

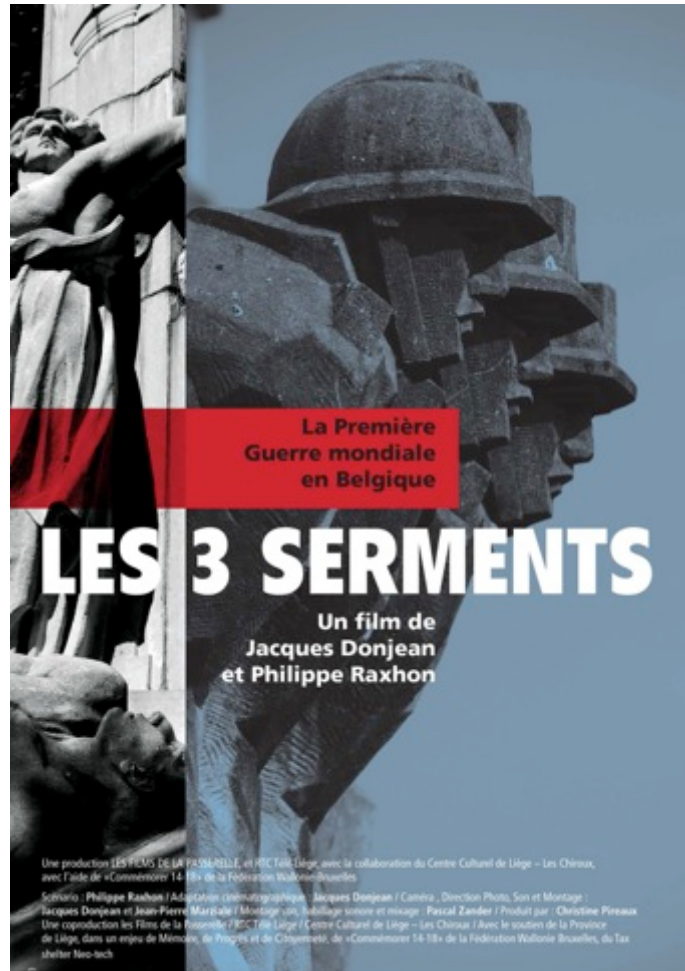
THE 3 PLEDGES

A film by **Jacques DONJEAN AND Philippe RAXHON**

Produced by **LES FILMS DE LA PASSERELLE and RTC TÉLÉ-LIÈGE**

On 4 August 1914, Germany invaded Belgium.

The Province of Liège became the “front door” to the First World War



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I. Summary of the film

“The Three Pledges” recounts the significant events of the First World War and the occupation of Belgium by the Germans, through the story of François, a young Belgian soldier who was 22 years old in 1914. Events force him to take three pledges, of duty, of the heart and of remembrance.

This documentary-fiction film plunges its audience into the heart of the fighting and allows it to experience the full force of the four-year-long war. It is illustrated with archive material from the period, by re-enactments of events, with images of remembrance sites today and by interviews with historians from several different countries.

“What is the value of a vow when you are no longer master of your own destiny, when your small, peaceful, neutral homeland is invaded by the most powerful army in the world, when its population is martyred, occupied, humiliated but not beaten?”

The DVD is in four languages and is extended and complemented by five bonus features which shed light on various aspects of the Great War: “Visé, the Martyr Town”; “The Loncin Fort”; the significance of the commemoration of the First World War for historians and “The Effect of the First World War on Industry” with Professor Robert Halleux.

II. The screenplay of “The Three Pledges”

a) The Vow of Duty

François, a 22-year-old from Visé, working as a baker in Liège, was called up into the Belgian army on 31 July 1914. On 4 August, neutral Belgium was invaded by 800,000 German soldiers, without a declaration of war. The first casualty of the First World War was killed in the Province of Liège.

François takes part in the defence of Loncin Fort. Assembled in the fort's courtyard, the garrison of 550 men swear never to surrender. The fighting is terrifying. François manages to escape and tries to rejoin the Belgian army led by King Albert I which is continuing the fight near Antwerp.

b) The Vow of the Heart

On the road to Antwerp, he meets civilian refugees from the fighting. One of them tells him about the massacre of civilians in Visé, and that all his family has been killed. François swears to fight on for his homeland and his family. Unable to get to Antwerp, he crosses the border into the Netherlands, which is also neutral, from where he hopes to rejoin the Belgian front line on the coast. An English spy persuades him to return to Liège to work there for the British War Office.

c) The Vow of Remembrance

Daily life in Liège continues under the German occupation. The resistance network set up by Dieudonné Lambrecht is dismantled by the Germans and he is executed. François joins the network organised by Walthère Dewé, who swears to avenge Lambrecht's death. Dewé's network, known as the "Dame Blanche", grows into the biggest First World War resistance network in Europe. Many years later, François takes up the challenge of passing on the story of what he did during the war.





III. Technical details

Director	Jacques Donjean
Screenplay	Philippe Raxhon
Producers	Christine Pireaux (Les Films de la Passerelle) Jean-Louis Radoux (RTC Télé Liège)
Assistant Director	Bernard Garant
Camera	Jean-Pierre Martial
Film Editor	Jean-Pierre Martial
Sound Mixing	Pascal Zander
Document managers	Christine Donjean Allain-Baudouin Simonis
Narrators	French: Oualid Ouahabi & Christian Crahay Dutch: Steffan Sattler & Rudi Klinkenberg English: Richard Wells & Simon Schrimpton Smith German: Hans Jaspers & Roland Ramaekers

Technical Data