

**REDRESS WA: DIRECTORY OF CARE FACILITY HISTORIES
SALVATION ARMY BOYS' HOME NEDLANDS**

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1) Facility's Name:

Salvation Army Boys' Home. This is not to be confused with the Seaforth Salvation Army Boys' Home at Gosnells.

2) Also Known As:

Hollywood Children's Village (1969 -).

3) Date(s) of Operation and Location:

1918 – 1991 (as residential care centre), Karalla Street, Nedlands (also recorded as being in Karrakatta and West Subiaco)

During World War 2 there was a period (ending in March 1944) in which the Nedlands boys were evacuated to Seaforth but were kept independent of the Seaforth boys.

4) Purpose / Role of facility:

Residential care for boys, with private admissions as well as Wards of the state. In 1969 it became coeducational and changed its name to Hollywood Children's Village. Withnell House in Guildford Road, Mt Lawley, was run in conjunction with the Home for youth in transition to independent living, probably from 1952 on.

5) Religious Affiliation:

Salvation Army

6) List of facilities:

Applicant 02663 provides an extensive narrative describing the Home in the 1950s. Commencing with dormitory accommodation (possibly 11 dormitories, with one being a sick bay), cottage style accommodation was later developed and by 1984 there were three cottages.

By 1953 accommodation was available for 120 boys.

Primary school facilities were available on the property but some senior boys went out to government schools but by the 1970s all children were attending outside government schools. "Accommodation for 120 school-age boys.

"Primary school facilities are available on the property. Some lads go out to school, to Perth Boys High or to Junior Technical School. Apart from the usual seasonal ailments, the boys enjoy excellent health." (Child Welfare Dept. annual report 1953).

7) Synopsis of living conditions:

Applicant 02663 provides an extensive narrative on life in the Home in the 1950s.

Boys report that they were fostered out each weekend to different families.

We only went to the manager's house (which also operated as reception and main office) on our birthday when we were allowed to remind the Manager of that fact. We received a small bar of chocolate which was a very prized item of food as it was probably the only piece of chocolate we'd see all year (02664, 1950s).

In 1968 boys rose at 6.30am, Mon-Fri and 7.30am on weekends. There were 2 cottages containing 24 boys and dormitories with 26 boys (a third cottage was completed by the end of 1968). The boys attended Hollywood Primary and High Schools. Sports and visits were encouraged on weekends although *most of Sunday is taken up by Church Parade and youth meetings* (file A340).

8) Summary of Government Regulations for care of children:

1934 – 1976 [..\GuidelinesResearch\Legislation and Regulations\Child Welfare Regulations 1934.pdf](#)

NOTE: The 1934 regulations were applied to the Child Welfare Act 1947, and continued to apply at least through to 1976 with some small amendments. See 1976 index to regulations: [..\Child Welfare regulations index 1934-1976.JPG](#)

9. Inmates shall be supplied with ample plain, wholesome food.
10. Each child over the age of six shall be supplied with...a separate towel, hairbrush and toothbrush.
11. Each inmate shall have a separate bed, complete with sheets, blanket, pillow and quilt.
12. All inmates of school age must attend an efficient school.
- 15a. Industrial training shall be carried on for not more than six nor less than four hours daily, with at least one hour for mid-day meal and shall cease at noon on Saturdays.
- 15b...training for boys shall be farm and garden work and any other handicraft...and the elements of carpentry and blacksmithing.
- 15c...training for girls shall be in needlework, washing, ironing, housework, cooking, garden work, and, where cows are kept, dairying.
19. The discipline enforced shall be mild and firm. All degrading and injurious punishments shall be avoided. The "boxing" of children's ears is strictly forbidden, as is also the corporate punishment of girls of twelve...and over. Corporal punishment shall not be inflicted upon girls below the age of twelve except under very extreme circumstances.
- 20a. Corporal punishment may, as a last resort, be inflicted in the presence of a witness by the manager or by the schoolmaster, under the direction...of the manager.
- 20b. Corporal punishment may be administered for offences against morality, gross impertinence, or for persistent disobedience, but not for trivial breaches of discipline or dullness in learning.
- 20c. **"Corporal punishment" means by means of strokes with a cane inflicted on the hands.**
22. Discipline may be generally maintained by the granting of privileges and the following light punishments: -
Forfeiture of privileges: extra school tasks or drill; confinement in a room with reasonable access of light and air. No inmate shall be confined for a longer period than four hours.

