

# 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 Quinn, 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



WWI Centennial Commission's  
Hello Girls page



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 Suresnes 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*

