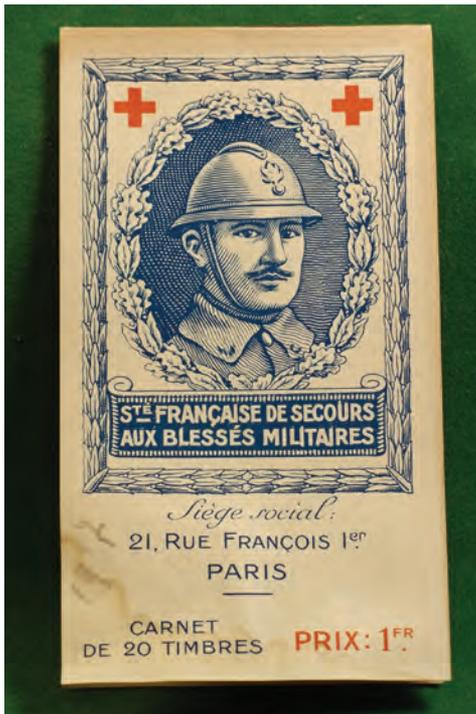




Atmospheric WWI American propaganda poster created by Harrison Fisher.



WWI French Red Cross war relief stamp book.



Red Cross-marked WWII British Austin ambulance, Tobruk, 1942, by King & Country Ltd.



WWII U.S. Army medic helmet and kit of Joseph Rosso Jr., who served with the 24th Division in the Philippines. His son, Michael, is a collector and formerly operated the Stockade Miniatures shop in Stroudsburg, Pa.

+ Angels of Mercy +

James H. Hillestad gives definition to the iconic Red Cross symbol, delves into the evolution of nursing and delivers more medical-related musings illustrated with military miniatures

TEXT AND PHOTOS: JAMES H. HILLESTAD

The year was 1859, and the event was the Battle of Solferino. French Emperor Napoleon III was embarked on a campaign against Austria, which was seeking control of minor states of Northern Italy.

The key player in this story is Jean-Henri Dunant, a Swiss businessman. After fruitless attempts to negotiate terms with bureaucratic civil servants in Paris, he set out for Solferino. There he hoped to contact the Emperor and secure his personal help in arranging concessions for Dunant's company in French-occupied Algeria.

BATTLEFIELD HORRORS

Dunant arrived in the evening of the day of the battle June 24. The horrors suffered in the French victory's aftermath stunned him. Some 40,000 men were dead or wounded — and there were

no medical facilities to bind wounds, provide water and comfort, or care for them in any way.

Appalled, Dunant organized townspeople to prepare temporary hospitals. He bought medical supplies with his own money.

Dunant stressed a neutral attitude of relieving the suffering of soldiers from both sides without favoritism. This was to become the hallmark of the organization he would found when he returned home to Geneva, Switzerland.

Hoping to spur changes for the better, Dunant wrote and self-published a book titled "A Memory of Solferino." He vividly described his experiences in the aftermath of the battle. He also advocated establishing an international treaty to guarantee the protection of medics and field hospitals for casualties. Dunant sent copies of the book to

FEATURE



British Boy Scouts van die-cast model made by Lledo in acknowledgment of contributions by Scouts during WWI.



WWII Battle of the Bulge U.S. Dodge ambulance, medics and wounded by King & Country Ltd.

RED CROSS GROWS

The British Red Cross traces its roots to the Franco-Prussian War (1870). The American Red Cross was founded in 1881 through the efforts of Clara Barton. The Ottoman Turks formed a similar organization called the Red Crescent, a symbol more acceptable to Muslims than the cross.

— James H. Hillestad



WWII period British ambulance, medical personnel and casualty by Britains.

FEATURE

leading military and political figures throughout Europe.

RED CROSS FORMED

Dunant's efforts led to the formation of the five-man International Committee for Relief to the Wounded. They organized a Geneva conference attended by 18 official delegates of national governments, seven non-official foreign delegates and six delegates from non-governmental organizations in October 1863. This conclave laid the groundwork for measures to improve battlefield medical services.

The Swiss government followed up by staging an international diplomatic conference. The first Geneva Convention "for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field" was adopted by 12 states and kingdoms Aug. 22, 1864. The treaty set forth common sense — and revolutionary — principles as follows:

- Wounded were to be treated with respect.
- Military hospitals were declared to be neutral.
- Medical personnel and materials were to be protected.
- The symbol of this protection would be "the Red Cross."

Dunant had chosen the organization's name and its now iconic symbol,



British Red Cross 100th anniversary stamps issued in 1963.



Afghan War Indian Army soldier with medical supplies by Somerset Ltd.



Indian Army medical section by Steadfast Soldiers.



W. Britain portrayal of WWI Australian Pvt. John Simpson, a stretcher-bearer at Gallipoli in 1915, using a donkey to evacuate a casualty.



Wounded are cared for aboard the battleship HMS Britannia crafted by Harold Pestana.

NURSING SERVICES EVOLVE

The Crimean War (1854-1856) was the cradle of nursing. England's "Lady With the Lamp" Florence Nightingale almost single-handedly removed the stigma that being a nurse had borne.

British Queen Victoria opened the country's first general military hospital in 1856. The Army Nursing Service was formed in 1881. It became part of the regular establishment of the British Army.

The Army Nursing Service's female complement at the beginning of the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) consisted of one woman superintendent and 56 nursing sisters.

The reasons given for this paucity of trained female nurses were many: it was cheaper to use untrained male orderlies; it was unsuitable to send women to the savage lands where most Victorian wars were fought; and it was unthinkable to ask women to care for soldiers with venereal diseases, which made up a large portion of the hospital cases in peacetime.

