**History of the Salvation Army**

**Early Beginnings**

The Salvation Army is an international organization, which began humbly in 1865 under the guidance of a radical Methodist minister named William Booth. More than 130 years later, The Salvation Army now stretches across the globe with churches and missions on every continent except Antarctica. With its international headquarters in London, England, The Salvation Army is dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and ministering whenever and wherever there is need.

The Salvation Army was founded by William Booth, an ordained Methodist minister. Aided by his wife Catherine, Booth formed an evangelical group dedicated to preaching among the “unchurched” people living in the midst of appalling poverty in London’s East End.

Booth abandoned the conventional concept of church and a pulpit, instead taking his message to the people. His fervor led to disagreement with church leaders in London, who preferred traditional methods. As a result, he withdrew from the church and traveled throughout England, conducting evangelistic meetings.

In 1865, William Booth was invited to hold a series of Evangelistic meetings in the East 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, and he attracted followers who were dedicated to fighting for the souls of men and women.

Thieves, prostitutes, gamblers and drunkards were among Booth’s first converts to Christianity. To congregations that were desperately poor, he preached hope and salvation. His aim was to lead people to Christ and link them with a church for further spiritual guidance.

In 1867, Booth had only 10 full-time workers, but by 1874, the number had grown to 1,000 volunteers and 42 evangelists, all serving under the name “The Christian Mission.” Booth assumed the title of general superintendent, with his followers calling 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 is a volunteer army.” Crossing out the words “volunteer army,” he penned in “Salvation Army.” From those words came the basis of The Salvation Army’s foundation creed, which was adopted in August of that year.

From that point, converts became soldiers of Christ and were known then, as now, as Salvationists. They launched an offensive throughout the British Isles, against the “seven dark rivers” of evil: grinding poverty, disease, lust, crime, despair and atheism.
The Army also gained a foothold overseas. Lieutenant Eliza Shirley left England to join her parents, who had immigrated to America earlier in search of work. In 1879, she held the first meeting of The Salvation Army in America, in Philadelphia. The Salvationist were received enthusiastically Shirley wrote to General Booth, begging for reinforcements. None were initially available. However, within a year, glowing reports about Shirley’s work in Philadelphia convinced Booth to send an official group of officers to pioneer the work in America.

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. At their first official street meeting, these pioneers were met with unfriendly actions, as had happened in Great Britain. They were ridiculed, attached and arrested.

Three years later, Railton and other Salvationists 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 Army officers in 1886 and gave the organization a warm personal endorsement. This was the first recognition from the White House and would be followed by similar receptions from succeeding president.

The Salvation Army movement expanded rapidly to Canada, Australia, France, Switzerland, India, South Africa, Iceland and Germany. Currently, the United States is home to more than 9,000 Centers of operation and local neighborhood units. The Salvation Army is active in virtually every corner of the world.

The Basic social services developed by William Booth have remained an outward visible expression of the Army’s strong religious principles. In addition, new programs that address contemporary needs have been established. Among these are disaster relief services, day care centers, summer camps, holiday assistance, services to the aging, and children, family and career counseling, vocational training, correctional services, and substance abuse rehabilitation.

With its Christian heritage and motivation, The Salvation Army continues its unique service to all people in the name of Christ.
In one of my recent journeys, as I gazed from the couch window, I was led into a train of thought concerning the condition of the multitudes around me. They were living carelessly in the most open and shameless rebellion against God, without a thought for their eternal welfare. As I looked out of the window, I seemed to see them all...millions of people all around me given up to their drink and their pleasure, their dancing and their music, their business and their anxieties, their politics and their troubles. Ignorant – willfully ignorant in many cases – and in other instances knowing all about the truth and not caring at all. But all of them, the whole mass of them, sweeping on and up in their blasphemies and devilries to the Throne of God. While my mind was thus engaged, I had a vision.

I saw a dark and stormy ocean. Over it the black clouds hung heavily; through them every now and then vivid lightening flashed and loud thunder rolled, while the winds moaned, and the waves rose and foamed, towered and broke, only to rise and foam, tower and break again.

In that ocean I thought I saw myriads of poor human beings plunging and floating, shouting and shrieking, cursing and struggling and drowning; and as they cursed and screamed they rose and shrieked again, and then some sank to rise no more.

