



The Summit Project

On Oct. 17, hikers from The Summit Project converged on Acadia National Park's highest peak as part of The Summit Project, a unique living memorial that honors Maine's military service members who have died since Sept. 11, 2001. Each hiker carried to the summit an engraved stone donated by the families of the deceased and retrieved from significant places of the fallen.

The hikers come from all over the state, and as far away as New York City. Their backgrounds are diverse — current military members, veterans, parents, professionals — but they all have one thing in common: A desire to honor and an unfaltering respect for our military men and women.

We thank this dedicated group for their efforts and share their stories here, in hopes that you, too, will be inspired.

"We accomplished our mission and made our state stronger because we honored our heroes and made a commitment to carry on their unfinished work."



COURTESY OF THE SUMMIT PROJECT

David J. Cote — a Marine Corps officer, Iraq war veteran and native Mainer — explains how he created The Summit Project with influence from main sources:

1. Mainers are veterans.

Veterans comprise nearly 15 percent of our state's population ranking among the very highest veteran populations of any state in America. Put another way, nearly 1 in 7 Maine adults is a veteran. Maine's patriotism and commitment to service in our Armed Forces is nothing short of

extraordinary. We must match with equal devotion, our commitment to them. They served us, we must now serve them by remembering them and taking care of our living veterans. I hope this memorial can help tell the stories of a generation of brave Maine veterans who did not return home but whose service and sacrifice must never be forgotten.

This is a story of our generation of Maine service members — a story that needs to be told. The Summit Project gives us an opportunity to

say to our veterans, 'You did your job.' You served with honor. You made us proud. We are connected to you and continue to learn from your example. We are inspired by you because we took the time to learn about you. We do not forget you.

2. With an elevation of 14,505, Mt. Whitney is the tallest summit in the contiguous United States. By happenstance, I was invited to hike that peak over Labor Day
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