



REVUE  
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DE LA  
CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

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# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## RELIEF ACTION OF THE ICRC IN BEHALF OF THE WAR-DISABLED

### GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC

It will be recalled that since the Second World War the ICRC has had the occasion already to supply artificial limbs for « Volksdeutsche » and German refugees in the German Federal Republic. A further action in connection with the same category of war victims started in 1955; it has just come to a close.

It consisted of gifts of invalid chairs to disabled refugees in poor circumstances who received no assistance from the State or German charitable organisations. The ICRC then asked the Red Cross of the German Federal Republic to inform it of requests received for invalid chairs and to give first preference to persons who had to make regular journeys to and from their place of work and, secondly, to young people whose disablement prevented their regular attendance at study courses.

The social workers of the German Red Cross in the various Länder (Bavaria, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Northern Westphalia) made enquiries among the disabled. Lists were sent to the ICRC in Geneva who made a choice of the beneficiaries. Their names were sent to the German Red Cross who ordered the invalid chairs from the various manufacturers and undertook to deliver them direct to the recipients.

The invalid chairs remain in the possession of the disabled persons until their recovery, or death, when they become the property of the National Society which makes use of them as it thinks appropriate.

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About one hundred invalid chairs have been distributed; as we have said, the action is now finished and the numerous letters of thanks received from the beneficiaries prove that it was successful. The International Committee was very pleased to have the efficient co-operation of the German Red Cross and its social workers, who dealt with the distribution of the invalid chairs to the disabled of the German ethnical minority who needed this assistance to start work again and to take their normal place in society.

### ITALY

A train from Rome deposited at Geneva Station a crowd of travellers eager to start their holidays. The sad little face of Damiano, showing signs of fatigue after a long journey and with his right eye dimmed by an opaque film, threw a shadow over the joyful scene. This Calabrian child, aged six years, had come from his distant village to Geneva for an operation (corneal graft) which will perhaps restore the sight of this eye wounded in an accident. This boy is the 45th beneficiary of the action undertaken by the ICRC since 1956 in behalf of young Italians whose eye sight is lost or seriously impaired. They have been given treatment or operated on by Professor Franceschetti at the Geneva Eye Hospital<sup>1</sup>.

Damiano, brought to the notice of the ICRC by the Italian Red Cross, was in charge of Mrs. L. della Valle Ferri, Superintendent of the Voluntary Nurses of the Xth Mobilisation Centre of the Italian Red Cross, who was also accompanying another patient, Antonio C., from Benevento. This boy has already twice received treatment at the Geneva Eye Hospital as part of this relief action. He has returned for a final operation and is anxiously awaiting the result. Mrs. L. della Valle Ferri and the two boys were met at the station by two representatives of the ICRC and went immediately to the hospital. This action of the ICRC is being continued and other disabled persons will shortly come to Geneva to be given the treatment they require.

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<sup>1</sup> See English Supplement of the *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, February 1959.

## REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

The *Revue Internationale* has already referred to the offer made to the Viet Nam by the ICRC to help the Vietnamese war-disabled by making the necessary material available for setting up a complete workshop for the manufacture of artificial legs<sup>1</sup>. The International Committee also arranged for British technicians to be sent to Saïgon to train Vietnamese workers. This Orthopaedic Centre was officially handed over to the Viet Nam authorities by the ICRC in 1956.

In 1958, Mr. A.M. Leuenberger, delegate of the ICRC in Saigon, drew the Committee's attention to the need for an ambulance at the Centre. With a view to continuing its effort in behalf of the war-disabled, the ICRC decided to give a favourable response to this suggestion and the ambulance, presented to the Direction des anciens combattants et victimes de la guerre au Vietnam (Ex-Servicemen and War Victims Association) was officially handed over at Saigon on May 23, 1959, during a ceremony which was attended by various leading figures in Viet Nam and the representatives of several Ministries.

