

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## Death of Miss Andrée Weitzel

The members of the ICRC were deeply sorry to hear, on 20 September 1984, of the sudden death of their fellow Committee member, Miss Andrée Weitzel.

Miss Weitzel had devoted almost her whole life to the problem of women in the armed forces.

In 1940, shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War, she joined a branch of the Swiss army which was open to women and subsequently put in 1,400 days of active military service.

In 1953 she was appointed chief of the women's auxiliary service of the Swiss army, and she directed it with great competence and dignity until 1976. National defence and the role that women could play in it represented a high ideal for her, and it was this integrated concept which she attempted to propagate, though she was not always understood. She was able to confront criticism with the serenity and humour that were constant features of her character.

In 1979, Miss Weitzel was made a member of the ICRC and brought the whole of her devotion, intelligence and strength to her work for the institution. She was asked to sit on the Executive Board in January 1981. Not least because she was a woman and a former armed services professional, her opinions were carefully heeded and highly appreciated. She was greatly liked by her colleagues of the International Committee and by the ICRC staff, whom she had won over with her uncomplicated nature, human warmth, and genuine interest in their work.

Andrée Weitzel took part in numerous ICRC activities, including dissemination of international humanitarian law to armed forces, relations with the World Veterans Federation, work on the role of women in the Red Cross and ICRC, medico-social problems of ICRC staff members, and the safety of delegates in the field. She undertook several ICRC missions abroad, including visits to Lebanon, the Philippines, Romania, France, Denmark, etc.

Miss Weitzel was vice-president of the Swiss National UNESCO Commission, vice-president of the Swiss periodical, *Notre armée de milice*, and president of a soldiers' welfare association.

In short, Miss Weitzel was a remarkable woman, a model of dignity and kindness, and her sudden death has deeply distressed all who knew her.

At the funeral in Lausanne on 25 September 1984, the President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexander Hay, paid the following tribute:

“Miss Weitzel was an excellent colleague for all of us, and for some a very good friend. She was always concerned for the wellbeing of those with whom she worked, bringing her friendship and support to men and women in the institution who might be suffering in mind or body. We shall never forget her cheerfulness, high spirits, boundless energy and very feminine vivacity, nor her readiness to help those around her. Andrée Weitzel was impelled by the true Red Cross spirit, which today's world needs so desperately...”