9) Abuse claim summaries:

Salvation Army Boys' Home (to 1969)

Physical abuse

Major Sumption hit me across my back with a feathered cane and I was left bleeding and bruised, and still have scars (01364, 1942 – 1946).

Captain Sumption took me to the drill hall and caned me severely for several minutes in front of all the other boys. These severe canings were a very regular event for any boy who committed various infringements of Captain Sumption's "rules". I was born with a 'hollow chest' condition resulting in a stooped, hunched over appearance, particularly when sitting or standing still. Captain Sumption would warn and cane me about sitting up straight. Once when sawing wood for the boilers we didn't hear the assembly warning and were about 10 minutes late. Captain Sumption flew into a rage and beat [my companion] so badly he fell on the floor in fear, crying and pleading to stop, and defecating himself. Then he gave me the same beating. [On another occasion, Sumption beat and kicked him to the extent that his penis was split open. He was taken to hospital and told to say that he'd been fighting with other boys] (05908, 1946 – 1948).

Capt. Francis had a nasty habit of stomping on our bare feet with his hobnailed boots (02858, 1943 – 1946).

I received over 20 strokes of the cane in one day and witnessed other children with hands lacerated by caning (02942, 1944 – 1950).

At assemblies, all boys on "report" would be sent to stand out front. My little shorts would be pulled down, completely exposing me since we were never given underwear. Sgt Boffey would then strap me over the backside with a leather strap and a huge amount of force. After the strapping we'd be ordered to turn and face the assembly so our genitals were exposed to other children and then ordered to pull our shorts up and sit down (03451, 1952 – 1954).

Lt. Swift would carry out severe canings that would leave my hands bleeding (00070, 1955 – 1961).

Captain Saunders used to wear his belt over the top of his belt straps so he could quickly whip it off in order to strap us with it (02245, 1964 – 1968).

Applicant 00325 (1962 – 1964) reports an initiation or induction for new boys of staff placing two lines of older boys and making new boys run through these lines while being punched, slapped, kicked and abused. This was designed to make new boys aware of what to expect if they broke the rules. Similar operations as punishments are recorded from Swan Boys' Home and Castledare.

Sexual abuse

I vividly recall a boy my age had been sexually assaulted by an Officer which resulted in him bleeding to death while sitting on the toilet (00070, 1955 – 1961). There are some other stories of a boy dying in the toilet at Nedlands but the circumstances vary, such as the death followed inoculations.

Sgt. Boffay would inappropriately touch and fondle us (03451, 1952 – 1954).

04147 (early 1960s) reports that older boys would play with younger ones, and that one of the adult staff members would masturbate the boys and another Captain would prowl the dorm at night and *this hand would come from nowhere*.

Lt. & Mrs Swift both were involved in sexual abuse in their bedroom. This resulted in ongoing rectal bleeding for which the boy wore pads, and he often missed out on activities and even parental visits due to the ongoing injury. The abuse was reported to a cousin in the home who said it was also happening to him (02443, 1959 – 1960).

I became a victim of Mr [Charles Alan] Smith through molestation, masturbation and attempted penetration (01177, 1962 – 1968).

The officer's name may be Smyth or Smith. He was responsible for taking me to the toilet at night to prevent bed wetting but 99% of the time I had already wet the bed. I'd have to take a cold shower and [it was then that he sexually abused me, including penetration]. During the day he'd buy me sweets and he did not punish me as much

as he punished others then during the night he'd abuse me. I began to run away and eventually told Captain Saunders but he totally refuted my allegations and I was given extra punishment (00545, 1968-9).

