

**Major Thomas Loudon, General Secretary  
The Salvation Army – North & South Carolina Division  
Friday, November 21, 2014  
US House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency  
Hearing “Emergency Preparedness: Are We Ready For A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Hugo?”**

**Oral Testimony**

Good afternoon Chairman Duncan, Members of the Committee, and Colleagues:

I am Major Tom Loudon, the General Secretary for The Salvation Army’s North and South Carolina Division. On behalf of our entire organization, thank you for this opportunity to share the story of The Salvation Army and our Emergency Disaster Services program.

The Salvation Army is a religious and charitable nonprofit organization that provides assistance to needy families every day of the year in communities all across this country. The Salvation Army's mission is to “*preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and meet human needs in His name without discrimination*” and our disaster services program focuses on fulfilling that mission by helping any and all who need assistance during emergencies. The Salvation Army’s first disaster response in the United States occurred more than 100 years ago – to the Great Galveston Hurricane of 1900 -- and since then, The Salvation Army has responded to just about every major disaster our nation has faced.

I’d like to share with you how The Salvation Army has been a vital part of our nation’s emergency disaster response system.

The geographical footprint of The Salvation Army reaches every zip code in the country. Our frontline responders are The Salvation Army officers, staff, and volunteers who live in the impacted area, and we support the development and training of community volunteers. If an emergency overwhelms our local resources, our organizational structure allows us to augment as need demands.

And, while our services may be adapted to the unique needs of a disaster situation, we are known for four core services. Many of you are probably familiar with The Salvation Army canteen – our mobile ‘kitchens on wheels’ – that can provide food and hydration. Within our southeast region, we have nearly 300 of these units, each capable of producing approximately 1,500 meals per day. Twenty of these feeding units are positioned in North Carolina and ten in South Carolina.

In addition to food service, The Salvation Army offers practical aid to disaster survivors, helping individuals and families meet emergency needs in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. We also collect and distribute donated goods, such as food boxes, cleaning supplies, and household items, by leveraging our network of facilities. And perhaps, most importantly, we minister to people affected by the disaster by offering emotional and spiritual care to rescue workers and survivors.

The Salvation Army is present in a community long before a disaster occurs, and we will continue to serve that community even after the disaster event is a distant memory. We participate in long-term disaster recovery operations, working closely with government agencies and the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster or VOAD network. For a catastrophic event, like Hurricane Hugo or Katrina, our disaster recovery efforts may continue for several years.

We rely on volunteers and the generosity of the public to support our service delivery. All Salvation Army disaster services are offered without charge and supported entirely by donations and the generosity of others. This gives The Salvation Army a good deal of flexibility in how we are able to help and, because the public is tremendously supportive, it allows us to independently fund our operations.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we recognize that we are a very small part of a much larger emergency response network, and we are grateful for the support we receive from our local, state and federal partners. Let me be clear here - without the strong support local, state, and federal emergency management agencies provide, The Salvation Army would find it very difficult to offer all the disaster relief services I have just described. We are extremely grateful that the counties, states and, at the federal level, FEMA, consistently invite The Salvation Army to “the table” – to participate in interagency training and exercises, to provide input in planning sessions, and into their emergency operations centers when a disaster occurs.

After Hurricane Hugo, The Salvation Army provided over 500,000 meals, in partnership with local and national food vendors; 338,000 food boxes; 4,000 volunteers, employees and officers provided almost 600,000 hours of service. Our mobile kitchens were serving for over 90 days. As we ponder the question, “Are we ready for a 21<sup>st</sup> century Hugo?”, we must also consider that our next disaster of this magnitude might not be a hurricane but some other natural or human-caused event. We believe that effective disaster response is all-hazards and ready for whatever challenge the future places before us. We also believe that the disaster response team extends across the whole community, including not just government agencies and charitable organizations, like The Salvation Army, but also private industry, faith-based and civic organizations, and citizens. The past twenty five years have revealed that our nation is vulnerable to a variety of hazards and that it will take all of us – working together -- to respond to these emergencies.

Thank you again for this opportunity. We are happy to answer any questions you may have and appreciate your continued support.

