

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
American Red Cross National Headquarters  
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
17th and D Streets, N. W. \_\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Washington, D. C. \_\_\_ VICINITY OF  
STATE CODE COUNTY CODE  
District of Columbia II District of Columbia 011

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
___DISTRICT	___PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	___AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	___PRIVATE	___UNOCCUPIED	___COMMERCIAL ___PARK
___STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	___WORK IN PROGRESS	___EDUCATIONAL ___PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	___ENTERTAINMENT ___RELIGIOUS
___OBJECT	___IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	___GOVERNMENT ___SCIENTIFIC
	___BEING CONSIDERED	___YES: UNRESTRICTED	___INDUSTRIAL ___TRANSPORTATION
		___NO	___MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Offices

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
American National Red Cross c/o The President  
STREET & NUMBER  
17th and D Streets, N. W.  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
Washington \_\_\_ VICINITY OF District of Columbia

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Recorder of Deeds  
STREET & NUMBER  
6th and D Streets, N. W.  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
Washington, District of Columbia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Historic American Buildings Survey (DC-347)  
DATE 1974  FEDERAL \_\_\_STATE \_\_\_COUNTY \_\_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
Washington District of Columbia

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1915-17, with public and private funds, and dedicated as a Memorial to the women of the Civil War, the Red Cross Main Headquarters building, is a large white stone building, designed in the Beaux Arts style with traditional classical ornaments. The architects were Breck Trowbridge and Goodhue Livingston of New York, and the building was constructed by the Boyle-Robertson Construction Company of Washington. The cornerstone was laid March 27, 1915, the first occupants moved in February 3, 1917, and the completed building was dedicated May 12, 1917. The final cost of the site and building was \$ 854,197.51.

As described by Nancy Schwartz, of the Historic American Buildings Survey, in the District of Columbia Catalog (1976) the American Red Cross National Headquarters building, on the west side of 17th Street, N.W., between D and E Streets, is constructed of white Vermont marble, eleven bays wide across the east front by five bays, three stories in height on a raised basement, with the third story recessed behind a balustrade.

The hipped roof has tall interior chimneys. A projecting tetrastyle Corinthian entrance portico with pediment stretches across the central east facade, while the remaining bays of this principal facade are separated by two-story engaged Corinthian columns. The end (north and south) elevations have slightly projecting unpedimented porticoes.

The main bronze grille entrance doors lead into a broad central hall finished in marble, with a wide stairway to the second floor. Above this stairway are three marble busts, "Faith," "Hope," and "Charity" by the noted American sculptor Hiram Powers. In the central lobby areas on all three floors of the building are paintings, sculpture and historical exhibits. On the second story, The Board of Governors Hall occupies the entire north end of the building. Three stained-glass windows by Louis Comfort Tiffany comprise the center of one wall. The panels are of St. Filomena, patron saint of the sick; a group of armored knights, symbolizing Red Cross services in war; and a figure representing Truth, with an apron overflowing with red roses. The Central Committee Room occupies the central portion of the east side of the second story. The Chairman, the President, and a Vice President occupy offices at the south end of the second story.

The Red Cross complex occupies the entire city block, is known as Red Cross Square, and includes two additional administration buildings on the north and west, one begun in 1928 and the other in 1931, and a landscaped garden in the middle of the block. Only the original, main headquarters building (1915-17), on the east end of the block has been designated as the national historic landmark.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1915

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Trowbridge and Livingston

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### American Red Cross

Main Headquarters of the Nation's largest official relief organization, the National Headquarters building has seen the Red Cross grow from 120 local chapters before the American entry into World War I to about 3,100 chapters now serving every State and territory of the United States. Built with both Federal and private funds, this building illustrates the cooperation of government and private efforts in carrying out the important duties of the Red Cross. Federal legislation creating a commission for a Memorial to the Women of the Civil War was enacted on October 22, 1913, charging the members to procure a site and design a memorial building to be the permanent headquarters of the American Red Cross. The "Marble Palace" was the result.

The United States was being ravaged by civil war when the Red Cross movement was forming in Europe. Forerunners of the effort here were the work of the United States Sanitary Commission during the Civil War, and the work of an individual, Clara Barton. She cared for soldiers of the Union and the Confederacy on battlefields and in military hospitals, inspiring others to follow her lead. In 1881, Clara Barton succeeded in founding the American Association of the Red Cross and the following year, Congress ratified the Geneva Convention, giving the Red Cross official sanction. The American National Red Cross was granted a Congressional charter in 1900.

One of the new organization's first acts was in behalf of the victims of the devastating Michigan forest fires of 1881. Disaster relief operations continued in 1882, 1884, and 1889 following the severe flooding of various rivers. The idea of an organized program of voluntary relief for disaster victims was the major contribution of Clara Barton to the Red Cross movement worldwide. (See also, Clara Barton House, Glen Echo, Maryland, National Historic Site).