And I saw out of this dark angry ocean, a mighty rock that rose up with its summit towering high above the black clouds that overhung the stormy sea. And all around the base of this great rock I saw a vast platform. Onto this platform, I saw with delight a number of the poor struggling, drowning wretches continually climbing out of the angry ocean. And I saw that a few of those who were already on the platform were helping the poor creatures still in the angry waters to reach the place of safety.

On looking more closely, I found a number of those who had been rescued, industriously working and scheming by ladders, ropes, boats and other means more effective, to deliver the poor strugglers out of the sea. Here and there were some who actually jumped into the water, regardless of the consequences in their passion to “rescue the perishing.” And I hardly know which gladdened me the most – the sight of the poor drowning people onto the rocks reaching a place of safety, or the devotion of the self-sacrifice of those whose whole being was wrapped up in the effort for their deliverance.

As I looked on, I saw that the occupants of the platform were quite a mixed company. That is, they were divided into different “sets” or classes, and they occupied themselves with different pleasures and employments. But only a very few of them seemed to make it their business to get the people out to sea.

But what puzzled me most was the fact that though all of them had been rescued at one time or another from the ocean, nearly everyone seemed to have forgotten all about it. Anyway, it seemed the memory of its darkness and danger no longer troubled them at all. And what seemed equally strange and perplexing to me was that these people did not even seem to have any care –
that is any agonizing care – about the poor perishing one who were struggling and drowning right before their very eyes…many of whom were their own husbands and wives brothers and sisters and even their own children.

Now this astonishing unconcern could not have been the result of ignorance or lack of knowledge, because they lived right there in full sight of it all and even talked about it sometimes. Many even went regularly to hear lectures and sermons in which the awful state of these poor drowning creatures were described.

I have always said that the occupants of this platform were engaged in different pursuits and pastimes. Some of them were absorbed day and night in trading and business in order to make gain, storing up their savings in boxed, safes and the like.

Many spent their time in amusing themselves with growing flowers on the side of the rock, others in painting pieces of cloth or in playing music, or in dressing themselves up in different styles and walking about to be admired. Some occupied themselves chiefly in eating and drinking, others were taken up with arguing about the poor drowning creatures that had already been rescued.

But the thing to me that seemed the most amazing was that those on the platform to whom He called, who heard His voice and felt that they ought to obey it – at least said they did – those who confessed to love Him much were in full sympathy with Him in the task He had undertaken – who worshipped Him or who professed to do so – were so taken up with their trades and professions, their money saving and pleasures, their families and circles, their religions and arguments about it, and their preparation for going to the mainland, that they did not listen to the cry that came to them from this Wonderful Being who had Himself gone down into the sea. Anyway, it they heard it they did not heed it. They did not care. And so the multitude went on right before them struggling and shrieking and drowning in the darkness.

And then I saw something that seemed to me even more strange than anything that had gone on before in this strange vision. I saw that some of these people on the platform whom this Wonderful Being had called to, wanting them to come and help Him in His difficult task of saving these perishing creatures, were always praying and crying to Him to come to them!

Some wanted Him to come and stay with them, and spend His time and strength in making them happier. Others wanted Him to come and take away various doubts and misgivings they had concerning the truth of some letters He had written them. Some wanted Him to come and make them feel more secure on the rock – so secure that they would be quite sure that they should never slip off again into the ocean. Numbers of others wanted Him to make them feel quite certain that they would really get off the rock and onto the mainland someday: because as a matter of fact, it was well known that some had walked so carelessly as to lose their footing, and had fallen back again into the stormy waters.

So these people used to meet and get up as high on the rock as they could, and looking towards the mainland (where they thought the Great Being was) they would cry out, “Come to us! Come and help us!” And all the while He was down (by His Spirit) among the poor struggling,
drowning creatures in the angry deep, with His arms around them trying to drag them out, and looking up – oh! So longing but all in vain – to those on the rock, crying to them with His voice all hoarse from calling, “Come to Me!, Come, and help Me!

And then I understood it all. It was plain enough. The sea was the ocean of life – the sea of real, actual human existence. That lightening was the gleaming of piercing truth coming from Jehovah’s Throne. That thunder was the distant echoing of the wrath of God. Those multitudes of people shrieking, struggling and agonizing in the stormy sea, was the thousands and thousands of poor harlots and harlot-makers, or drunkards and drunkard makers, of thieves, liars, blasphemers and ungodly people of every kindred, tongue and nation.

