Episode in Bretoncelles from the Franco-Prussian War of 1870

As it was crossed by transport routes (road and rail) the area of the Perche around Nogent-le-Rotrou was the scene of an important episode of the war of 1870-71. Paris was under siege and the relief armies were sent from Tours to unblock the capital. Aware of the threat, the Prussians quickly sent a strong detachment to seize Le Mans and Tours. The King of Prussia’s army, meeting little resistance, seized Dreux and Chartres and threatened the Perche as of 15th November 1870. A front was established between La Madeleine Bouvet, Bretoncelles and the hamlet of La Fourche, within the commune of Coulonges-les-Sablons, where , on the 27th November, violent battles took place.

In position on the hill of Cracotières the Prussian artillery fired on the centre of Bretoncelles. The station building was set on fire. Many dwellings and the schools were hit. Hastily arranged ambulances, in particular in the former hospice (16 rue Gareau), took in a number of wounded, one of whom was Ernest Pommerelle, captain of the 1st Infantry Regiment of the Marines, who died there on 9th January 1871.

French and Prussian soldiers who fought around Bretoncelles are buries in a communal grave in the cemetery.