

HIGHEST DISTINCTION OF DUTCH RED CROSS AWARDED TO DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

On the occasion of the 1977 World Red Cross Day—celebrated on 8 May—the Dutch Red Cross honoured the International Tracing Service (ITS) at Arolsen by awarding the Gold Cross of Merit to the Director, Mr. Albert de Cocatrix.

During the ceremony at the Dutch Red Cross central headquarters in The Hague, Jonkheer G. Kraijenhoff, Chairman of the Central Committee, paid tribute to the humanitarian work still being performed by the ITS more than thirty years after the end of the Second World War, and spoke of the excellent and highly fruitful working relationship that the Dutch Red Cross has had with the Service throughout that period.

All the documentation on people affected, in one way or another, by the Second World War is centralized at Arolsen. The files are still growing, due to the continued research carried out by the ITS, and the impressive archives section now contains information on some fourteen million people who had been civilian workers or underwent forced labour, deportation, evacuation, transfer, detention in concentration camps or prisons, etc. Even today, the ITS receives daily requests for information and investigation, many of which come from the Netherlands. It was in grateful recognition of the humanitarian work of the ITS that the Dutch Red Cross awarded its Gold Cross of Merit, the highest distinction it can give, to the ITS and its Director.

Accepting the award, Mr. A. de Cocatrix, the ITS Director, expressed his sincere gratitude and emphasized how moved he was by this gesture, particularly as it was the first time that the ITS, which has been responsible to the ICRC since 1955, had been honoured in such a way.