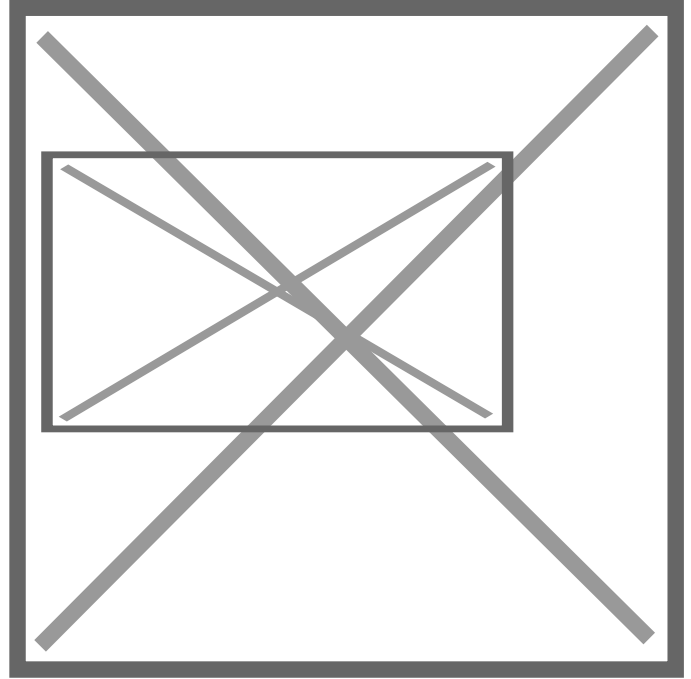


## British Sallies volunteer during vacation

### Head butler at Buckingham Palace



**BRITISH SALVATIONISTS AUSTIN and Linda Burn spent their vacation volunteering in New York City.**

When President George W. Bush stated that America has “no truer friend” than Great Britain in times of crises, he might have been talking about Austin and Linda Burn.

Originally scheduled to spend some vacation time in New York City this month, their plans were suddenly altered when terrorists attacked and destroyed the World Trade Center on Sept. 11. As they watched the tragedy unfold on television, Austin and Linda felt it might be a little too dangerous to fly to New York.

“The tickets were booked, we had a place to stay,” said Austin. “Then my wife called me and said that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. And then another plane hit and we knew what was happening.

“We sent the tickets back and were offered a full refund; then, we went to another local travel agent to book a two-week holiday in Tunisia.”

That might have been the end of the story, except, just as he was about to pay for the Tunisia vacation, he was struck by an overwhelming feeling to do something for those impacted by the horrible tragedy. Call it loyalty, sense of duty or obligation—whatever he felt, he knew that going on vacation was not appropriate.

“We decided it wasn’t right,” said Austin. “We left the travel agency and when we got home, we phoned the original travel agent and asked for the tickets back.”

The travel agent was a little reluctant to oblige at first, until Austin explained why they needed them returned – to help The Salvation Army in New York City with its emergency efforts. According to Austin, the agent’s attitude “changed immediately.”

So the Burns flew to New York and were thrown right into Operation Compassion Under Fire, the Army’s emergency response to the disaster. They worked hard, assisting volunteers and doing whatever else was asked. And there have been no regrets about a missed vacation.

Instead, they have drawn great satisfaction from helping their American “friends,” particularly since they are Salvation Army friends.

## Caring Magazine logo

While Austin holds a prestigious job as Page of the Presence (head butler for the royal family) at Buckingham Palace, he and Linda are also members of the Salvation Army in England, attending the Upper Norwood Corps, where Austin is a bandsman.

He was shocked by the devastation at ground zero, but also encouraged by meeting up with a New York Police chaplain, the Rev. Francis M. Doig.

"We just started chatting," explained Austin. "During our conversation he told me that, in the last few days, there were 16 converts among the police. They were also able to thwart two suicide attempts. People are finding the Lord."

Needless to say, the experience was quite different from the original vacation plans.

While there, Austin Burn turned 29 years old. No parties were planned, but there was plenty of reason to celebrate. Like the enormous satisfaction of sacrificing a holiday to help those in need. Like helping relieve exhausted rescue workers. Like assisting a fellow volunteer with a meaningful task.

Hope you had a Happy Birthday, Austin. You deserve it.

*—Greater New York Division*