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18th CSSB Soldiers honor fallen at memorial in Czech Republic

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CHEB, the Czech Republic – The 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion “Warhammers” remembered a group of Big Red One Soldiers who gave their lives in the name of freedom during World War II at a ceremony held at the 1st Infantry Division Memorial here Sept. 11.

“I thought that by supporting the efforts of remembrance on September 11th, our participation with our host nation Soldiers and civilians of Germany was the appropriate thing to do. It really showed that despite past differences, we hold a mutual respect for servicemembers,” said Staff Sgt. Gerardo Cordero, a native of Chicago, Ill., who works as a platoon sergeant for the 1st Inland Cargo Transfer Company, 18th CSSB.

The memorial is located on the outskirts of the city of Cheb, also known as Eger, and commemorates the 639 Big Red One Soldiers who were killed in the local area from Feb. 8 to May 6, 1945 as they helped to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany. The informational plaque at the memorial makes special note of the American Soldiers of Czech heritage who had lost their lives in the land of their forefathers.

The American Soldiers brought a wreath from Grafenwoehr, Germany, which was placed by the Wachbattalion. The Wachbattalion, which is stationed in Berlin, is made up of German

soldiers who are individually selected to represent the German military in German state functions and other ceremonial events.

“Placing the wreath was a moving and humbling experience, doubly so as it coincided with the World Trade Center attacks. Being here in Cheb is a day I will never forget, and we must not forget these Soldiers and their ultimate sacrifices,” said Col. Michael Bendich, who is a native of New Orleans, La., and works as the special activities officer for U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr.

“At the 1st Infantry Division memorial monument, we were able to remember the fallen U.S. Soldiers. They had given their lives to liberate Europe from Hitler's Nazi regime, and I was happy to do this while standing beside those Soldiers from the 18th CSSB as they are partners with the market town of Freihung,” said Burgermeister Norbert Bucherl, the mayor of Freihung, Germany.



German Wachbattalion Soldiers prepare to place a wreath from the 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion at the 1st Infantry Division memorial in Cheb, the Czech Republic Sept. 11. (Photo by Capt. Jennifer Dyrz, 18th CSSB PAO)



Soldiers of the 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion along with Grafenwoehr garrison representatives and Bundeswehr Reserve Association members stand in front of the 1st Infantry Division memorial with a wreath placed in memory of the fallen U.S. Soldiers in Cheb, the Czech Republic. (Photo by Capt. Jennifer Dyrzcz)