

# The History of the Salvation Army



**William Booth embarked upon his ministerial career in 1852. His crusade was to win the lost multitudes of London to Christ. He went into the streets of London to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the poor, the homeless, the hungry and the destitute.**

**Booth abandoned the conventional concept of a church and a pulpit and took his message to the people. His fervor led to disagreement with the leaders of the church in London. They preferred traditional measures. As a result, he withdrew from the church and traveled throughout England conducting evangelistic meetings. His wife, Catherine, was a major force in The Salvation Army movement.**

**In 1865, William Booth was invited to hold a series of evangelistic meetings in the east end of London. He set up a tent in a Quaker graveyard and his services became an instant success. This proved to be the end of his wanderings as an independent traveling evangelist. His renown as a religious leader spread throughout London. His followers were a vigorous group dedicated to fight for the souls of men and women.**

**Thieves, prostitutes, gamblers and drunkards were among Booth's first converts to Christianity. His congregations were desperately poor. He preached hope and salvation. His aim was to lead them to Christ and to link them to a church for further spiritual guidance. Even though they were converted, churches did not accept Booth's followers because of what they had been. Booth gave their lives direction in a spiritual manner and put them to work to save others who were like themselves. They too preached and sang in the streets as a living testimony to the power of God.**

**In 1867, Booth had only 10 full-time workers. By 1874, the numbers had grown to 1,000 volunteers and 42 evangelists. They served under the name "The Christian Mission." Booth assumed the title of a General Superintendent. His followers called him "General." Known as the "Hallelujah Army," the converts spread out of the east end of London into neighboring areas and then to other cities.**

**Booth was reading a printer's proof of the 1878 Annual Report when he noticed the statement, "'The Christian Mission under the Superintendent's of the Rev. William Booth is a volunteer army. He crossed out the words "Volunteer Army" and penned in "Salvation Army" From those words came the basis of the foundation deed of The Salvation Army which was adopted in August of that same year.**

**Converts became soldiers of Christ and are known as Salvationists. They launched an offensive throughout the British Isles. In some instances there were real battles as organized gangs mocked and attacked soldiers as they went about their work. In spite of the violence and persecution, some 250,000 persons were converted under the ministry of the Salvationists between 1881 and 1,885.**

Meanwhile, the Army was gaining a foothold in the United States. Lieutenant Eliza Shirley had left England to join her parents who had migrated to America earlier in search of work. She held the first meeting of The Salvation Army in America in Philadelphia in 1879. The Salvationists were received enthusiastically. Shirley wrote to General Booth begging for reinforcements. None were available at first. Glowing reports of the work in Philadelphia convinced Booth to send an official group to pioneer the work in America in 1880.

On March 10, 1880, Commissioner George Scott Railton and seven women officers knelt on the dockside at Battery Park in New York City to give thanks for their safe arrival. This was to be their first official street meeting held in the United States. These pioneers were to be met with similar unfriendly actions, as was the case in Great Britain. They were ridiculed, arrested and attacked. Several officers and soldiers even gave their lives.

Three years later, Railton and the seven "Hallelujah Lassies" had expanded their operation into California, Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

President Grover Cleveland received a delegation of Salvation Army officers in 1886 and gave the organization a warm personal endorsement. This was the first recognition from the White House that was to be followed by similar receptions from succeeding presidents of the United States.

Termed as the "invasion of the United States," The Salvation Army movement expanded rapidly to Canada, Australia, France, Switzerland, India, South Africa, Iceland and Germany. Currently in the United States, there are more than 10,000 local neighborhood units, and The Salvation Army is active in virtually every corner of the world

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## **A Brief History of the USA Southern Territory**

The opening salvos of the Salvation War were fired in Baltimore, Maryland when the Shirley family arrived there in 1881. Early successes followed throughout Maryland and from there the work spread further through the South.

The South was the focus of attention during the Spanish-American War, as Florida became the launching point for American forces before sailing for Cuba. The first work in America among the military took place here among the troops.

The Salvation Army in the South found its fortunes bound to a farm economy that was dominated by Cotton and tobacco. As prices rose and fell, corps experienced both boom times and bust. The work was difficult to establish but finally it was felt that the region was strong enough to become its own command.

In April 1927, the National Commander Evangeline Booth came to Atlanta to proclaim the opening of the Southern Territory. Appointed to head the new command were Commissioner and Mrs. William McIntyre, native Canadians but whose service was almost entirely in the United States. The opening was not a smooth one as two years later the Great Depression fell on the world.

As the economy improved and as the South tackled the problems created by years of racial segregation, the Army found more fertile fields for growth. Its pragmatic approach to social issues and its simple, but heartfelt proclamation of the Christian Gospel has

allowed it to grow at a continuing accelerated pace. Currently one of the fastest growing territories in the world the Southern Territory is now experiencing growth in new areas such as ethnic ministries with Hispanic and Asian corps.

Innovative social programs have continued to keep the Army's work relevant through the transition caused by welfare reform. The vitality of its Christian message is witnessed by new corps openings, larger numbers of cadets, larger attendance in its meetings and the optimism that comes with a forward march.

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## **The Worldwide Salvation Army**

International Headquarters, in London, England, is the international administrative center of The Salvation Army. From International Headquarters, the General, the Army's international leader, provides spiritual and administrative guidance to Salvation Army units around the world.

## **The Salvation Army in the United States**

The Salvation Army in the United States is divided into four territories. The national commander and the national chief secretary serve in coordinating capacities. Each territorial commander operates under the general policies laid down by International Headquarters in London, England.

National policy is established by the commissioners' Conference, over which the national commander presides. While the local leadership adjusts to meet conditions in each community, all officers are subject to the same broad, overall policies.