Alan Smith asked me to come with him to his job cleaning a bank in Fremantle, he said he trusted me and that was my reward. We went twice a week, I think. He was always cuddling me and on several occasions made me masturbate him as he fondled me. [He had intercourse with me at the beach] (03248, 1970 – 1971).

Bed wetting

Notes: *The bed-wetters present the usual problem but they are given quite a lot of attention and a complete check is kept on them. The bedclothes are washed out and aired daily while the boys are treated and assisted in every way to overcome their weakness and from the records kept it appears that a certain amount of success with some of the lads is achieved* (file 1819/1922 v2 fol. 286)

In 1956 Number 11 dormitory was specifically for bed wetters. Waterproof mattresses had been bought but chronic bed wetters were being transferred to the Child Welfare Home for treatment with the **Enuresis machine** at the arrangement of the Child Welfare Department's Institution Officer (file 1819/1922 vol 2).

Statements from applicants.

We weren't allowed to go to the toilet after dark. I suffered enuresis shortly after arriving at the Home and I'd be caned and forced to sleep in the wet bed for the rest of the night (01364, 1942 – 1946).

I was caned in an abusive way for wetting the bed which made me wet myself (01005, 1965 – 1967).

Within a short time of arriving I began to wet the bed. I'd be made to do laps of the oval with my wet sheets draped over my body or around my neck. All the while I'd be made to call out repeatedly *I'm a bed wetter*. Other boys would be encouraged to chase, taunt and verbally abuse me (02245, 1964 – 1968 and 00545, 1968 – 1969).

Captain Saunders would cane me 6 times for bed wetting (00545, 1968-9).

The Roberts' (Cottage parents) would tape the doors at night and know if anyone had got up. We weren't allowed to go to the toilet at night (01005, late 1960s)

Education

At Nedlands schooling was spasmodic, the Salvo staff attempted some form of tutoring but often there were no classes for days on end. When I eventually left the Home and was enrolled at state school my brother and I were innumerate and barely literate (01098, 1940s).

Education was not a priority. When I went home [to parents] I should have been in grade 3 but was put into grade 1 because I was so far behind academically.

While we were there we never went to school (05252, 1963 – 1966).

Food

"The boys had a song":

There is a fly bog farm not far away

Where we get bread and scrape

Three times a day

And we never see

Any sugar in our tea

And we are gradually fading away (00895, 1930s).

It was usually weeties for breakfast and we had competitions to see how many rat poo droppings we could line up on the side of our plates (01866, 1936 – 1941).

Most kids suffered from boils and barcoo rot – I still have a scar on my left leg from the rot (00116, 1930s).

It was mostly donated food and that meant the meat was usually offal. I'd volunteer to feed the chooks just so I could eat the scraps (00335, 1934 – 1938).

I and other boys would creep out at night to scavenge through neighbours' garbage bins for anything edible (01098, mid 1940s).

Variety, quality and quantity of good foods was a constant problem. Scabies and boils were common in the Home. Cheap products such as sago, porridge, weeties, tripe, cabbage, potato, turnip, swede, carrot, bread, milk and processed meats (polony and saveloys) being the fundamentals (02663, 1950s).

Whenever a load of broken biscuits arrived from Mills & Wares, the Officers would line us all up at one end of the hall, and put the biscuits down the other end. A whistle would blow and all the boys would race and fight each other to get the biscuits. Everyone was so desperate to eat. The Officers were deliberately playing children off against each other for their own amusement (03451, 1952 – 1954).

The Officers did not eat the same food as us. They were seated on a stage looking down at us, eating their lovely roast meals, whilst we were eating horrible stews. At one stage there were wrigglers in the stew but all the boys stuck together and refused to eat it (00081, 1951 – 1955).

The meals there walked off the table. I had so many sores (boils?) on me (02259, 1959).

The food was pig swill, really bad and we were lucky if we ever saw an apple (01177, 1962 – 1968).

