

100 SIGNIFICANT DATES IN AMERICAN RED CROSS HISTORY

After years of research, here is a list of 100 major events in American Red Cross history that the Historical Resources Division staff compiled in consultation with members of the American Red Cross Museum Advisory Committee, local chapters, and blood regions. This list can change periodically and we invite you to submit nominations with supporting documentation, including the date when an event occurred, via email to AskMuseum@usa.redcross.org.

	Date	Event
1	December 25, 1821	Clara Barton is born in New Oxford, Massachusetts.
2	May 8, 1828	Henry Dunant, founder of Red Cross Movement, is born in Switzerland.
3	June 24, 1859	Battle of Solferino in Northern Italy prompts Henry Dunant to call for an international relief organization to bring aid to the war-injured.
4	April 20, 1861	Clara Barton, "Angel of the Battlefield," begins aid to servicemen in Civil War.
5	February 9, 1863	International Committee of the Red Cross is founded in Geneva, Switzerland.
6	August 8, 1864	First Geneva Convention issued protecting the war-wounded.
7	May 21, 1881	Clara Barton & associates establish the American Red Cross.
8	August 22, 1881	First local chapter of the American Red Cross is formed in Dansville, New York.
9	September 4, 1881	Red Cross undertakes its first disaster relief effort aiding victims of Michigan forest fires.
10	March 16, 1882	U.S. Senate ratifies first Geneva Convention.
11	May 31, 1889	Red Cross responds to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, flood that kills over 2,000.
12	August 27, 1893	Clara Barton aids 30,000—mostly African-American—homeless victims of a hurricane on the Sea Islands of South Carolina.
13	February 15, 1896	Clara Barton & associates arrive in Constantinople to begin 5-month campaign bringing relief to Armenian victims of Turkish oppression.
14	June 20, 1898	Clara Barton sails to Havana with supplies for victims of Spanish-American War.
15	September 8, 1900	Clara Barton's last relief operation is on behalf of victims of the devastating hurricane & tidal wave that hit Galveston, Texas.
16	December 10, 1901	Mabel T. Boardman elected to Red Cross governing board, beginning a lifelong career of organizational leadership, particularly among volunteers.
17	January 5, 1905	American Red Cross receives the Congressional Charter under which it still operates today.
18	April 18, 1906	Earthquake & fire ravage San Francisco & President Theodore Roosevelt calls on the Red Cross to lead a major relief effort.
19	October 9, 1909	Major Charles Lynch appointed director of new Red Cross First Aid Department.
20	January 20, 1910	First meeting held to form American Red Cross Nursing Service is chaired by Jane Delano who becomes the Service's esteemed director.
21	November 5, 1910	Pullman Company donates first railroad car to Red Cross for use around the country as a classroom for first aid instruction.

