

Assistance to members of the armed forces

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RELIEF ACTION AND ASSISTANCE

ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF FORMER MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE HANDS OF DETAINING POWERS, TRACING AND IDENTIFICATION OF MISSING PERSONS.

In 1955 the ICRC continued its activity in favour of prisoners of war and ex-servicemen still held by Detaining Powers.

It sent, in particular, over 1,500 *enquiries* (2,911 in 1954) to the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Moscow, concerning persons reported missing in the USSR during the last world conflict, or in the early post-war period. New enquiries opened at the request of the families, concerned nationals of fifteen different countries.¹

The methods employed for the *tracing and identification* of missing members of the armed forces are described in the chapter entitled "Central Prisoners of War Agency" (See pp. 8-10).

The ICRC dealt successfully with the transmission of 2,360 *Family Messages* (3,417 in 1954) (similar in form to the "Civilian Messages" instituted during the Spanish Civil War), and the exchange of such messages between the Arab States and Israel, also with East European countries, the USSR in particular, on behalf of nationals of those countries, and aliens, whose relatives had received no news for some considerable time.

Over 3,500 *relief parcels* were sent from Geneva—(3,400 to the USSR and 100 to Albania)—of a value of about 130,000 Swiss francs (2,900 in 1954). In most cases the parcels were sent directly

¹ Countries are listed in descending numerical order of cases : Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, USSR, Austria, Hungary, France, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Belgium, Luxemburg, Bulgaria and Switzerland.

to the addressees, and in others through the National Societies, for distribution. The checking of addresses, when necessary, was made in the card-indexes of the Central Prisoners of War Agency. The contents of the parcels (clothing, foodstuffs, tonics, toilet articles and medicaments) varied according to the geographical situation of the camps and prisons, and the season of the year. Numerous letters have been received by the ICRC from liberated prisoners who, on returning to their country, wished to express their gratitude for the help given by Geneva.

Through the intermediary of its delegates, the ICRC also visited *hospitals, camps and other places of detention* where prisoners of war were held, particularly in the Middle East, Israel and Egypt.

ASSISTANCE TO FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR.

Mention has been made in previous annual reports to the activity assumed by the ICRC in connection with the application of the Peace Treaty with Japan (San Francisco, September 8, 1951).¹ According to the provisions of Article 16, certain Japanese assets, or their equivalent, are to be used for the compensation of former prisoners of war (members of the armed forces of the Allied Powers party to the Treaty) who suffered undue hardship during their captivity. The negotiations for the implementation of the Article having reached the final stage (Tokyo, November 30, 1954), the Japanese Government handed the necessary funds to the ICRC, in 1955, and thus fulfilled its obligations.

¹ Contracting Parties to the Peace Treaty : Argentine Republic, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Ceylon, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxemburg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Salvador, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Japan.

The amount of the funds is equivalent to about 66,525,000 francs in Swiss currency.

A study is now being made to determine the amount due to the former prisoners of each nationality concerned, taking as a basis for distribution the total number of prisoners of war of each country who are entitled to compensation under Article 16. Each of the States concerned was requested to supply the ICRC with a complete list of members of its armed forces who were prisoners of war in Japanese hands. The majority of the lists have now been received by the ICRC ; it must, therefore, carry out the necessary checking, to make sure, in particular, that all the States concerned have based their lists on identical standards, and that the persons whose names have been communicated by the States fulfil the two conditions provided in Article 16, i.e. that they were members of the armed forces of the Allied Powers, and were detained, as prisoners of war, by the Japanese authorities.

The nominal lists received from the different States are first examined, in order to discover possible errors, and to note doubtful cases which will have to be verified. Some checking in the form of " spot checks " is also done by comparing the lists with documents sent to the Central Prisoners of War Agency by the Japanese authorities during hostilities. The most important part of the checking is done on the spot, in the various countries concerned, by persons specially appointed by the ICRC, in conjunction with the authorities, in order to throw light on doubtful cases, and also to verify, by reference to the documents on which the lists are based ; such documents, in fact, provide proof that the persons concerned belonged to the armed forces and were prisoners of war. In this last check, it is, of course, impossible to examine each individual case, but a certain number of spot checks are made. It is only when all the lists have reached the ICRC, and checks have been successfully carried out in all the countries concerned, that an equitable distribution of Japanese assets between the ex-prisoners of war of different nationalities will be possible.