## **The USA Southern Territory**

The administrative center of the Southern Territory is in Atlanta, Georgia. The USA Southern Territory comprises 15 southern states and is divided into nine divisions. The territorial commander is the administrative and spiritual leader of the territory.

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## Area Commands

Salvation Army operations in large metropolitan areas are often administered by an area commander. Under his command, there may be a number of Salvation Army officers commanding corps community centers and social service centers.

## Corps Community Centers

This is the local Salvation Army center of operations seen in most towns and cities across the country. Each week a variety of people will meet here for worship, cross-cultural services, fellowship, musical activities and other events.

There may also be a variety of community outreach activities, as well as character building activities for youth and adults. services and so on which are part of the corps program. All are welcome to attend Salvation Army meetings.

Emergency relief, emergency shelter or other social services may also be available at the corps community center, though they often are offered at one or more separate nearby Salvation Army facilities.

## Other Salvation Army Centers of Operation

Large social services centers, senior citizens' housing, domestic violence and children's shelters, camps and rehabilitation centers may operate independently of an area command or corps community center. These facilities are administered directly by divisional headquarters or by territorial headquarters.

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## What The Salvation Army believes

**The Salvationist believes that:**

**The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice.**

**There is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.**

**There are three persons in the Godhead - the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and coequal in power and glory.**

**In the person of Jesus Christ the divine and human natures are united so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.**

**Our first parents were created in a state of innocence, but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness; and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.**

**The Lord Jesus Christ has by His suffering and death made atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.**

**Repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to salvation.**

**We are justified by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.**

**Continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.**

**It is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**In the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgment at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked**

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## **What is a Salvation Army Officer or Soldier?**

### **The General**

**The General, based at International Headquarters in London, is the international leader of The Salvation Army and travels widely wherever the Army is active. He or she is elected by the High Council (a group of senior Salvation Army officers) for a term of five years or until the 68th birthday is reached, when he or she must retire. The Advisory Council to the General assists The General in policy making.**

### **Officers**

**Salvation Army officers are ordained ministers serving in The Salvation Army in a professional capacity and on a full-time basis. They are members of The Salvation Army who commit their lives to doing God's will and serving others.**

**Officers may be single or married. If married, both husband and wife must undertake the same training, and both are ordained and commissioned upon completion of training. Single officers wishing to marry must marry within the ranks or resign their officership. Officers resigning their officership to marry may remain in The Salvation Army as soldiers and may resume their officership if the non-officer spouse elects to undertake officer training.**

**Officers come from all walks of life - from varying backgrounds and occupations - to complete a two year residential course at a Salvation Army Training College. Concurrent with ordination they are commissioned to the rank of captain. After fifteen years of satisfactory service they are promoted to the rank of major. Higher ranks are at the direction of the General.**

**The majority of officers are responsible for a Salvation Army corps community center (church), with pastoral and community service responsibilities. Officers may also serve in other Salvation Army facilities or in an administrative capacity at headquarters.**

All officers receive a small standard allowance according to rank, with an added stipend calculated on the number of dependents. The amount of allowance does not vary for different appointments or levels of administrative responsibility. Quarters and transportation are provided and remain the property of The Salvation Army.

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## Becoming a Salvation Army Officer

### Auxiliary/Captains

Auxiliary/Captains are persons who undertake Salvation Army officership after they reach the maximum age for acceptance into the college for officer training. After five years, an auxiliary/captain may receive a full commission. An auxiliary /captain has the same responsibilities and receives the same allowance as a regular officer.

### Sergeants

Sergeants are Salvationists (active lay members in good standing for at least two years) who elect to work full-time for The Salvation Army in a pastoral or administrative capacity. Sergeants are employees and are not ordained or commissioned, but they may be appointed to a corps community center, where they will perform all pastoral duties except those reserved to ordained clergy.

### Soldiers

Lay members of The Salvation Army are called soldiers. As do lay members of other churches, Salvation Army soldiers have secular professions and are typical members of the community. Upon enrollment, soldiers sign the Articles of War, which state the Army's beliefs, and they accept certain moral standards, e.g., Salvation Army soldiers do not smoke or drink alcohol. Soldiers are expected, but not required, to wear the uniform as a witness to their faith.

Children may be enrolled as Junior Soldiers. Junior Soldiers sign a covenant in which they make a confession of faith and agree to obey God, pray and read the Bible. While adults make a commitment to The Salvation Army when they become soldiers, the Junior Soldier covenant does not include this provision.

### Local Officers

Salvationists who accept particular lay leadership responsibilities in a corps are called local officers; their positions are similar to elders in other churches. Local officers may undertake such responsibilities as corps treasurer, Sunday school teacher, youth leader and other leadership and service positions. Local officers are required to wear the uniform when carrying out the responsibilities of their position. As with volunteer lay leaders in other organizations, they receive no pay for these activities.

### Adherents

Adherents choose to make The Salvation Army their spiritual home and place of worship, but who do not wish to make the commitments of Salvation Army soldiership. While they

may participate in all corps community activities, they may not assume official leadership positions. Adherents do not wear the uniform.

### **Why does The Salvation Army use military structure and uniforms?**

The Salvation Army's military style is rooted in the militaristic spirit prevalent in the mid-1800s, when William and Catherine Booth founded the organization. This organizational style has proven effective in making the Army a highly disciplined and mobile organization, able to respond quickly and efficiently to human need whenever and wherever it arises.

The uniform also finds its roots in the culture of its founding and continues to serve as a witness to the Salvationist's commitment to serving God and man. Today, The Salvation Army's uniform is recognized as a symbol of commitment and a sign of availability and accessibility in times of need or crisis. Salvation Army officers always wear the uniform when they are on duty in the corps, the office or the community.