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22	December 15, 1910	Thomas A. Edison Company releases "The Red Cross Seal," a film about the ravages of tuberculosis & Red Cross efforts to prevent its spread.
23	March 25, 1911	Red Cross helps families of mostly young women who are victims of tragic Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire in New York City.
24	February 6, 1912	Red Cross approves creation of a Rural Nursing Program.
25	April 12, 1912	Clara Barton dies at age 91 in her home in Glen Echo, Maryland, 8 years after her resignation from the Red Cross.
26	April 14, 1912	Red Cross comes to aid of those who survived the sinking of the <i>Titanic</i> .
27	March 19, 1913	President Woodrow Wilson named first honorary president of American Red Cross, establishing a precedent for all chief executives who have followed.
28	February 1, 1914	Commodore Wilbert E. Longfellow, known as the "Amiable Whale," begins Red Cross Water Safety program.
29	September 12, 1914	Red Cross "Mercy Ship" sails to Europe with medical staff & supplies following outbreak of World War I.
30	July 24, 1915	S.S. <i>Eastland</i> , with 2,000 summer holiday-makers aboard, capsizes in the Chicago River, causing over 800 deaths. Red Cross relief is immediate.
31	June 27, 1916	Home Service for the military begins with help to U.S. troops along Mexican border.
32	May 10, 1917	President Woodrow Wilson appoints a War Council to guide operations of the Red Cross during World War I.
33	May 12, 1917	Red Cross dedicates its headquarters building in Washington, D.C., as a memorial to "the heroic women of the Civil War," both North & South.
34	May 25, 1917	Red Cross starts service to blinded war veterans in Baltimore, Maryland.
35	June 2, 1917	Red Cross Commission to Europe sets sail to alleviate wartime suffering.
36	June 17, 1917	Red Cross holds first War Fund drive surpassing a goal of \$100 million in one week.
37	August 30, 1917	Red Cross starts its Canteen Service to provide refreshments to the military.
38	September 15, 1917	President Woodrow Wilson calls on youth to join the newly formed Junior Red Cross.
39	April 22, 1918	Red Cross introduces medical social work in servicemen's hospitals.
40	June 5, 1918	Red Cross begins Nurses' Aide program to make up for nurse shortages during wartime.
41	July 2, 1918	Frances Reed Elliott is enrolled as the first African-American in the Red Cross Nursing Service.
42	January 27, 1919	Red Cross reports 204 of its nurses have died combating worldwide Spanish influenza pandemic.
43	May 5, 1919	League of Red Cross Societies (now the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies) is formed in Paris, France.
44	May 17, 1919	Red Cross National Children's Fund is set up to aid youth in postwar Europe.
45	October 4, 1921	Red Cross opens its first national convention in Columbus, OH.

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46	September 1, 1923	Red Cross aids thousands of earthquake & fire victims in Tokyo & Yokohama, Japan.
47	April 21, 1927	Major levee breaks in great flood on Mississippi River as Red Cross aids victims.
48	March 7, 1932	Red Cross begins distribution of government surplus wheat & cotton products to victims of drought in the Dust Bowl.
49	May 15, 1940	Early blood processing program for relief of English war victims, called Plasma for Britain, begins under direction of Dr. Charles R. Drew.
50	February 4, 1941	Red Cross begins National Blood Donor Service to collect blood for the U.S. military with Dr. Charles R. Drew, formerly of the Plasma for Britain program, as medical director.
51	June 1, 1941	Red Cross services to military unified as "Services to Armed Forces" (SAF).
52	November 3, 1941	Irving Berlin's "Angels of Mercy" becomes official Red Cross wartime song.
53	December 7, 1941	Moments after attack on Pearl Harbor, Red Cross volunteers go into action.
54	July 15, 1942	Red Cross convenes meeting with black leaders to encourage minority participation in organization.
55	October 26, 1942	World War II Clubmobiles begin service in England.
56	November 9, 1942	Red Cross approves plan for establishing membership units in U.S. colleges.
57	November 11, 1942	Red Cross opens famous Rainbow Corner Club in London for servicemen.
58	November 28, 1942	Red Cross responds to fire at Coconut Grove nightclub in Boston, Massachusetts, that claims 494 lives.
59	May 1, 1943	Jesse Thomas is the first African-American to join the American Red Cross executive staff.
60	March 20, 1945	President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's last radio talk to nation is in support of the Red Cross War Fund.
61	August 18, 1945	Red Cross ends its World War II blood program for the military after collecting more than 13 million pints.
62	August 29, 1945	First Red Cross field director arrives in Japan after World War II to help rebuild Japanese Red Cross.
63	June 8, 1947	Board of Governors replaces Central Committee as Red Cross governing body.
64	January 12, 1948	Red Cross begins its National Blood Program for civilians by opening its first collection center in Rochester, New York.
65	October 1, 1949	George C. Marshall, World War II hero & creator of the "Marshall Plan" to help Europe recover from war, becomes Red Cross president.
66	July 22, 1950	Red Cross becomes blood collection agency for military during Korean War.
67	August 5, 1953	Red Cross aids Operation Big Switch exchange of POWs at end of Korea War hostilities.
68	October 1, 1953	Janet Wilson becomes first National Director of new Office of Volunteers that brings workers together from different services under "one Red Cross."
69	April 4, 1955	The Red Cross liberalizes fundraising policy to allow chapters to participate in federated campaigns, such as the Community Chest, forerunner of the United Way.

