



HISTORY OF DERMATOLOGY

WAR, SKIN AND « POILUS » : SKIN, AN INTERFACE AT THE CROSSROADS OF FIGHTING, LIVING CONDITIONS AND COLONIALIST CONSIDERATIONS DURING THE GREAT WAR

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Background: The "Great War" (1914-1918) is remembered as a major trauma where the victims are tens of millions. The skin is in the front line, subject to all the tests encountered by the "Poilus". Never in history, the epidermis reflected so much the psychological distress of the latter.

Observation: The hand-to-hand combat, shells or intoxications by gas, the notorious yperite, are responsible for the most mutilating lesions and often sources of infections. But the soldier on the other side of the no man's land is not the only enemy. The living conditions are disastrous. The cold and the humidity will be at the origin of a new entity: the trench foot. Hordes of rats and myriads of lice swarm in the trenches, sources of epidemics. The danger is present even out of the front line. The terrible scourge of venereal diseases is likely to jeopardize future generations forever... The goal of this poster is to review all this cutaneous diseases of soldiers of the Great War.

Key message: This conflict, which has so marked memories, has also left an indelible mark in the epidermis of our « Poilus ».