Medical issues

All the beds had bed bugs, head lice were rife (we used to share a brush), I also suffered from threadworms and was never treated. After being hit very hard across the left ear I'd a discharge from that ear – it was the mucous from my nose coming out my ear, Matron Drew didn't treat it very well, nobody ever sought outside medical help (00335, 1934 – 1938).

When playing footy I got kicked in the shin. The bruising was terrible and I went to the sick room where I stayed some weeks before someone said I should be in hospital (and it was a fight to save his leg) (01866, 1936 – 1941).

The good doctor was heard by me dressing down the Matron (Mace) telling her I'd been ill for six weeks and without his prescribed food and medication I would die. I believe I was in such a bad shape that the SA were too ashamed to send me to a hospital (02858, 1943 – 1946).

I was constantly being hit across the head and at the age of 11 went deaf – the staff just thought I was disobedient and inattentive and punished me more (01327, 1940s). As further punishment, I was placed in the lock-up, a bare room about 12x12 with barred windows. I developed a serious cough and chest pain which continued to worsen. After about 5 or 6 days one of the boys who brought us food told the wife of another Officer in a different section and she took me to the children's hospital where I was admitted with pneumonia and pleurisy (05908, 1946 – 1948).

Showers

I was one of the youngest and I never had a hot shower, the bigger boys had that privilege. By the time my turn came the showers were as cold as ice (00081, 1951 – 1955).

Labour related abuse

We scrubbed the wooden dining room floor. Adjutant Burr would often urinate on the floor as I was scrubbing it and once when fetching me more soap (soap we made) bashed me on the head with the bar (02858, 1943 – 1946).

We helped wash the babies and Adjutant Burr asked me to put a baby in the water but I said the water was too hot. She grabbed the baby from me placed it in the water and it screamed and was burnt. Burr told Matron it was my fault but Lt. Fowler, [who was helping] said, No, Matron, he tried to stop Burr who snatched the baby from him (02858, 1943-1946).

Other abuse

Major Sumption liked to scare boys – he'd make them stand in a circle, he would stand in the middle shaking his feathered cane so it would make a swishing sound. We were warned not to tell families anything bad going on in the Home for if we did everyone in the dormitory would be punished (01364, 1942 – 1946).

I was placed in a large drum and other boys were instructed to strike the drum with wooden clubs. You'd come out shaking uncontrollably, traumatised, and deaf for several days (01098, early 1940s). 02858 (1930s) recalls Capt. Sumption putting boys under a small cut down rain water tank resting on a wooden floor then ordering many children to encircle it, drumming on it.

Grandma asked why I didn't spend some of the money she sent me on food. I'd never received any and an Officer told her that "all money sent went to benefit all in the dormitory" (02325, 1940-1941).

We'd to prepare wood for the furnace and had to jump on the wood in our bare feet to make it a suitable size for burning – no axe or other equipment provided (00081, 1951 – 1955). This has been mentioned by at least one other applicant, the wood being sticks or branches from nearby bush.

I remember being locked away in a cell a lot (05252, 1963 – 1966).

A couple of times I was heard talking after lights off and I'd be made to stand in the courtyard in pyjamas until the early hours of the morning before being told to go to bed – even in inclement weather (04202, 1962 – 1964).

At Nedlands I was number 41 and I was usually called by this number rather than by my name. We were forced by staff to box each other. If we refused to fight we'd be blindfolded and thrown in together and both boys would be slapped by an Officer to get the fight started (03451, 1952 – 1954).

No one was referred to by name – it was usually "You!", or your number was called out (00081, 1951 – 1955).

Mr Roberts never laid a hand on me. He was a mental abuser and made us write lines from as soon as we got back from school until tea time, then we'd do our duties, then back to lines until he turned the lights out (01005, late 1960s).

Mrs Crotty made us eat the whole two packets of cigarettes until we swallowed them while she stood and watched to make sure they were gone (01005, late 1960s).

