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***WWI Crusaders:***

***A band of Yanks in German-occupied Belgium help save millions from starvation as civilians resist the harsh German rule, August 1914 to May 1917***

**By Jeffrey B. Miller**

**ASTOUNDING WWI AMERICAN-LED COMMISSION SAVED THE PEOPLE OF BELGIUM IN THIS HIDDEN GEM OF A TRUE STORY**

You've probably never heard of the CRB—the American-led Commission for Relief in Belgium. For nearly 10 million Belgians and Northern French facing imminent starvation behind German lines in World War I, the CRB was life-saving. With the indomitable help of young, idealistic Americans, the CRB was responsible for initiating, organizing, and supervising the largest food relief the world had ever seen.

This is the story told in the narrative non-fiction historical book, [\*WWI Crusaders: A band of Yanks in German-occupied Belgium help save millions from starvation as civilians resist the harsh German rule, August 1914 to May 1917\*](#) [Milbrow Press, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018], written by Jeffrey B. Miller and releasing this fall on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War I (and Veteran's Day!). Realizing that Americans were in the dark about this incredible humanitarian chapter of U.S. history—and reflecting on his own personal connections to the story, which he holds close to his heart—Miller, a writer for over 40 years, set out to make a significant contribution to the written record of this massive American relief effort.

“My passion for *WWI Crusaders* was sparked by my grandfather, who was a CRB delegate, and my grandmother, who was a 22-year-old Belgian working to provide much needed milk to the children of Antwerp,” Miller recounts. “When they died, I inherited all their diaries, correspondence, and photographs from that period, 1914-1917. For the last 10 years, I've worked full time researching the time period, WWI, the CRB, and numerous delegates.”

The CRB is part of the genesis of how the world came to see the United States as one of the best sources of aid and relief on a global scale. Today, the concept of American selfless humanitarianism is assumed by many, and yet few realize it was started in large part with this food relief initiative by former President Herbert Hoover.

The size of the relief was only rivaled by the number of obstacles that had to be overcome to achieve something that had never been tried before—saving a nation from starvation caught in the middle of a world war. The CRB worked closely with its Belgian counterpart, the Comité National (CN), and challenges included: getting the belligerents to allow the food relief; buying massive amounts of food and shipping it via steamers and hundreds of canal barges; finding a way to pay for the nearly \$1 billion in 1914 dollars that was spent; and organizing 40,000 Belgian volunteers to prepare and distribute the food every day. Through it all, military men on both sides were trying to shut down the operation, as the leaders of the CRB and CN sometimes disagreed so strongly that they jeopardized the entire relief.

“*WWI Crusaders* is the first book that tells, in one complete volume, the interlacing stories of German brutality, Belgian resistance, and the American humanitarian crusaders of the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB) during World War I,” Miller explains. “The book follows the major players in the largest food relief the world had ever seen as well as the boots-on-the-ground American and Belgians working with—and some fighting against—the Germans.”

*WWI Crusaders* covers from the beginning of the war, August 1914, through May 1917, when the last Americans left Belgium because of America’s April entry into the war. An extensive epilogue wraps up all major stories and people through the end of the war and beyond. Lively, personal stories in the book follow CRB delegates, a 22-year old Belgian woman, two U.S. diplomats, an underground newspaper leader, and the founder of the CRB, Herbert Hoover. A thoroughly-researched and comprehensive telling, the book explores a variety of important facets from this groundbreaking contribution to humanitarian relief and war aid, including:

- The scale and awareness that this humanitarian effort really beholds
- The results and how Americans saved millions of lives
- The staggering obstacles of establishing and maintaining relief for nearly 10 million, all behind the German trenches
- Who the humanitarian crusaders actually were and their passion for service and relief
- Herbert Hoover’s own role in the food relief effort—during and after the war

- No one thought it was possible—private citizens of a neutral country saving from starvation an entire nation trapped in the middle of a world war
- Drama and tension in the story: The leaders of the CRB and CN created internal conflicts that often threatened the relief efforts, and how they persevered through crisis after crisis

**Jeffrey B. Miller** has been a writer, editor, and author for more than 40 years. His career includes starting six magazines (city, regional, and national), being editor-in-chief of five inflight magazines, and director of communications for AAA Colorado. He is also the author of *Stapleton International Airport: The First Fifty Years* (Pruett Publishing, Boulder, CO, 1983); co-author with Dr. Gordon Ehlers of *Facing Your Fifties: Every Man's Reference to Mid-life Health* (M. Evans & Co., New York, 2002), which was included in *Publishers Weekly's* Best Books of 2002; and author of *Behind the Lines* (Milbrow Press, 2014), which detailed the chaotic beginnings of WWI Belgium food relief and was included in Kirkus Reviews' Best Books of 2014.

Miller is currently a member of American Society of Journalists and Authors (ASJA), American Historical Association (AHA), National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS), Colorado Authors League (CAL), Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA), and the Colorado Independent Publishers Association (CIPA).

Jeffrey B. Miller can be found online on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Goodreads](#), and learn more about his work at [www.wwicrusaders.com](http://www.wwicrusaders.com).

*WWI Crusaders* will be available on [Amazon](#), Barnes & Noble, and wherever books are sold beginning November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

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