



# DRIVING AMBULANCES

The Salvation Army raised money to buy ambulances. They were driven by Salvation Army members and worked under the direction of The Red Cross Society. The men driving were volunteers and served for six months at a time.

The ambulances could be used to transport patients from the train to the hospital boats bound for the UK, where they would help unload the cars, sometimes supporting the wounded on their backs. Other duties meant transporting the wounded from field hospitals to base hospitals or even collecting the wounded from the firing line. By autumn 1917 it was estimated that 80,000 wounded men had been transported in Salvation Army ambulances.

Shifts also varied. They could be primarily in the morning, only during the night, on call whenever, or 10-20 hours long, days at a time.

‘I need hardly repeat how glad I should be to have more Salvation Army men out here, in view of the extremely satisfactory service which they have, without exception, given in the past. Yours truly, E.W. Paget, Director of Transport.’ [Letter written 1917/1918]

In 1917 Sir Arthur Stanley wrote, referring to the ambulance service, ‘I thank you for the money, but much more for the men. They are quite the best in our service.’ One wounded soldier recalls, ‘A Salvation Army ambulance man bandaged me up. I said to him, “I had a narrow escape that time, old chap.” His reply? “Yes, and were you ready?” I remembered and cried to God for salvation.’

