

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EIGHTEENTH AWARD of the FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MEDAL

II

An account of the moving ceremonies which in many countries marked the awarding of the Florence Nightingale medal appeared in the May 1962 issue of the International Review. Since then news reached Geneva from the National Societies describing this event, which it had not therefore been possible to include in the article on that subject. We now have pleasure in including this information, since our readers will realize the importance of this event in the Red Cross world and will thus have a complete picture of the eighteenth award :

INDIA

Miss Mariam Korah, Superintendent, Lady Reading Health School, Delhi, has rendered 30 years of untiring service to the cause of Nursing in India, having qualified in Nursing and Midwifery in 1932 and as a Health Visitor in 1933. During 1932-1934, Miss Korah did pioneer work in developing maternity and child welfare services under the Rural Development Scheme sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation in Tiruvellur, South India. Since 1939, Miss Korah has been working in the Lady Reading Health School, first as Assistant Superintendent and then as Superintendent and has been successful in instilling in her students a sense of duty, and awareness of their responsibilities. Under her able guidance, the students have learnt to take an active part in various activities in the field of social welfare and public health, be it a Cleanliness Drive, an Immunization campaign or a fund-raising for some good cause. Apart from her regular duties, Miss Korah has been closely

associated with several welfare associations in Delhi and other places, such as the Indian Conference of Social Work and the Trained Nurses Association of India. She has also taken a keen interest in Home Nursing training of the St. John Ambulance Association and has since 1950 served as District Superintendent (Nursing), Delhi St. John Brigade District.

The good reputation enjoyed by the Lady Reading Health School as a School for Public Health Nurses and Health Visitors owes in large measure to Miss Korah's example and drive, and to her devotion to the highest ideals of nursing.

Such were the facts and the outstanding qualities recognized by the International Committee when it awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal to Miss Korah. This high distinction was presented to her at an impressive ceremony by the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad during the General Assembly of the Indian Red Cross which took place on April 26, 1962 in New Delhi.¹

ITALY

The General President of the Italian Red Cross, General Guido Ferri, bestowed the Florence Nightingale Medal to three Italian nurses at a ceremony which took place some time ago at the National Society's headquarters in Rome, in the presence of Mrs. Gronchi, Mr. E. Rocchetti, Director General, of Sister Menada, national inspector of voluntary nurses, of the heads of services of the Central Committee of the Italian Red Cross and of a delegation of regional female inspectors.

The ceremony assumed a particularly moving character, since this high honour was awarded posthumously to one of the three recipients who had been a victim to her duty. This was Sister Carolina Salvati Accolti Gil, voluntary nurse, who had devoted herself during the Second World War to the wounded and sick. Seriously burned in an accidental explosion at the military hospital of Valenzano, she died after much suffering.

Mention should also be made of the two other recipients. Sister Stella Diana, voluntary nurse and professional nurse, displayed outstanding qualities and devotion to duty in the two world wars. She also worked, in time of peace, ceaselessly and with exceptional

¹ *Plate.*

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

competence in the training of voluntary nurses and visiting health assistants. Similarly Sister Cresto Salvo, voluntary nurse and professional nurse, performed her duties with complete devotion in military hospitals during the two world wars. When peace came she continued to give her services to others by caring for the needy and the dispossessed.