Mr. Leuenberger addressed the meeting and recalled the interest—proved by the gift of the ambulance—taken in Geneva in the development of the Orthopaedic Centre, which is directed by Colonel Bui-Van-Hai. He also mentioned that the ICRC, which was one of the founders of the Rehabilitation Centre, had also, on several occasions, supplied tools, peg legs and wheel chairs for the disabled. Colonel Bui-Van-Hai said in his reply :

“ It is a great honour for me to speak today to an audience which shows such constant concern for our war-disabled. Allow me, first of all, to thank the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross for taking part in this little ceremony and to introduce him to all of you as one of the principal benefactors of the Orthopaedic and Professional Rehabilitation Centre in Saigon.

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<sup>1</sup> See English Supplement of the *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, January 1956 and July 1959.

It was he, in fact, who had the idea of installing an artificial limb workshop, which was the beginning of the Orthopaedic Centre. Two British technicians were sent to Saigon to instruct the Vietnamese workers who, after three months apprenticeship, were able to continue the work under the direction of M.O. Captain Le-Van-Thong.

From the time the Centre was started in 1956, he has never failed to give us valuable assistance in the rapid development of this work, which was new and difficult for us in view of the limited resources and funds at our disposal.

Today, thanks to our continued effort and under the kind auspices of the Government, in particular the Ministry for National Defence, the undertaking is now making good progress and has been of great assistance in improving the conditions of our war-disabled. Moreover, although it has come to maturity, it is not neglected by its benefactors. The International Committee of the Red Cross has added to its good action by making another and more symbolical gesture—the gift of a specially equipped motor ambulance to the Orthopaedic and Professional Rehabilitation Centre in Viet Nam.

This ambulance, equipped with all necessary and up-to-date apparatus, can carry a large number of patients with comfort. It contains removable beds, medical apparatus, hospital instruments, a first aid chest, air-conditioning apparatus—in fact everything that is necessary, and is most complete.

In future, our patients will no longer have to suffer the discomfort of transport by an ordinary vehicle. It is a very valuable gift.

As I have said, however, the fact of this ambulance having been given is more valuable than the gift itself, since this gesture of the International Committee shows its unfailing concern for our disabled. It is a practical expression of the highest and most noble sentiments of mutual and brotherly help, to which all honour is due at all times and in every place.

May I express the sincere thanks of all our war-disabled, and my own, for all the generous aid afforded to our Orthopaedic Centre.”

GERMAN JOURNALISTS  
VISIT INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

Fourteen German journalists, representing leading press and radio organs of the German Federal Republic, concluded on September 1 a study-visit of the International Red Cross.

The visit of the press and radio editors was arranged by the German Federal Republic Red Cross in connection with the Society's commemoration of the " Centenary of the Birth of the Red Cross Idea ". It is the first such initiative to be undertaken by a National Red Cross Society.

At the International Committee of the Red Cross following short talks by several staff members, Vice-President Frederic Sordet chaired a discussion on the institution's work and activities. In the evening, the former President of the ICRC, Carl Burckhardt, received the visitors at Vinzel.

At the League of Red Cross Societies, Secretary General Henry W. Dunning, and other staff officers, reported to the journalists on functions and services of the world Red Cross federation. The session closed with a question-and-answer period at which the journalists posed questions to League and ICRC representatives.

## NEWS AND DOCUMENTS

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### A STEP FORWARD IN THE PROTECTION OF HOSPITAL SHIPS AND RESCUE CRAFT

The Diplomatic Conference held at Geneva in 1949, which was attended by Plenipotentiaries from almost every State in the world, gave attention to the question of ensuring the maximum protection for hospital ships and rescue craft. The Committee responsible for examining the draft Second Geneva Convention, in particular the articles relating to war at sea, gave special consideration to the problem of means of transmission and communication between protected ships, on the one hand, and land, naval and air forces, on the other hand, in order to afford the maximum protection to such ships and enable them to operate effectively. The Italian Delegation presented a draft article containing detailed provisions for regulating such communication. The Diplomatic Conference considered, however, that it could not lay down regulations on this matter, which was not within its strict field of competence. The Conference therefore merely confined itself to expressing its interest and concern in two resolutions: the first calls on the States to settle among themselves at an early date the problem of such communication; the second makes provision for certain measures which should be taken by protected ships. The text of these resolutions (Resolutions No. 6 and 7 of the Diplomatic Conference of 1949) is as follows:

