

DISTINCTION

The International Committee has awarded its Silver Medal to one of its delegates, Mr. Roger Vust. It was during a plenary session on June 6, 1963 that Mr. Léopold Boissier gave him this souvenir in the name of the institution over which he presides.

Mr. Vust has represented the ICRC since 1942 in Algeria where, from 1944 to 1945, as assistant to Dr. Wyss-Dunant, he visited the prisoners of war. At the same time he was constantly intervening with the Allied Military Authorities for the organization of relief convoys and the forwarding of civilian messages. From 1945 onwards, he was the head of the Delegation and up to 1947 he also attended to the repatriation of the seriously wounded and to the tracing of missing persons.

In 1955, following events in Algeria, the ICRC again had recourse to his services. Numerous persons came to his home—which was the headquarters of the ICRC representation in Algeria—invoking Red Cross intervention to trace missing persons, to obtain news of prisoners and also seeking aid and relief.

From 1958 until the end of the war in Algeria, Mr. Vust visited places of detention. He continued in office during the troubled times at the early stage of Algerian independence, intensifying his efforts, and taking an active part in all ICRC functions in Algeria including, apart from visits to places of detention and the tracing of missing persons, despatch of relief to regrouped communities, and assistance to the disabled and to all victims of the Algerian conflict in general.

In his exposition of these functions, Mr. Boissier added a few words reflecting Mr. Vust's activities and the spirit in which they were accomplished.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

“ Mr. Vust was guided and inspired by a rare quality of which he is completely possessed, kindness ; an instinctive kindness which seemingly is not aware of itself and is thereby the more profound and the more active. He has witnessed so many acts impelled by hate, thirst for vengeance, cowardice and fear. All that did not diminish one jot his belief in his mission, or his will to do good in the face of all odds. His quiet courage and his equanimity enabled him to maintain a transcendancy over men and situations, constantly guiding him in his task so fraught with peril. Unceasingly, he strove to convince and, to convince, to understand.

Mr. Roger Vust has accomplished a great task in Algeria. By his acts and by his person, he has brought honour to his country and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Innumerable men, women and children, French and Algerian, owe their salvation to him. Therein lies his finest reward.

In the name of the International Committee, I am happy to bestow upon him this Silver Medal as a modest symbol of our gratitude and affection.”
