

## L'Eglise de Deux Bombs

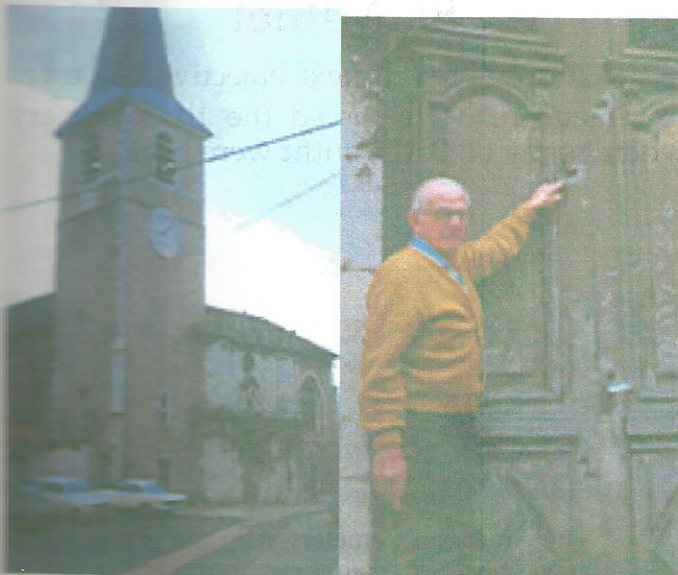
Sunday morning saw an early start from Metz for what promised to be an interesting day for both of us. It would be on this day that we were to visit places where our paths crossed in 1918 and 1945 on the battlefields of Champagne.



If you can't bring the cows to water, bring water to the cows.

We headed south about 24 kilometers, through Pont-a-Mousson, to Dieulouard where we arrived about 8:30 am.

Dad recalled that the 95th Company had been housed in an old Tannery with the usual red tile roof. The Germans had been bombing the cities of Nancy and Toul with regularity and always seemed to have a few bombs left for Dieulouard on the way back to their base. The concussion from these bombs would rattle the tiles on the tannery roof causing red tile dust to sift down on the fellas as they attempted to get a little sleep.



The Eglise and Dad pointing to bullet holes.

Dad particularly remembered a Sunday morning when two bombs dropped directly on the Eglise (Church) in Dieulouard. As many churches were spared during the war, both of these bombs failed to explode. They cut perfectly round holes, about 12 inches in diameter, on each side of the peak of the roof near the back of the Nave.

Several people, attending service, were killed and more were injured by falling debris. Dad told me that when he was there several of the parishioners had hung these two bombs on the two pillars closest to where they had penetrated the roof. They also had hung crude plaques describing the incident with the names of those killed and injured.

It was very easy for us to find the church as it was located on the top of the small hill in the center of town. After parking nearby, we found Mass was underway because it was Sunday morning. We quietly entered the entrance, at the back of the church and "lo and behold" the first thing we saw were those bombs hanging from the two pillars.

When the service was over we met the Priest after he had greeted everyone in his Parish. With my feeble French I was able to tell him Dad's recollection of being there in 1918. He was most gracious and



spent about half an hour visiting with us.

He took us inside and allowed us to take pictures of the two bombs. Then he pointed out a small statue over the door of the oldest part of the church which had been there since the 15th century. He showed us the Crypt which also dated from the 15th century.



Dad next to the pillar on which one of the black bombs had been mounted.