

CELEBRATE RED CROSS MONTH IN MARCH

Each year, the president of the United States proclaims March "Red Cross Month." How did this tradition come about?

Since Clara Barton created the American Red Cross in 1881, it was largely dependent for publicity and funds on the spontaneous support of people who learned of catastrophic events and the Red Cross response to them. News of an event broke. The American Red Cross rushed to the scene with help. People around the country came forth with outpourings of volunteer assistance and donations of funds and supplies.

A change occurred in 1917, when the United States entered World War I. After declaring war, President Woodrow Wilson ordered the American Red Cross to raise funds to support its aid to the military and civilians affected by war, as Congress had mandated. In response, the Red Cross held its first national War Fund drive in June 1917 and set as its goal \$100 million, an astoundingly large sum at the time. The public response was immediate and overwhelming.

After the War, the Red Cross decided to make the Roll Call an annual membership and fundraising drive. In addition, it conducted special appeals from time to time in response to major disasters.

In November 1941, with war in Europe, the Red Cross conducted a highly successful 25th Annual Roll Call. A few days later, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States entered World War II. The American Red Cross responded immediately by declaring a War Fund campaign. By June 1942, it had raised more than \$66 million.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared the month of March 1943 as "Red Cross Month." The Red Cross set a goal of \$125 million, the largest amount ever requested in one campaign by any American organization. Again, the response was overwhelming. It took less than six weeks to reach the target. By June 1943, donations totaled nearly \$146 million. Roosevelt called it "the greatest single crusade of mercy in all of history."

This success compelled the Red Cross to repeat the March drive during the remaining years of the war and to make it the occasion of its annual membership and fund-raising efforts ever since. As part of the tradition, the President customarily issues a proclamation each year declaring March as Red Cross Month.

This Red Cross Month, we are thanking our supporters and urging people in America to continue to be involved with their Red Cross.

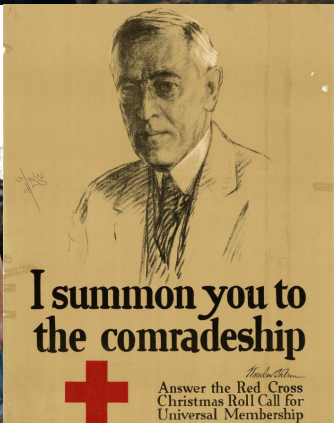
The Red Cross works tirelessly to be there with help and hope when people need it most, and we are grateful for the public support that enables us to continue our work, here at home and abroad.

Red Cross Month is a great time for people to get involved with the Red Cross by:

- Donating blood;
- Signing up for a CPR, first aid or another Red Cross course;
- Giving a financial gift that can really save the day when the next disaster strikes;
- Getting involved as a volunteer.

We're proud of our history and appreciative of the volunteers, employees and supporters who have given time, blood or contributions to enable the Red Cross to perform its life-saving mission.

Call 1-800-RED CROSS or go to redcross.org



MARCH IS RED CROSS MONTH  **American Red Cross**