February 28, 1943 [American Red Cross Appeal] 1454

FDR Speech File

AMERICAN RED CROSS APPEAL
OF THE PRESIDENT
RADIO BROADCAST
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1943
AT 4.15 PM, EWT

Read by Norman H. Davis

(Chairman, American Red Cross)

(Due to illness of the President)

Just a few weeks ago I was privileged to visit a part of the North African theatre of war, and to see and talk with our soldiers and sailors who man that front. Among these men in North Africa are the sons and brothers and husbands and friends of many of you who are listening at this moment. I wish it were somehow possible to share my experience with you, because I know what it would mean to you to have the chance to clasp the hand of some relative or friend thousands of miles from home, and to wish him well.

There is one way for you, however, to reach this hand of love and friendship across the ocean. For wherever our fighting men are -- all over the world -- the American Red Cross is by their side, extending always the arm of helpfulness and comfort.

At home, we have grown accustomed to the role of the Red Cross in every national emergency, in every local catastrophe -- a generous friend to those overtaken by tragedy. Even our enemies know about the American Red Cross, because it has never let international boundaries act as the limits of its mercy.

The American Red Cross begins today the greatest

single crusade of mercy in all history. It is undertaking a task unprecedented -- because this war is unprecedented. We undertake this greatest of all Red Cross crusades in the name of mercy -- now that we are engaged in a war to decide whether all our concepts of mercy and human decency are strong enough to survive.

In the Axis nations, mercy and decency are regarded as synonyms for weakness and decadence.

In our land it is from our great tradition of mercy that we take part of our strength.

Each one of you who has a friend or relative in uniform will measure the significance of this crusade in your own heart. You -- at your house today -- know better than anyone else what it means to be sure that the Red Cross stands at the side of our soldiers or sailors or marines wherever they may be. All of us -- one hundred and thirty millions -- know how indispensable to victory is the work of this great agency which goes on every minute of every day -- everywhere on earth where it is needed.

By proclamation, I have designated the month of March as Red Cross Month. To make sure that every American boy on every fighting front has everything he needs which the Red Cross can supply, it will require at least one hundred and twenty-five million dollars.

That is all that we need to know -- we will not fail.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

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THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

NEWS SERVICE

NOTE RELEASE DATE

STATEMENTS FILE

~~FOR RELEASE AFTER~~ 4:30 P.M., E.W.T., February 28.
TEXTS OF PRESIDENT'S AND GENERAL EISENHOWER'S TALKS ARE ATTACHED. TEXT OF ADMIRAL NIMITZ' REMARKS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED SEPARATELY BY NAVY DEPARTMENT.

Washington, D.C., February 28 — President Roosevelt, officially opening the 1943 Red Cross War Fund campaign for $125,000,000 today described Red Cross services to U.S. servicemen as "indispensable to victory."

The President's statement, highlighting the observance of Red Cross Sunday, was read over the four major radio networks by Red Cross Chairman Norman H. Davis in the absence of the Chief Executive, who still is confined to the White House by a slight intestinal upset.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces in North Africa, speaking from that theatre of operations, and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet, joined in the appeal.

In his message, the President said in part:

"The American Red Cross begins today the greatest single crusade of mercy in all history. It is undertaking a task unprecedented — because this war is unprecedented. We undertake this greatest of all Red Cross crusades in the name of mercy — now that we are engaged in a war to decide whether all our concepts of mercy and human decency are strong enough to survive.

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"Each one of you who has a friend or relative in uniform will measure the significance of this crusade in your own heart. You — at your house today — know better than anyone else what it means to be sure that the Red Cross stands at the side of our soldiers or sailors or marines wherever they may be. All of us — one

hundred and thirty millions -- know how indispensable to victory is the work of this great agency..."

General Eisenhower, in his address declared:

"The Red Cross takes your subscription, transforms it into useful and practical aid, and brings it to the soldier freely, cheerfully, and efficiently.

"I do hope that the Red Cross organization in this theatre will be expanded many times. We have need of it every day everywhere. In the brief moment I have had, I cannot possibly describe to you the extent to which all of us, particularly these magnificent soldiers who fill the American units in North Africa, depend upon the American Red Cross. Perhaps it would be best for me to say that I have yet to meet an American soldier -- and I've spoken to hundreds -- who doesn't say with enthusiasm and vigor -- 'That Red Cross is certainly doing one fine job'."

