

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

Grants in aid from the French Fund Maurice de Madre

Some years ago Comte Maurice de Madre, a Frenchman resident in Switzerland, bequeathed a large legacy to the ICRC to provide assistance for delegates, doctors, nurses (male and female) and relief workers who, in the course of their work, have suffered injury and thereby found themselves in straitened circumstances or in reduced health¹.

Since 1979 the income from this fund has been used to provide grants to Red Cross personnel who have been injured or are sick as a result of a humanitarian mission. Beginning in 1981 grants have been made also to the families of Red Cross personnel who have lost their lives while on duty and were not covered by any insurance.

The Board of the de Madre Fund consists of two representatives of Comte de Madre's family, two representatives of the ICRC, and one representative of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. It meets two to three times a year to make a decision on the requests for grants which are submitted to it by National Societies or by an ICRC or League delegation in the country where the disaster occurred.

In 1984 a total of 62,000 Swiss francs was paid out:

- to a relief worker from the Lebanese Red Cross injured in Beirut in August 1983;
- to the family of a nurse and to that of a driver from the Uganda Red Cross killed in November 1983 in the Kampala region;
- to a doctor from the Uganda Red Cross wounded during the same attack;

¹ See the January-February 1979 edition of the *International Review of the Red Cross* containing Circular No. 512 to the National Societies announcing the establishment of the Fund and the procedure to follow to obtain a grant.

- to the family of a relief worker from the Lebanese Red Cross killed in February 1984 in Beirut;
- to the families of two relief workers/ambulance men from the El Salvador Red Cross killed in March 1983 while transporting wounded people;
- to an ambulance driver from the Haiti Red Cross seriously injured in a road accident in July 1983.
- a supplementary grant to the relief worker from the Lebanese Red Cross injured in 1983 to cover the expenses of another surgical operation.

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The above summary shows that, during the past year, the number of National Societies whose staff have benefited from grants paid out by the Fund has gone up slightly, with the result that the total amount paid out over the year has also increased.

However heartening this improvement might be, it is still too little in relation to the probably much higher number of people from the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies throughout the world who would normally be entitled to grants from the Fund.

The following is a summary of the conditions to qualify for a grant from the de Madre Fund:

- Be a member of, or collaborator with, the permanent or temporary staff of a National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society;
- Have participated in a relief operation in cases of armed conflict, natural disaster or in a similar situation;
- Have suffered injury to the extent that one's health is impaired (wounded, sick or invalid); or
- Be in straitened circumstances as a result of the injury or illness;
- If, the person concerned having died while carrying out his humanitarian mission, his family are in straitened circumstances.

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The annual income from the Fund, the capital of which increases regularly, certainly enables it to deal with more requests while restricting compensation to the level compatible with local regulations and practices.

The National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are called upon to avail themselves of the opportunities for compensation provided by the Fund for the benefit of their deserving members.

Those interested should contact the Board of the French Fund Maurice de Madre, at the ICRC in Geneva, or the ICRC delegations throughout the world for information on the procedure to follow when submitting a request for a grant.

The Central Tracing Agency Today

The new building of the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency (CTA) was recently officially opened in Geneva; this is an appropriate opportunity to review the latest developments in the Agency's activities and organization.

What is the specific role of the Central Tracing Agency and what are its activities? The CTA has been in operation for more than one hundred years and has a central card index which today contains more than 60 million information cards on about 40 million people. In 1984, some 340,000 requests for or items of information were received and registered. In broad terms, one can say that it is responsible for collecting, storing and transmitting information on victims of conflicts. In this way, it helps to alleviate the moral suffering of people in distress.

Moreover, thanks to its family message service, the CTA transmits messages of a humanitarian character between people cut off from normal means of communication.

Every year, as a consequence of international conflicts, civil wars or internal disturbances, thousands of people—soldiers and civilians, refugees and detainees, adults and children—are imprisoned, deported, suddenly uprooted from their homes, with no means of communicating even with their immediate family. For such people, the Red Cross often represents the only hope of receiving—some day—news from their families.

In order to ensure optimum preservation and use of the wealth of data collected by the Agency over more than a century, the old documents are today microfilmed and information gathered in