O what a black sea it was! And oh, what multitudes of rich and poor, ignorant and educated were there. They were all so unalike in their outward circumstances and conditions, yet all alike in one thing – all sinners before God – all held by, and holding onto, some iniquity, fascinated by some idol, the slaves of some devilish lust, and ruled by the foul fiend from the bottomless pit!

“All alike in one thing?” No, all alike in two things – not only the same in their wickedness but, unless rescued, the same in their sinking, sinking…down, down, down…to the same terrible doom. That great sheltering rock represented Calvary, the place where Jesus had died for them. And the people on it were whose who had been rescued. The way they used their energies, gifts and time, represented the occupations and amusements of those who professed to be saved from sin and hell – followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The handful of fierce, determined ones, who were risking their own lives in saving the perishing were true soldiers of the cross of Jesus. That Mighty Being who was calling them from the midst of the angry waters was the Son of God, “the same yesterday, today and forever” who was struggling and interceding to say the dying multitudes about us from this terrible doom of damnation, and whose voice can be heard above the music, machinery, and noise of life, calling on the rescued to come and help Him save the world.

My friends in Christ, you are rescued from the waters, you are on the rock, He is the dark sea calling you to come to Him and help Him. Will you go? Look at yourselves. The surging sea of life, crowded with perishing multitudes rolls up to the very spot on which you stand. Leaving the vision, I now come to speak of the fact – a fact that is as real as the Bible, as real as the Christ who hung upon the cross, as real as the judgement day will be, and as real as the heaven and hell that will follow it.

Look! Don’t be deceived by appearances – men and things are not what they seem. All who are not on the rock are in the sea! Look at them from the standpoint of the great White Throne, and what a sight you have! Jesus Christ, the Son of God is, through His Spirit, in the midst of this dying multitude, struggling to save them. And He is calling on you to jump into the sea – to go right away to His side and help Him in the holy strife. Will you jump? That is, will you go to His feet and place yourself absolutely at His disposal?

A young Christian once came to me, and told me that for some time she had been giving the Lord her profession and prayers and money, but now she wanted to give Him her life. She wanted to go right into the fight. In other words, she wanted to go to His assistance in the sea.
As when a man from the shore, seeing another struggling in the water, takes off those outer garments that would hinder his efforts and leaps to the rescue, so will you who still linger on the bank, thinking and singing and praying about the poor perishing souls, lay aside your shame, your pride, your cares about other people’s opinions, your love of ease and all the selfish loves that have kept you back for so long, and rush to the rescue of this multitude of dying men and women.

Does the surging sea look dark and dangerous? Unquestionably it is so. There is no doubt that the leap for you, as for everyone who takes it, means difficulty and scorn and suffering. For you it may mean more than this. It may mean death. He who beckons you from the sea however, knows what it will mean – and knowing, He still calls you and bids you to come.

You must do it! You cannot hold back. You have enjoyed yourself in Christianity long enough. You have had pleasant feelings, pleasant songs, pleasant meetings, pleasant prospects. There has been much of human happiness, much clapping and shouting of praises – very much of heaven on earth.

Now then, go to God and tell Him you are prepared as much as necessary to turn your back upon it all, and that you are willing to spend the rest of your days struggling in the midst of these perishing multitudes, whatever it may cost you.

You must do it. With the light that is now broken in upon your mind and the call that is now sounding in your ears, and the beckoning hands that are now before your eyes, you have no alternative. To go down among the perishing crowds is your duty. Your happiness from now on will consist in sharing their misery, your ease in sharing their pain, your crown in helping them to bear their cross, and your heaven in going into the very jaws of hell to rescue them.
The Structure of The Salvation Army

The **General**, with headquarters in London, is the international leader of The Salvation Army. In the United States, the functions of The Salvation Army are coordinated by the National Commander, whose office is at National Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia.

For Administrative purposes, the nation is divided into four territories: The Central with Territorial Headquarters in Hoffman Estates, Illinois; The Eastern with Territorial Headquarters in West Nyack, New York; the Southern with Territorial Headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia; and the Western with Territorial Headquarters in Long Beach, California. Each territory is under the leadership of a Territorial Commander.

