

The Conference then turned to the political problems posed by disarmament. It saw a gleam of hope in the agreements reached in past years, so long as those agreements were effectively implemented, which was not always the case. After pointing out that the experts had solved the scientific and practical problems of general disarmament by means of effective international control, the Conference stressed that the States' lack of political will was the sole obstacle to the conclusion of a treaty. It also pointed out that the partial agreements concluded in recent years had to a considerable extent reduced nuclear testing in the atmosphere and had established the dynamics of negotiations conducive to the gradual development of a climate which could lead to the conclusion of other agreements. The complexity of the world and the variety of political and economic conditions seemed to be important obstacles to disarmament. The basic demand should consist in establishing among the States the required political will for attaining a disarmed world, and public opinion should be clearly informed.

The ICRC, which has always been concerned about the problem of peace and its preservation in the world, took part in this important conference with the utmost interest.

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## MEDICAL AVIATION

Medical aviation is forging ahead, whether in its use of rescue helicopters in cases of distress, in the aeromedical transport of the wounded, in the special equipment installed in medical aircraft or in other technical innovations no less important to the protection of human life. This was the general impression of the 320 delegates, from fifteen countries, who attended the international symposium on the role of helicopters and aeroplanes in search and rescue, held at Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany. The ICRC was represented by Mr. P. Eberlin, Technical Adviser.

After a number of statements, followed by discussions and some civilian and military films, there were recommendations on the con-

struction of aircraft for medical evacuation and improved and standardized telecommunications. The symposium noted the ICRC's efforts regarding the signalling and identification of medical aircraft and the relevant work of the Conference of Government Experts convened by the ICRC in May and June 1972.

Helicopters of various types performed rescue and evacuation demonstrations while crewmen showed the medical equipment of air ambulances and improved signalling methods. The role of the medical helicopter is, on the whole, fairly well known while the humanitarian functions of some modern military aircraft, equipped for the transport and requisite treatment of the wounded and the sick, are not so well known. We think the particulars given below about a recent type of medical aircraft may interest readers.

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Medium-range aircraft, specially equipped for transporting the wounded and the sick and for providing treatment during flight, are contributing to the development of medical aviation. At the present time, twenty-nine medium-range aircraft, bearing the red cross emblem, are being used by the U.S. Army and Navy exclusively for aeromedical transport. They are assigned secondary flights, that is to say, the conveyance of patients from one medical institution to another.

The first of these medium-range aeromedical airlift transports, the C-9A, which was christened "Nightingale" after the famed English nurse, entered service in September 1968. Since then, these twin-jets marked with the red cross have carried about 6,000 patients a month between U.S. ports of entry from overseas and military hospitals, for specialized treatment, or to hospitals near the patients' homes. In four years' service, twelve Nightingale-type medical aircraft used by the U.S. Air Force have carried out more than 65,000 aeromedical missions, and the rate of operational readiness has been more than 99 per cent.

In Europe, four of these specially equipped airborne hospital wards will cover an area ranging from south-east Turkey to north-west Africa and to Norway, transporting patients to the Rhein Main base. Long-range military aircraft, such as the C140, which

## MISCELLANEOUS

are equipped to receive eighty litter patients accompanied by medical personnel, carry them across the Atlantic.

The twin-jet C-9A is a specially designed model of a commercial aircraft outfitted as a fully equipped flying hospital ward. Ambulatory patients can enter the cabin through a forward door and a ventral stairway underneath the tail. For the boarding of litter patients and paraplegic cases in wheelchairs, a hydraulically operated forward door opens from the inside, and a boarding ramp automatically unfolds, sloping to the ground at a 19-degree angle.

The interior of the aircraft was designed by engineers, biotechnologists and aeromedical specialists, in close co-operation with Air Force scientific and medical personnel. It allows of various arrangements:

- (a) accommodation for 30 litters in three superimposed tiers (normal);  
accommodation for 40 litters in four superimposed tiers;
- (b) combined accommodation, 18 litters and 20 seated ambulatory patients;
- (c) accommodation for 40 seated ambulatory patients.

Ambulatory patients are seated facing aft; a 40-inch space separates the rows of seats to provide room for patients with bulky leg or body casts.

To hold litters, stanchions are pivoted down from the plane's ceiling, with the lower end locked in the floor. Triangular cantilever arms are then snapped into the stanchion to hold the litter. When not in use, the stanchions swing up against the ceiling for storage. Built into each stanchion are five utility panels, including an emergency oxygen mask, a nurse call-button, a fresh air inlet, a reading light and an ashtray.

Located at the forward end of the cabin, the intensive care compartment can accommodate three or four patients. An ultra-violet light system decontaminates the air. The compartment has cardiac monitoring and intensive care equipment. The temperature, pressure and humidity can be controlled there independently of the rest of the plane. Besides the intensive compartment's equipment, the plane has a special electrical system to permit on-board use of regular hospital medical equipment such as respirators and incuba-

tors. In the medical and emergency oxygen systems, liquid oxygen is used instead of the compressed gaseous oxygen used in commercial transports.

The twin-jet has a range of more than 2000 miles and a cruising speed in excess of 500 m.p.h.

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### **ROUND TABLE ON INFORMATION IN ARMED CONFLICTS**

A round-table meeting on information in armed conflicts was held at Menton, France, on 18 and 19 November 1972. It had been organized jointly by the *Commission médico-juridique de Monaco* and the *Institut international de Droit humanitaire*, of San Remo, and was attended by jurists from a number of countries and representatives of journalists' organizations. The ICRC was represented by Mr. A. Modoux, Head of Press and Information Division.

Discussions were focused on the question of protection for journalists whilst on dangerous missions, and the action of the United Nations in that field. Reference was also made to the work of the two sessions of the Conference of Government Experts on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law which, at the request of the United Nations, had also considered that question.

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### **CONGRESS FOR THE STUDY OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM**

The Association for the Study of the World Refugee Problem (AWR) held its twenty-second Annual Congress at Geneva from 13 to 16 October 1972. At the opening meeting, after addresses of welcome had been delivered by the representatives of the Swiss