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Michael Kobold and Sir Ranulph Fiennes Reach Everest Summit

KATHMANDU - The watchmaker Michael Kobold and the explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes reached the summit of Mt. Everest here early this morning. Speaking from the summit via satellite telephone to his Home Base Manager in the U.S., Mr. Kobold said “this has been the hardest thing I’ve ever done, and without the SEALs’ help I sure would not have made it to the top.” Mr. Kobold and his team raised a flag depicting the Navy SEAL trident atop the summit in honor of wounded and fallen SEALs. Kobold, who is leading the 2009 Everest Challenge Expedition in support of fallen and injured U.S. Navy SEALs, was trained for approximately two months on the SEAL base in Coronado, California ahead of his adventure in Nepal.

The expedition’s other team members include Sir Ranulph Fiennes, whom the Guinness Book of World Records describes as the world’s greatest living explorer, Kenton Cool, the British mountain guide who has summited Everest a record seven times, and Will Cross, the first diabetic American to reach the summit. Will Cross did not reach the summit but instead abandoned his bid to stand atop the world’s highest mountain.

Michael Kobold asked his teammates to join him in support of his mission to raise \$250,000 for the Navy SEAL Warrior Fund, a 501c3 charitable organization that provides financial aid for the families of SEALs who are wounded or have fallen in action. The U.S. Navy SEALs are arguably the most well-trained fighting force in the U.S. Armed Forces. Each Navy SEAL must complete a grueling 7-month-long program that tests his mental and physical toughness and endurance. A group of Navy SEALs volunteered to train Mr. Kobold when they learned of his ambition to raise money for the Navy SEAL Warrior Fund.

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