Territories are made up of smaller units known as divisions. There are 40 divisions in the United States and each is headed by a Divisional Commander. Divisions consist of corps centers for worship and service, which are the basic units of The Salvation Army, and various specialized centers. The functions of each corps include religious and social services which are adapted to local needs. Each corps is under the supervision of a Corps Officer.

Salvation Army fund-raising campaigns are conducted on both a local and a regional basis. The normal sources of funds are the traditional Christmas kettle campaigns, government contracts, direct mail programs, corporate and foundation gifts and planned giving. In most areas, The Salvation Army is a member agency of local affiliates of the United Way of America where such affiliation has proven to be beneficial to The Salvation Army.

Nationwide uniformity of policy is the responsibility of the Commissioner’s Conference, whose membership includes the national commander, the territorial commanders, the national chief secretary and the four territorial chief secretaries. Standing commissions devise and evaluate strategic initiatives to further the mission and ministry of The Salvation Army and then make recommendations to the Commissioner’s Conference.

Advisory organizations, comprised of representative community, corporate and civic leaders, perform a valuable service by providing advice and acting as liaison between The Salvation Army and the community. The Advisory organizations interpret community needs to The Salvation Army and facilitate the development of resources, enabling The Salvation Army to respond to critical community needs. A national advisory board makes its recommendations to the Commissioner’s Conference.

The Salvation Army is a participating member in various religious and human service associations, coalitions and conferences having similar principles and practices. Legally, each of the four Salvation Army territories in the United States functions as a tax-exempt corporation with the national commander as Chairperson of the Board.
Corps

A corps is a church and place of worship in The Salvation Army. Corps buildings may also be referred to as Corps Community Centers because in addition to a chapel, these facilities may also include gymnasiums, multi-purpose activity rooms, daycare and senior centers, cafeterias, and other space for community service programs. Some corps are additionally called temples or citadels such as the Atlanta Temple Corps.

There are approximately 1,275 corps within the United States. Within the United States, groups of corps may be grouped together under an Area Command, which provides administrative leadership and support. Area Commands are typically established in densely populated urban areas, such as the Houston Area Command, or in areas united by a common geographic, media, or fundraising market, such as the Mississippi Gulf Coast Area Command.

In Communities without a full Salvation Army corps, a Service Center or Service Unit may be established to deliver basic social services to needy individuals. Some areas may also have a Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC). An ARC provides drug and alcohol rehabilitation treatment to individuals while also teaching basic job skills that can be used once the cycle of dependency is broken.
Salvation Army Officers

Candidates for officership undergo an intensive two-year course in residence at Salvation Army Colleges in Chicago; Suffern, New York; Atlanta, and Rancho Palos Verdes, California. The curriculum combines theory and field practice, including Salvation Army doctrine, theology, sociology, psychology, Salvation Army regulations, homiletics, public speaking, Bible studies, church history, composition, community relations, business administration, accounting, and vocal and instrumental music.

After two successful years of training, cadets are commissioned as lieutenants, ordained as ministers, and assigned to active duty.

Officers (wearing red epaulets) are the clergy of The Salvation Army. They have either completed training as cadets or auxiliary captains and have been ordained and commissioned to officership. Officers are engaged in continuing education. With its Christian heritage and motivation, The Salvation Army continues its unique service to all people in the name of Christ.

Salvation Army officers must devote their full-time to Army work. The majority of officers are commissioned as married couples with both spouses serving with the Army ministry. As ordained ministers of the gospel, Salvation Army officers are authorized to perform marriage ceremonies, funeral services, and dedications. They also provide counseling and consolation to the bereaved.

Promotion is based on length of service, character, efficiency, capacity for increased responsibility, and devotion to duty. The ranks are:

- Cadets (officers in training)
- Lieutenants (newly commissioned officers
- Captain
- Major
- Lieutenant Colonel (conferred by position)
- Colonel (conferred by position)
- Commissioner (conferred by position)

The international leader holds the rank of General and is selected by a high council of active-duty commissioners and territorial leaders.

The Salvation Army provides officers’ living quarters, furnishings, and official transportation. Sixty-five is the retirement age.
**Salvation Army Soldiers**

The Soldiers of The Salvation Army (wearing blue epaulets), the committed laity, are local citizens in communities throughout the world who give allegiance to the doctrines and disciplines of the Army. There are approximately 450,000 soldiers in the United States.

