

# Preparation of medical personnel and assistance to war disabled

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Organisation (IRO) ” was made available to the ITS by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. The practical value of these documents has been shown to be considerable, but their filing has entailed long and patient work.

## **PREPARATION OF MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND HELP TO WAR DISABLED**

With a view to possible conflicts, the ICRC must contribute “ to the preparation and development of medical personnel and medical equipment, in co-operation with the Red Cross organisations, the Medical Services of the armed forces and other competent authorities ”, as stated in the Statutes of the International Red Cross (art. VI, figure 5). This is the task of the Medical Personnel Section.

Unfortunately, even in peace time, most countries suffer from a grave shortage of professional medical personnel. The ICRC encourages the National Red Cross Societies to instruct voluntary medical personnel which, in the event of conflict, would become the auxiliary of the Medical Services of the armed forces.

To this effect, the ICRC remains in as close contact as possible with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies by means of frequent visits and missions. In 1961, on the occasion of her journey to Australia, the Head of the Medical Personnel Section, Miss A. Pfirter, visited the National Societies or the civil Medical Services and the Medical Services of the armed forces of the following countries : Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, India, Nepal, Burma, Thailand, Malaya (Society not yet officially recognised), Australia, New Zealand, Laos, Pakistan.

The ICRC has also frequently sent National Societies documentation on the rights and duties which the Geneva Conventions confer on medical personnel in time of war.

In view of the importance of maintaining contact between the ICRC and the nursing world, the Head of the Medical Personnel Section, participated in the 12th quadrennial Congress of the International Council of Nurses, in April 1961, in Melbourne. More than 2,300 nurses from thirty-three countries took part.

The Medical Personnel Section has remained in close communication with the National Nursing Associations and has co-operated in exchanges of nurses between these Associations.

In 1961, the ICRC was frequently visited by nurses from Switzerland and abroad, and groups of visitors came from the following institutions : “ Le Bon Secours ”, in Geneva ; the Hospital School of Thoune ; the Lindenhof, at Berne ; the Swiss Red Cross refresher School at Zurich ; “ La Source ” at Lausanne ; the School of Social Studies in Geneva ; the French Red Cross Nursing School at Valence and the Italian Red Cross Nursing and Health Visitors School at Turin. To these can be added numerous nurses and other visitors interested in these questions.

**War disabled Service.** — In 1961, the ICRC concluded its action on behalf of young blind Italians or those with serious eye illnesses. Since 1957, 54 children and young people have received treatment ; 16 of them came to Geneva, sometimes on several occasions, for visits. They all expressed their warm gratitude to Professor A. Franceschetti, a member of the ICRC, to his assistants and to the staff of the Ophthalmological Clinic in Geneva.

The action which the ICRC had been undertaking since 1958 on behalf of Algerian war disabled who had taken refuge in Morocco, also reached completion in 1961. In all, relief supplies sent comprised 25 provisional or final artificial lower limbs, 8 pairs of orthopaedic shoes for amputated cases or those wounded in the foot, 112 artificial eyes, 70 pairs of crutches and 2 invalid carriages.

The ICRC also continued its consignments of equipment for the artificial limb workshop at Sarajevo (Yugoslavia). In 1961, it also supplied it with special tools for the manufacture of certain types of artificial limbs.

Finally, it met the requests of certain National Societies by sending them such items as a resuscitation appliance and a stretcher (to the Polish Red Cross) and twelve Braille watches intended for war blinded (to the Indian Red Cross).