

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## France

**Post:** Paris

### **FAS Paris Facilitates Commemoration of WWII Fallen Heroes**

**Report Categories:**

Export Accomplishments - Border Facilitation

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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**Report Highlights:**

FAS Paris obtained a waiver from the French Ministry of Agriculture that allowed the U.S. foundation Wreath Across America to import into France 10,000 U.S. sourced balsam pine wreaths with an approximate value of USD 145,000. On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the wreaths were laid on each grave at the Normandy American Cemetery overlooking D-Day beaches.

### **General Information:**

In July 2018, the U.S. based foundation [Wreaths Across America](#) contacted the U.S. Embassy to France with the intention of expanding their wreath laying operations to U.S. war cemeteries outside of the United States. Their goal was to lay wreaths on the 9,380 graves of the [Normandy American Cemetery](#) located near the Omaha Beach D-Day landing.

Wreath Across America had planned to ship 10,000 wreaths manufactured in Maine with balsam pine, valued at USD 145,000, into France. However, [EU Directive 2000/24/EC](#) implemented in France by a [decree of March 24 2006](#) prohibits the import into the European Union of any plant product made with Balsam pine.

In early August 2018, FAS Paris contacted the French Ministry of Agriculture. FAS Paris asked if the Ministry could grant an exceptional waiver for the import of the balsam pine wreaths and what would be the conditions to such waiver. Following FAS Paris demand, the Ministry of Agriculture granted Wreaths Across America a waiver with a suggested import protocol that could be met by both the producer of the wreaths, U.S. Plant inspection services (APHIS) and the importer in France. After forwarding APHIS remarks on the conditions, FAS Paris negotiated with to the Ministry to slightly amend the protocol so that all the conditions could be implemented.

The 10,000 wreaths were inspected by APHIS and fumigated before being air shipped to France. The [American Battle Monument Commisison](#) (ABMC) and Wreaths Across America held a wreath Laying Ceremony on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Hundreds of French and U.S. volunteers, veterans and junior fire brigade personnel laid the wreaths at each grave with a candle to remember the fallen. Together with French officials and representatives from the U.S. Embassy to France, FAS Paris participated in the ceremony to honor the heroes.

(Photos © FAS Paris)





**D Day Veteran Charles Norman Shay was present at the ceremony**



