

# 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.

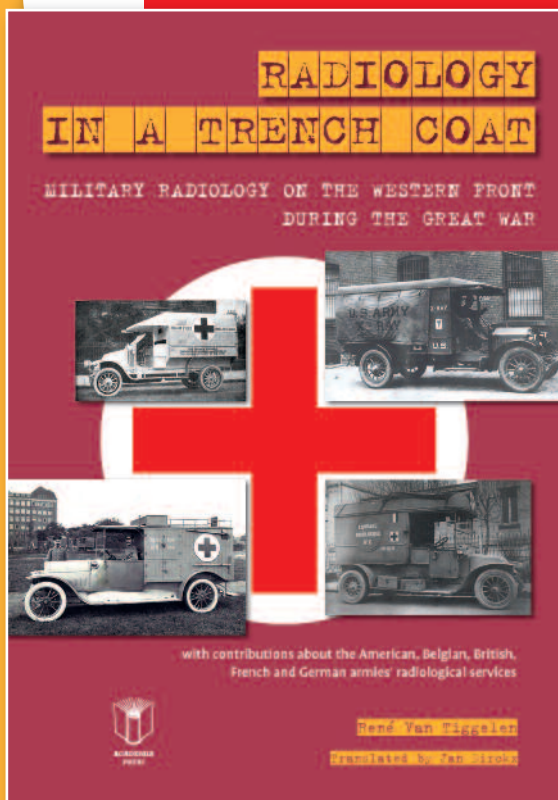
The circumstances of the war propel radiology's development in ultra-fastforward. In addition to the diagnosis of fracture and disease, the localization of projectiles is its outstanding priority. Antibiotics are not yet in existence; thus the immediate removal of a foreign body is extremely critical 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."

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