

## The Mountain Way Charity – assisting UK Military Veterans: Case Study 02 - Ric

Ric was a 41-year-old former Royal Marine when he was introduced to the Mountain Way following years of depression and the failure of CBT, EMDR and other recognized therapies to help with his chronic PTSD. Primarily stemming from operational service in Afghanistan, Ric’s case was one of cumulative exposure and the resultant stress.



*Ric in Afghanistan. Constant high-intensity military operations with the close-up horrors of warfare had taken a huge toll.*



*PTSD turns normally positive veterans into very negative personalities.*

Sustained periods on operations of ‘contacts’ – small arms, IEDs, mortars and Close-Quarter Battle – had resulted in predictable outcomes within civilian life. A cloud of depression, guilt, rage, shame and grief hung over him permanently, resulting in nightmares, chronic sleep deprivation, flashbacks and an overarching sense of isolation and hopelessness.

Desperately trying to cling on to a relationship with his daughter, he had approached other military charities for help, but none had been successful. Ric was out of work, grieving for the loss of a military relative in Afghanistan and was enduring suicidal thoughts by the time he approached us.

Our Chief Mentor, Andy, started working with Ric to understand the root causes of all these issues, long before Ric attended one of our programmes. We call this process ‘Open Door’ and it culminated with Ric making the firm commitment he was ready to face some extreme challenges and make a pledge to the Mountain Way that he was ready to start the journey to recovery.



*Our programmes are held in environments that contrast starkly from those of the sufferer.*



*A significant talent for creative arts started to emerge during the Programme. This is some of Ric’s work.*

Over two weeks in the Pyrenees, Andy gradually let Ric explore all the underlying issues of his PTSD. Through a combination of mindfulness, guided reflection and meditation – all conducted in an environment conducive to progress - Ric took the first steps towards relegating PTSD to being an element of his life, rather than the driver and overwhelming characteristic of it.

Culminating in his final resolution atop Mount Salvaguardia, Ric finished the programme and thus the first major step in his post-traumatic growth journey. ‘Core34’ psychological assessments had shown significant improvement over the two weeks and he was ready to continue in a new mindset with a vastly different perspective and carrying a range of tools at his disposal.



*Ric’s latent talents as an artist have led him towards a new venture*

As with all graduates of our initial programme, Ric now continues his post-traumatic growth phase. Back in work, with a vastly different relationship with his daughter, family and friends, Ric has shown an extraordinary migration to positivity, optimism and a new hunger for life.

His artwork is flourishing and is now part of a business plan for a new venture. He believes that he may now be able to use his experiences to assist others, in addition to assisting with fund raising activities for the Mountain Way.



*Repaired relationships are a powerful indicator of progress.*