

# Ministry to the War and Peace Show

By Geoff Baker – Evangelist from Southborough Team

The main thing I want to say today is that big things can come from small beginnings. Especially if we trust in God and God is in it .

Jackie and myself felt we should try and get in to the War and Peace military vehicle show, because there was a lot of mention of war but not much about **peace**. With just 3 days to organise, we went in with back packs full of bottles of water, chocolate bars and sweets to give away. The idea being to get in conversation and deliver the Gospel message. How big was our faith at that point, probably as small as a mustard seed.

After 2 days of continuous rain being soaked and just covered in mud, we were both thinking do we give up, we were getting conversations but this was really hard work and depressing. But we decided to continue all week but the rain and mud just got worse. Did we think we had achieved anything probably not much. But we were not going to give up. But awful as this week was it actually set us up for the next year.

The following year we got a marquee and we gave away tea and coffee. Although we gave the tea away people kept wanting to give us money, so we came to a compromise of collecting money for military charities. We ended up collecting over £2000. We had hundreds of people come in, and the amount of people who said to us they remembered us from the previous year, because we did not have to be there, but we kept coming.

We did not know what would work so we tried several options. We had a display on the role of chaplains during the First World War, people did not realise, I did not realise the role they played and how many were killed. We set up a prayer wall, which in the beginning we found the prayers used to appear secretly, often overnight or early morning. But within a short while people were happy to openly put prayers on wall and ask us to pray for them.

One of the best things that happened was that we got the other traders talking to each other. We organised a BBQ and invited the regulars and the traders around us. Most had never spoken to each other, but the result of that evening was they became friends with each other and us. The next year they wanted to help do the BBQ, they would also help us set up the marquee. They did get their tea quicker but they did just want to help us. They even offered to pay for us to be there if the Diocese didn't..

Now without us actually having to say a word they asked us why we were there and natural evangelism through conversation took over, and the message of Christ emerged by itself.



And the other thing that happened was we introduced a Sunday morning service. We had 120 or more people coming along. We had many different Chaplains with their own unique ways of getting the message across.

Bishop James you came on one occasion. Where else would you have an emergency ambulance come through the middle of the service - just like Moses parting the Red Sea?

God honoured us in so many ways in which we could never have imagined, we started our journey with very little faith but ours and everybody who came to help saw their faith grow in to a giant tree. We could not have done it in our own strength, we could only have done it through Christ. Believe in the power of God and the generosity of God and you may just find anything is possible.

One last little story. We had someone coming in to ask for prayer because two of his mates had been killed in Afghanistan. We have to jump to the next year. One display we had were A4 size glossy photos from the Army photographic competition. The man who had asked for prayer came in and said I don't believe it. We all thought there was a problem. One of the photos was a brass plaque with names of soldiers on it. The picture was a reflection of the face of a paratrooper looking at the plaque. He then tells us the bottom two names were his two mates who had been killed the previous year. He could not believe it nor could we.

The next day someone else came in and his mate who had been killed was also on plaque. The army sent me more copies of photo so they could have their own print. Our God is amazing.