

## Stained-glass window commemorating the Great War Saint-Jean-de-Folleville



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Like all French villages during the Great War, Saint-Jean-de-Folleville lost men on the field of battle, twenty-five in all. The village council wished to pay tribute to them and in February 1919, decided to collect funds and erect a monument to be designed and built by Charles Carel, a monumental mason from Le Havre.

In February 1920, the local priest, Father Leclerc, also declared a wish to honour the memory of parishioners who had died for their country. He asked the municipality's permission to dedicate a stained-glass window in the church to them. He specified that it should associate religion and patriotism in such a way "which could not offend any of their beliefs".

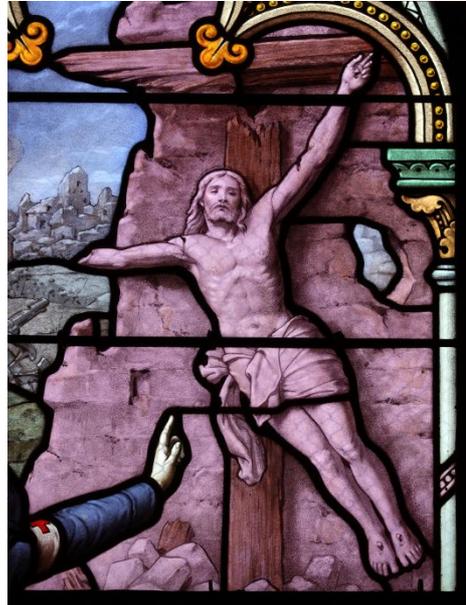
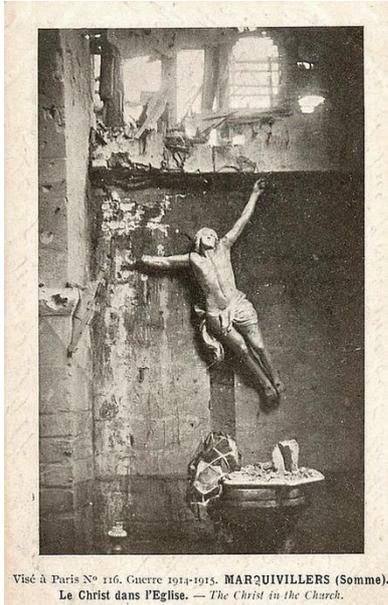
He entrusted the task to the Parisian master glazier, Emile Janiaud, who proposed a rare style of window that would adapt the structure of the window bay to the design, and not the other way round. The window in question is "the first on the right as you enter the church".



Date and signature © Département de la Seine-Maritime

According to a description given by Father Leclerc to the council, in the centre of the round-arched window is: "A faithful representation of the Christ of Marquivilliers Church, with a view of the neighbouring village in the distance". At the time, the church in Marquivilliers had become symbolic of the destruction wrought by the enemy.

We see a dying soldier points at the damaged calvary of Marquivilliers while being held in the arms of a nurse.



The Christ in Marquivilliers church, postcard (n.d. circa 1915), © private collection) © C. Kollmann, Archives Department, Région Normandie

This scene has similarities with windows made for churches in the Manche and Calvados. Both of these came from the workshops of master glazier Mazuet de Bayeux. The technique had, therefore, become common, but we don't know how or which of the two workshops developed it.<sup>1</sup>

Twenty-four, 18cm-diameter medallions depicting the deceased villagers surround the central image. Each is edged with their name, date and the place where they fell. There is no image of Isidore Houzard however, as the artist had no photograph of him.

The portraits are particularly lifelike and show the skill of the craftsmen, who cropped and enlarged photos provided by the families.

An artist used the prints' transparency to transfer their features onto the small glass medallions. The contours are defined using an acid-based grisaille technique and polecat-hair brushes, and the highlighting methods in the style of Jean Cousin for the skin tones. The uniforms were coloured with blue and red enamels.

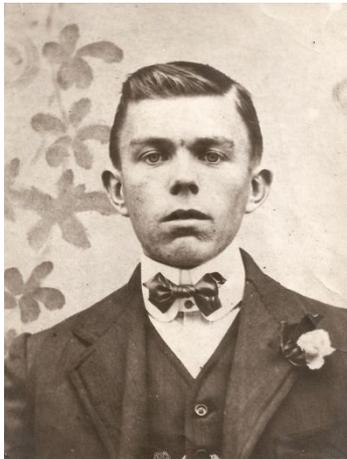
<sup>1</sup> CHERON Philippe, DELAUNEY Sophie. Vitraux de Normandie, une histoire de la Grande Guerre. Lyon: lieux-dits, 2018. Images du patrimoine, n°301.



Five of the medallions, including that of Isidore Houzard, with no portrait, © Département de la Seine-Maritime

Research has been done into the life of each soldier so their stories could be recorded for posterity. Some of their descendants had kept photographs, medals and letters, documents that today allow us to add to the human aspect that these portraits reveal to us.

The Legoy family alone paid a heavy price, losing three of their sons to the war. Only two appear on the stained glass window; the third died in 1925, still severely traumatised by the time he spent in a German internment camp.



René Legoy in civilian clothes, postcard (n.d. pre 1914?, Cordier collection) and his portrait dressed in the uniform © L'Amande et l'Obsidienne © C. Kollmann, Archives Department, Région Normandie

During renovation work on the church, the window was sent for restoration by Amandine Steck at the workshops of L'Amande et l'Obsidienne in Honfleur.

The conservation work on the glass consisted mainly of careful, meticulous cleaning and filling, the installation of a ventilation slat and the near-complete replacement of the metal framework, which was threatening to give way.

The bars were replaced by a more durable, conventional frame made to the shape of the stained-glass windows.



Stained glass elements removed for restoration © L'Amande et l'Obsidienne