

Assistance to the wounded and the sick of the armed forces

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross**

Band (Jahr): - **(1952)**

PDF erstellt am: **27.05.2024**

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II. Assistance to the Wounded and Sick of the Armed Forces

MEDICAL PERSONNEL

The ICRC has continued its work in connection with the categories of medical personnel who would be collaborating, in a conflict, with the Medical Services of the land, sea and air forces.

At the suggestion of the Swiss Red Cross the ICRC made an enquiry in all countries signatory to the Geneva Conventions as to the status and duties of the various categories of nursing personnel in war time. The questionnaires sent to National Societies and Army Medical Services resulted in 65 replies from 47 countries. The information received was examined, and then summarized in a general report entitled *Training, Duties, Status and Terms of Enrolment of the Medical Personnel Assigned to the Care of the Wounded and Sick in the Armed Forces*. The conclusions of this report were unanimously accepted by the members of the Health, Medical Personnel and Social Aid Commission of the XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference¹. The ICRC hopes that, with an equal standard of training, medical personnel in the various countries may enjoy similar status in order to encourage international collaboration of medical teams ; and at its suggestion the study of this question will be pursued by the International Information Office for Military Medicine and Pharmacy.

Further, at the request of certain National Societies of countries which have ratified the Fourth Geneva Convention,

¹ See *Part III*, Chapter I, page 64, and Chapter II, page 67.

the ICRC has tried to summarize, in a convenient form, the provisions of this Convention which concern the *protection of civilian hospitals and their personnel in time of war*.

ASSISTANCE TO THE DISABLED

The International Committee's work on behalf of the disabled gradually increased during 1952. The object in view was to provide war-disabled who could not be assisted by their national institutions with the means of making the best possible return to normal life and of taking up remunerative employment.

To this end the ICRC worked in close co-operation with National Societies and endeavoured to provide necessitous disabled persons with medicaments which were unavailable locally, or with prostheses, apparatus or appliances intended to facilitate their taking up employment. The ICRC has lent its assistance in 15 different European countries by :

- (a) collective or individual relief action,
- (b) indirect assistance in the form of information.

In connection with *collective relief action*¹ the ICRC distributed 617 Braille watches and 20 repeaters to war blinded in Austria, Germany, France and Poland. It forwarded to Australia Braille watches purchased by the Red Cross Society of that country, and distributed in Austria and Finland 8 typewriters and 3 tandems for the blind as well as an invalid carriage for persons having lost both legs. In Jordan and Greece 41 prostheses or orthopaedic appliances were supplied, and in Bulgaria 75 blankets for tubercular disabled in the Tzarev Brod Home. In addition, by agreement with the Yugoslav Red Cross, the ICRC presented establishments for the re-education of war disabled in Jugoslavia with vocational training apparatus purchased in the United Kingdom.

¹ A certain number of these gifts were purchased with the balance of a legacy received from Australia in favour of Finnish and Polish disabled.

The *individual requests for assistance* led to the study of 1,081 new cases representing 16 nationalities. Of these, 361 were helped by the ICRC, and a number of others by local aid organisations.

The total value of collective and individual assistance to the disabled in 1952 was Swiss francs 94,110.

By means of *approaches and enquiries* the ICRC obtained facilities from the authorities of various countries for its work of assistance to the disabled, in connection with currency transfers and exemption from Customs duties.
