

Registered Office

Herrmann-Debrouxlaan 40
1160 Brussel – Belgium

Foundation of Public Utility

VAT BE 406.568.867
CBE: 0406 568 867

Research Centres

Boeretang 200
2400 Mol – Belgium

Chemin du Cyclotron 6
1348 Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve – Belgium

The book by Evelyne Cerf-Pecher, "Charles Pecher (1913 - 1941) et le Strontium Radioactif", recounts the discoveries, the life and the tragic end of Charles Pecher, Belgian pioneer in nuclear medicine whose work has long been ignored. It is written in French, but a 38 page English short version is included.

In 1939, as a young doctor graduated from the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Ch. Pecher obtained a BAEF grant and went to work at UC Berkeley with Ernest Lawrence (Nobel Prize in Physics, 1939). He showed that strontium-89, having properties similar to calcium, is taken up in bones. He was the first

- to perform a bone scan on a mouse (by autoradiography);
- to carry out a series of dynamic scintigraphies;
- to successfully complete a first clinical trial using Sr-89 to treat pain caused by bone tumors.

In 1941, Ch. Pecher was called up to arms by Belgium. He was ordered to join a provisional Belgian base in Canada. The Belgian government in London remained deaf to the requests of the highest scientific (E. Lawrence) and political (H. Hoover) American authorities, asking that he should be allowed to continue his research in Berkeley. As for the United States government, it prohibited Ch. Pecher from leaving the territory. Patriot, Charles Pecher would however decide to go beyond this prohibition and left for Canada. He was found dead a few days later, only a few weeks before the birth of his daughter Evelyne. Ch. Pecher was 27 years old.

At the end of 1942, the United States became involved in the Second World War and studies surrounding nuclear research leading to the bomb, including those on Sr-89, became military secrets. The works of Ch. Pecher were classified at the highest level of secrecy. It would take several decades before the secrecy of its work was lifted.

The book, of which SCK CEN is pleased to offer you a copy, is the homage of his daughter Evelyne to the man, the researcher and the father whom she never knew.

The Belgian Nuclear Research centre, SCK CEN, a global player in research and production of radioisotopes and their medical applications, has decided to support the publication of this story, a mixture of science, biography and politics, in order to complete the history of nuclear medicine and thus help to illustrate the pioneering role of Charles Pecher.

We hope you will be as passionate about the book as it captivated us. If it weren't for a very real and personal biography, it would be a great spy novel and scientific investigation. In order to allow its wider dissemination, an e-book version is available on different platforms. SCK CEN is committed to dedicating all of its sales revenues to nuclear medicine research.

Frank Deconinck
Derrick Gosselin
Eric van Walle