The Supervisory Council, whose work is to guide the ICRC in its delicate task, is composed of Professor Paul Carry, Member of the ICRC, Chairman, Hans Bachmann, Director of Finance for the town of Winterthur, Ernest Frœlich, Director General of

the C^{ie} Suisse de Réassurances, Eugène Hasler, former Federal Judge, and Frédéric Schnorf, former Director General of the Swiss National Bank. The Council meets whenever circumstances make it necessary.

The ICRC has also been called upon to issue *certificates of captivity* for other categories of former prisoners of war, on whose behalf their Governments have instituted a system of compensation which, in many cases, is proportionate to the duration of captivity. Requests for certificates are received, in particular, from former members of the German armed forces ; the major part of the German archives were destroyed at the end of the war, and proof of captivity in foreign hands can only be supplied by the Central Prisoners of War Agency. In 1955, the ICRC issued about 2,500 certificates (3,058 in 1954) on behalf of former prisoners of war of seven different nationalities.¹

During the past year, the ICRC continued to examine cases in dispute, and to take steps to obtain documents required to enable ex-servicemen to receive pensions. This work, which still goes on after conflicts have come to an end, involves a considerable amount of correspondence with National Red Cross Societies and public authorities.

WAR DISABLED

In 1955, the ICRC also gave assistance to the war disabled and to disabled civilian victims of events, in eighteen countries.² It despatched relief supplies, in the form of collective consignments or individual parcels to a total amount of 74,000 Swiss francs (97,205 in 1954), divided up as follows : ex-servicemen : 62,519 fr. ; civilian victims : 11,481 fr.

The *collective consignments* in 1955 represented an outlay of 61,000 Swiss francs (73,480 in 1954). A list of items in order of value is given below :—

¹ Austrians, French, Germans, Italians, Jugoslavs, Libyans and Poles.

² Albania, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, German Federal Republic, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Italy, Jugoslavia, Lebanon, Poland and Viet Nam.

Setting up a workshop for the manufacture of artificial limbs for Viet Nam war disabled, in Saïgon.

Purchase of invalid carriages for amputated or paralysed Volksdeutsche in Germany, and artificial limbs for Volksdeutsche war-mutilated in Austria.

Supplying artificial limbs for war disabled under detention in Greece.

Assistance to Palestinian war-disabled refugees in Lebanon.

Relief for Polish war-disabled refugees in France.

Supplying orthopaedic equipment, Braille watches for the blind, and pharmaceutical products, to Albania, Australia, Egypt, Finland, France and Guatemala.

During the year, the cost of *individual relief* provided for the war disabled of fifteen different nationalities in particularly distressing circumstances, who were not, for various reasons, entitled to assistance in their countries of residence, amounted to Sw. Fr. 13,000 (23,725 in 1954).

The technical methods employed for the distribution of these relief supplies, which included medicaments, tonics, surgical boots and artificial limbs, elastic bandages and stockings, trusses, Braille watches, spectacles, hearing aids, warm clothing and underclothing, and foodstuffs, were constantly improved. Efforts were made, after a careful study of each case, with the help of the National Society concerned and the ICRC Delegation, when necessary, to find a method which was fully adapted to the needs, which has, in fact, to be revised as often as possible in order to take account of the development of each case.

PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO THE TREATMENT OF THE WOUNDED AND SICK

The ICRC pursued its careful study of the question of co-ordination in connection with the training of the personnel required for Red Cross activities in time of war.

It remained in contact, during the year, with the Army Medical Services of various countries, and the National Red Cross Societies

which undertake to recruit nursing personnel and to raise the standard of training, and the quality, of nurses, and to train voluntary aids.

The ICRC took part in the XVIIIth Meeting of the International Information Office for Military Medicine and Pharmacy (Istanbul, August 1955), attended by delegates of Army Medical Services, members of the International Committee of Military Medicine and Pharmacy.

Dr. E. Gloor, Vice-President, and M. J. Pictet, Director for General Affairs, represented the ICRC at this meeting, of which the purpose was to study the question of the protection of Army Medical Services and, in particular, the activity of Protecting Powers in the medical field, and the medical treatment of neutrals and non-belligerents during a conflict. These questions had given rise to preliminary investigation among all members of the International Committee of Military Medicine and Pharmacy ; a report on the replies received had been prepared by the Committee's representatives and submitted, with their comments, to the Conference Bureau.

