

What would you do if you were blown out of a tank and left for dead with a shattered spine? Or what would you do if you stepped on an IED and had your calf muscles ripped from your body? Or what would you do if you signed up for your dream job, the only thing you've ever wanted to do, serve your country in conflict zones, only to discover that it causes a debilitating internal condition that means you are forced to leave? I don't know what I would do but I would be surprised if I was as resilient as the three young men I have been in Ecuador with for the past 2 weeks as part of the first expedition from the Royal British Legion's Battle Back Centre.

Lyndon has a tattoo with the date he was blown out of the tank. Why? Because it changed his life. Thanks to the RBL he has been fully rehabilitated physically despite being told he would never walk again. He now climbs regularly and unlike me reached the summit of Cotopaxi. As did Paul, who despite having severely damaged legs, walked better for longer than those of us with calf muscles intact. Luke will achieve whatever he wants in the next stage of his life. His attitude is phenomenal. He blames no-one for what has happened to him and for a young man he has a wise head on his shoulders.

The trip to Ecuador with these three young men has been an incredible journey for all of us. For them it has been part of their rehabilitation. For me it was an opportunity to raise awareness of the Centre that has helped them recover and re-join a society and a community grateful for their personal sacrifice. I didn't make it to the top of Cotopaxi but the support from local residents has been phenomenal and it is a challenge and experience I will never forget as the three young men I met were inspiring, if only because they didn't lie down and feel sorry for themselves but got up, got better and then went and climbed the second highest volcano in the world.