



The grove of trees a little left of center, marks the apparent spot where "Big Bertha" was located.

We concluded the cannon, itself, had probably been used as scrap iron by the French during the World War 2.

Continuing to the west we entered the Champagne sector which gets it's name from a well known beverage. The white chalky soil is particularly suited to growing grapes of the type used in making Champagne. This area between Vouziers, Reims and Chalon Sur Marne is also noted for it's many wine aging caves.

Our first stop was in the village of St. Etienne-a-Arnes. The sixth Marine Regiment captured this village on the 10th of October 1918. In the center of the village was a monument commemorating that event and sitting on a bench in the village square we found an elderly lady and two elderly gentlemen.



These two men and the lady lived here when Dad was there in 1918.

We told them of Dad's participation there in 1918 and they responded with the fact that all three had been residents at that time. This was a very satisfying visit for Dad and I must say his pictures and our presence were much better received here than on some of our stops in Germany.

We took a picture of these people and then they directed us to the Sompey monument which was visible on Blanc Mont Ridge about four kilometers to the south.

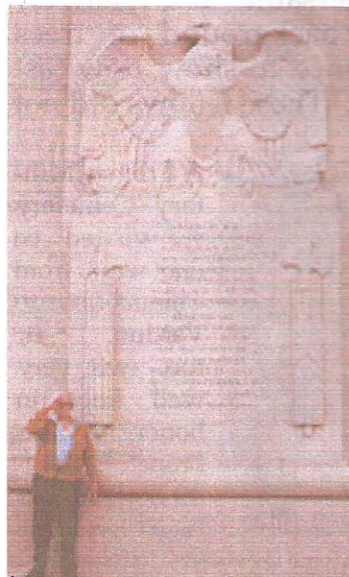
Before departing St. Etienne they directed us to the old cemetery Dad had remembered as being to the right of road D23 when approaching from the southeast. We located the cemetery and found it had been enlarged significantly by the addition of hundreds of German Army graves.

We proceeded to Blanc Mont Monument, a tower of golden-yellow limestone, located on the highest point of Blanc Mont Ridge. The monument stands in the center of approximately a 40 acre field and is surrounded by pine trees and remnants of WW1 trenches, dugouts and gun emplacements.

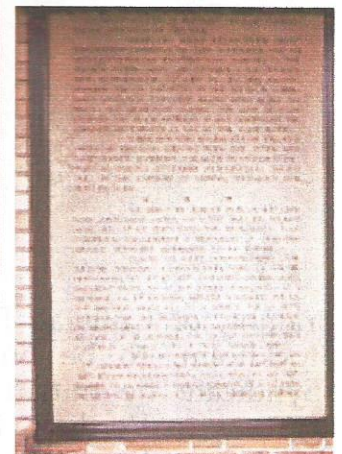
We noticed only one other car of visitors but as we approached the monument, itself, a caretaker appeared as from nowhere, and unlocked the door enabling us to enter the tower.

I could not restrain Dad from making the climb to the top which turned out to be 77 steps! He wouldn't stop for a breather on the way up and when he reached the top and saw the view he let out a war cry, "WALLA, THE MARINES HAVE LANDED."

The view from the top of the monument extends for miles. Directional arrows, embedded in the stone, point to all the villages within sight as well as the direction of big cities such as Reims and Paris.



Dad gives a salute after 77 steps to the top of the monument.



The Plaque.