The ICRC continued the distribution of studies published by it in 1953, entitled " The Doctor in the Geneva Conventions of 1949 ", by M. J. P. Schoenholzer, and " Medical Personnel assigned to the Care of the Wounded and Sick in the Armed Forces ", by M^{lle} L. Odier, Member of the ICRC. Following requests on the subject, it published in 1955, under the title " Training Course for Red Cross Nursing Auxiliaries and Voluntary Aids ", a treatise by M^{lle} H. Nussbaum, with a preface by M^{lle} L. Odier, intended for the use of nursing auxiliaries. The ICRC also supplied information to doctors, nurses and male nurses, in connection with professional training, its own activities, and the prescriptions of the Geneva Conventions which have such a great bearing on their work as a whole.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MEDAL

Every two years the ICRC honours professional nurses and voluntary aids who have distinguished themselves exceptionally in caring for the sick or wounded, by the award of the Florence

Nightingale *Medal*, instituted by the IXth International Red Cross Conference.

In 1955, for the fifteenth distribution of the Medal, the following 28 awards were made, embracing 17 different nationalities¹:

Amelia BALMACEDA LAZCANO, Voluntary Aid and Social Worker, (*Chile*),

Eva Ulrika BECK-FRIIS, Professional Nurse, Directress of the Nurses Training School of the Swedish Red Cross (*Sweden*),

Ruby G. BRADLEY, Professional Nurse, Lt. Col. Army Nurse Corps (*United States of America*),

Nina CARAKIOZIDES, Voluntary Aid,

Despina CHOURSOGLOU, Professional Public Health Nurse, Matron of the Greek Red Cross Hospital (*Greece*),

Blanca Julia CLERMONT, Professional Nurse, met her death while engaged in the evacuation of the wounded during the San Juan earthquake (*Argentine Republic*),

Margaretta CRAIG, Professional Nurse, Principal of the College of Nursing, New Delhi (*India*),

Gerda DREISER, Assistant Nurse, member of the staff of the German Red Cross management (*German Federal Republic*),

Kaja Egel FOGET, Professional Nurse, Matron (*Denmark*),

Geneviève de GALARD-TERRAUBE, Professional Nurse, Air Convoy Corps (*France*),

Jeanne GAVOUYERE, Professional Nurse (*France*),

Hertha GROLLER, Professional Nurse, Matron (*Austria*),

Verna HAGMAN, Professional Nurse (*Sweden*),

Hermine HANSGIRG, Professional Nurse, Matron of Feldbach Hospital (*Austria*),

Sister Julie Fanny Lina HOFMAN, Professional Nurse, founder of a home for mentally defective and incurable children (*Switzerland*),

Anna HOLTHE, Professional Nurse, Member of the Executive Board of the State Central Institute for Disabled Persons (*Norway*),

¹ See 408th ICRC Circular of May 12, 1955.

Haya ISHIBASHI, Professional Nurse, Director of Nurses at the Matsuzawa Mental Hospital (*Japan*),
Ismat KHANUM SHAH, Professional Nurse, President of the Trained Nurses Association of Pakistan (*Pakistan*),
Ella Priscilla JORDEN, Professional Nurse, Matron B.R.C.S. at Irbid Hospital (*United Kingdom*),
Sophie KIENZLE, Professional Nurse, Directress of Lorch Sanatorium (*German Federal Republic*),
Isabel MAITLAND STEWART, Professional Nurse, Professor and Director of Nursing Education (*United States of America*),
Lucy Thelma MARSHALL, Professional Nurse and Tutor Sister (*Australia*),
Jane McLARTY, Professional Nurse and Tutor Sister (*Union of South Africa*),
Geneviève PONSOT, Professional Nurse, Head of the French Red Cross Emergency Service (*France*),
Marie SCHICKINGER, Professional Nurse, Cerny Hospital, Heidelberg (*German Federal Republic*),
Takeno TANIMOTO, Professional Nurse, Assistant-Director of the Japanese Red Cross Central Hospital (*Japan*),
Florence TAYLOR, Professional Nurse, Dean of the School of Nursing, Christian Medical College Hospital, Vellore (*India*),
Ingrid WYLLER, Professional Nurse and Tutor Sister, Director of the Norwegian Nurses Association School of Advanced Nursing Education (*Norway*).
