

press cutting



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St John's Wood banker to recreate daring WWII raid for Royal Marines charity

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Keith is doing the challenge to raise awareness of the Royal Marines Charitable Trust



A St. John's Wood fund manager is attempting to recreate a daring Second World War commando raid in France, 75 years on, to raise awareness for some armed forces charities.



Keith Breslauer and disabled former Royal Marines will begin the challenge on December 7

Keith Breslauer, from Elm Tree Road is a patron of the Prince's Teaching Institute and the Royal Hasler Company, a rehabilitation centre for members of the armed forces, named after one of the survivors of the original Operation Frankton raid, Herbert 'Blondie' Hasler.

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Founder of Patron Capital, Mr Breslauer, along with several disabled former Royal Marines set off on December 5, attempting to do the same route undertaken by their forebears 75 years ago.

During Operation Frankton, a group of Royal Marines attempted to kayak 85-miles up the Gironde river, in France, to Bordeaux. Once there they were to attach limpet mines to cargo ships, and escape overland to Spain.

The group will trace the 100-mile walk that Mr Hasler, and fellow survivor Bill Sparks took to get to Ruffec, where they made contact with the resistance.

Of the ten men that attempted the raid in December 1942, only two survived. Six were captured and killed by the Germans, the other two died from hypothermia.

According to father-of-four Mr Breslauer, who has previously kayaked the reverse of the D-Day landings route from Normandy to Portsmouth, despite its failure, it still had its positives.

“It did a really important thing. It inspired the locals to resist and it was used as a positive message for the public and military.

“They argued that for D-Day they were able to re-organise their plans in reaction to what happened,” he said.

Despite his previous charity exploits, he admits this will be one of his toughest yet. “It will be hard, but you can’t feel too bad when a guy with a prosthetic limb is right next to you.”

Dr Tom Keene, who has done research into Operation Frankton will be accompanying the group on part of the journey and giving lectures at various points along the 100 mile walk.

Fitness fanatic Mr Breslauer, former chairman St John’s Wood synagogue, is training hard as he gets closer to December 7.

The trip will raise awareness of the Royal Marines Charitable Trust. “I come from a family big on doing things for others, and because I can do that, I do,” he said.

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