first women soldiers was above and beyond the ordinary.

Edmee died of cancer in January 1945 just shy of her 50th birthday. She was buried at Ft. Lincoln Cemetery, Brentwood, MD in an unmarked grave for reasons now lost to time.



Fourth Unit Marie Edmee LeRoux middle row, far left









Edmee LeRoux's Veterans Legacy Memorial page.

The Hello Girls America's First Women Soldiers

From March 1918 to January 1920, 223 American, Canadian, French, Romanian, Spanish, British, Swiss and Belgium-born, English and French-speaking women sailed to France as military telephone operators to serve in the Great War. They served at the battles of St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne, the occupation of Germany and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. Known affectionately as the "Hello Girls," they connected over 26 million calls in support of the war effort. Two women, Inez Crittenden and Cora Bartlett, died overseas. Inez died on November 11, 1918, and is buried in France at Surenses American Cemetery in Paris. Cora was buried in France, but later her remains were returned to the United States where she was laid to rest at King's Lake Cemetery in Hillsdale, Michigan. After the war, the "Hello Girls" were denied Veteran status for 60 years until 1977, when only a handful were still alive. They, and other women from the Army Nurse Corps, YWCA and the Red Cross, played a significant role in the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. President Wilson remarked in the Senate Chamber on September 30, 1918, as he implored senators to pass the constitutional amendment providing for women's suffrage. "This war could not have been fought... [without] the services of...women..."



L to r. Suzanne Prevot, Charlotte Gyss, Esther Fresnel, Fernande Van Balkon, Grace Banker (Chief Operator), Frances Paine

