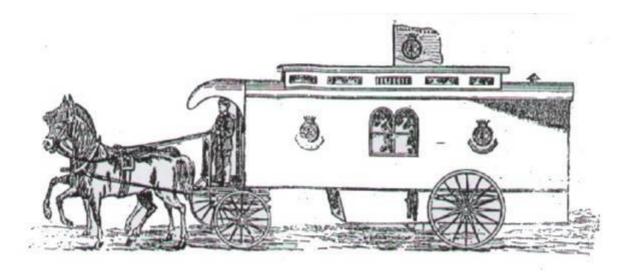
## **Cavalry Forts Caravans**

An early innovation in Salvation Army evangelism was the use of caravans, known early on as 'cavalry forts'. At first these were horse-drawn but later they became motorised.

The following excerpt comes from a diary entry by Cadet William Henderson of Carlisle Citadel Corps and gives a vivid impression of what life onboard was like. It is interspersed with images of caravans taken from an 1885 edition of 'The War Cry':



**The Salvation Army** 

Cavalry Fort "Integrity" 7th July 1891.

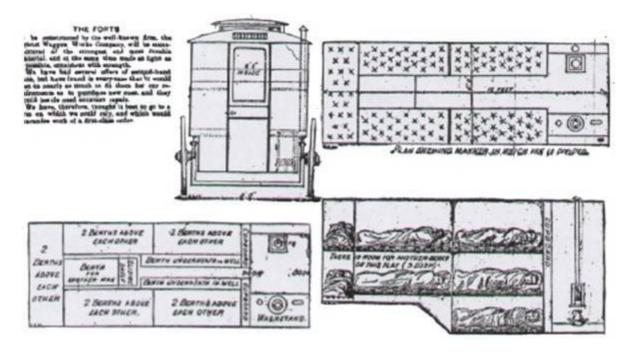
## **Chesham Corps**

'The Cavalry Vans are so fitted up that ten men can live, and live happy and contented in them. They are sent out during the summer months, sometimes to the villages for two or three weeks at a time, and sometimes to the towns where the Army has not yet opened; and there they open the town and stay two or three months, and then go on to other places. The lads that live in the van or fort are supposed to be Candidates, and after their Fort life is over they go into training and become Officers. It happened to be my lot to be one of the lads on the Fort last year which were sent to open three towns in the south of England. Each of these Forts have a different name, and the names are as follows 'Rescue' 'Faithful' 'Mercy' 'Deliverer' 'Conqueror' 'Integrity'. The one I was on was the 'Integrity'. First of all I must give a description of the van. The van is much better and larger than these travelling vans that we meet with from time to time; it is much larger and stronger and after all so light that it can easily be drawn by two horses.

The outside is painted the Army colour blue, and at each side there are two crests and the flame of the Fort very nicely painted. The top part is painted white and the bottom part and underneath are painted red which gives it a very nice appearance. Then there are four large glass windows which open and are used for ventilation and on the top there are all round small ventilators, which make the inside nice and light. On the top was our Blood and Fire Flag.

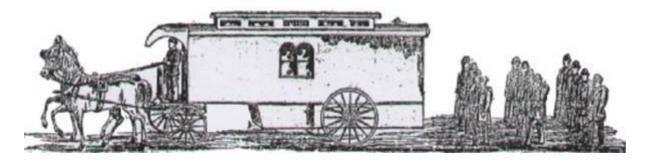
Now then, I think we have seen everything on the outside that is of any importance, so that we will take you to the inside. There is a large window in the door which lets down so that we can get plenty of air. Then on the right of us there is the stove where we cook our things. We have two large pans and a kettle, a frying pan, a shovel, a poker and I think that is all that belongs to the fire.

On the left there are cupboards in which we put our plates, saucers, cloths, aprons, bread, butter, milk, jam and all that is needed to go in. Then on the each side of these cupboards there are what we call pigeon-holes or fixtures where we can put knives, forks, spoons and sundry little articles and the cups and mugs hang on the bottom of these cupboards. The cups, saucers, plates and mugs are unbreakable because they would need to be among such rough fellows as we were. Then there are the beds, which hold ten altogether, there are two beds one above the other all round. The top boards or shelves we let down during the day and put up when we go to bed at night. They hold by means of strong iron ledges, one at each side. On the bottom beds we sit during the day and they have and do for our boxes. In these boxes we put our things such as clothes and other sundry articles. Then come the beds, which are made of seaweed covered with American leather, and a pillow of the same material. We are allowed a single blanket and a double one.



Then all the lads have their own duties to go through. In the morning we rise at six, have prayers, then dress and commence our duties. Two go to clean all the boots, two fold up the blankets, and if it is a fine day they take them out to air and also the beds, then they wash the van. Then one goes on the lamps, sees that there is plenty oil and keeps the glasses clean and also the tent. Another goes on cook. All these duties are done by the same two all the week, and then they change about. Then they wash and get cleaned ready for going out. We all have breakfast in the Van, which is done by means of a board resting on two iron bars, which reach across, the lads at each side and the cook at the end. We are all very comfortable. After breakfast we have prayers again. Then we go out by two's, visiting until twelve or one o'clock.

Sometimes we get on very well, and sometimes we don't, but we do it for the Lord, and He makes it all right. One day while two were visiting, they got two souls saved, which was a very great victory. Other days while praying on the doorsteps, they got hot and cold water thrown on them, but on the whole we got on very well indeed. When we first entered the town, the people thought we were a strange lot of folk with all our luggage on our shoulders. We got a piece of land at the other end of the town, and a dirtier or muddy place I never was in. Sometimes we were nearly over the boot tops in mud, and going into the van nearly made it as bad inside as it was outside. It also meant extra work for the boot cleaners...who dreaded it. It was alright when fine, but when it rained it was distressing.



The people were very hard and kept aloof at first. The first Sunday, which was the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, was very cold and wet, and to make things worse we hadn't the tent up because someone had omitted sending the ropes to hold it up. This meant that we had to have our meetings in an old barn, which was almost as good outside as it was inside. The place swarmed with rats, and there was nothing inviting about the concern at all. Everything looked discouraging, what with mud and cold and rain and no tent but just an old barn - as it was, and the dry hard people, it would make anybody discouraged. But we plodded on and stuck to our guns, and a few weeks hard fighting when a smash came and souls swept into the fountain. We were sent out for two months but had to stay for five on account of not getting a barracks in time.

We had only been in Chesham a few weeks, when orders came from Headquarters for two of our number to go to Eastbourne. Now and again we got Specials from Headquarters, which helped us wonderfully, and people began to understand us and to open their doors. So when the tent was put up they began to crowd in night after nights, and blessed times were had. Then came the Crystal Palace Anniversary, and we wanted very much to go. So the Captain let us beg, and we got all our travelling expenses. Some thirty of the Soldiers came with us and also a good number of outsiders. They began to get warm hearted and sympathised with us, and sent us along all manner of things in their turn such as sides of bacon... rounds of beef... meatpies... dumplings... puddings... tarts... gooseberries... apples... jam... tea... sugar and nearly everything that we could think of. At one time we had scarcely a day but what we had something sent along. Praise the Lord forever.'

The Salvation Army History - Caravans