

Frying Pan Farm Park Visitor Center Blood Drive

While a British obstetrician performed the first human blood transfusion in 1818, it was not until World War II that mass blood donations could be safely transported to overseas recipients.



In August of 1940, American doctor Charles Richard Drew headed the Blood for Britain Campaign, which was enacted to collect blood for British soldiers fighting in Europe. Drew had previously

discovered a method for preserving blood plasma so that donations could be shipped across long distances. In the past, most successful transfusions had required that the donor and the recipient be in the same location.

Using his new technique, Drew collected donations from volunteers in New York City. He and his team then preserved the blood plasma and shipped it to medics in Europe who administered it to wounded soldiers. It was the first time a program had been created to collect blood plasma in one location and ship it to another to be administered. The program lasted until June 17, 1941 and performed over 14,556 transfusions.

After the United States entered World War II in December of 1941, the American Red Cross opened dozens of blood donation facilities across the country. Wartime propaganda urged civilians to donate, and by the war's end, the Red Cross had collected over 13 million units of blood.



The advancements made during World War II led to new developments including:

- 1947-** Blood donations begin to be tested for blood type and syphilis
- 1956-** A national blood clearinghouse is established
- 1969-** Technique developed to store blood platelets at room temperature

Thank you for donating