

RADIOLOGY IN A TRENCH COAT

Military radiology on the western front during The Great War

René Van Tiggelen

Translated by Jan Dirckx

A year from now we commemorate the centenary of The Great War, gone down in history as the first industrial war, a brutal slaughter on a scale never experienced before.

In Flanders' Fields and on the French and German front lines an adolescent medical discipline, barely nineteen years old, reaches full adulthood: RADIOLOGY. This diagnostic specialty's unique significance is recognized by all other medical specialties from the first days of its existence.

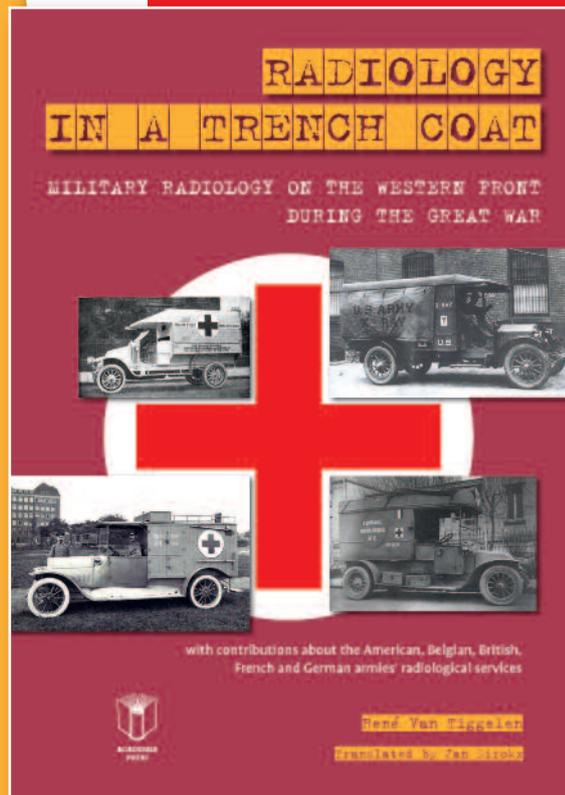
The circumstances of the war propel radiology's development in ultra-fastforward. In addition to the diagnosis of fracture and disease, the localization of projectiles is its outstanding priority. Antibiotics are not yet in existence; thus the immediate removal of a foreign body is extremely critical since preventing infection is practically the sole guarantee for the healing, if not the survival of the wounded soldier.

Amidst the desperation of a stalemate in the war the pioneer-radiologists labor like true heroes and fight their way to their patients' salvation, often at the peril of their own health. The "ray of X" becomes a ray of hope. We also remember that radiologists and their assistants are amongst the first "nuclear victims" due to the radiation exposure during their work.

Despite (or thanks to?) this chaotic theatre, radiology takes a big leap forward. By the end of the war it earns its stars & bars side by side with the other medical disciplines. After the war no hospital, no clinic goes without X-rays any longer.

The contributions made by American, British, French, Belgian and German radiologists are extensively discussed and illustrated in a true historic perspective.

From the author's background as a radiologist this lavishly illustrated 220 page book (more than 260 figures, some of them in colour) offers an overview on the subject that is probably unique in the world.



About the author

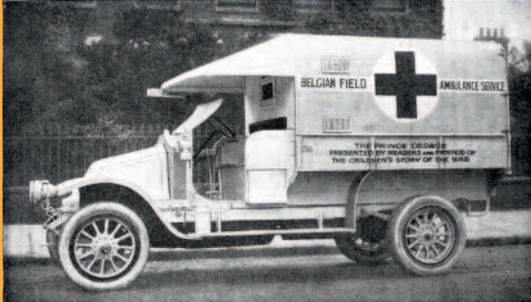
The author, René Van Tiggelen graduated in Medicine at the University of Louvain (UCL-1967).

He then decided to specialize in radiology under the leadership of Professors P.Bodart (UCL) and G.Cornélis (UCL/KUL).

He obtained simultaneously a degree in social medicine and hospital management. He made his whole career as a radiologist in the Belgian armed forces. As an army medical officer with the rank of colonel, he used to be the deputy chief of staff of the medical department. As a senior hospital lecturer he taught bone radiology at the VUB (Brussels Free University, Flemish section) from 1982 to 1996 and has been a guest teacher at the EHSAL since 1998. With a team of volunteers he created the Belgian Museum of Radiology in 1990 and has been its managing director since.

2003 Sarton Award at the University of Ghent. 2011 Laureate of the Frans Jonckheere prize, awarded by the Académie royale de Médecine de Belgique, for his work: "A Transparent Skull. An illustrated history of neuroradiology."

Table of contents:



Foreword	By D. Hanson, CEO of the Royal Military Museum
Chapter 1	The onset of military radiology
Chapter 2	The Belgian Army radiologists among the pioneers
Chapter 3	Guidelines of the Medical Department until the beginning of the hostilities
Chapter 4	How is our rear combat zone organized?
Chapter 5	Radiology treks to the Yser Front
Chapter 6	The X-ray equipment, how in fact does it function at this time?
Chapter 7	Vehicles for radiology
Chapter 8	The localization of projectiles and their extraction
Chapter 9	Dangers of X-rays
Chapter 10	Problems and solutions in radiology
Chapter 11	Unfortunate intervention by Röntgen
Chapter 12	Dr. Etienne Henrard, the radiologist who becomes a General
Chapter 13	From lab technician to technologist
Chapter 14	Radiology described by those who have undergone it
Chapter 15	Imperial German military radiology
Chapter 16	French military radiology
Chapter 17	Radiology in the British Expeditionary Force
Chapter 18	“La Fayette, nous voici!” “La Fayette, here we are!”
Chapter 19	Positive effects of the conflict on radiology
Afterword	By Major General G. Laire (MD), Surgeon General of the Medical Component

ISBN 9789038219394

220 p. - € 30.00



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