Admiral Nimitz likewise lauded the work of the Red Cross in his theatre of operations and urged every American to support the War Fund Campaign.

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Speech of the President read by Norman H. Davis, Chairman,
American Red Cross, over four networks, 4:15 to 4:30,
Sunday, February 28, 1943

Just a few weeks ago I was privileged to visit a part of the North African theatre of war, and to see and talk with our soldiers and sailors who man that front. Among these men in North Africa are the sons and brothers and husbands and friends of many of you who are listening at this moment. I wish it were somehow possible to share my experience with you, because I know what it would mean to you to have the chance to clasp the hand of some relative or friend thousands of miles from home, and to wish him well.

There is one way for you, however, to reach this hand of love and friendship across the ocean. For wherever our fighting men are -- all over the world -- the American Red Cross is by their side, extending always the arm of helpfulness and comfort.

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That is all that we need to know -- we will not fail.

FOUR-NETWORK BROADCAST
OPENING AMERICAN RED CROSS WAR FUND CAMPAIGN
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1943
4:15 TO 4:30 PM. EWT

TALK BY GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, FROM NORTH AFRICA

I have been asked to send an appeal from our soldiers in North Africa to our home country for subscriptions for the American Red Cross. I prefer not to call my little talk an appeal. I should rather merely give you a statement of the facts.

I firmly believe that if American citizens could be assured that the Red Cross was rendering effective aid to our fighting armies, any donation requested would be oversubscribed in a single day. Each of you has a brother, son, husband, or very dear friend serving somewhere in the armed forces. The American Red Cross is the single organized agency that brings to that man those things that have no place in official equipment tables, but do so much for his well-being and morale.

Here in Africa that soldier may be working at one of our ports unloading ships, and helping to move precious supplies to combat soldiers who are hundreds of miles away in slit trenches at the battlefront. He may be one of the men actually in those trenches or may be lying sick and wounded in one of our hospitals. Wherever he is, whatever duty he is performing, the American Red Cross is nearby to learn of his wants and to satisfy them. Men and women of the Red Cross labor night and day to give the soldier a comforting smoke when he has none of his own, to hand him a razor, toothpaste, a piece of candy, or any one of the hundreds of other items that may, for the moment, seem to him to be the most important thing he could get.

In Red Cross Clubs, big and little, wherever there are troops concentrated it provides a homelike atmosphere where your son or friend may get good coffee, read a book or magazine, or just relax among people that he knows to be his friends. If he's in a hospital, special attentions are given by some Red Cross woman who will bring him anything possible to add to his contentment or even, upon request, write a letter to his homefolks. Most of North Africa is undeveloped country, and

EISENHOWER
(CONT'D):

it has been systematically stripped of all those things you are used to buying daily at the corner drug store. Here a soldier cannot walk in and buy any of those things so necessary to his comfort — sometimes, almost to his existence. The Red Cross takes your subscription, transforms it into useful and practical aid, and brings it to the soldier freely, cheerfully, and efficiently.

I do hope that the Red Cross organization in this theatre will be expanded many times. We have need of it every day everywhere. In the brief moment I have had, I cannot possibly describe to you the extent to which all of us, particularly those magnificent soldiers who fill the American units in North Africa, depend upon the American Red Cross. Perhaps it would be best for me to say that I have yet to meet an American soldier - and I've spoken to hundreds — who doesn't say with enthusiasm and vigor — "That Red Cross is certainly doing one fine job."

# # #

124

file

February 27, 1943

Dear Mr. Davis:

Here is the text of the President's speech. He deeply regrets that he will not be able to deliver it in person, and will greatly appreciate having you read it for him. I have told Mr. Brown that we will leave the matter of the release of the text in his hands.

Very sincerely yours,

WILLIAM D. HASSETT

Honorable Norman H. Davis,
Chairman,
American National Red Cross,
Seventeenth & D Streets,
Washington, D. C.

Enclosure.

wdh-mms

file

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT TO BE READ BY HONORABLE NORMAN H. DAVIS, CHAIRMAN, AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS, ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1943

Just a few weeks ago I was privileged to visit a part of the North African theatre of war, and to see and talk with our soldiers and sailors who man that front. Among these men in North Africa are the sons and brothers and husbands and friends of many of you who are listening at this moment. I wish it were somehow possible to share my experience with you, because I know what it would mean to you to have the chance to clasp the hand of some relative or friend thousands of miles from home, and to wish him well.

