

The primary purpose of the Association is to teach First Aid and Home Nursing to both civilians and the Armed Forces and to provide trained and organized personnel to help in time of disaster or national emergency. This work was started in Canada in 1895 and, since then, about 750,000 persons have received certificates and other awards. Since 1940 the number has been close to, or above, 100,000 a year. During 1942, 118,490 certificates were issued and in the first half of 1943, 66,310. Many thousands of these went to members of the Armed Forces to which trained instructors and textbooks have been provided in large numbers. In 1942 an order was issued providing that every member of the Royal Canadian Air Force, men and women, must take St. John First Aid instruction. The railways of Canada and many large industrial concerns maintain their own St. John centres. The training of personnel of Air Raid Precaution in First Aid work has been a large war-time undertaking.

The uniformed Brigade performs a very special function in war-time. At port cities it assists the regular R.C.A.M.C. doctors and nurses, helps in hospitals and merchant seamen's hostels and shipwrecked seamen. It largely staffs the First Aid Posts for A.R.P. Early in 1943 when Voluntary Aid Detachments were made an integral part of the Army Nursing Service the Brigade instituted a recruiting campaign to enlist V.A.D. or nurses' aides and many are now on duty in Army hospitals. Others are helping short-staffed civilian hospitals. All wear the grey and white uniform with the eight-pointed cross of St. John. Uniformed St. John Brigade members are to be found at all exhibitions, large demonstrations or wherever crowds gather. A new departure in 1943 has been the training of Brigade members as blood-typing technicians. The entire personnel of big war industries are typed so that, in the event of serious accident, blood transfusions may be given in the quickest possible time.

Early in 1943 a new agreement was entered into between the Canadian Red Cross Society and the St. John Ambulance Association whereby future training would come under a joint board consisting of representatives of both organizations and a chairman appointed by the Minister of War Services. Certificates are to be issued under the joint name. The object was to avoid duplication, pool instructors and make training available to as large a number of persons as possible. Further, under this new arrangement, which has been approved under Order in Council, the finances necessary to carry on St. John activity in Canada will come from the annual public appeal of the Red Cross.