

A Reenactment from the Battle of Sedan on September 1, 1870 (Sound Recording, 1890)

Abstract

The Battle of Sedan (September 1–2, 1870) was the decisive battle in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71. It contributed to the fall of Emperor Napoleon III of France (1808–1873) a few days later and, in the spring of 1871, to France’s final capitulation to German forces. Every year—though often with little enthusiasm in many parts of the country—Sedan Day [*Sedantag*] was celebrated as the closest thing Imperial Germany had to a national holiday. The sounds heard in this two-minute clip include the music sung by German soldiers on their way into battle, the commands of army officers and the shouts of enlisted men, and the roar of the battle itself.

Source

The scenes included in the sound recording are: “The Watch on the Rhine” [“Die Wacht am Rhein”] (music); commands: “Down! Fire!” [“Hinlegen! Feuer!”]; battle roar; commands: “Bayonets fixed” [“Seitengewehr gepflanzt auf!”]; “Hurrah!” [“Hurra!”]; battle roar; “Helmets off to pray!” [“Helm ab zum Gebet!”]; “I pray to the power of love” [“Ich bete an die Macht der Liebe”] (music); commands: “Helmets on! Put your weapons together!” [“Helm auf! Setzt die Gewehre zusammen!”]

Source: Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv, Frankfurt am Main: Archiv Nr. W4476, “A Scene from the Battle of Sedan, September 1, 1870” [audio file], 1890. Reference from: *Tondokumente zur Kultur- und Zeitgeschichte 1888–1932: Ein Verzeichnis*, zusammengestellt u. bearb. von Walter Roller. Potsdam, 1998, p. 20, no. 7.

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