



Sweat equity

Sweat equity is the contribution to a project or enterprise in the form of effort or toil. It can be most closely described as putting your body and your heart behind something you're passionate about.



In 1962, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed May 15 as National Peace Officers Memorial Day and the calendar week in which the day falls as National Police Week. The purpose of Police Week is to honor law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. In 1997, the Police Unity Tour was born to bring awareness of these officers who made the ultimate sacrifice serving their communities. Members of the Police Unity Tour ride bicycles

approximately 250–300 miles through various routes into the Law Enforcement Officers Memorial during Police Week. The motto of the Tour is “We Ride For Those Who Died.”



In 2016, there were several high-profile incidents in which law enforcement officers in the United States were attacked, ambushed and lost their lives. It was because of this very difficult year that two different groups of cycling LAPD officers had similar ideas: to do more to honor fallen officers in conjunction with National Police Week.

LAPD Officer **Mike Gomez** from Hollywood Area took it upon himself to organize and produce a cross-country bicycle ride with nine officers traveling from Hollywood Community Police Station all the way to Washington, D.C. Officer Gomez put his own personal time and effort into an incredible feat that paid tribute to fallen officers and brought awareness of the dangers officers face every day across the country.

LAPD Sergeant **David Budek** wanted to specifically recognize the tragedies that had befallen the Dallas and Baton Rouge communities with the murders of nine police officers during two separate ambushes in July 2016. Sergeant Budek organized a group of 10 cyclists from Southern California police agencies, including LAPD, San Diego PD, Escondido PD, Los Angeles World Airport PD and Pomona PD, and were joined by officers from Dallas PD and Fort Worth PD. These 12 cyclists rode from Dallas to Baton Rouge to Washington, D.C., paying tribute to fallen officers along the route, raising awareness of all law enforcement officers who have been killed in the line of duty and raising funds for the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. They were joined along their route by members of the communities affected by the tragic losses of police officers.

These rides were not LAPD-sponsored events. The officers who participated in both cross-country treks did so on their own time and “on their own dime.” Imagine the effort of cycling

quite literally all day to reach your day's destination and encountering the plethora of physical, logistical, weather and mechanical challenges along the route. These officers timed their arrivals in D.C. to coincide with National Police Week and the arrival of the Police Unity Tour.



This truly is sweat equity. The photos that accompany this article may show smiling faces, but those smiles and sheer determination hide the pain that it takes to ride endless miles, climb the hills and cycle through the less-than-pristine roads that traverse our country.

I would like to thank and congratulate all involved officers in the Hollywood Memorial Ride, the Dallas-Baton Rouge Memorial Ride and the Police Unity Tour for undertaking physical endeavors to honor our fallen and ensure that they are never forgotten. Your sweat equity truly reflected that you put your hearts and bodies behind something you were all passionate about. May our fallen law enforcement heroes rest in peace. May their families, friends and communities take solace in knowing their loved ones will never be forgotten.

If you have any questions, please contact me at LouTurriaga@lappl.org or at (818) 416-6495.