Army doctors were still almost as prejudiced against female nurses as they had been when Nightingale had gone out to Turkey nearly 50 years earlier.

Meanwhile, a correspondent for The Times reported, "Men were dying like flies for want of adequate attention."

As this became known to the public, there was an outcry in England. A Royal Commission was appointed to look into the matter.

After the Boer War, the Army Nursing Service was reorganized as Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, forerunner of today's Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps.

Notable contributors to the care and well-being of the troops during the Boer War included Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, a doctor who served in a field hospital; and lawyer



WWI Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps from the Premier Series by Charles Biggs.



First Aid Nursing Yeomanry by H.M. of Great Britain.



First Aid Nursing Yeomanry 1914-18 War Medal.



WWII First Aid Nursing Yeomanry uniform.



Women of Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps by Asset Miniatures.

Mohandas K. Gandhi, who raised an ambulance corps of more than 1,000 Indians.

Two other related organizations should be mentioned:

The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) was founded in 1907 as an organization of mounted lady first-aiders to ride on to the battlefield and help the wounded. It was thought that a single rider could get to a wounded soldier faster than a horse-drawn ambulance.

The original uniform was a scarlet tunic with white facings, a navy blue riding skirt with three rows of white braid and a hard-top scarlet hat with black leather peak. In 1912, the uniform was changed to a khaki tunic, khaki riding skirt and khaki soft cap.

The FANY served in both World Wars and continues to serve today.

The Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) was a unit of civilian volunteers who provided nursing care for

military personnel in the United Kingdom. The VAD system was founded in 1909 with the help of the Red Cross and the Order of St. John.

English authors Agatha Christie and E. M. Delafield were VAD



WWII British Red Cross Proficiency Medal.

nurses as was American aviator Amelia Earhart. She served as a nurse's aide in Toronto, Canada.



WWII British nurse's uniform with ribbons for the Defence Medal and Voluntary Service Medal. Around her neck is her VAD identity badge.



Crimean War British Army casualty with nurse Florence Nightingale by King & Country Ltd.



French first aid station by CBG Mignot.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1899, the Russian Red Cross Society offered the British government medical staff, medicines and financial contributions to help the wounded of both fighting parties in the Second Anglo-Boer War. The British government politely declined Russian help. But the Boer leadership accepted it with "great gratitude." —James H. Hillestad

FEATURE



Spanish medical orderly made by Alymer.



British stretcher-bearers of the Anglo-Zulu War by Trophy Miniatures of Wales Ltd.

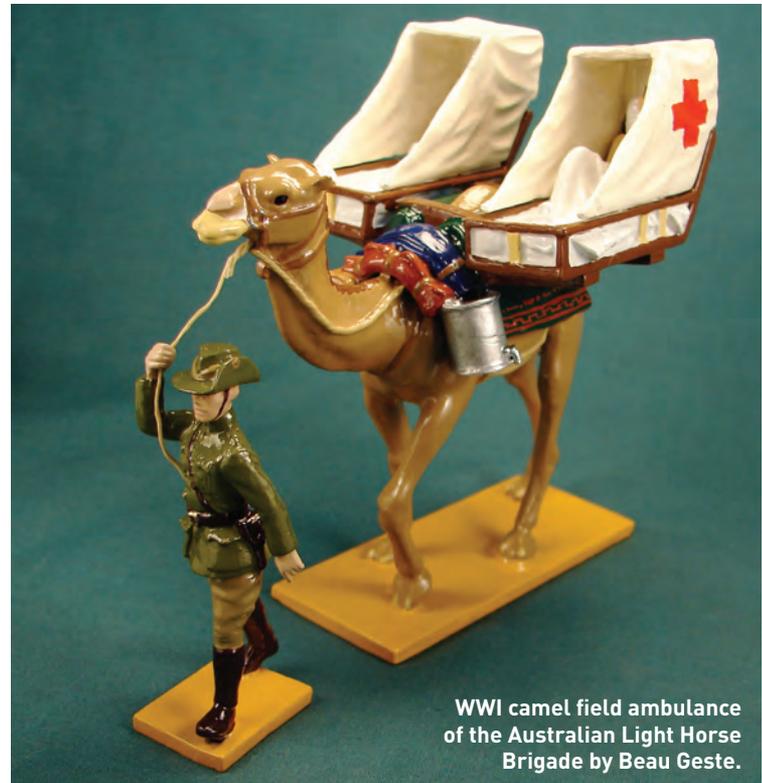
WRITERS AND CARTOONISTS WHO WERE WWI AMBULANCE DRIVERS

Ernest Hemingway
Dashiell Hammett
Sidney Howard

John Dos Passos
W. Somerset Maugham
Walt Disney



WWII U.S. Army medic and wounded blood transfusion set by King & Country Ltd.



WWI camel field ambulance of the Australian Light Horse Brigade by Beau Geste.



WWII U.S. Army Nursing Corps "Shannon Set" made by King & Country Ltd. in tribute to the late Shannon Reuss of Treefrog Treasures, who worked as a nurse at U.S. Veterans Administration hospitals. Also shown are a medical tent and jeep ambulance from the same maker.

which is a reversal of the colors of his own homeland's national flag.

In 1876, the organization adopted the name International Committee of the Red Cross, which is still its official designation. Today the humanitarian movement has about 97 million volunteers, members and staff around the globe.

For more than 140 years, the Red Cross has been an icon of hope, compassion and healing. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER

James H. Hillestad is the proprietor of The Toy Soldier Museum and shop in Cresco, Pa., USA.