## RESOLUTION NO. 6

Whereas the present Conference has not been able to raise the question of the technical study of means of communication between hospital ships, on the one hand, and warships and military aircraft on the other, since that study went beyond its terms of reference; whereas this question is of the greatest importance for the safety and efficient operation of hospital ships,

the Conference recommends that the High Contracting Parties will, in the near future, instruct a Committee of Experts to examine technical improvements of modern means of communication between hospital ships, on the one hand, and warships and military aircraft on the other, and also to study the possibility of drawing up an International Code laying down precise regulations for the use of those means, in order that hospital ships may be assured of the maximum protection and be enabled to operate with the maximum efficiency.

## RESOLUTION NO. 7

The Conference, being desirous of securing the maximum protection for hospital ships, expresses the hope that all High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea of August 12, 1949, will arrange that, when ever conveniently practicable, such ships shall frequently and regularly broadcast particulars of their position, route and speed.

Soon after the Diplomatic Conference, the Italian authorities took the first step towards implementing Resolution No. 6 and drew up draft regulations intended to ensure « telecommunication between hospital ships or medical aircraft and the naval or air forces of the Parties to the conflict ». At the request of the Italian Government, the Swiss Federal Council, acting in its capacity as depositary of the Geneva Conventions, transmitted this draft in March 1950 to all the States which had signed the Geneva Conventions so that they might study it with a view to the possible convening of a Committee of experts.

Over the next few years, twenty-eight replies to this communication were received in Berne. A number of amendments were proposed and it became clear that the text was not yet

sufficiently developed to serve as a basis for consideration by a meeting of experts.

The concern which had been expressed at the Diplomatic Conference, however, also had repercussions in other parts of the world. In particular, the Scandinavian countries were anxious to ensure the maximum protection in time of conflict for their many rescue craft. Spurred on by the efforts of the Director of the Swedish Sea Rescue Institution, Captain H. Hansson, a set of regulations was drafted in 1958; although their purpose was the same as that of the Italian draft regulations, they differed considerably from the latter as regards both their general conception and the technical details. The International Committee of the Red Cross was requested to communicate this draft to the Swiss federal authorities with a view to their transmission to the States party to the Conventions.

This transmission was delayed for several reasons: two draft texts, basically different from one another, were in existence; it was feared that their successive presentation might give rise to misunderstanding, and lastly there was a possibility that the Italian authorities might convene a Committee of experts. On the other hand, it seemed necessary to make a comparative study of the Italian and Swedish drafts and try to arrive at a single text which would also take account of the principal comments submitted by States on the first Italian draft.

At the suggestion of Sweden, it was then decided to arrange for a small group of experts to meet, consisting of specialists from the two countries concerned—Italy and Sweden. The International Committee of the Red Cross offered accommodation for the meeting, together with all the necessary material assistance. In addition, the Swiss federal authorities readily agreed to send experts on international law and telecommunication to take part in the discussions.

Although the group was very small, it nevertheless included highly qualified persons. Its meeting lasted three days, from June 9 to 11, 1959, and it rapidly became apparent that agreement could easily be reached and that there was no divergence of opinion regarding the technical means of applying the general principles.

The following persons participated in the meeting :

For Italy: Captain G. Fiorani, of the Italian Admiralty, and Mr. F. Nicotera, Engineer, Inspector-General in the Ministry for Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Services.

For Sweden: Captain H. Hansson, Director of the Swedish Sea Rescue Institution, Captain A. Björling, of the Swedish Admiralty and Mr. T. Övergaard, Director in the Swedish Telecommunication Office.

