



**Chandra X-ray  
Observatory Center**

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**RCW 86:** A supernova remnant that could match the oldest known supernova in recorded history.  
(Credit: Chandra: NASA/CXC/Univ. of Utrecht/J.Vink et al. XMM-Newton: ESA/Univ. of Utrecht/J.Vink et al.)

**Caption:** A combined image from the Chandra and XMM-Newton X-ray observatories of RCW 86 shows the expanding ring of debris that was created after a massive star in the Milky Way collapsed onto itself and exploded. The new X-ray data were used to determine that RCW 86 is likely the remains of a new bright star recorded by Chinese astronomers in 185 A.D. The Chandra observations focused on the northeast (left-hand) side of RCW 86, and show that X-ray radiation is produced both by high-energy electrons accelerated in a magnetic field (blue) as well as heat from the blast itself (red).

**Scale:** Chandra field of view is 38 arcmin across.

*Chandra X-ray Observatory ACIS Image*

*CXC operated for NASA by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory*