

But, as Mr. Beer, Secretary General of the League, said at the time, "it is just such conditions which require the Red Cross to make a special effort, often doomed to failure, but which must be repeated again until at last success is obtained".

J.-G. L.

W. STEENSMA: "DE RADIO MEDISCHE DIENST VAN HET NEDERLANDSCHE ROODE KRUIS VOOR DE SCHEEPVAART"¹

The medical leader of the Radio Medical Service of the Netherlands Red Cross took his degree as a doctor of medicine with the defence of this thesis, based on daily experience for two years (1967/68). In the first chapter some regulations for the medical care of ships crews and passengers are quoted. It is clear that the development of communication has a great influence: the presence of a doctor on a ship is no longer a first necessity. Introduction of the Amver (Automated Merchant Vessel Report) for the Atlantic Ocean in 1958 and the Pacific in 1966 has proved very helpful. Two examples of medical advice by telephone or telegram give a clear picture of the course of things and it appears that the treatment so advised and applied may be optimal.

In chapter II the training of a ship's officer for medical service on board is discussed. Dr Steensma emphasizes the necessity of an interneeship in a hospital for at least three weeks. It is quite obvious that the smooth functioning of the radio medical service largely depends on the medical knowledge and skill of the man on board.

Nautical experience is a must for the physician in charge of the RMS. This is proved in chapter III describing the present working method of the Netherlands radio medical service, a

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specialized autonomous branch of the Netherlands Red Cross like the other scientific services of this national society. Since 1967 this service is provided by only two regular physicians. Formerly there was only the hospital-doctor on duty, as is still the case elsewhere. The advantages of the new form are obvious. In this chapter also information is given about the situation in other countries as far as this could be obtained. Unfortunately there exists a great lack of co-ordination in method and medical registration. The author can give some details and figures about Norway, Israel, the USA, France, Germany (Fed. Rep.) and Italy. In this last country Dr Steensma visited the Centro Internazionale Radio Medico that is well known throughout the world, about which an article appeared in the International Review of the Red Cross of April 1968. As can be expected he strongly defends the system applied in the Netherlands and in Norway where one or two regular doctors are responsible for the RMS.

In the next chapters a few medical cases are treated more in detail, while at the end of the book we find statistical data of the cases in which medical advice was given: 203 in 1967, 280 in 1968; the number of contacts with a vessel being 488 and 622, as well as the text of a helicopter evacuation check list.

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