

**WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE  
ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN  
NATIONAL RED CROSS FOR WAR AND WHAT  
SHOULD BE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE  
MEDICAL DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND  
NAVY? THE ENNO SANDER PRIZE ESSAY**

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The Enno Sander Prize Essay.

By MAJOR CHARLES LYNCH,  
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT AND GENERAL STAFF,  
UNITED STATES ARMY.



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## The Enno Sander Prize Essay.

WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION  
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**E**XPERIENCE has shown that any military voluntary aid association which lacks definite internal organization or whose general arrangements for co-operation with the government are not fixed until the outbreak of war is not in a position to accomplish the best results. Much valuable time will inevitably be lost under such circumstances, for there will be extreme difficulty in perfecting the details of organization of the society and the hurry and stress of war will render almost impossible the establishment of satisfactory relations with the departments charged with the care of sick and wounded soldiers and sailors by law,—the Medical Departments of the Army and Navy. So perfected is the organization, in Japan for example, where the Red Cross has most proved its worth in a great war that its governing council might have said before the conflict with Russia, as did Von Moltke in respect to the German army at the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War, "My work is now over." In order to answer the question at issue, it is, therefore, necessary to discuss the American National Red Cross in time of peace, as well as in time of war.

It is possible that all the readers of this paper are thoroughly familiar with the present status of this association, but even if this be so it is believed that at the risk of a little loss of time it

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will be best to point out certain of its important characteristics. Our present Red Cross, which has almost nothing in common with a former organization of the same name, is young; the Act of Congress re-incorporating it (the old society was incorporated) was approved as late as January 5, 1905. The list of incorporators contained the names of men and women of national prominence. By the act of incorporation the American Red Cross is designated as the organization which is authorized to act in matters of relief under the Treaty of Geneva. Provision is made for a Central Committee, the governing body, which is empowered to organize state and territorial associations, the branch societies. The Act states that as soon as there are six branches the Central Committee will consist of six persons appointed by the incorporators, six by the representatives of branch societies, and six by the President of the United States, one of whom shall be designated by him as chairman, the others coming from the Departments of State, War, Navy, Treasury, and Justice. The Act provides further that the funds of the association shall be audited by the War Department.

Shortly after the act of incorporation was passed the board of incorporators held its first meeting and elected as its president, the Secretary of War, who still fills this position. The Central Committee elected a distinguished and energetic executive committee. A beginning was soon made in organizing branch societies, the committee endeavoring in all cases to secure as organizers representative men and women of the various states and territories, who could be counted on to interest themselves in the work of organization. A board of consultation, composed of the Surgeons General of the Army, the Navy and the Marine Hospital Service, was created at the first annual meeting of the Red Cross.

Interest in the association has not flagged, nearly all the distinguished names found on the roll of its Central Committee at the beginning are still there and the branch societies which are now over thirty in number instead of eighteen as at the first annual meeting have enlisted the aid of many prominent people in their own localities. At the first annual meeting 3,337 members were reported; in December, 1906, these had increased to

over 9,000, when there were 133 doctors and 121 nurses registered at the branch societies. At the latter date a balance of \$7,773.50 was in the Endowment Fund, the general fund of the Central Committee. The executive committee has lately passed resolutions which will result in the transfer of interest and balances of special relief funds to the General Emergency Fund, which should eventuate in making available considerable sums for the society. The expenses of administration have always been maintained at a low figure, largely because a number of enthusiastic members have worked wholly without pay. An active propaganda by means of lectures and a quarterly bulletin, has been conducted. The April number of this bulletin announced that the District of Columbia branch was preparing to give its enrolled nurses a special course of lectures with practical administration of field hospital work under the auspices of the medical department of the army. So far as known this constitutes the first accomplishment in this line, though other attempts have been made with much the same end in view. The re-organized Red Cross has had no experience in war as yet, but has contributed funds for a number of disasters, the greatest of which was the San Francisco earthquake. This certainly proved a severe test for the methods of the Red Cross in this class of work, and the society gained great credit.

From what has been said it will be noted that the general organization of the American Red Cross corresponds very closely to that of the same association in other nations, in which organized voluntary aid has been the subject of serious study. It was manifestly advantageous that the incorporators should be representative people and it has been very wise to follow the policy of obtaining this class of men and women for the executive positions, both on the Central Committee and at the branches. Not only will they be most influential in obtaining a large membership, but their recognized probity insures confidence in the Red Cross. The provision in the act of incorporation for audit of the accounts of the association by the War Department was also a good move in the latter direction. There is one danger in this, however, though it may be a remote one. In war, especially in