## **Supporting Documentation**

The Salvation Army is a religious and charitable nonprofit organization, founded on the streets of East London, England, 150 years ago. We provide assistance to needy families every single day of the year in communities all across the United States and in 125 other countries around the world. The Salvation Army's mission is to “*preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and meet human needs in His name without discrimination*” and our disaster services program focuses on fulfilling that mission by helping any and all who need assistance during emergency events. The organization’s first disaster response in the United States occurred more than 100 years ago – to the Great Galveston Hurricane of 1900 -- when our National Commander ordered Salvation Army officers to that stricken city to provide whatever practical aid and comfort they could. Since then, The Salvation Army has responded to just about every major disaster our nation has faced.

Our national headquarters is in Alexandria, Virginia. We divide the United States into four administrative regions called ‘territories’ The Salvation Army’s Southern Territory, headquartered in Atlanta, GA, includes the states of North and South Carolina. The territories are further subdivided into 40 smaller entities called ‘divisions’ that typically include from one to three states, with oversight provided by a divisional headquarters office. The divisional headquarters for the North and South Carolina Division is in Charlotte, NC. Additionally, we have smaller, more localized operations called ‘corps.’ These are The Salvation Army units you will find in many communities across this country. Smaller communities may have only a single corps or service unit; larger cities may include multiple service locations and facilities.

The Salvation Army has been active in North and South Carolina since 1887 - opening units in Raleigh, Wilmington, and Spartanburg in that year. Today, The Salvation Army operates 64 commands in the two states, which serve all 100 counties and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation in North Carolina as well as the 46 counties of South Carolina. These operations include providing youth programs, including Boys and Girls Clubs and summer camps; shelters for families in need of transitional housing; weekly worship services; drug and alcohol treatment programs; homeless shelters; affordable residential housing for seniors; and seasonal programs, such as our Christmas kettle program and toy drives. One of The Salvation Army’s 25 Ray and Joan Kroc Community Centers opened in Greenville, SC in 2011.

Our local commands are typically directed by a Salvation Army officer - individuals or married couples who are ordained to full-time ministry within The Salvation Army. Officers wear navy blue uniforms with red epaulets and are responsible for leading a force of local volunteers, employees, and soldiers. Nationally, The Salvation Army in the United States now includes more than 5,300 officers, 63,900 staff, and tens of thousands of volunteers.

## Emergency Disaster Services

The Salvation Army has been a vital part of the nation's emergency disaster response system.

First, because the presence of The Salvation Army reaches every zip code in the country, we live and work in the communities where disasters strike. Our first responders are The Salvation Army officers, staff, and volunteers who live in the impacted area, and we support the development and training of community volunteers. If an emergency overwhelms our local resources, then we augment those resources by deploying personnel and equipment from across our division and, if necessary, from across the country, to help where needed.

And, while our services may be adapted to the unique needs of a disaster situation, we are known for four (4) core services. Many of you are probably familiar with The Salvation Army canteen – our mobile kitchen on wheels – that can provide food and hydration. Within our southeast region, we have nearly 300 of these units, each able to produce approximately 1,500 meals per day. Twenty of these feeding units are positioned in North Carolina and ten in South Carolina.

In addition to food service, The Salvation Army offers practical aid to disaster survivors, helping individuals and families meet emergency needs in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. We also collect and distribute donated goods, such as food boxes, cleaning supplies, and household items, by leveraging our network of facilities. And perhaps, most importantly, we minister to people affected by the disaster by offering emotional and spiritual care to rescue workers and survivors.

The Salvation Army is present in a community long before a disaster occurs, and we will continue to serve that community even after the disaster event is a distant memory. We participate in long-term disaster recovery operations, working closely with government agencies and the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster network. A VOAD is an association of voluntary organizations committed to cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration before, during and after disasters. For a catastrophic event, like Hurricane Hugo or Katrina, our disaster recovery efforts may continue for several years.

We rely on volunteers and the generosity of the public to support our service delivery. All Salvation Army disaster services are offered without charge and supported entirely by donations. This gives The Salvation Army a good deal of flexibility in how we are able to help and, because the public is tremendously supportive, it allows us to independently fund our operations.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we recognize that we are a very small part of a much larger emergency response network, and we are grateful for the support we receive from our local, state and federal partners. Without the strong support local, state, and federal emergency management agencies provide, The Salvation Army would find it very difficult to offer all the services I have just described on a disaster.

