

IRAQ WAR VETERAN WITH COLD INJURY TAKES ON GRADE FIVE ICE CLIMB

A British Army veteran living with a service-related cold injury has completed a near-vertical ice climb in the Scottish Highlands.

ROSSENDALE, LANCASHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM, April 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A British Army veteran living with a service-related cold injury has completed a near-vertical ice climb in the Scottish Highlands - despite having no prior climbing experience.

Brian Wood MBE, ambassador for [Veterans for Veterans](#), joined former SAS soldier Jay Morton, known for Channel 4's SAS: Who Dares Wins, to take on a Grade five route in the Cairngorms - one of the most demanding standards in UK winter climbing.

For Wood, the challenge was not just physical, but deliberate. He uses endurance challenges as a way to manage his mental health.

"Movement for me is medicine," Wood said.

A video documenting the mission was filmed, [and you can see it here.](#)

TESTING THE INJURY - NOT AVOIDING IT

Wood lives with a non-freezing cold injury sustained during operational service in Kosovo. The condition affects circulation in his hands, making cold environments painful and unpredictable.

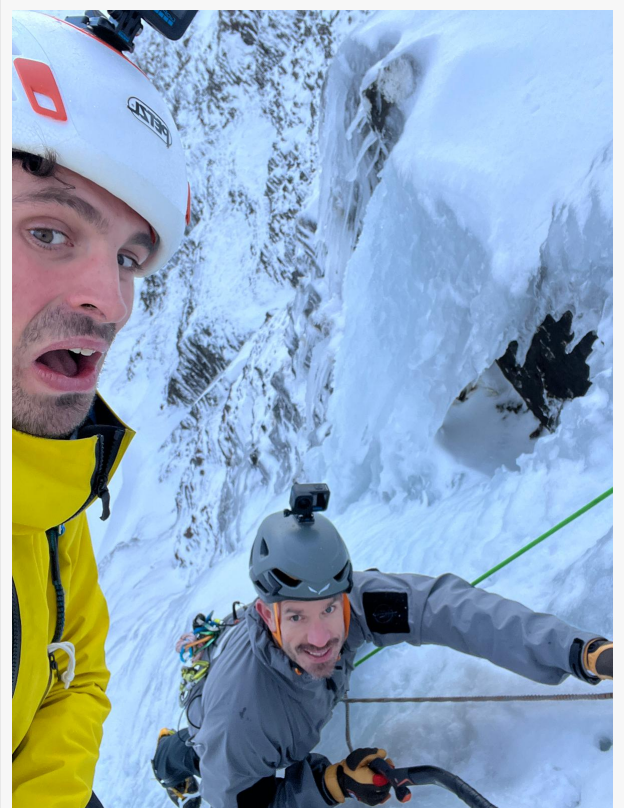
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You either commit - or you don't move.”

Brian Wood MBE

The climb placed him directly back into those conditions, with a six-kilometre approach through snow before reaching a sustained vertical ice face.

Halfway up, the strain became clear. Fatigue set in, with forearms burning and calves under constant tension, while the cold began to affect his hands.



Brian Wood and Kay Morton on their Ice Climb

"I've got to manage my hands and keep the blood flowing. It affects me badly in these conditions," Wood explained.

Rather than step away, he paused, adjusted, and continued the climb, using technique and control to manage the impact of his injury.

FROM NOVICE TO VERTICAL ICE

With no climbing background, Wood was coached on the basics before stepping onto the wall. Wearing crampons and using ice axes under instruction, he climbed on a top rope while Morton led the route, placing protection and managing the ascent.

The route, known as The Last Post, is graded at level five - a sustained and technical climb with little margin for error.

At the base, the scale of the challenge was immediately apparent.

"Tell me that's not what we're climbing," Wood said.

From that point on, the climb came down to mindset.

"You either commit - or you don't move."

MOVEMENT AS MEDICINE

Wood served for 17 years in the military and continues to rely on that experience to push through demanding situations.

He said that maintaining physical challenge plays a key role in managing life after service, providing structure, focus, and a sense of control.

"When you commit to something, you're all in," he said.

REACHING THE TOP

Despite the conditions and the added complexity of his injury, Wood completed the climb, describing it as the most physically demanding challenge he has ever faced.

"I felt completely drained. It's probably the toughest thing I've done as a novice," he said.

Morton praised the effort, noting the difficulty of the route even for experienced climbers.

"To climb a Grade five route in those conditions without any prior experience is seriously impressive. Full credit to him."

WHY IT MATTERS

Veterans for Veterans support former service personnel living with conditions linked to their

careers, including hearing loss and cold injuries developed during training and operations.

They understand the long-term impact these conditions can have, but also recognise the drive many veterans retain to challenge themselves and maintain a sense of purpose.

This climb reflects that mindset - not avoiding injury, but learning to manage it, adapt, and continue moving forward.

Robin Cooke

Veterans for Veterans

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