

Graham Limb who struggles sometimes to leave his home because of anxiety, stepped out and completed a one million step challenge; a week ahead of schedule. Graham Limb, 46, from Haslingden, is a member of Veterans In Communities and he used the walk to raise money for that charity along with mental health charity Mind. He said: "I had a set route at the start every day. I would leave my home at 8am, walk up to the Halo, then over Cribden, down to Stonefold and then Rising Bridge Road, the cycle path adjacent to the A56, Jubilee Road, Victoria Park and on to the VIC Centre in Bury Road.

"Sometimes I would extend that route and most days I would go out and complete a second walk.

"It was very important for me to do this for VIC because it has been a big part of my life for nearly 10 years and supported me through lots of dark times as well as happy times.

"The million steps was supposed to be done over three months, I decided I wanted to do it in eight weeks and although I have now done the million steps, I set a target of eight-week challenge and eight weeks I will do."

As he neared the one million, Chief Executive of VIC Amanda Walton volunteered to join his walk.

She said: "What Graham has achieved is inspirational. It has been an amazing challenge for him and I am chuffed to bits that he has achieved it ahead of schedule.

"I have only gone out this morning; he has been doing this day after day and I know that the biggest challenge for him has been just to get out of the house. What he has done has been phenomenal."

Graham joined the Royal Artillery at an early age and struggled to re-adjust to civilian life.

When he saw what was happening in Croatia with ethnic cleansing, he felt he couldn't stand by and so fought against the Serbs. During his time there he decided to join the French Foreign Legion and returned to Croatia.

On returning to the UK, he became a firefighter, but had to leave this career early after a traumatic fire where children died.

He found motivation hard during the pandemic, but rose to the challenge when VIC was asked to volunteer to marshal the outside of the vaccination hub in Rawtenstall. When he finishes the eight weeks, Graham will have walked the equivalent distance of Haslingden to Lille in France and back. Lille was where he signed up to join the French Foreign Legion.

He added: "I feel very proud, not just because I have done this but because I have inspired other people to get out and walk. It is not about doing lots of steps, it is about getting out and enjoying your surroundings and the nature you see.

"You can spend money on going to a gym, but walking is free. I have discovered loads of places I never knew before around my home area.

"I am very grateful to everyone who has sponsored me"