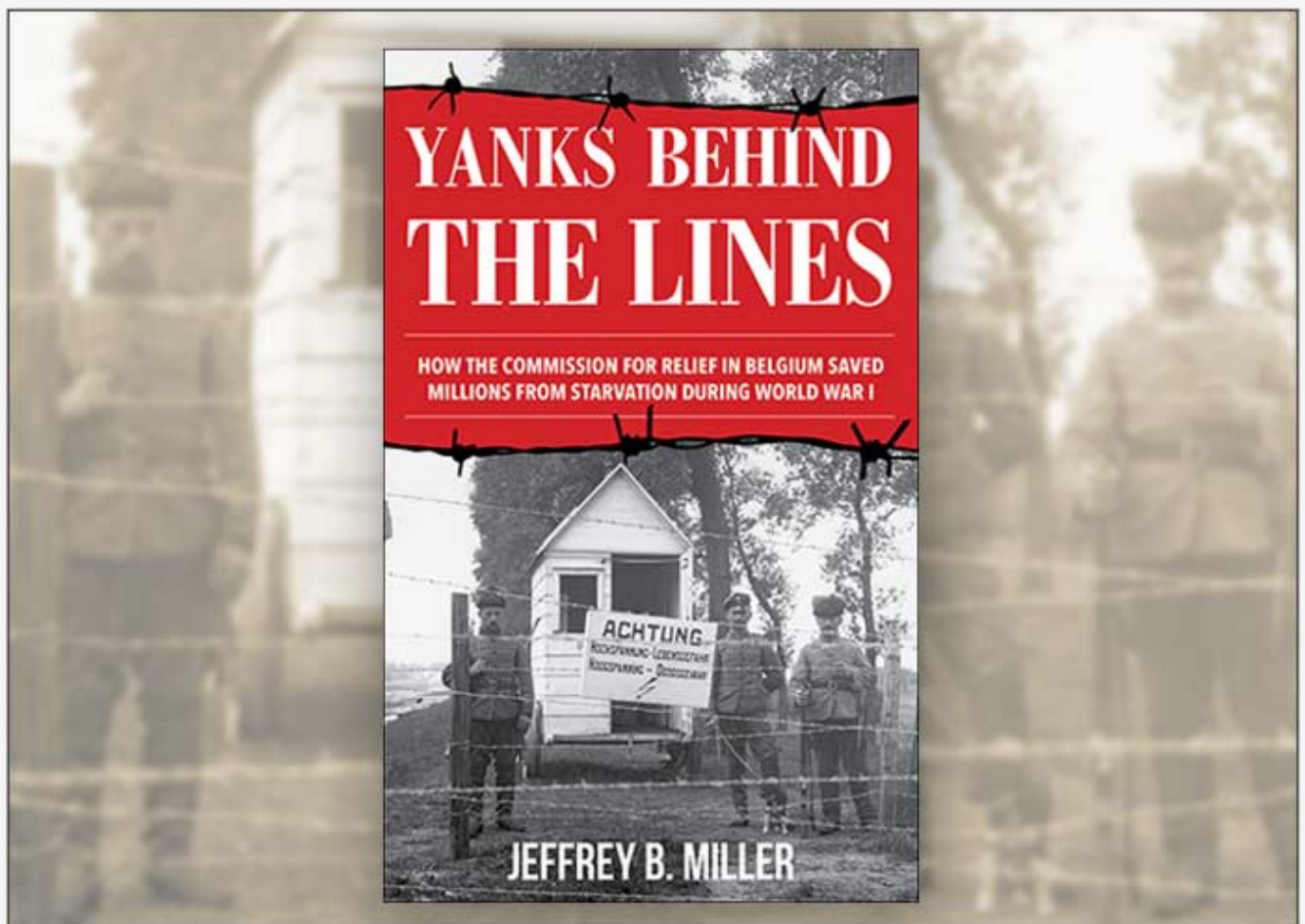


A Little-known WWI Anniversary Celebrates America's Humanitarian Roots

DENVER, Colo., Oct. 9, 2020 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – On Oct. 22, 1914, less than three months after the start of World War I, one of the largest food-relief programs the world has ever seen was begun when the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB) was founded in London by a group of prominent Americans, according to Jeffrey B. Miller, author of a new nonfiction book, “Yanks behind the Lines: How the Commission for Relief in Belgium Saved Millions from Starvation during World War I” (ISBN 978-1538141649; Rowman & Littlefield). The book chronicles the CRB, the CRB delegates, and Belgium under the harsh German rule.



