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Clara Barton *Top 100 Americans*

Clarissa Harlowe "Clara" Barton (December 25, 1821 – April 12, 1912) was a pioneer nurse who founded the American Red Cross.

After the war, she ran the Office of Missing Soldiers, at 437 Seventh Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C. in the Gallery Place neighborhood. The office's purpose was to find or identify soldiers killed or missing in action. Barton and her assistants wrote 41,855 replies to inquiries and helped locate more than twenty-one thousand missing men. She traveled to the Andersonville prison camp in Georgia to help identify the dead and missing and install grave markers for thirteen thousand graves, and Congress eventually appropriated \$15,000 toward her project.

Barton then achieved widespread recognition by delivering lectures around the country, which lasted well over a year, about her war experiences. After her country wide tour she was both mentally and physically exhausted and under doctor's orders to go somewhere that would take her far from her current work. She closed the Missing Soldiers Office in 1868 and traveled to Europe. She met Susan B. Anthony and began a long association with the woman's suffrage movement. She also became acquainted with Frederick Douglass and became an activist for civil rights.

In 1869, during her trip to Geneva, Switzerland, Barton was introduced to the Red Cross and Dr. Appia; who later would invite her to be the representative for the American branch of the Red Cross and even help her find financial beneficiaries for the start of the American Red Cross. She was also introduced to Henry Dunant's book *A Memory of Solferino*, which called for the formation of national societies to provide relief voluntarily on a neutral basis.

At the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War, in 1870, she assisted the Grand Duchess of Baden in the preparation of military hospitals, and gave the Red Cross society much aid during the war. At the joint request of the German authorities and the Strasbourg Comité de Secours, she superintended the supplying of work to the poor of Strasbourg in 1871, after the Siege of Paris, and in 1871 had charge of the public distribution of supplies to the destitute people of Paris. At the close of the war, she received honorable decorations of the Golden Cross of Baden and the Prussian Iron Cross.

When Barton returned to the United States, she inaugurated a movement to gain recognition for the International Committee of the Red Cross by the United States government. In 1873, she began work on this project. In 1878, she met with President Rutherford B. Hayes, who expressed the opinion of most Americans at that time which was the U.S. would never again face a calamity like the Civil War. Barton finally succeeded during the administration of President Chester Arthur, using the argument that the new American Red Cross could respond to crises other than war such as earthquakes, forest fires, and hurricanes.