There is one way for you, however, to reach this hand of love and friendship across the ocean. For wherever our fighting men are -- all over the world -- the American Red Cross is by their side, extending always the arm of helpfulness and comfort.

At home, we have grown accustomed to the role of the Red Cross in every national emergency, in every local catastrophe -- a generous friend to those overtaken by tragedy. Even our enemies know about the American Red Cross, because it has never let international boundaries act as the limits of its mercy.

The American Red Cross begins today the greatest single crusade of mercy in all history. It is undertaking a task unprecedented -- because this war is unprecedented. We undertake this greatest of all Red Cross crusades in the name of mercy -- now that we are engaged in a war to decide whether all our concepts of mercy and human decency are strong enough to survive.

In the Axis nations, mercy and decency are regarded as synonyms for weakness and decadence.

In our land it is from our great tradition of mercy that we take part of our strength.

Each one of you who has a friend or relative in uniform will measure the significance of this crusade in your own heart. You -- at your

house today — know better than anyone else what it means to be sure that the Red Cross stands at the side of our soldiers or sailors or marines wherever they may be. All of us — one hundred and thirty millions — know how indispensable to victory is the work of this great agency which goes on every minute of every day — everywhere on earth where it is needed.

By proclamation, I have designated the month of March as Red Cross Month. To make sure that every American boy on every fighting front has everything he needs which the Red Cross can supply, it will require at least one hundred and twenty-five million dollars.

That is all that we need to know — we will not fail.

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Mr Hassett

Will you do the
necessary and ask
Norman Davis to read

JSLT

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 25, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR

BILL HASSETT

Dear Bill:

This is the result of my tinkering with the draft which the American Red Cross sent over. I think it is in fair enough shape to show to the President.

SAMUEL I. ROSENMAN

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT FOR AMERICAN RED CROSS

FEBRUARY 28, 1945

Just a few weeks ago I was privileged to visit a part of the North African theatre of war, and to see and talk with our soldiers and sailors ~~and marines~~ who man that front. Among these men in North Africa are the sons and brothers and husbands and friends of many of you who are listening at this moment. I wish it were somehow possible to share my experience with you, because I know what it would mean to you to have the chance to clasp the hand of some relative or friend thousands of miles from home and to wish him well.

There is one way for you, however, to reach this hand of love and friendship across the ocean. For wherever our fighting men are -- all over the world -- the American Red Cross is by their side, extending always the arm of helpfulness and comfort.

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In the Axis nations, mercy and decency are regarded as synonyms for weakness and decadence.

In our land it is from our great tradition of mercy that we take part of our strength. This Red Cross crusade will be another evidence of this strength that will not be relaxed except on the unrelenting terms of unconditional surrender.

Each one of you who has a friend or relative in uniform will measure the significance of this crusade in your own heart. You -- at your house today -- know better than anyone else what it means to be sure that the Red Cross stands at the side of our soldiers or sailors or marines wherever they may be. All of us -- one hundred and thirty millions -- know how indispensable to victory is the work of this great agency which goes on every minute of every day -- everywhere on earth where it is needed.

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That is all that we need to know — we will not fail.

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Judge Rosenman

AMERICAN RED CROSS

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

WASHINGTON, D. C.

TO: Mr. William Hassett DATE: February 22, 1943

FROM: Mr. Brown

Attached is a suggested draft for the President's talk over the combined networks 4:15 to 4:30 P.M., EWT, February 28. We clock it at approximately 4 minutes 40 seconds which is just right. We hope the draft is satisfactory. Is it our understanding that you will release the text of the President's talk to the newspapers or shall we?

I am also attaching a carbon copy of the Chairman's introductory remarks.

G. Stewart Brown

Attachment

MR. DAVIS: On December 8, 1941 - the day after Pearl Harbor - the American Red Cross called upon the people for its first emergency war fund of this war. That fund was generously over-subscribed and, as a result, the Red Cross has extended its wartime services to every section of the world where our men are fighting for our freedom and security.

This year duties officially assigned to the Red Cross are unprecedented. And to finance those obligations to the fighting men and their families - the Red Cross must call upon the people for the largest war fund in its history. And so today, the Red Cross - and its millions of volunteer solicitors under the national chairmanship of Mr. Walter S. Gifford, sets out to raise a great war fund - equal to the gigantic tasks that lie ahead.