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70	July 14, 1955	United States ratifies the Geneva Conventions of 1949 that still apply today.
71	December 5, 1962	Red Cross begins collecting medicines & food for Cuba in exchange for release of Bay of Pigs POWs.
72	March 27, 1964	Red Cross aids victims of massive earthquake that hits Anchorage, Alaska.
73	October 8, 1965	Red Cross Movement adopts its Seven Fundamental Principles: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity, & Universality.
74	October 30, 1967	Board of Governors receives report that National Headquarters will host a national Rare Blood Donor Registry for blood types occurring less than once in 200 people.
75	February 14, 1972	Red Cross calls for national blood policy that the federal government sets up in 1974 supporting standardized practices & an end to paid donations.
76	June 14, 1972	Red Cross responds as Hurricane Agnes slams eastern United States.
77	April 29, 1975	Red Cross begins 4-month Operation New Life for Vietnam refugees brought to the United States.
78	February 25, 1977	President Jimmy Carter makes his 51st blood donation in bloodmobile at the White House.
79	January 13, 1983	United States blood banking groups issue their first warning about Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).
80	October 21, 1983	Board of Governors approves expansion of Red Cross bone marrow program that leads to stem cell collection & distribution.
81	February 23, 1987	Red Cross opens its Holland Laboratory dedicated to biomedical research.
82	September 10, 1989	Red Cross begins relief efforts for victims of Hurricane Hugo.
83	October 17, 1989	Red Cross aids 14,000 families affected by the Loma Prieta earthquake in Northern California.
84	September 24, 1990	Red Cross Holocaust & War Victims Tracing & Information Center opens in Baltimore, Maryland.
85	February 4, 1991	Elizabeth Dole becomes first woman president of the Red Cross since Clara Barton.
86	May 19, 1991	Red Cross Board of Governors approves major upgrade of blood program.
87	August 3, 1992	First National Testing Laboratory, applying standardized tests to ensure safety of Red Cross blood products, opens in Dedham, Massachusetts.
88	August 24, 1992	Hurricane Andrew blasts Florida & leads to multi-year Red Cross aid.
89	August 1, 1993	Record crest of Mississippi River occurs at St. Louis in worst Midwest flooding to date.
90	April 19, 1995	Red Cross aids victims of bombing of Federal Building in Oklahoma City.
91	October 9, 1996	Congress passes Aviation Disaster Act that leads to creation of Red Cross Aviation Incident Response (AIR) Teams to assist victim families.
92	May 6, 1998	Red Cross creates post of Chief Diversity Officer to lead effort to ensure an inclusive work environment & responsiveness to the needs of culturally diverse communities.

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93	November 16, 1998	Red Cross opens an Armed Forces Emergency Services (AFES) Center with hi-tech emergency communications service for military.
94	March 1, 1999	Red Cross initiates Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) which provides early detection of HIV & Hepatitis C in blood.
95	September 11, 2001	Red Cross responds to terrorist attacks by airplane in New York, at the Pentagon, & in rural Pennsylvania.
96	October 3, 2001	Red Cross announces Liberty Fund for September 11 terrorism victims.
97	October 11, 2001	President George W. Bush announces America's Fund for Afghan Children with contributions to be distributed by the Red Cross.
98	February 7, 2001	Red Cross joins other groups to launch Measles Initiative, 5-year plan to eradicate the disease in sub-Saharan Africa by immunizing children.
99	August 13, 2004	Hurricane Charley slams into Florida's Gulf Coast, followed in quick succession by hurricanes Frances, Ivan, & Jeanne that call for major Red Cross relief in Southeastern states.
100	December 26, 2004	Magnitude 9.0 earthquake off west coast of Indonesia triggers massive tsunami that brings death & destruction to 12 countries. American Red Cross joins international relief effort.

For more information about American Red Cross history,
visit the Red Cross Museum website:

<http://www.redcross.org/museum>

Or contact:

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