



Orville Munson

Fourteen sites in foreign countries were selected as permanent cemeteries for American soldiers not returned to the US for burial during WW II (by choice of next to kin). One of those sites is located near Epinal, France.

The Epinal cemetery contains 5,255 burials of which 69 are known but to God. The missing commemorated MIA Court of Honor lists 424 names. Two burials were members of the 48th Engineers killed nearby that were not returned to the US for burial. Lt. William A. Smith, who was killed the day St. Die was liberated is one of them. Orville Munson and his wife and their pen pal, Paule Merklen, from Epinal, visited the cemetery in 92 and again in 94. In 94 Paule placed flowers near the cross for Lt. Smith.





**ST. DIE TODAY - SOUTH OF THE MEURTHE RIVER
AND
NORTH OF THE RIVER**



THE REBUILT CATHEDRAL AT ST. DIE



In 1994 St. Die, France, chose to observe a holiday of festivities for fifty years of liberation from WW II. Orville Munson, the first American soldier to enter St. Die during WW II, and his wife received a personal invitation to attend the gathering from The Mayor of St. Die, Christian Pierret. The celebration encompassed three nights and two days of constant well planned activities and banquets. Thousands of locals attended the various ceremonies. The pictures shown here are Munson addressing one of the gatherings and his placing flowers at one of many monuments in St. Die honoring the dead.



ST. DIE, THE GODMOTHER OF AMERICA
BY
ORVILLE O. MUNSON



The author of *St. Die, The Godmother of America*, Orville O Munson, is shown here in a picture taken in December 1944.