

The Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) ended with the firm establishment of the French Republic and with German unity under Prussian leadership. After describing the events leading to the war, we explain how this conflict was the first involving the use of machine guns; soldiers were struck down by the thousands. Confronted with smallpox and typhus epidemics, military surgeons were quickly overwhelmed and gave priority to limb injuries, considering other wounds as inevitably fatal. Here, we present detailed descriptions of spinal and cranial injuries by Léon Legouest and of asepsis prior to trepanning by Ernst von Bergmann. Both the war and the Commune had disastrous effects on Paris. Jean-Martin Charcot continued to work intensely through the conflict, caring for numerous patients at La Salpêtrière Hospital according to his son Jean-Baptiste's account, which we've also excerpted below. As for young Dejerine, he treated the wounded from France who had taken refuge in Switzerland. Désiré-Magloire Bourneville also took heroic initiatives, as did [Charles Lasègue](#), Alfred Vulpian, Alix Joffroy and Victor Cornil <sup>1)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup>

Walusinski O. Neurology and Neurologists during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). *Front Neurol Neurosci*. 2016;38:77-92. doi: 10.1159/000442595. Epub 2016 Apr 1. PubMed PMID: 27035594.

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