

## REPORTED ABROAD \*

### INTERNATIONAL BONUS BOOKLET FOR THE REPAIR OF PROSTHESES AND ORTHOPEDIC APPLIANCES

Dr. F. Blohmke, Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Bonn, Germany, whose article on the "Russian Arm" appeared in the Spring 1965 issue of this Bulletin, relates in the June 1965 issue of *Orthopädie-Technik*, the accomplishment of an agreement among the members of the European Council for the issuance of a "bonus booklet." Similar to the Prosthetic Service Card issued to veterans with service-connected disabilities in the United States, the bonus booklet is usable in all the member countries of the Council, and is issued to civilian as well as military war victims. An outline of the agreement follows:

Motivated by the principle that the improvement of orthopedic care is an important aspect of social progress, the member countries of the European Council agreed to issue an international "bonus booklet" for the repair of prostheses and prosthetic appliances. Social progress is one of the main goals of the European Council as stated in the preamble and Article I of the Statutes.

The agreement was first signed in Paris on September 17, 1962 by Austria, Denmark, France, Italy, West Germany, Luxembourg, Great Britain, and The Netherlands. Announced in the Federal Republic of Germany on April 23, 1965, all that remains is disposition of the ratified document, and after one month it will become law.

Other preliminary agreements have been reached by the European Council based on the principles of equal status among individual member nations in social and medical areas. While agreements have been worked out in Social Security, European aid, and the exchange of war disabled for the purpose of medical care, the issuance of the "bonus booklet" and its final realization is a significant accomplishment for the Council.

The general rules governing the use of the booklets are as follows:

The booklet is intended to give each military and civilian war disabled on travel or temporary residence abroad an opportunity to have his prosthesis or orthopedic appliance repaired without cost, provided the need for repair has arisen suddenly and unexpectedly.

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\* Based chiefly on translations by Dr. Gabriel Rosenkranz, Medical Consultant to the VA Prosthetics Center.

The booklet is issued by a designated office and is for use, within the territory it covers, by all civilian and military war victims who intend to travel abroad and remain there temporarily.

According to the member country issuing the booklet, printing may be in one or several languages in addition to one of the official languages of the European Council.

This booklet must not be retained by the physician or orthopedist but must remain in possession of the owner. Nothing must be changed or rendered unreadable in the booklet.

The owner is entitled, upon presenting this booklet, to have his prostheses or orthopedic appliances repaired by an officially authorized manufacturer of the country in which he is temporarily residing. For reimbursement the manufacturer presents the invoice at the designated office in his country. Kind and cost of maintenance work must be accurately listed. The authorized manufacturer must charge only the costs which are approved by the offices of the country in charge of the procurement of these services for their own war disabled.

The manufacturer's charge is checked by the office of the country designated for the care of war disabled to ascertain whether the claim was necessary. After approval, this office pays the manufacturer for the repair work.

Once a year, the mutual accounts of the contracted member countries are balanced, and the proper authorities are appointed when necessary.

New booklets are issued only when the old ones are completely used up and the empty booklet with control slips is presented at authorized offices.

Upon return to his home country, the disabled individual must report every repair and present his bonus booklet to the authorized office of that state as soon as possible.

Any unauthorized person who acquires this booklet or uses it by fraud may be punished according to the regulations of the country in which the fraud occurs. If the booklet is fraudulently used by the owner, he must repay (refund) the applicable costs. Upon repeated or gross misuse, the booklet can be canceled.

According to the procurement law of the Federal Republic of Germany, a war disabled person always had the right for free procurement and maintenance of his appliances even when abroad. The new regulation, however, spares him the necessity of paying for repairs out of his own pocket until his return and he is in a position to apply for reimbursement.

### **CARBONDIOXIDE (CO<sub>2</sub>) FOR PNEUMATIC PROSTHESES**

"Medizinische Technik" reports in their September 1965 issue that according to the Federal Health Ministry (Berlin), many children with congenital malformations have been equipped in the last few years with pneumatic prostheses. These prostheses, which were chiefly developed at the University

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of Heidelberg under the direction of Prof. Lindeman, need compressed CO<sub>2</sub> for power.

In order to secure the supply of CO<sub>2</sub>, the ministry has forwarded an alphabetical listing of CO<sub>2</sub> filling stations to all health offices in the country, to the dysmelia treatment centers, and to the Federal Association of parents of war disabled children. For next year, preparation is being made for a listing of CO<sub>2</sub> filling stations abroad, so that children on vacation abroad can be provided the required CO<sub>2</sub>.