

Title:

The Story Of The Invasion Of Lorraine In 1914

Word Count:

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Summary:

The French and Germans have argued about the territories of Alsace and Lorraine for centuries. In 1871, after losing the Franco-Prussian War, France was forced to cede the territories back to Prussia. When Germany invaded Belgium in 1914, France seized upon the opportunity to restore its honor and reclaim the coal rich regions of Alsace and Lorraine. On August 14, 1914, the French army under the command of Generals Foch and Dubail marched into Lorraine. The German forces ...

Keywords:

Article Body:

The French and Germans have argued about the territories of Alsace and Lorraine for centuries. In 1871, after losing the Franco-Prussian War, France was forced to cede the territories back to Prussia. When Germany invaded Belgium in 1914, France seized upon the opportunity to restore its honor and reclaim the coal rich regions of Alsace and Lorraine. On August 14, 1914, the French army under the command of Generals Foch and Dubail marched into Lorraine. The German forces (Sixth Army) were led by Crown Prince Rupprecht and equipped with machine guns and heavy artillery.

The German strategy was simple. On August 14th, they began a controlled retreat intending to draw the French armies into attacking heavily defended areas. The French First and Second Armies easily marched forward. On August 17th, Foch's XXth Corps was able to seize Château Salins. On August 18th Dubail's 1st Army advanced into Sarrebourg and on the same day the 2nd Army took control of Dieuze. As the French armies continued to advance, they were met with increasingly heavier resistance from the German troops.

Rupprecht grew impatient with the retreating strategy and requested orders to attack. There are contradictory reports whether the order to counter attack came from Army Chief of Staff Helmuth von Moltke or if Rupprecht used his own authority. On August 20th, the German Sixth Army attacked the French 2nd Army. Since the French army had been advancing extremely fast, they had no trenches or

other defensive positions to thwart the German offensive.

The XXth Corps led by Foch was able to maintain its position, but the 1st and 2nd armies were pushed backed. Gaps began to form in the French lines. On August 22nd, only 8 days after the French offensive began, the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army Joffre was forced to order a retreat to Belfort, Epinal and Toul where trenches were in place and a stalemate between opposing forces followed.