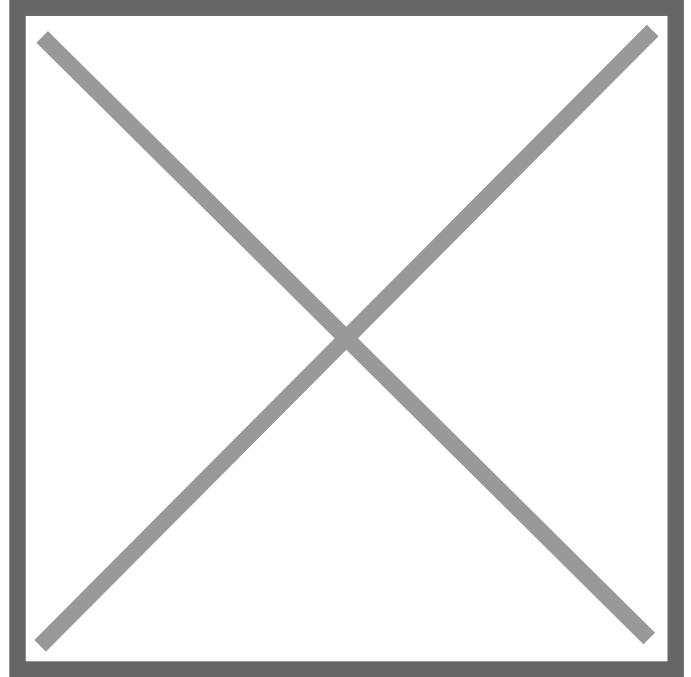
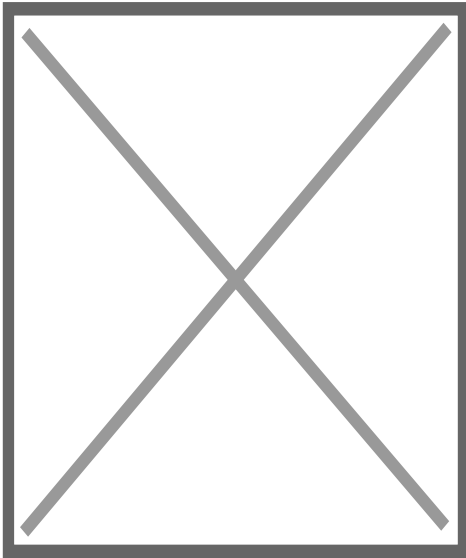


Under three flags

The Army banner flies high in Africa during visit from USA West.

by Commissioner Pat Swyers –



Commissioner Philip Swyers helps set the foundation stone and time capsule for the new Kenya Territorial Headquarters.

More than a year ago, Commissioner Phil and I received an invitation to be the special guests for the 2007 Commissioning and Territorial Leader's meetings in both Kenya and Southern Africa. Because the seasons in the Southern Hemisphere are the opposite of those in the north, these events in Africa take place in November and December. We had the privilege of spending nearly a month in Africa. As we look back on those days, we see Salvationists of both territories faithfully and joyfully serving God under the flag of The Salvation Army.

New cornerstone for the work in Kenya

We began our journey in Kenya, which is under the leadership of Territorial Commander Commissioner H. Anzeze and our own Lt. Colonels Kenneth and Jolene Hodder, the chief secretary and territorial leader of women's ministries.

The schedule was full. First on our agenda was placement of cornerstones for two new THQ buildings. Scheduled to be divided into East and Western Kenya territories in March 2008, Kenya now

needs new headquarter facilities for both territories. The USA Western Territory has been able to fund the construction of these buildings, so it was fitting that the territorial commanders of Kenya and the West joined to lay the cornerstones for each.

Enthusiastic crowds joined the celebrations. Although Kenya West will not officially open until March 2008, we were delighted to see a newly formed Western Territorial Band and Songster Brigade, resplendent in new uniforms and ready for service.

Kenya commissions 35

The commissioning events included the ordination of 35 new officers. Thousands who had gathered for the occasion were delighted as the new officers received their first appointments. The Territorial Band and Songsters praised God through music as they participated throughout the weekend.

At every event we attended, there was a Parade of Witness where Salvationists marched in their crisp white uniforms. Singing and dancing were incorporated into each event.

Visiting the field

We visited corps in outlying areas—many seem to be springing up almost on their own—and a large number of soldiers there are already involved in the Army's services. Many corps we visited provide lodging, schooling and HIV outreach programs.

WORTH provides opportunities for women to learn marketable skills and crafts so that participants can be self-sufficient. Among other skills, WORTH teaches soap making, basket weaving, sewing and even agricultural work in a rice field. There is much more to WORTH—it's a very productive service program.

Program for prostituted women

We attended an outreach program for formerly prostituted women who were striving to get out of abusive situations and feed their families. One young woman, aged 17, already had two small children. These women are outcasts in their society, but under the caring ministry of The Salvation Army, they are learning about God's love and seeking change in their lives.

During the program, the women depicted different situations that showed the sorrow they had faced. Then they sang together. As they danced and sang they placed "kongas"—long pieces of fabric that are worn in many different ways, most often as a dress—covered with the symbols and colors of The Salvation Army around me and Lt. Colonel Jolene Hodder. They hugged us, saying that we were now a part of their newfound hope. Thank God for the hope of a new life for them.

Commissioner Phil preached each day as we gathered with the Territorial Executive Council. We visited the Officers' Training College and had time to share with the staff. A particularly fond memory was the THQ Christmas Party, a time of fellowship with the officers and employees.

We concluded our stay with a visit to Western Kenya and the site of the new THQ, where almost 5,000 Salvationists gathered for Sunday meetings and praise. It is a growing Army and our prayer is that God will continue his work under the Kenyan and Salvation Army flags.

South Africa

The Southern Africa Territory spans seven separate nations. Our visit took place in the Johannesburg area where the Army works under the South African flag. There we saw faces from home as we met the members of our corps band. The Territorial Leaders, Commissioners Tuck, had suggested that Commissioner Phil might bring a band along with us for the commissioning weekend. The commissioner was happy to be able to select the Torrance band. [See accompanying story]

Shosholoza—which means “keep working”—was the theme of the commissioning weekend. Commissioner Trevor Tuck chose the theme to encourage Salvationists there to keep working to build God’s kingdom. The theme was perfect for the weekend and resonated with all in attendance. “Shosholoza,” a new march written by Bandmaster Kevin Larsson for the weekend, was an instant success wherever the Torrance band played.

Following the commissioning weekend, we said goodbye as the soldiers of our corps, who had traveled so far to work with and encourage the Salvationists of Southern Africa, left for home. We stayed a few more days as guests for the Territorial Leadership Conference. As officers from across the Southern Africa Territory gathered for a time of refreshment and encouragement, we had the opportunity to share God’s Word and the friendship of fellow officers.

We enjoyed opportunities and blessing in abundant measure—all because we serve together under the flag of God’s Army!