

## **The Battle of the Teutoburg Forest in 9 AD**

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The battle which took place in the Teutoburg Forest two thousand years ago was one of the turning points in Roman history of war. The Germans defeated the Roman Army, which stopped the expansion of the Roman Empire and established its borderline on the river Rhine.

In the year 9 AD, three Roman legions, under the command of Publius Quinctilius Varus, were ambushed in the Forest of Teutoburg by Arminius, the commandor of the German troops. The Romans, who proceeded in marching formation, were not able to use their normal martial skills in the strange, forest-clad terrain. As they were scattered, they could not form an organised defence. The Germans, who knew the terrain and the prevailing conditions well, destroyed the Roman legions almost entirely and also captured the eagle standards of two of them.

To the Romans, this defeat by barbarians was deeply shameful, and the loss of the eagles was an utter humiliation. The battle also influenced the expansionist politics of Augustus and his successor Tiberius. No more were the Romans willing to go headlong into the German forests, and the Rhine remained the northern border of the empire.

When viewed from today's perspective, the battle of the Teutoburg Forest had long-lasting effects. The Rhine became the borderline between different cultural groups and linguistic areas. In the East, the Germanic languages retained their vitality, whereas in the West, Latin, which had already displaced the Celtic languages as well as a number of other minority languages, was, in the course of time, differentiated, and thus gave birth to the Romanic languages.