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PHOTO CAPTION: Front cover for “Yanks behind the Lines” (Rowman & Littlefield) by Jeffrey B. Miller.

The CRB, working with its counterpart in Belgium, the Comite National (CN), fed nearly 10 million Belgians and northern French behind German lines for four years as the “Great War” took the lives of more than 9 million soldiers. The CRB bought, shipped and delivered food through an English blockade into

German-occupied Belgium. Thirty to 50 relief ships were in transit every day. From Rotterdam the food was transferred to more than 300 canal barges and brought into Belgium via its canal system. The food was then distributed by more than 40,000 Belgians working with the CN.

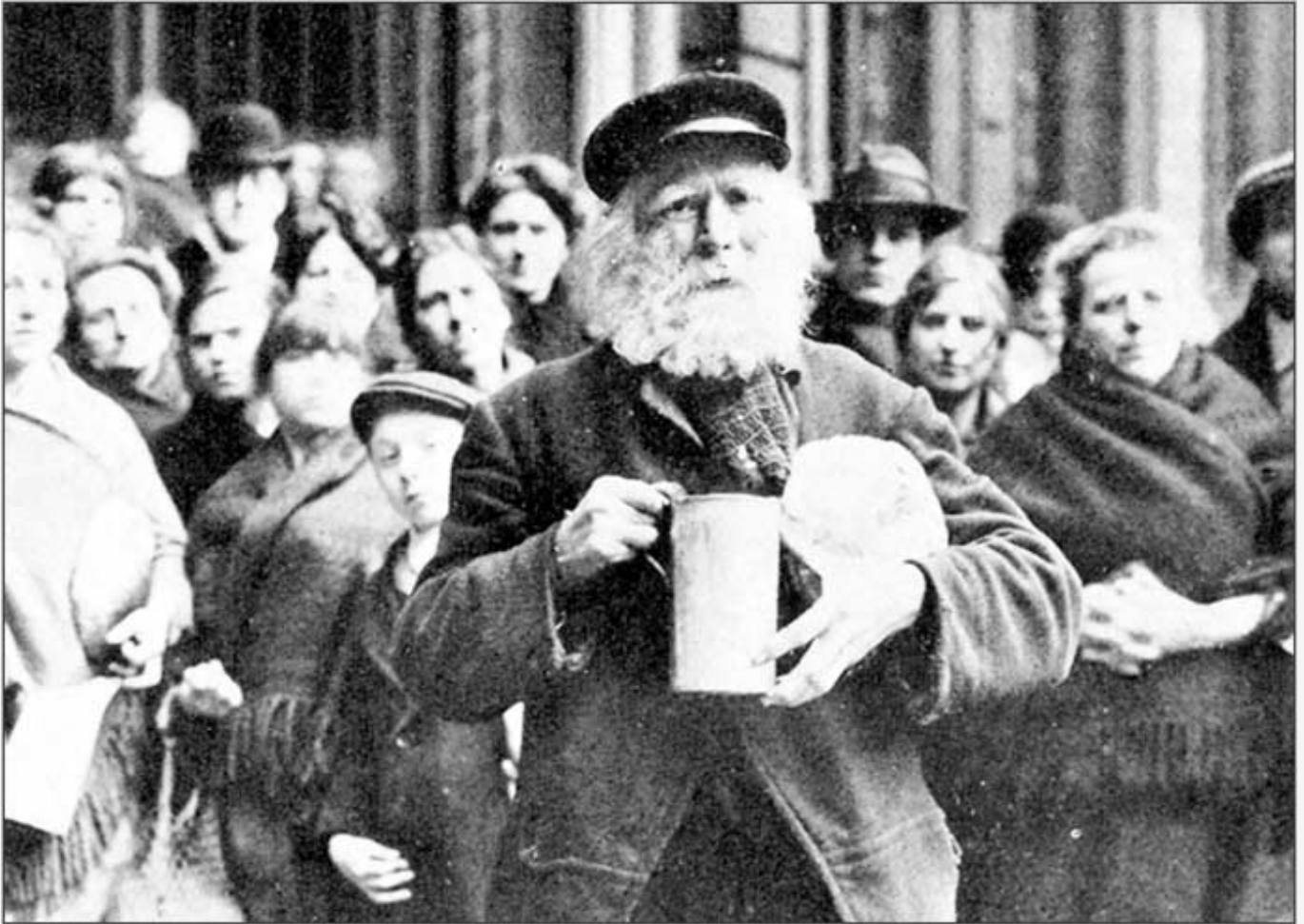
“Americans were enthusiastic supporters of the CRB in 1914. Today few have heard the name, let alone the story,” says Miller.