For Switzerland: Mr. H. Thévenaz, Professor of international law at the University of Neuchâtel and representing the Federal Political Department, Mr. C. Gillioz and Mr. R. Monnat, respectively Chief and Inspector in the Radio Section of the Swiss Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Administration.

Professor Thévenaz acted as chairman of the meeting.

The new draft regulations adopted by the experts, the text of which may be found below, is as present being studied by the government departments concerned in Italy and Sweden and it is very possible that the Swiss federal authorities may, in the near future, be requested to communicate the text to all the States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

The text of the draft regulations was also presented to the VIIIth International Lifeboat Conference, held at Bremen from June 22 to 25, 1959, by the Swedish delegation. The Conference adopted a resolution calling on States, in the event that this text is transmitted to them by the Swiss Government, to study most carefully the proposals contained therein, whose sole object is to increase the protection afforded by the Second Geneva Convention to hospital ships and rescue craft.

**Means of Radioelectrical and Visual communication to give increased security during armed conflicts to ships, craft and aircraft protected under the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for the Protection of War Victims**

I. — COAST RADIO STATIONS

- A. *During an armed conflict coast radio stations or substitutes therefor*  
 (1) *shall keep permanent watch on the distress radio frequencies 500, 2182 and 8364 Kc/s, or any other distress frequency which might be internationally adopted in the future;*

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- (2) *shall receive on these frequencies distress calls;*
  - (3) *shall receive on these frequencies messages about position, course, and speed emanating from protected ships, craft and aircraft, and any other messages in conformity with the Geneva Conventions of 1949;*
  - (4) *if possible, shall reply to such calls and messages;*
  - (5) *shall retransmit the same calls and messages, in the speediest possible way, to the competent services in order to provide assistance and to ensure that protected ships, craft and aircraft are not attacked in error.*
- B. *Any harmful interference to the said distress radio frequencies and distress communications shall be avoided.*
- C. *If need be, English shall be used as the common language.*

### II. RULES APPLICABLE TO PROTECTED SHIPS AND CRAFT

- I. *All protected ships and craft shall whenever feasible be equipped with the following means of communication;*
  - (a) *Radiotelegraph equipment operating on the frequency 500 Kc/s and/or radiotelephone equipment operating on the frequency 2182 Kc/s, for alarm and communication, and eventually any other equipment operating on frequencies at present recognized, or which may be recognized in the future, for use for distress calls and calls for assistance emanating from ships or aircraft;*
  - (b) *A signalling lantern equipped for transmitting Morse signals in clear language, and if possible with a minimum range of three nautical miles in daylight;*
  - (c) *Signal flags as provided in the International Code of Signals, as large as possible having regard to the masts;*
2. *Protected ships and craft shall also be equipped with the following:*
  - (a) *the International Code of Signals, radio section;*
  - (b) *“ Q ” Code of miscellaneous abbreviations and signals for use in telecommunication, as mentioned in the Radio Regulations in force;*
  - (c) *the International Code of Signals, visual section;*
3. *Protected ships and craft equipped with the above-mentioned means of communication shall be given the same call sign for radio communication and for visual communication; the said call sign shall be included in the notification for which provision is made in Article 22 of the Second Convention of Geneva of 1949.*

*If any collective national call sign is assigned to such protected ships and craft, it shall also be notified to the Parties to the conflict.*

*Where necessary, a collective international call sign approved by the International Telecommunication Union may be used.*

4. *Protected ships and craft which are illegally attacked may have recourse to all the signalling means at their disposal in order to ensure their protection.*

### III. DIRECT COMMUNICATION

#### A. **Between protected ships and craft, on the one hand, and enemy warships or military aircraft, on the other hand**

##### I. Radio communication

- (a) *Communication between protected ships and craft, on the one hand, and enemy warships or military aircraft, on the other hand, may take place by radio, but only at the express request of the enemy warship or military aircraft.*
- (b) *If possible, such communication should be established in accordance with the wishes expressed by the enemy warship or military aircraft over the above-mentioned frequencies.*

##### 2. Communication by visual signalling

*Protected ships and craft, on the one hand, and naval or air forces, on the other, may enter into contact with each other, for purposes of communication or identification, as follows:*

