

It was about a 35 kilometer drive from Moummelon to Reims where we arrived with the Sunday evening traffic. Profiting from getting lost in Metz, the night before, I took the precaution of studying the Michelin guide in hopes of driving right up to the Lion D'or Hotel. However, the Michelin Guides have yet to discover one way streets!



Fortunately, the Reims Cathedral has an open street to it's front so it is possible to get the entire facade in a photo. This was taken in the evening from about four blocks away. Those towers are 247 feet high.

After photographing the Cathedral, we checked into our hotel and found a restaurant for a chicken dinner. The chicken was tough, but Dad thought the ice cream was acceptable.

We agreed that this had been the most meaningful day of our trip so far. We both visited places we knew from 53 and 26 years ago, respectively, places where our paths had crossed.

The next morning, Monday the 23rd of August, started with a tour of the Cathedral of Reims. The foundation stone of the present building had been laid seven hundred sixty years, three months and seventeen days prior to our visit. It took over two centuries to complete the structure.

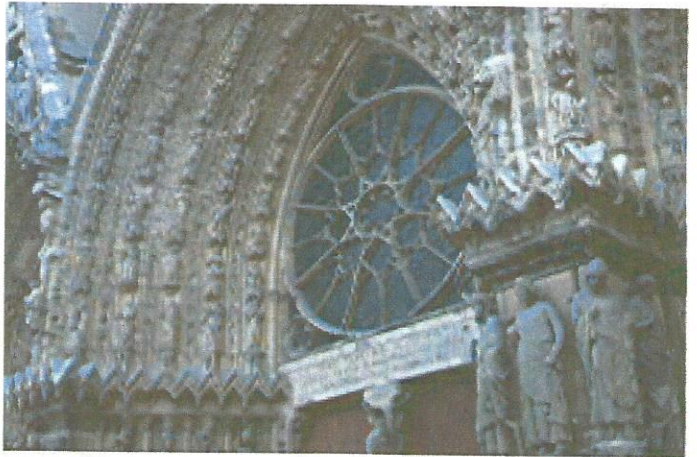
It has an overall length of 452 feet, the width at the transepts is 186 feet and the inside height of the vaulted ceiling is 103 feet. It occupies an area of 71,500 square feet, which is just a bit less than the combined areas of the Culligan factories in Diegem, Belgium and Cadriano, Italy.

The roof of the Cathedral was destroyed when over four thousand six hun-

dred bombs were rained on the city of Reims on the 19th of September 1914. The roof was covered by sheet lead, supported by rafters of solid oak. A scaffolding in place around the north transept porch for repairs, was ignited by fire bombs. This, in turn, melted the lead roof and ignited the oak beams with the result that the entire roof was destroyed.

Through the generosity of John D. Rockefeller Jr., work was started in 1919 and replacement of the roof was completed in 1937.

About two thirds the way up the west front is the Gallery of Kings consisting of 56 statues, each 15 feet in height. You will get some idea of the massiveness of this building when you realize that each of these statues weighs over six tons.



In the lower right of this photo you can see three of the six ton statues. Perhaps this will help understand why it took two centuries to build.

We had a complete tour of the Cathedral, including the Tresor (Treasury) where the jewels and robes of Cardinals and gifts of Kings, crowned in the Cathedral, are stored. Twenty four Kings of France have been crowned there.

After the tour we departed Reims on a 62 kilometer drive over rolling hills and the Marne Valley to Chateau Thierry. Being a little low on cash, we found a bank and after a couple pages of red tape were successful in cashing a couple Traveler's Checks at a fairly reasonable rate of exchange.

Our next objective was Belleau, or Belleau Woods, the scene of one of the most grueling battles of WW1 which took place in June and July of 1918. Belleau Woods is approximately 45 miles east and a little north of Paris.