Mabel T. Boardman assumed a leading role in the American Red Cross in 1904. In 1905, the present charter of the American National Red Cross went into effect. The charter, still in effect, reaffirmed Red Cross responsibilities for disaster relief and for assistance to the armed forces, required annual reports to Congress, and placed the actual direction of the Red Cross in the hands of a Central Committee. An amendment in 1947 broadened chapter representation on the governing body, renaming it the Board of Governors.

(Continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- American Red Cross. National Headquarters. (Washington, 1919).
- Ibid. Facts and Answers to Questions About the Red Cross. (Washington, 1963).
- Ibid. The American Red Cross: A Brief Story. (Washington, 1963).
- U.S. Senate. Public Buildings in the District of Columbia. (Washington, 1918).
- Federal Writers' Project. Washington: City and Capital. (Washington, 1937).
- Nancy B. Schwartz, District of Columbia Catalog of the Historic American Buildings Survey, 1976.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 1-1/4 acres.

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	3 2 3 0 3 0	4 3 0 6 8 6 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The national historic landmark boundary has been drawn to enclose the 1915 American Red Cross National Headquarters Main Building alone, with some lawn area around it, a setting for the building. The landmark is bounded by a line 22.5 feet north of the north curb of D Street, N.W., a line 30 feet west of the west curb of 17th Street, N.W., a line 29 feet south of the south curb of E Street, N.W., and by a line drawn across the block known as Red Cross Square, north to south 10 feet to the rear of the building, from D to E Streets, N.W.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Blanche Higgins Schroer, Landmark Review Project, original report 12/1/64

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1100 "L" Street, N. W.

(202) 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington,

District of Columbia

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL XX

STATE     

LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

3/20/85

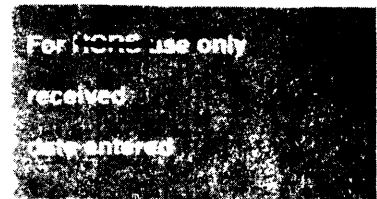
ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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American Red Cross National Headquarters

Although the duties of the Red Cross are imposed by the Congressional charter, the organization is supported mostly by the voluntary contributions of the American people. In times of public distress, the President of the United States makes government transportation and communication facilities available to the Red Cross to facilitate its work.

In 1909 the Red Cross turned its attention to an additional field--that of nursing. Programs such as elementary hygiene and home care of the sick were organized. Wilbert Longfellow, in 1914 persuaded the Red Cross to begin courses in swimming and lifesaving. In 1916, at the request of the Surgeon General of the Army, the Red Cross undertook the organizing of hospital units. With America's entry into World War I, these units became U.S. Army Base Hospitals in France. The organization also provided nurses and other personnel to aid servicemen with counseling and to provide communications between the men and their families.

In the postwar period, the Red Cross broadened its program of peacetime activity, developing new techniques in disaster relief and services to veterans, and expanding its health and welfare services. There was a dramatic expansion in training in first aid, nursing skill, and water safety. During the disastrous drought and depression years of the 1930's, the Red Cross was called upon by the government to help with the distribution of food and clothing. During the same period the Red Cross took the first steps in blood donor recruiting that led to the formation of Red Cross Blood Services.

In World War II, no longer responsible for organizing military hospitals and providing medical staff for them, the Red Cross nonetheless was engaged in numerous other activities. It provided a wealth of volunteer and staff manpower in military hospitals, assigned field directors to major U.S. military units, supplied nearly 13.5 million units of blood for plasma for servicemen, and operated clubs and clubmobiles for the men in overseas rest and recreation areas. In conjunction with Red Cross societies in other countries, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the League of Red Cross Societies, the American Red Cross carried on extensive relief and rehabilitation programs for the civilian victims of the war.

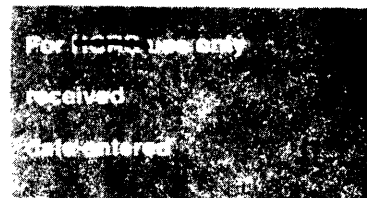
After the war, marked changes were made in both the organizational structure and the programs of the Red Cross. Emphasis was placed on the concept of involving the entire community in programs and projects for young people and people of retirement age were much expanded.

In the 50's and 60's, after several major natural disasters, the Red Cross conducted enormous and costly relief operations. As government took a stronger hand in disaster relief, the Red Cross worked closely with governmental agencies in mobilizing resources for disaster and met its responsibility for emergency care. Its assistance included providing shelter, food, clothing, blood and blood products, medical and nursing care, essential household furnishings, interim housing, personal occupational supplies, and transportation, and meeting the most urgent immediate needs of families for minor repairs to make their homes livable.

(Continued)

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

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American Red Cross National Headquarters

In 1948, building upon its experience in World War II, the Red Cross established blood services that, by the 1980's, were meeting a large share of the blood needs of the Nation and playing a leading role in blood research. Safety services and nursing and health services kept growing, and the Red Cross continued its service to men and women in the armed forces and assistance to veterans and their families.

History prepared by Carol Kolb, Research Assistant, Historic Sites  
Survey, 1975.