These soldiers may take on volunteer responsibilities in the congregation or help in the Army’s social service outreach. Many soldiers serve in directing and leading youth groups in character-building activities. Many take part in the Army’s musical programs and teach young people to sing and play. Soldiers visit the sick and lonely in hospitals, nursing homes, and correctional institutions. Social service programs are enhanced by the commitment of soldiers who often give their time in the Army’s basic ministries of shelter and food provision.

To become a better soldier, an individual makes a commitment to The Salvation Army denomination, keeping A Soldier’s Covenant. The Covenant affirms the soldier’s faith in God, the Gospel, and the divinity of Jesus Christ. Soldiers also abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs and tobacco.

Other members of The Salvation Army congregation are adherents who participate in church activities but have not signed on as soldiers. Adherents may take on some lay responsibilities such as teaching religious classes.

**A Soldier’s Covenant**

1. **We believe** that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.
2. **We believe** that 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.
3. **We believe** that there are three persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.
4. **We believe** that 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.
5. **We believe** that our first parents were created in a state of innocency, 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.
6. **We believe** that the Lord Jesus Christ has, by His suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.
7. **We believe** that repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation.
8. **We believe** that we are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and that he that believeth has the witness in himself.
9. **We believe** that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.
10. **We believe** that 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.

11. **We believe** in the immortality of the soul; in the regeneration of the body; in the general judgement at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked.
Symbols of The Salvation Army

The Crest

The Salvation Army crest was designed in 1878 when The Christian Mission changed its name to The Salvation Army and began adopting a military style with uniforms and military terms. The crest can also be found inside Salvation Army periodicals and books and on the walls of Salvation Army chapels.

This symbol has particular relevance for Salvationists because it reminds them of the important features of their faith. The ‘S’ in the center stands for salvation, while the cross represents the death of Jesus. The swords remind Salvationists that they are fighting against sin. The surrounding shape of the sun stands for the fire and light of the Holy Spirit. The crown reminds Salvationists that Heaven is the reward of all those who love and serve God. The motto ‘Blood and Fire’ again emphasizes important points of Salvation Army belief: ‘Blood’ because Christians are saved from sin by the death of Jesus, and ‘fire’ representing the power of the Holy Spirit which helps Christians live holy lives.

Salvationists worldwide use the crest, translating the words into their own language.
The Emergency Disaster Services Logo

The Salvation Army Disaster Services Logo incorporates the well-known shield and is the symbol of The Salvation Army’s Disaster Services ministry. This is the symbol that is used on disaster apparel and equipment.

![Emergency Disaster Services Logo](image)

The Shield

The Salvation Army Shield is the “community service” logo of the Army. It is used to symbolize the human services work of our community, which began in 1896. The origin of the shape seems to indicate that the shield is an enlargement of the type worn in earlier days by Salvationists, mostly women, to join their collar. “The message of the shield…tells of a fight on a spiritual battlefield which must last as long as life itself, and that God in Christ is a shield to protect and save us to the uttermost.”

![The Salvation Army Shield](image)
Doing The Most Good

In 2006, The Salvation Army adopted a brand promise. This brand, “Doing The Most Good,” appears alongside the Salvation Army Shield.

“Doing the Most Good” is The Salvation Army’s national brand strategy and distinct identifiable message. Moreover, it is a promise the organization makes to its contributors, clients, associates, officers and employees. The Salvation Army pledges to do the most good with contributions of money, time and resources, evidenced in that 83 cents of every dollar donated are directly allocated to services that assist people in need.

The promise of the brand consists of a twofold approach for employees. The Salvation Army makes a promise to do the most good for its employees in their employment: by offering a greater sense of purpose in their work, by training and mentoring employees, and by offering pay and benefits that allow employees and their families to feel secure in their health and their future. These provisions contribute to the success of The Salvation Army’s global mission to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and meet human needs.

However, the brand promise also charges employees to do the most good in every aspect of their work, regardless of location or position. The Salvation Army expects its employees to meet the needs of co-workers, customers and clients with the compassion and dignity that are hallmark to the principles of the organization. Employees are also expected to be excellent stewards of the resources entrusted to them and to complete their responsibilities in accordance with the mission of the organization.

