

Time Machine (1907): Eiffel Tower is saved from destruction by the radio

By Washington Times, adapted by Newsela staff on 05.03.16

Word Count 728

Level 840L



Guarding the Eiffel Tower, and its wireless station, in Paris, France, during World War I. Bains News Service

Newsela Editor's Note: This story originally appeared in the March 10, 1907, issue of the Washington Times. The Eiffel Tower was built in 1889 as a part of the world's fair. In the early 1900s, Gustave Eiffel began experimenting with using the tower as a wireless broadcasting system.

A GREAT war eye will soon watch the whole of France. It will sweep her frontiers, her army and her seaboard. This will be the new mission of Paris' famous Eiffel Tower.

This tower was erected as the chief curiosity of the world's fair of 1889 and has now become the central point of the great wireless signal system of the French army and navy.

Officials of the army may direct the military from 984 feet above the ground. They can direct them within France's borders and beyond them.

Its navy will be constantly in touch with Paris. This will be true whether her ships be in the Mediterranean to the south of France, the Bay of Biscay to the east, the English Channel to the

northeast, the North Sea to the north or the Baltic to the northwest.

A Farther Telegraph Reach For Parisian Landmark

One day, from this remarkable tower may come orders that will change the map of Europe.

Last fall, the army was directed from the new station. Then the navy was given their orders without a hitch.

The distance over which the tower can send messages was recently extended. Messages are now exchanged with London, England, and Berlin, Germany, on the one side. On the other, with Tunis and Algiers on the African coast.

France is now equipping it to become the most complete wireless telegraph system in the world.

The French love the idea of keeping their unusual tower. They enjoy the plan to make it the most wonderful war eye on the globe. People now expect to see it one day become an airship station.

From World's Fair Attraction To Military Watchdog

The tower was built by the famous engineer Gustave Eiffel. It was completed in March 1889. It was the thing to see at that year's world's fair. It has never stopped bringing in visitors and their money.

It cost more than \$1 million to build the tower. Seven thousand tons of metal were used. The government paid \$292,000. The engineer supplied the rest. The profits from 1889 alone almost covered the cost.

At 984 feet tall, how does the Eiffel Tower compare to other world structures? The Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., is only 555 feet tall. The broad-brimmed hat of William Penn on Philadelphia's City Hall in Pennsylvania sits just 547 feet above the sidewalk. The dome of St. Peter's cathedral in Rome, Italy, rises only 448 feet.

From the top of the Eiffel Tower, one can see about 85 miles. At night, a searchlight slices into the surrounding darkness.

At its base, this wonderful tower covers nearly 2.5 acres. Its lower section consists of four iron columns. Each one of those consists of four smaller columns that spring gracefully upward, curving toward each other. At 629 feet above the ground, they join in a single column. Above this, the long needle of the tower rises 364 feet higher. There are platforms that can be reached by elevators and stairs. From the highest platform, a winding stairway climbs to the very top.

Tower's Wireless Makes France Stronger

These different platforms may one day be converted into airship stations. The French are daring enough to try it. They have already built a battleship that can withstand the strike of a heavy shell.

In peacetime, the French army consists of about 550,000 men. In time of war, the number is figured at something over 4,600,000. The Eiffel Tower could direct those armies far into Germany, England or Italy. If France were attacked, the wireless service would work even better. Stations could be added to frontier forts. They could send messages back to Eiffel.

The northeastern town of Nancy would likely bear the first shock should Germany attack. If this happened, it would be known at once to Paris. Troops could then be promptly moved there like men on a chessboard.

The same is true for her great navy. France has 557 fighting ships and 257 other vessels. This naval force could be made into a quick-moving and devastating whole.

Quiz

- 1 Based on the article, why is the plan to make the Eiffel Tower a wireless telegraph system important to France?
- (A) It will help other countries build similar towers.
 - (B) It will bring more people to see the tower at the world's fair.
 - (C) It will help the French government cover the tower's building costs.
 - (D) It will help French military officials communicate with their troops.

- 2 What is the relationship between the 1889 world's fair and the Eiffel Tower?
- (A) The Eiffel Tower was the star attraction at the fair.
 - (B) The Eiffel Tower was built as an airship station at the fair.
 - (C) The Eiffel Tower was built to send messages to visitors at the fair.
 - (D) The Eiffel Tower provided shelter for people at the fair.

- 3 Read the sentences below from the section "Tower's Wireless Makes France Stronger".

These different platforms may one day be converted into airship stations. The French are daring enough to try it.

What does the word "converted" mean in the first sentence?

- (A) brought
- (B) changed
- (C) added
- (D) thrust

- 4 Read the paragraph below from the section "A Farther Telegraph Reach For Parisian Landmark".

The distance over which the tower can send messages was recently extended. Messages are now exchanged with London, England, and Berlin, Germany, on the one side. On the other, with Tunis and Algiers on the African coast.

Which word could replace "extended" WITHOUT changing the meaning of the first sentence?

- (A) examined
- (B) explored
- (C) expanded
- (D) exhibited