SOUTH AFRICA

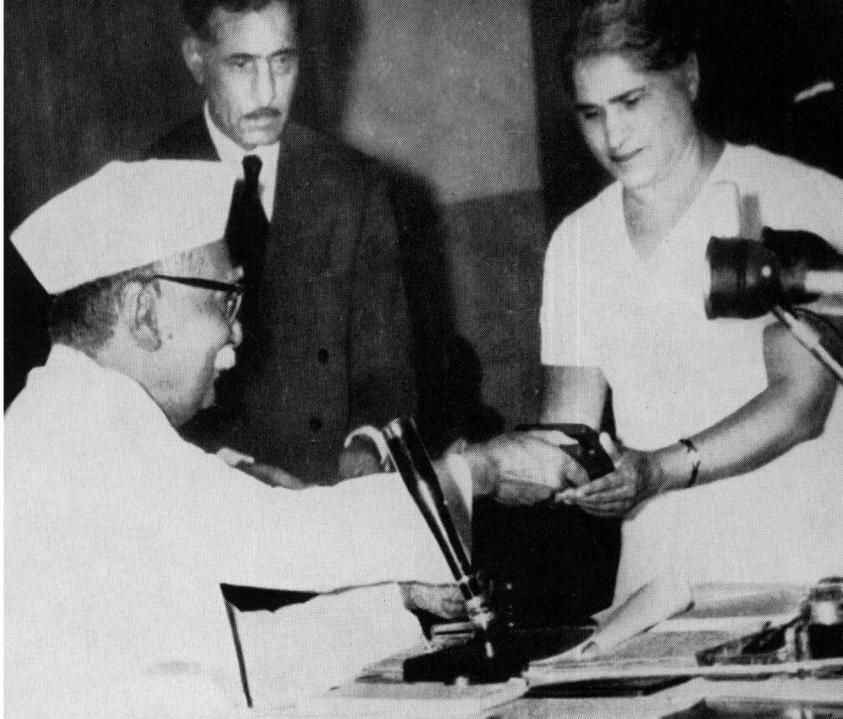
On Thursday afternoon, 3rd August, 1961, the State President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. C. R. Swart, presented the Florence Nightingale Medal to Miss C. A. Nothard, R. R. C., at the Nurses' Home of the Pretoria Hospital.

The ceremony was attended by over 400 people, including members of the Diplomatic Corps, the heads of the military, medical and nursing professions, members of the nursing profession and of the South African Red Cross Society. In the grounds of the hospital, the State President inspected a guard of honour of Voluntary Aid Detachments.

The President of the Society, the Hon. Mr. Justice E. R. Roper, opened the proceedings by thanking the State President for having honoured the Society by consenting to be its Patron and for coming to present the medal. He then gave a brief outline of how the International Committee of the Red Cross came to institute the award of the medal and the significance of the honour bestowed upon the recipient.

The National Secretary then read the citation which had been presented to the International Committee of the Red Cross, for its consideration. The citation told of Miss Nothard's career when, as soon as she had qualified at Pretoria Hospital, she served as a sister in the South African Military Nursing Service in France during the First World War, when she was decorated by the French Government and was twice Mentioned in Despatches; of how, as Matron in Chief of the South African Military Nursing Services in the Second World War, she built up the nursing services and was awarded the Royal Red Cross, and of her life-time of service in improving the conditions of patients, the training of nurses and the furtherance of the nursing and midwifery professions.

Before presenting the medal, the State President said:



In New Delhi, the President of India (left) bestowing the medal on Miss Mariam Korah...

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MEDAL: EIGHTEENTH AWARD

... and in Pretoria, the President of the Republic of South Africa awarding it to Miss C.A. Nothard. On left, Mrs. C. R. Swart





Distribution of powdered milk, near Tizi-Ouzou

THE ICRC IN ALGERIA

in the presence of the ICRC representatives: above, left, Mr. Martin; below, right, Mr. Gasser



“ By earning this distinction, Miss Nothard has brought honour to herself in her chosen profession. But she has also brought honour to South Africa, our beloved country. A greater achievement, however, has been that she has brought to her soul, her innermost being, that great and wonderful feeling and conviction that she has not lived in vain ; that her life has been one of service to others and that she has in her work, as far as lay in her power, carried out her duty towards God and towards mankind.

For that she has been honoured and for that we her fellow countrymen honour her today.

While I listened to the recital of her nursing work during time of war, I was reminded of the words of a song which was popular during and after the First World War and I cannot resist the temptation to repeat the words here today. The song is called: “ The Rose of No-Man’s Land ”

, There is a rose that grows in No-Man’s Land,
and it’s wonderful to see ;
Though it’s bathed in tears, it will live for years
In my garden of memory,
'Tis the one red rose a soldier knows
It was made by the Master’s hand ;
 In the War’s great curse,
 Stood the Red Cross Nurse,
 She’s the Rose of No-Man’s Land.”

and, speaking in Afrikaans, he continued :

“ This excellent achievement, which today receives recognition by the award of the Florence Nightingale Medal is one which not only gives to you pride and pleasure, but is also a clarion call to others in the nursing profession to go and do likewise. It stands as a shining example, a mighty encouragement and an inspiration for the future which must and shall lead others to follow in your footsteps.”

After the State President had presented the medal, Mrs Swart accepted a corsage from a Red Cross Junior and Miss Nothard was presented with a bouquet from the South African Nursing Association.¹

¹ *Plate.*