The Salvation Army strives to enact its brand promise so that its employees, be they truck drivers, administrative staff or executive directors, may be witnesses of exceptional performance, that they may be proud to say, “I am the Salvation Army; I am doing the most good.”

I am doing the most good.
I am hope.
I am compassion.
I am strength
I am faith.

I am doing the most good.
I serve a community.
A region.
A nation.
A world.
I serve heroes.
I serve victims.
I serve a sovereign God.

I am doing the most good.
I am an Army.
Drafted by the Creator.
Commissioned by a man who defied death.
My enemies are despair and destruction.
My ammunition is grace and mercy.
My allies are generosity and benevolence.
I am an Army.
Helping others be all they can be.

I am doing the most good.
I feed empty stomachs and hungry souls.
I rebuild ruined homes and shattered lives.
I am a willing listener for a veteran with stories to tell.
I am bottled water and an encouraging smile for a weary firefighter.
I am an answered prayer.
A silver lining.
A second chance.

I am going the most good.
I am a humble steward of other people’s generosity.
I am a grateful courier of a stranger’s kindness.
I am a faithful executor of other’s goodwill.
I take my responsibility seriously.
I am blessed.
I am a blessing.

I am The Salvation Army.
I am doing the most good.
The Flag

The first Salvation Army flag was presented to Coventry Corps by Catherine Booth in September 1878. Until 1882, the central shape was a sun, but when a plan to open the Army’s work in India was put into action it was found that the Parsees, an Indian religious sect regarded the sun as sacred and so it was changed to a star. The flag itself is not sacred, but is a symbol of what Salvationists believe.

- the blue border represents the HOLINESS of God.
- the yellow star represents the FIRE of the Holy Spirit.
- the red represents the BLOOD of Jesus Christ.

The motto “Blood and Fire,” written on the star, stands for the blood of Jesus and the fire of the Holy Spirit. The flag is carried at the head of marches of witness and is given a prominent place in Salvation Army halls. It is also aloft at special ceremonies such as the dedication of babies.
The Uniform

The origins of the Salvation Army uniform date back to the founding of The Salvation Army. In 1878, soon after the term “The Salvation Army” was adopted by William Booth, military terms became standard among the members of the movement. Church halls became corps; giving coins in an offering was called “firing a cartridge”. Flags, badges, and brass bands, all reminiscent of the military were added along with a military style rank system for clergy and adherents.

The great majority of pioneer Salvationists were proud of their uniforms because of the great crusade for which the uniform stood. Partly because pride and because of economic necessity (officers and soldiers have always had to purchase their own uniforms and in 1890 a uniform would cost on average, three weeks’ salary) many Salvationists wore their uniforms on any occasion where formal clothes would be expected. Weddings, funerals, family portraits, visiting relatives, and town hall meetings would be some of the occasions one might expect to see the uniform. Even without motivation, the wearing of military ceremonial uniforms was widely popular among the working class men in the late 19th century in Britain.

At first, the apparel of early Salvationists were anything but uniform and included an odd assortment of clothing and headgear. It took almost two years to standardize The Salvation Army uniform, but by the beginning of 1880, a standard navy blue serge uniform was introduced for both men and women. Men wore a high neck tunic with a stiff collar over a scarlet jersey. Their headgear was a military cap with a red band, on which the words “The Salvation Army” had been worked in gold letters. Women wore long navy skirts, close-fitting high neck tunics with white lace-edge collars. The large black straw bonnet was Catherine Booth’s idea. Cheap, durable, protective, and solidly unworldly, the bonnet with its red, band and huge ribbon bow became a well known symbol of The Salvation War.

Today, The Salvation Army uniform has been undated and modernized, both in terms of style and material. It is also culturally sensitive, varying in design according to the culture and climate where it is worn. Variations include white, grey, beige, and navy; a safari type with shorts is also available as is a sari with a Salvation Army sash.

Not all Salvation Army members wear a uniform. It is a personal choice to do so, but the reason for wearing it remains unchanged. The Salvation Army uniform represents:

- A commitment in the war against evil.
- As a personal testimony to the wearer’s own faith and practice.
- The availability of the Salvationist to anyone needing a helping hand and listening ear.