

The Men had all gone to War.

The German French Wars.

At the time of the Second World War, Germany had invaded France three times in the last 80 years: First there was the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 to 1871. Then the Great War from 1914-1918. After that, the Second World War 1939- 1945.

Defending France against the Germans has become a family duty.

In the Franco/ Prussian war, Pierre's grandfather also called, Pierre fought on the side of the Bulgarians and Prussians. Whereas Pierre's great uncle, Gentien, had fought on the side of Napoleon III, pictured on the right. Note by James Lander:

*I think Pierre's service with the Bavarians ended in 1862 and that he did **not** fight on the German side in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Two small books about the French failure in that war were published in 1871 and 1873 by "Baron de Bosmelet", who I assume was Pierre--if only because he refers to volunteering in a sort of local recruitment, rather than serving with the Hussars as I believe Gentien did.*

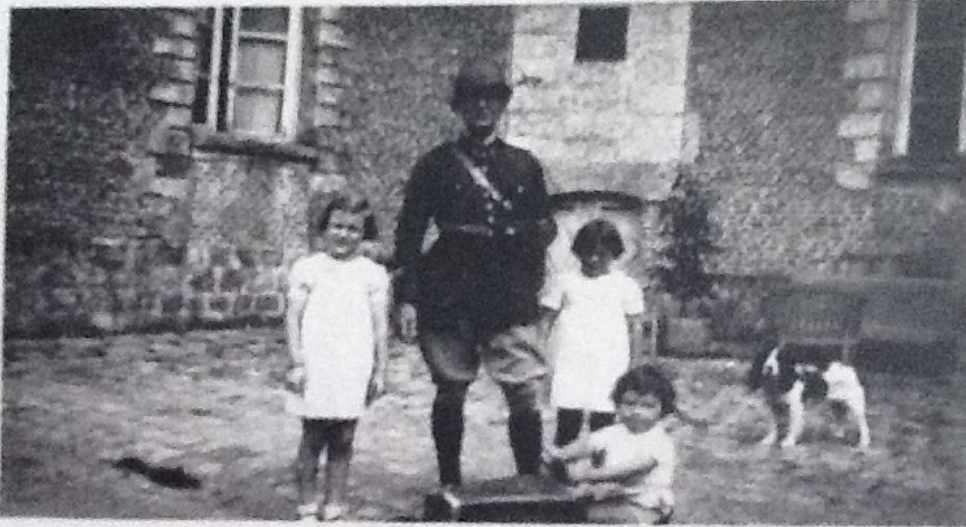


In the Great War of 1914-1919 Pierre's father, Robert Soyer, had been a translator and a soldier. The picture on the right is Robert with an English regiment.



I think he is the one to the right of the second window in his French uniform. During the war when his father was home on leave my grandfather, Pierre, use to try on his father's leather boots, or so Henriette told her daughter-in-law, my grandmother.

In the Second World War Pierre, my grandfather, fought in four battles; two with the French army defending the borders against advancing German Troops. He also fought



Pierre Soyer de Bosmelet, Capitaine de l'Infanterie Coloniale avec ses trois enfants (Monique, Béatrice et Gentien) et son chien, photo du 1er septembre 1939 avant de rejoindre le front.

Officier dans l'infanterie coloniale, il pouvait surgir à tout instant, mettant en alerte les chiens qui l'auraient reconnu

another two battles, with the Free French under Charles de Gaulle, in the later part of the war. Throughout the war he had trained soldiers to fight in the front lines. The Second World War devastated the whole of Europe. The disruptions continued long after the war ended, this was true for my family too.

This picture is probably taken by my grandmother at the Château de Bosmelet. From left to right ; Monique, Pierre Soyer de Bosmelet, Béatrice, Gentien and the pet dog. Pierre Soyer de Bosmelet is in his French Army Uniform about to go to the front, he is surrounded by his three children. The two girls, Monique ,9, and Béatrice, 7, were from his first marriage. Gentien, 2, was my uncle. By 1947 only Pierre and Beatrice were still alive. Even the dog did not survive the war. [To read more about this story keep clicking the panels and read the graphic novel a draft version of Gentien the Corporal.](#)