

2 October 2009

Draft

**ABF EARLY EARLY CHRISTMAS FAIR BREAKS THE £40,000 BARRIER**

Fantastic support all round for the annual event held by the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) the Soldiers' Charity raised a record of over £40,000 for the charity, which is up £5000 on last year. Proudly sponsored by Aspire Defence our main sponsor, the Fair attracted over 1350 eager shoppers from Wiltshire and surrounding counties to Tedworth House, Tidworth, as always on the last Wednesday in September, for the Early Early Christmas Fair.

Caroline Cary the Fair Organiser said ' I personally would like to thank everyone who supported the Early Early Christmas Fair at Tedworth House. It was incredible to have again surpassed last years total, but it has become a very popular major event in the calendar and that is evident by the amount of tickets sold and the numbers through the door. I would also like to thank the local businesses who gave us donations in the form of prizes or who advertised with us. The stalls were fantastic and run very professionally with great variety, beautifully presented in a superb venue with a wonderful atmosphere. This is now the largest annual fundraising event for the ABF in the country, and never has it been a more important time to support the ABF, the Soldiers' Charity'.

Colonel Tony Moorby of the Army Benevolent Fund said: "The support for year's fair was better than ever, with the revised layout continuing to work successfully. We had fantastic support from our main sponsor Aspire Defence and also Sodexo Defence. For the second time we had a licensed raffle which proved to be a great success. The winner of the £500, first prize was R Watt of Salisbury. The runner up M Nesbitt won a £200 donated by General Dynamics. The third prize of £100, was won by P Andrews. On behalf of the ABF the Soldiers' Charity may I thank our generous sponsors and those who supported the raffle very much indeed for their contribution. Many regular visitors returned to Tedworth House for what has become a very popular social and community event – and we saw lots of first timers hunting around for some Christmas bargains too, which is always pleasing and a wonderful support for the charity. I would like to thank the many, many people who gave their time, effort and support to make this year's Fair the huge success it was.'

'Aspire Defence has again been proud to sponsor such a significant event in the local area. We are delighted that the Aspire Marquee continued to work so well and the Fair raised a record sum and we would like to thank all our staff who worked so tirelessly with the ABF to ensure the Fair's success' said Aspire's Colin Kenton, Garrison Facilities Director for Tidworth Garrison.

"Together with Corps and Regimental Associations, the ABF disburses some £10 million a year to serving and former serving members of the British Army and their families when they are in need. Sadly this need continues to grow and in this past year there has been a 20% increase to over 3,100 cases helped. The terrific amount raised this year from the Fair has happily met our expectations and will help the Fund considerably towards meeting those demands.

For more information about the Army Benevolent Fund and forthcoming fundraising events in your area, please contact Colonel Tony Moorby on 01980 672337 or alternatively log on to [www.armybenfund.org](http://www.armybenfund.org)

**Ends**

**Media enquiries to: Colonel Tony Moorby 01980 672337 or  
amoorby@armybenfund.org**