Hollywood Children's Village (1969 -)

I wet myself during the day and was made to put my wet underwear over my head and face, and sit in the lounge room while people walked in and out, sat, watched tv, and made fun of me. Every time I used to wet the bed I'd be belted many times with a strap in the mornings and it caused many nights of terror and sleeplessness (04966, girl, 1973-74).

His father was not allowed to visit as the children had told him of the abuse at the Home. The children were told he was not allowed because he was drunk (00297, 1970).

On numerous situations I was forced to sit up all hours of the night until I ate rhubarb or other vegetables which were in my evening meal. I was sexually abused by an older boy but when I told someone I was told not to tell fibs (00297, 1970).

If I reported abuse to my case worker, Mrs Bouse had a habit when it was late at night of dragging you out of bed by your hair, into the lounge and being made to stand in the corner, not to move, all the time yelling at me, repeating things my case worker had said. You were made to say sorry but it wasn't good enough for her. If you moved you were whacked on the back of the legs and made to start again standing still. She'd scream at you *I am a good Christian woman, I do this for the love of God. I have to deal with nasty children like this all day.* That was all she'd ever say about anyone who was being punished. If anyone wet the bed she'd wake them in the night and literally beat them (03484, 1971 – 1973).

10) Alleged Perpetrators:

Note: Not all names or spellings have been verified.

Alan Smith (Charles Alan Smith) – Cottage parent, “Brand Cottage, 1960s, early 1970s. Sexual abuse. Jailed in 1997 (aged 65) for 15 years after pleading guilty to 76 offences against 20 boys, paroled after less than 8 years. Was a Superintendent at Sister Kate’s in the 1950s. (Ref: ABC *Four Corners* 18.8.2003 *The Homies* and http://www.mako.org.au/charles_alan_smith.html [news reports from AAP and *Herald Sun*]). Had been dismissed in 1974 after confessing to abuse, but was reemployed by the Salvation Army in 1979. Apart from quotes above, Alan Smith is mentioned by other applicants as sexually abusing them but details are not always provided (e.g. 02370).

Lt. Swift (sexual and physical abuse, 1950s)

Captain / Major (Jack?) Sumsion) (physical and possible sexual abuse, 1940s – frequently named in this period – with many spelling variations - and was at the home until 1967).

Officer Broosky (physical abuse, 1940s)

Adj. Burr (female, physical and mental abuse, 1940s)

Sgt. Robinson (physical abuse, 1945 – 1952)

Sgt. Boffay (sexual and physical abuse, 1950s)

Captain Harold Saunders (physical abuse, 1964 – 1968). Saunders was also frequently mentioned for abuse at the Salvation Army Home in Box Hill, Victoria, in the 1950s. He possibly was accused in court of physical abuse in the late 1990s or early 2000s.

Captain Rolly (physical abuse, ca. 1964 - 1966)

Mr & Mrs Roberts (Cottage parents, Pied Piper Cottage, mental and physical abuse, ca.1966 – 1968)

Mrs Crotty (physical abuse, ca1969 – 1974))

Mrs Bouse (cottage parent, 1970s, physical and emotional abuse)

11) Staff Members:

The staff, as at 23 July 1943 (while Nedlands staff and children were at Seaforth) is listed on file 1819/1922. Major & Mrs Parkes (Major Parkes retired late 1945); Adjutant & Mrs Miller; Major Bogie, Matron; Major Jenkins (toddlers); Adjutant Burr (laundry); Lieut. Tonkin (kitchen), Capt. & Mrs Francis; Lieut. Hillman; Sergt. Robertson; and full time gardener.

The staff, as at 20.11.1968, is listed on file A340. Captain & Mrs Saunders; Mr & Mrs Smith (formerly of Sister Kate’s); Mr & Mrs Richardson; Mr & Mrs Roberts; Capt. Argent (boys’ dormitory) and a cook and assistant.

Major J Sumsion is recorded at the home in 1945 and transferred out early in 1967.

File 1819/1922 (vols 1 & 2) also contain various staff lists from the 1920s on.

Both files are copied in the Redress Files.

