

Research Enquiry Information Sheet

The St John Ambulance Brigade, Association and the Order of St John

This Museum and our archives relate to both the Order of St John and St John Ambulance, and it is useful to know which is which:

The Order of St John is a Chivalric Order, of which people can become members on recommendation, often for their work with St John Ambulance. Membership has various grades from Serving Member (formerly Serving Brother or Sister), all the way up to Bailiff and Dame Grand Cross. The Order has roots in the medieval period, but the current Order of St John, with its headquarters in England, was established in the Victorian period. St John Ambulance is one of the Order's charitable outputs. It began in 1877 with the establishment of the St John Ambulance Association to train people in first aid. In 1887 the St John Ambulance Brigade was established to provide first aiders to serve at public events. The Association and Brigade have since merged and exist today simply as St John Ambulance.

What do we hold in our archive?

While we may hold information that can confirm membership of St John Ambulance, these records are not complete, so not every member of St John Ambulance will be in our records. We hold more detailed records for London and Kent – this is why we ask for known addresses, so if you think the person you are enquiring about lived in either London or Kent, please include this in the form.

If the person you are researching held a senior position in the Brigade or Association, it is possible that we might find a record of them in annual reports or First Aid magazine. You can view the editions of First Aid magazine published during the First and Second World Wars on our website [here](#).

We also hold records of Service Medal recipients, mostly from the 1920s onwards and records of Life Saving medal recipients. No records exist of recipients of medallions. (Please see medal information sheet).

If you believe the person you are researching may have been a Voluntary Aid Detachment nurse (VAD) during the First World War you can search for their record card online at <https://vad.redcross.org.uk/> We only hold some records of First World War VAD/ Auxiliary Hospitals. You can check which ones [here](#).

We have a comprehensive record of Order membership and will therefore be able to tell you whether the person you are enquiring about became a member of the Order and dates of admission and promotions. We also hold many citations (nomination forms) for Order membership and so we may be able to tell you the reasons why someone was nominated or promoted. We will not be able to tell you who made the nomination.

If you are looking to make a donation of an object or artefact to the Museum, please send a photograph of the item(s) and any information you have about the item, this can then be passed on to our Curator who will be able to advise on if we are able to accept the donations. (Please note that we have a strict acquisitions policy and sometimes will be unable to accept offers but we appreciate the kind offers we receive and would always like to see more St John history.)