The CRB was founded and led by Herbert C. Hoover, who became known after the war as the “Great Humanitarian,” and later became America’s 31st president (1929-1933), in part because of his leadership of the CRB and the post-war American Relief Administration (ARA). The privately operated CRB was funded by worldwide donations and government subsidies from America, Britain, France and Belgium and spent nearly \$1 billion in 1914 dollars (approximately \$25 billion today).

“This was a much more lasting and complex and diplomatically unprecedented initiative than anything that might arise from a temporary crisis,” says George H. Nash, Hoover biographer and author of several volumes about him. “The CRB/CN relief effort was organized across the entire country of Belgium; every community was fed, every civilian had to receive assistance. That’s what makes the CRB stand apart from everything that came before it in the way of humanitarian intervention.”

Ultimately, the CRB also helped change the way Americans saw themselves and how the world saw America.

“The CRB is significant to everybody who cares about humanitarian relief because it was a turning point in history,” says Margaret Hoover, great-granddaughter of Hoover and host of PBS’s Firing Line with Margaret Hoover. “It was the moment where international relief became operationally effective on such a massive scale. Nobody had thought that an individual could take on the feeding of an entire nation in the middle of a world war. This totally transformed what America realized it could do in terms of its own role in the world. America had a role in the world—not only to achieve success and freedom and welfare for its own people, but then it could give back to the rest of the world.”



YANKS BEHIND THE LINES -- BELGIAN SOUP LINE

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PHOTO CAPTION: Elderly Man Photo: By September 1914, Belgians throughout the country had no choice but to join the soup-kitchen lines as the country quickly consumed its dwindling supplies.

That shift in perspective happened not only in America but around the world. "The good will and humanitarian aid created by the CRB's work—and later by the work of the American Relief Administration after the war—engendered a worldwide feeling that America could be a benefactor of humanitarian aid on a scale never seen before," says Branden Little, scholar of humanitarian relief and professor of history at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah.

For Hoover personally, the CRB meant a transformation from successful mining engineer to a man admired around the world. According to historian Nash, "Hoover became an international hero. How were people becoming heroes in WWI? Mostly as soldiers on the battlefield, or great generals organizing victories on the battlefields, or civilian world leaders. Hoover made his reputation not by killing people or organizing warfare, but by saving people from the consequences of warfare."

About the author, the book, and the publisher:

Based in Denver, Colo., Jeffrey B. Miller is a journalist and public historian who has written three books that were named Best Books of the Year (one with Publishers Weekly, two with Kirkus Reviews). He has spent the last

10 years researching and writing about the CRB, CN, and German-occupied Belgium. "Yanks behind the Lines" summarizes the story of the CRB thematically with chapters dedicated to all the critical issues. Individual personal stories are interwoven into the big picture to create a compelling read about this little-known but hugely important humanitarian program.

Rowman & Littlefield publishes high-quality college texts, entertaining and informative books for general readers, and professional and scholarly books in the humanities and social sciences.

Learn more: <https://YanksBehindTheLines.com/>

Twitter: @WWICrusaders

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MULTIMEDIA:

*VIDEO: 2.5-minute Book Trailer: https://youtu.be/x0u_ijwC2KA

*PHOTO 1: <https://www.Send2Press.com/300dpi/20-1009s2p-yanks-cover-300dpi.jpg>

*Photo 1 Caption: Front cover for "Yanks behind the Lines" (Rowman & Littlefield) by Jeffrey B. Miller.

*PHOTO 2:

<https://www.send2press.com/300dpi/20-1009s2p-yanks-elderly-300dpi.jpg>

*Photo 2 Caption: Elderly Man Photo: By September 1914, Belgians throughout the country had no choice but to join the soup-kitchen lines as the country quickly consumed its dwindling supplies.