- (a) *by projector, in Morse*
- (b) *by signal flags*
- (c) *by lights, rockets, or any other pyrotechnical device agreed upon by the Parties to the conflict.*

#### B. **Between medical aircraft and enemy armed forces**

*Signalling and communication in order to ensure the safe passage of protected aircraft shall be effected only in accordance with special agreements between the Parties to the conflict. Medical aircraft which are illegally attacked may, however, have recourse to all the signalling means at their disposal in order to ensure their protection.*

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**Important messages from a warship to a hospital-ship**

	" Q " Code	International Code of Signals	
		Radio	Visual
<i>Stop your ship at once</i>	—	IRJKI	K
<i>Stop your ship, I will send a boat</i>	—	EHNBU	OP
<i>Alter course... degrees to starboard</i>	—	BOUCL	JP
<i>Alter course... degrees to port</i>	—	BOTYQ	JO
<i>Continue on your present course</i>	—	BIRCO	JS
<i>You are ordered to proceed to...</i>	—	HANIT	LMS
<i>What harbour do you intend to make for ?</i>	—	EFWUX	GYS
<i>What is your true course ?</i>	QTI	BOROR	ECI
<i>What is your speed ?</i>	QTJ	IPCIZ	WF
<i>I request assistance for shipwrecked in position...</i>	—	—	—
<i>Tune in your r.t.</i>	—	—	UB
<i>Stop sending</i>	QRT	—	—
<i>Indicate your call sign</i>	QRA	ILVUP	NNJ
<i>Move off as quickly as possible</i>	—	—	—
<i>You are standing into danger</i>	—	IPTUH	U
<i>I require medical assistance</i>	—	ALIDL	—

**Important messages from a military aircraft to a hospital-ship**

Message	" Q " Code	International Code of Signals	
		Radio	Visual
<i>Stop your ship at once</i>	—	—	—
<i>Alter course... degrees to starboard</i>	—	BOUCL	JP
<i>Alter course... degrees to port</i>	—	BOTYC	JO
<i>Continue on your present course</i>	—	BIRCO	JS
<i>You are ordered to proceed to...</i>	—	HANIT	LMS
<i>Where are you bound ?</i>	QRD	—	—
<i>What harbour do you intend to make for ?</i>	—	EFWUX	GYS
<i>What is your true course</i>	QTI	BOROR	ECI
<i>What is your speed ?</i>	QTJ	IPCIZ	WF
<i>I request assistance for shipwrecked in position...</i>	—	—	—
<i>Indicate your call sign</i>	QRA	ILVUP	NNJ
<i>Move off as quickly as possible</i>	—	—	—
<i>You are standing into danger</i>	—	IPTUH	U
<i>Stop sending</i>	QRT	—	—
<i>Tune in your r.t.</i>	—	—	UB

## APPENDIX

**Manœuvres:**

*Recent experience has shown that the most appropriate way of signaling from a military aircraft to a protected ship is by manœuvres.*

*Such manoeuvres should be agreed upon, however, by the Parties to the conflict. The manoeuvres indicated below are only given by way of example.*

<b>Message</b>	<b>Manœuvre</b>
<i>Stop your ship at once</i>	<i>Circle the ship at least twice</i>
<i>Continue on your present course</i>	<i>Cross the ship's track astern, at low altitude, opening and closing the throttle or varying the engine speed</i>
<i>Indicate your call sign</i>	<i>Fly over the ship at low altitude at least twice, along its track, opening and closing the throttle or varying the engine speed</i>
<i>Move off as quickly possible</i>	<i>Dive towards the ship repeatedly</i>
<i>You are standing into danger</i>	<i>Cross the ship's track before the bows, at low altitude, opening and closing the throttle or varying the engine speed</i>
<i>Stop sending</i>	<i>Rock the wings, flying away from the ship</i>
<i>Tune in your r.t.</i>	<i>Rock the wings, flying towards the ship.</i>

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