## Relationships with the States of North & South Carolina

The Salvation Army works together with the States of North Carolina and South Carolina and their respective emergency management agencies:

1. We maintain regular communications to ensure that The Salvation Army is appropriately involved in disaster planning, mitigation, preparedness, and response activities. The Salvation Army is invited to participate in interagency training and exercise programs and supports the states' disaster conferences, committees, task forces, and other emergency preparedness events.
2. We are included in the states' emergency operations plans as a provider of Mass Care – what some of you may know as the Emergency Support Function 6.
3. We are included in federal, state and regional emergency activation protocols and notified when a disaster or other emergency event has occurred.
4. The Salvation Army has designated liaison officers that reports to the state emergency operations center upon activation to help coordinate and exchange information among the organizations involved in the disaster response. Specifically, The Salvation Army keeps the two states' emergency management agencies informed of its disaster response activities, and its working relationships with local governments, other local voluntary agencies, and community-based organizations involved in the response. This includes engaging with Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), which includes our colleague agencies, such as the American Red Cross, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief and other charitable disaster responders.
5. The South Carolina Emergency Division, North Carolina Division of Emergency Management, and The Salvation Army work cooperatively in the dissemination of materials to educate the public on how to avoid, mitigate, prepare for, and cope with disasters. During disaster operations, the public information officers from state emergency management and The Salvation Army maintain close coordination to share disaster related media releases produced by the two organizations.
6. The process and relationships described above are very similar to the relationships The Salvation Army has with other state emergency management agencies and with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

This level of collaboration is essential, and we believe that an effective disaster response team extends across the entire community spectrum – not just to agencies like FEMA and The Salvation Army, but also to private industry, local faith-based and civic groups, and citizens.

## **The February 2014 Ice Storm**

The February 2014 Winter Storm that hit the State of South Carolina illustrates The Salvation Army's structure and organized approach to disaster response.

On Monday, February 10, 2014 we alerted all Salvation Army locations in North and South Carolina about the impending storm. This communication activated our pre-established network of local Salvation Army commands to begin preparing for storm response and focused on three (3) key areas of concern:

1. Local Salvation Army units were to closely monitor the weather in their local area, especially in South Carolina since that was the area of concern for greatest impact.
2. Local Salvation Army units were to coordinate with their county emergency management officials regarding protective actions, including areas that could require assistance or where a shelter could be established.
3. Local Salvation Army units were to anticipate that winter storm conditions likely would inhibit travel so any service delivery should be localized initially and independent of additional support. Therefore, partnering with other local organizations and agencies to ensure meeting local needs was the initial priority.

Two days before the storm's anticipated arrival, Salvation Army senior leadership from divisional headquarters personally contacted every officer in these local commands across the Carolinas. This served three functions – establishing communication to reassure our local personnel, assess impacts or concerns regarding Salvation Army infrastructure, and report any service delivery taking place or anticipated.

A Salvation Army liaison established communication with the South Carolina Emergency Management Division and Emergency Support Function 6: Mass Care. This communication and coordination was maintained with the State Emergency Operations Center and the liaison deployed there on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Salvation Army personnel participated in the coordination of mass care support to the impacted counties, communicating with the primary state agency for mass care, the South Carolina Department of Social Services, as well as other ESF 6 partner agencies and organizations, including the American Red Cross and South Carolina Baptist Disaster Relief.

The Salvation Army conducted and participated in conference calls with South Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (SCVOAD). These calls commenced the day after the storm and continued for nine days – all of us focused on “the 4 Cs” of cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration. This focus helped organizations better anticipate local needs and assign resources as available.

Local responses took place in nineteen communities – ten in North Carolina and nine in South Carolina. The Salvation Army provided service and support from the Aiken, Anderson, Charleston, Florence, Georgetown, Greenville, Orangeburg, Rock Hill and Sumter

commands. Services included mass feeding, distribution of personal comfort kits, food boxes (in partnership with Harvest Hope Food Bank) as well as providing emotional and spiritual comfort.

Overall, in North Carolina, the Army provided 7,000 prepared meals, 18,000 drinks and snacks. In South Carolina, service delivery included 5,700 prepared meals, 8,500 drinks and 6,600 snacks. Our response involved 130 personnel, who provided 16,000 hours of service.

### **Conclusion**

It is true that disaster relief is just one of the many services that The Salvation Army offers and that day-to-day, our other social services demand a tremendous amount of our time and resources. But when a major disaster strikes, The Salvation Army will be there and ready to offer fast, efficient, and practical aid to any and all that need assistance.