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American Red Cross Month, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Few events humble men more than natural disasters. Last year in the United States alone, hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes killed 290 people and destroyed property valued at \$15 billion. Working to mitigate the human toll of that devastation were nearly 90,000 American Red Cross disaster relief workers—95 percent of whom were volunteers—helping the victims first to survive, and then to rebuild their lives.

Disaster assistance speaks to the deepest and purest ideals of the Red Cross movement. It is the reason the Red Cross was formed more than a century ago, and it remains the truest example of its continuing commitment to service.

The American Red Cross has responded to recent disasters swiftly and magnanimously, as it always has. Since September, nearly a dozen major disasters—including eight large-scale floods in the South and Midwest—have pressed the American Red Cross into action. But disaster is not the only spur. Social services, health and safety programs, blood and tissue efforts, and international activities all galvanize our Red Cross into service.

The organization continues to lead the way in making the Nation's blood supply as safe as possible. It recently introduced testing to reduce post-transfusion non A, non B hepatitis, following up its 1985 implementation of HTLV-III testing for AIDS. It also launched its Look Back initiative, a program that notifies people who have been transfused with blood or blood components from donors who later tested positive for the AIDS antibody. Finally, the American Red Cross undertook a massive AIDS public education effort to spread the facts about the disease.

The American Red Cross continues to train millions of students in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, water safety, and small craft operation. It maintains vital communication services to the Nation's military through a network of Red Cross posts at 277 domestic and overseas military installations. Every 11 seconds, the Red Cross helps someone in our Armed Forces or a member of a service family. Last summer, the Red Cross formed the National Bone Marrow Donor Registry, giving new hope to thousands of patients with life-threatening blood diseases. Finally, the American Red Cross continues to aid foreign disaster victims. Its response to the October 1986 earthquake in San Salvador included cash, goods, and staff services valued at more than half a million dollars. Work still goes on in the aftermath of the terrible September 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, where Red Cross workers from around the world are helping the victims to rebuild.

No one can predict when the next river will flood or the next storm will hit. No one can foresee the next threat to the Nation's health. What *is* predictable is that we will face such threats and emergencies, and that the American Red Cross will be there to offer help and hope.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American National Red Cross, do hereby proclaim the month of March 1987 as American Red Cross Month. I urge all Americans to continue to give blood, to volunteer their time whenever possible to assist in this great service, and to give generous support to the work of the American Red Cross and its local chapters.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

Ronald Reagan