

# Fort A.P. Hill hosts Veterans Day Observance

**By David San Miguel**

Fort A.P. Hill Public Affairs Office

*"You have never lived until you have almost died."* – Winston Churchill.

Under a clear blue sky and a gentle breeze, nearly 100 installation employees, a Virginia congressman and local elected officials joined together in a solemn tribute to recognize Veterans, Nov. 9.

The wreath-laying ceremony was held at the installation's Medal of Honor Memorial behind the post headquarters at 11 a.m. and served as a prelude to Veterans Day observances nationwide.

Rep. Rob Wittman said that Veterans Day observances such as this are only fitting.

"We are the greatest country in the world because we have men and women who are willing to serve," he said. "They're willing to put themselves in harm's way."

Wittman added that it's with the same humility Veterans of today continue to demonstrate as their predecessors had during World War II.

"We are deeply blessed by that commitment," he said. "We should also thank the families for their contributions and sacrifices."

During the ceremony, Lt. Col. Jack Haefner, garrison commander, remarked how humbling it is to be standing before a memorial that is dedicated to Virginia's Medal of Honor recipients.

He added that many of the installation's employees are themselves Veterans of military service. "Many of you are Veterans of wars and conflicts that America fought to protect the innocent and the oppressed," he said. "America is and always has been the first nation to stand up for the freedom of people around the world."

Haefner added that such service does not come without cost.

"One of our combined arms training complexes is named after Command Sgt. Maj. Steven W. Faulkenburg," he said. "He had served as the installation's command sergeant major and was killed in combat while serving with the 1st Infantry Division on Nov. 9, 2004."

"As a veteran, you put your life on the line for your country's freedom," added Bill Knode, Naval Special Warfare Combat Training Center program manager and special guest speaker at the luncheon that followed.

"Many of those who train here will be down range fighting in Afghanistan or Iraq," he said.

"Servicemembers are giving of themselves so that the United States can have freedom."