This campaign is to be opened officially now by the President of the American Red Cross. Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States.

Speech of the President for American Red Cross. 2/24/43

2 copies

THE PRESIDENT: ~~In this war, as in the last, it has been my privilege to go out to the battlefronts, to talk to our fighting men and to see them in action.~~

Just a few weeks ago I was privileged to tour the North African theatre of war, and to see and talk with our soldiers and sailors and marines who man that front. Among these men in North Africa ~~were~~ are the sons and brothers and husbands and friends of many of you who are listening at this moment. I wish it were somehow possible to share my experience with you, because I know what it would mean to you to have that you would give anything in the world for the chance to clasp the hand of some loved one, relative or friend thousands of miles from home and to wish him well.

There is one way for you, fellow Americans, to reach this hand of love and friendship across the broadest ocean. For in North Africa and wherever our fighting men are - all over the world - the American Red Cross is by their side, extending always the arm of helpfulness and comfort. And the Red Cross must look to you and me at home if it is to continue to do this job for you and me.

At home, we ~~know what~~ have grown accustomed to the role of the Red Cross ~~stands for~~ in every national emergency, in every local castastrophe -- a generous friend in peace, as well as in war, it is always ready to give aid and comfort to those overtaken by tragedy.

Yes, even our enemies know about the American Red Cross, because ~~the American Red Cross~~ it has never let international boundaries act as the limits of its mercy.

THE PRESIDENT: Today, the American Red Cross - simultaneously with its sister society in Canada - begins to-day the greatest single crusade of mercy in all history. It is undertaking a task unprecedented — because this war is unprecedented. And it is especially fitting that we should undertake this greatest of all Red Cross crusades in the name of mercy — now that we are engaged in a war to decide whether mercy and all our concepts of mercy and human decency are worth anything. In the Axis nations Nazi occupied Europe, for instance, mercy and decency are regarded as synonyms for weakness. ~~Men and women have been enslaved beyond any evil dream of other tyrants through the ages, children have been made the victims of slow, systematic starvation so that the Nazis may make good their boast that Germany shall eat first.~~

~~Yes, they define mercy as weakness. But here~~ In our land it is from our great tradition of mercy that we take part of our strength. And so this Red Cross crusade shall be another evidence of this strength that will not be relaxed except on the unrelenting terms of unconditional surrender.

That is the broad significance of the drive we begin on this Red Cross Sunday. Each one of you who has a friend or relative ~~son or brother or husband~~ in uniform will measure ~~its~~ the ~~personal~~ significance of this crusade in your own heart. You — at

THE PRESIDENT: your house today -- know better than anyone else what it means to be sure that the Red Cross stands at the side of ~~your~~ our soldiers or sailors or marines wherever he may be. We know at "our house", too.

By proclamation, I have designated the month of March as Red Cross Month. To make sure that every American boy on every fighting front has everything he needs, which the Red Cross ~~estimates that~~ it will ~~need~~ require at least one hundred and twenty five million dollars. ~~I think~~ P T that is all that we need to know. We will not fail.

~~But~~ All of us - one hundred and thirty millions - know how indispensable to victory is the work of this great agency which goes on every minute of every day - everywhere on earth where it is needed.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

WASHINGTON, D. C.

file

TO: William H. Hassett

DATE: February 4, 1943

FROM: G. Stewart Brown

SUBJECT: Red Cross War Fund Broadcast, February 28

Miss Tully informed Chairman Norman H. Davis sometime ago that, barring unforeseen developments, the President would accept his invitation to talk briefly Sunday afternoon, February 28 on the four-network radio program officially opening the 1943 Red Cross War Fund campaign.

The Chairman being absent, this memorandum is to inform you that the networks have scheduled the program from 4:15 to 4:30 p.m. EWT, Sunday, February 28. If agreeable to the President we would like him to talk for approximately four minutes. He will be followed by Lieutenant General Dwight Eisenhower, who has agreed to participate in the program from North Africa, and a representative of the Navy or Marine Corps in the Pacific as yet to be selected, both of whom will describe Red Cross activities in their theatres of action. We are prepared to submit a suggested draft for the President's talk unless we hear from you that you would prefer to have it prepared elsewhere.

I need not tell you how important this program is to the Red Cross in inaugurating its campaign for $125,000,000 to finance our war-time services for another year. The President's participation will insure a successful beginning for the drive.

G. Stewart Brown