

Former shul chairman set to recreate WW2 commando raid

Keith Breslauer to take part in the Frankton 75 Challenge on behalf of the Royal Marines Charitable Trust

BY ANDREW SHERWOOD | November 29, 2017, 5:27 pm |

The former chairman of St John's Wood Synagogue will next week embark on a gruelling re-enactment of the 'Cockleshell Heroes' 1942 commando raid on Bordeaux.

Keith Breslauer, an American citizen, who has been in England for 25 years, will take part in the Frankton 75 Challenge, recreating the commando raid on shipping in the German occupied French port of Bordeaux during the Second World War, on behalf of the Royal Marines Charitable Trust.

Comprising of an 85-mile paddle and 100-mile run, the 52-year-old will join eight marines for the challenge, which they hope to complete over six days.

Explaining how he came to taking on the most challenging of challenges, he explains: "I was in shul in New York one Shabbat and I heard the rabbi give a speech which contained a list of names of American soldiers who died in combat, in Afghan and Iraq. I said a prayer, like you do, for the soldiers of Israel for defending our freedom, and thought that was an amazing thing.

"I came back to England and said 'Why don't we do this? No one could really give me a straight answer and that led to me reaching out, ultimately to a friend and I got a hold of the Royal Marines. We started taking them on ski trips, having our company help them, train them, honour them, doing whatever we can to make sure there is a powerful support for this part of society.

"These are individuals who are really the highest level of casualties in any kind of conflict the British are involved in. We've really adopted them, and have started to get involved in a number of charities.

"A number of years ago, I did the 1664 Global Challenge – a 120-mile paddle. Every year in October, we sponsor the Royal Parks Half Marathon. Every four or five years, we come up with some other interesting new event, this time, with the 75th anniversary of a really important mission. I was asked if I wanted to be part of it, I said sure, they said I could do the run or the paddle, I said: 'Wait a minute, if I'm going to do it, I'm going to do the whole thing!'"

Having invested in one of the only kayaking machines which exists – the Kayak Pro – to help him get in perfect shape for the event, which begins on 8 December, he says: "I get on it pretty

much every other night of the week and every other day I'm running. I try to run roughly 30 miles a week, and try to paddle roughly the same distance too."

Working with Tom Keene, a well-known historian who wrote a book about the raid to recreate a course, he said: "What's particularly interesting is two people survived this event, one of them Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert George "Blondie" Hasler, is a name they gave to the disabled unit of the Marines in the combined services – the Hasler company. We sponsor the Hasler company, we're very active in it specifically."

Hoping to show how obstacles can be overcome, he says: "By me taking on this challenge, I'm trying to spread the news about overcoming obstacles like these two guys who managed to survive the mission, how the Hasler guys survive their own challenges."

"I came from a very modest background, with my parents, we survived a lot of obstacles and I think that is the overrunning theme we're trying to say. If we can do that and get a lot of people interested – that would be great."

"I'm also one of the few Jewish guys most Royal Marines have ever met before and I think it's important as a sign of giving back to our community and country – and to recognise who these people are. I come from a culture of giving back, of being thankful for the society we're in."

Looking forward to taking on the event, the Managing Director and founder of Patron Capital, a private equity firm, added: "I hope I'm in good shape, although someone saw me running the other day and said I looked like I was dying in the run!"

Client: Patron Capital
Source: Jewish News (Main)
Date: 30 November 2017
Page: 39
Reach: 25402
Size: 93cm2
Value: 130.2



Ex-shul chair to re-enact WW2 raid

CHARITY

The former chairman of St John's Wood Synagogue will next week embark on a gruelling re-enactment of the 'Cockeshell Heroes' 1942 commando raid on Bordeaux.

Keith Breslauer, an American citizen, who has been in England for 25 years, will take part in the Frankton 75 Challenge, on behalf of the Royal Marines Charitable Trust.

Comprising of an 85-mile paddle and 100-mile run, the 52-year-old will join eight marines for the challenge, which they hope to complete in six days. Having raised money in the past for Jewish charities, he said: "I come from a culture of giving back, of being thankful for the society we're in. I hope I'm in good shape, although someone saw me running the other day and said I looked like I was dying in the run!"

◆ Full interview: jewishnews.co.uk