field work, persons without special training cannot be expected to conform in all respects to the methods of accountability of the War Department, and to require them to do so could only result in unnecessarily hampering them in making expenditures. Timid souls would probably spend nothing except a perfect voucher were obtainable and sick and wounded might suffer in consequence. Quite possibly the Auditor and the Red Cross have reached an understanding on this subject. If not it should be settled in time of peace as long as vouchers show, so far as they can, that expenditures have been honestly made, that the form is not of importance and in certain specified cases certified or attested lists of disbursements should be accepted in lieu of vouchers. The Red Cross in all countries is given a legal status. This, and the fact that by the act of incorporation the American Red Cross is authorized to act in matters of relief under the Treaty of Geneva will not, perhaps, result, in the event of war, in preventing the organization of other aid societies with similar objects. Still it will undoubtedly limit their number and the evil due to the multiplying of voluntary aid organizations with consequent confusion, overlapping of effort, and the frittering away of popular resources will be reduced to the minimum.

It will be noticed that the composition of the Central Committee insures close affiliation with the central government. This has proven to be highly desirable in every country, as by this means community of effort is better assured. In most countries, however, in which it is generally recognized that the Red Cross is best prepared to do effective work in war while the aid associations are under their own private management as the Red Cross is with us when they come into association with the army and navy, it is specifically provided by law or regulations that they shall be entirely subservient to the governmental services. This is accomplished in various ways. In Germany an Imperial Commissioner regulates matters; in Japan representatives of the army and navy have places on the central committee and are empowered to speak authoritatively for their departments. It is not so sure, however, that our organization is not, at least quite as good a one for us. The Surgeons General of the Army and Navy

being on the board of consultation should be able to state their needs to the Red Cross and what perhaps is just as important, to keep informed of what aid that association may be depended upon to furnish in the event of war. Moreover, as is the case at present, it is probable that both the medical departments of the army and the navy will always have representatives on the Central Committee. The nature of our institutions would probably be opposed to such subserviency as is enforced in other nations, and it is thought that with us the same results will be accomplished by relying on the good faith and good sense of our Red Cross association. At least it may be safely taken for granted that the desire of our Red Cross as now constituted and administered is by all means in its power to strengthen governmental efforts and not to work at cross purposes with them. Neither is it conceivable that a body constituted like its Central Committee will ever sacrifice the interests of sick and wounded soldiers and sailors by friction with the departments charged by law with their care.

Unfortunately, however, though a step toward it, the mere establishment of a community of purpose between the army and the navy and the Red Cross does not insure that sick and wounded in war will have the attention to which they are justly entitled and which both the war and the navy departments and the aid association desire to give them. No voluntary aid society has ever provided for ill and injured soldiers and sailors in war in a satisfactory manner unless the government has also done its part. This was illustrated in a striking manner in the recent great war in the far East. It may safely be assumed that the Russian Red Cross was equally solicitous with the Japanese in respect to the succor of sick and wounded soldiers. The former had little to build on in the way of an army medical department and the latter had a great deal. The result was, especially at first, that there was much unwarranted suffering among the patients of the Russian army, while with the Japanese, from the beginning to the end of the war, sick and wounded had every care that conditions permitted. While this may rightly be ascribed in part to the better organization of the Red Cross on

the Japanese side, it was primarily due to that country having a trained medical officer personnel adequate in numbers to serve as a framework on which to build up an efficient organization composed of both army and Red Cross.

This, it is true, is not a matter of Red Cross but of army organization and yet to fulfill its high altruistic mission the American National Red Cross must take cognizance of the fact that with the present wholly inadequate complement of medical officers in our army no effort, however great, will give our soldiers satisfactory aid in war. Its duty, therefore, seems obvious; not only should the association as an association, but also its members as individuals, wield what power they have to obtain a personnel of medical officers of the army commensurate in numbers with what all experience has shown to be required if sick and wounded are to escape unnecessary suffering in war. The American Red Cross cannot take refuge, like the Chinaman, by declaring that this is not its "pigeon." Nothing could be more futile than to go on year after year with an army organization which makes failure certain in the event of war no matter how strenuous may be the efforts of both army and Red Cross at that time.

The accomplishments of the Red Cross society in war will also be largely dependent on the number of its branches and the size of its membership. Though, in our association, these are still few and small as compared with many nations, a gratifying increase in both is shown since the reorganization of the Red Cross. There should be no pause in this good work. Branches even if they have few members should be organized in every state and territory; they must gradually attract members and if war comes will, without doubt, serve as nuclei for great memberships. Naturally the funds seem very small as compared with the hundreds of thousands of dollars which some countries have collected for sick and wounded soldiers and sailors in the event of war, and they are small, too small, from every point of view. Rapid augmentation cannot be anticipated perhaps, but if the Red Cross is to perform its proper functions much more money is necessary. This must come largely from an increase in membership.