The First World War and The Salvation Army



Did The Salvation Army fight in the First World War?



All Salvationists fought, but they fought by showing God's love to their fellow man, no matter where they were - if they were on a battlefield or making a cup of tea, all were expected to help.

It was a very difficult time as The Salvation Army had members in most of the countries that became involved in the First World War.

What did The Salvation Army do?

We wanted to make sure each person was cared for, that nobody felt alone. Wartime is a very stressful time. Wherever there was a need, we tried to help.



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What did The Salvation Army do in the UK?



We raised money to buy the first motor ambulances.

We had hostels near train stations and ports. Hostels were a safe place for soldiers and sailors to stay in if they were travelling, or if they were lost in a new city.

We ran huts in the soldiers' training camps, a place to get some good food and a cup of tea. It was a clean and welcoming place to relax in.

Women and children made socks and clothes for soldiers. We also sent parcels with goodies inside to cheer up soldiers.

We did lots of home visits and made sure families were coping. Public kitchens became popular; food was becoming scarce, and mothers involved in war work had little time to cook meals for their families.

We gave emergency support when there were bombings emergency repairs, shelter and food.

What did The Salvation Army do abroad?

We had huts and field kitchens run by men and women. Field kitchens used small ovens which could be set up anywhere - in a ditch, in a bombed-out house, or in a field! They could be set up very close to the front line so the troops could have something good to eat.



We worked with the Red Cross and drove the ambulances. We drove the wounded from the front to the hospital and also took them to trains and boats so they could return home to Britain.



Being part of The Salvation Army meant we were already trained to work hard and serve others. When food supplies in a field kitchen became very low, we started making doughnuts. Doughnuts are cheap to make, but smell and taste great! Our doughnuts cheered up a lot of soldiers.

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What else did women do?



We visited the wounded in the hospital. We brought them little gifts: chocolate, a Bible, socks, soap, a *War Cry* - The Salvation Army's newspaper. We talked to the men, sang with them, and helped them write letters home.

Sometimes we had to write a letter explaining how they had died. We would tell the family where their loved one was buried and include some of the flowers we had left on the grave.







If we could help, we did. It might be finding food or fresh water, or giving a lift to a tired soldier or even helping a priest get to a dying soldier.

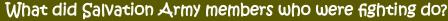
Most drivers were also part of Salvation Army bands so we played instruments to cheer soldiers up. A song often helps.

What are Chaplains and what did they do?



Chaplains are ministers who go with the troops. We tried to help by talking and praying with the soldiers, or by holding religious meetings. We helped bury the dead. But we also helped in other ways. We would make cups of tea or find treats to eat. We would write letters, sew on buttons, or even peel potatoes! - anything to support the men.





We still helped by serving others. We usually wore a Salvation Army jumper under our uniform or a Salvation Army badge, so people knew we were happy to help. We talked and prayed, like a chaplain would, and many soldiers treated us like a chaplain. We sang or played instruments. We would help carry the wounded, or give water to others. Sometimes we were teased, but eventually we were respected for showing our love for others.



What did The Salvation Army do in Germany?



The Salvation Army in Germany is called *Die Heilsarmee*. To help the German people there were public kitchens, home visits, and hostels. Most of our records have been lost because of the bombings in WW2, but it seems the support was similar to what was happening in the UK.

In Germany all Salvation Army members had to be involved in the war, but that didn't stop Salvationists serving others. There are stories of them talking and praying, of singing, and of helping the wounded. There are even stories of British and German soldiers helping each other, only to find out that they both belonged to The Salvation Army.





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Some facts and figures

Over 20,000 UK Salvation Army members enlisted Over 60,000 enlisted in the Allied forces Over 180 huts were built Some huts could have 5,000 men visiting in one day The first hut in the UK was built in August 1914 The first hut in France was built at the end of December 1914

The first fleet of ambulances was bought on 28 November 1914 There were more than 55 Salvation + Army ambulances By autumn 1917 it was estimated that more than 80,000 men had been transported in Salvation Army ambulances There were more than 45 Salvation Army chaplains



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