

Start

In May 1942, the Guide Emergency Committee started plans to raise money to equip teams of volunteer workers. The call for funds was answered from all of the Empire and other Guiding countries. Guides gave up a luxury, did extra chores and other organizations donated. By August in 1945 the Fund totaled £150,000.00.

In those complicated days of total war, to have people eager to help was one thing; to get permission to help was another.

Big societies and freak splinter groups were all planning to help in Europe after the war. Government and army authorities ruled that all societies must be approved and must co-operate. Those wishing to send teams were required to outline their plans by a given date. In a carefully worded statement. Rosa Ward set out the G.I.S. offer of 'Teams of ADULT workers'. The letter was acknowledged with the single comment: "This will not be work for children."

A second letter, crystal clear in wording, brought no answer; no application forms were received. The last day then set for offering teams came. A committee member, in contact with the Quakers, decided to act. The G.I.S. was the newest relief society, so surely it might ask for help from the oldest established? A call at Friends' house, a telephone conversation with some distant V.I.P. and the difficulty was settled. The reply came - "They are sending you the necessary forms by hand at once." The G.I.S. offer was accepted.

Thus the Guide International Service was among the first of the Team-Making Societies which, supported by others giving help in kind, were to form 'The Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad.' The Council became known as 'COBSRA'.

The committee consulted with people who had done relief work after WWI. They gathered information from people who had escaped Europe's War.

The G.I.S. had been a foundation member of the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad so were well informed with relief plans.

Money was raised to train and equip volunteers for civilian service in relief and welfare work, serving in Egypt, Greece, The Netherlands Germany and Malaya The GIS was one of the approved organisations to provide teams to work with displaced persons and refugees under the umbrella of the British Red Cross, the British Army and the United Nations relief and rehabilitation administration. From 1945 teams of women were formed to undertake medical, catering and canteen duties, establishing feeding schemes in camps; providing hospital equipment, medical supplies and disease control, as well as food and general relief supplies, saving thousands of lives. In 1947 repatriation and emigration schemes were established. 1951 brought the inauguration of education, adoption and parcels schemes. The service was disbanded in 1952 with any remaining funds being distributed to further assist displaced persons.

Teams of Guiders were trained and then trained more. The ask of them was to sort out who could do the job ahead. After a long strenuous day of training they could be sent off on long hikes to see who had the stamina and could do everything in their power, and then more. They were sorted by their character, intelligence and physical fitness.

The badge, the World Trefoil with G.I.S. was decided on as it would be recognised World Wide.

?This is not the badge seen on the uniform in photos