12) FACTORS APPLICABLE TO ASSESSMENTS

12/1. Severity of abuse and/or neglect

One applicant (05908, 1946 – 1948) reported extreme physical abuse (and hints at sexual abuse) by Captain Sumsion, who is named by other applicants. However, 05908 also says that *In contrast to Captain Sumsion I cannot recall, nor did I ever see in my two and a half years at the Home any other Salvation Army staff resorting to the type and manner of treatment meted out by him.*

Some of us went to Crawley baths to learn to swim. The private teachers were shocked at our physical appearance (02858, 1943 – 1946).

Applicant 02858 also recalls that a change of Major, in charge of the home, ca.1944-46 made a difference. Major Parkes had been in charge but seemed never to concern himself with the plight of the children. The new, un-named Major, had the drum punishment and other atrocities stopped but he *was up against some evil cunning officers*.

03451 of the 1950s said that *At night all the children would be assembled and made to sing songs to praise the Lord and the Salvation Army. We used to change the words to reflect the reality of life in the Home. One of the songs was I'm Happy Today – we changed it to I'm Hungry Today. If we got caught changing words we'd be punished. However we were so unhappy we used to change the words anyway and risk being punished.*

a) sexual abuse – Sexual abuse is commonly reported from the 1950s through to the 1970s. Alan Smith is frequently named, and he did receive a prison sentence many years later.

physical abuse – Extreme physical punishment is reported from the 1930s through into the 1980s. Captain or Major Sumption is the most frequently named abuser but there were many others, and many un-named officers reported. Many reports of physical punishment include severe injury that required hospital treatment.

b) emotional / psychological abuse – Most applicants recall the extreme lack of emotional support and the ongoing physical abuse, merging into psychological abuse as it occurred on such frequent basis for many of the children.

c) Neglect – Many applicants report boils and other infections from the poor diet and the total lack of good emotional care. A lack of education has been mentioned often but not in detail. Many applicants say that if they'd had better education they may have had better opportunities later in life. Serious neglect of medical issues has frequently been recorded.

12/2. Compounding or ameliorating factors

c) Isolation. There were outings, but in earlier years schooling was conducted in the Home so lessened the opportunity for children to have activity beyond the boundary. There was some fostering out for weekends but it is unclear in what date periods this occurred.

d) Contact with parent(s) or extended family. Visits to children were allowed, but there does not appear to have been home visits for the children. Letters were censored or never sent / received, as were gifts and money. One boy (04444, ca.1961) shortly after arrival asked about going home and his mother and was slapped and was afraid to ask again. His mother had died and he was not told until years later when he was in another institution.

12/3. Consequential harm

Based on individual applications.

12/4. Aggravating factors

There are typical aggravating factors that have been brought out by individual applicants who have stayed at Salvation Army Boys' Home, Nedlands throughout its existence as a residential care centre. The factors include:

a) verbal abuse. Few applicants have stated there was extreme verbal abuse although it is likely to have occurred before, and accompanied, the physical punishments.

c & d) threats, intimidation. Threats of punishment were frequent, and intimidation through sexual abuse common.

h) lack of care or support following abuse. Medical care was extremely poor and even severe injuries following abuse were often ignored, at least in the short term. Reporting of abuse generally resulted in further punishment rather than belief and action.

i) frequent public punishment. Most punishment appears to have been public, with boys humiliated through punishment outside in the quadrangle or on the stage of the main hall / dining room.

REFERENCES:

ACT application numbers as quoted in (), with dates applicant was in institution.

Signposts: a guide for children and young people in care in WA from 1920. (Dept. for Community Development)

Community Welfare Department file A340 *Institutions – Salvation Army Boys Home – Nedlands, general correspondence.* State Records Office consignment #1417.

Child Welfare Department file 1819/1922 (vols 1 & 2) *Salvation Army Boy's Home Hollywood – reports and general correspondence* (State Records Office consignment #1031).

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Salvation Army Home for Boys, 1920. Battye Library photograph 001175D.