

FBI agent's triathlon mission for Hawaii Law Enforcement Memorial

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By Lisa Kubota - bio | email

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HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - Three years after the groundbreaking ceremony, construction still hasn't started on a memorial for Hawaii's fallen law enforcement officers. An FBI agent is now on a mission to make sure the tribute isn't forgotten.

Ed Ignacio has served as a law enforcement officer for 21 years, with the Honolulu Police Department, Hawaii County Police Department and the FBI. Now his daily triathlon training includes tactical gear weighing nearly 40 pounds.

"This added weight, it just takes it to a whole nother lever. Triathletes often look for ways to cut weight. We ride the lightest, fastest bikes. (Wear the) lightest shoes," said Ignacio, a supervisory special agent.

Ignacio knows 8 of the 63 fallen law enforcement officers in Hawaii. His unique campaign to help raise awareness and funds to build a memorial is a huge challenge.

"It has been hard on my body, the pounding on the muscles, the chafing," said Ignacio. "But that's what it's supposed to symbolize. I'm doing this to symbolize sacrifice and pay respect to the officers out there that have given the ultimate sacrifice."

Organizers held a groundbreaking ceremony in May 2011 after the state provided land worth \$5.2 million near the Kalanimoku building. A spokesman said the Hawaii Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation has raised \$500,000, but still needs another \$300,000 to construct and maintain the tribute.

"The sequestration put us back substantially. We were anticipating federal funding to come and finish off the project last year," explained HLEMF spokesman John Aeto.

Ignacio just finished the Lanikai Triathlon wearing the extra weight during the run. He plans to compete in three other races wearing the tactical gear and also hopes to qualify for the next Ironman World Championship in Kona.

"I think about the kids of the fallen officers and having nowhere to go to honor their dads or their

moms. That kind of keeps me going," said Ignacio.

Organizers hope other donors are inspired. They would like to finish fundraising this summer and start construction as early as September.

"My theme for what I'm doing is 'here to complete, not to compete' cause I'm not here to finish the race the fastest. I'm just here to complete the race, raise awareness, and hopefully that will help complete the memorial," said Ignacio.

To donate to his campaign, go to :

<http://www.crowdrise.com/otherraces/fundraiser/edwardignacio>

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