



VETERANS TRANSITION ADVOCATE MAGAZINE



**Southern California-based
aircraft cleaning company
hires veterans and strives to
improve their lives.**



Ben Ingram During Military Service. (Photo Courtesy of Ben Ingram)

Ben Ingram Warriors in Need

by Eli Stepp

Passion and fortitude are immediately apparent when interviewing “Warriors in Need” Founder Ben Ingram and his business partner Nick Matthews. The pair have served honorably in the military and currently do so in the Aviation Industry. Both have a serious passion for veterans in general, and for veterans in transition to civilian life. To say their military and aviation pedigree are outstanding is quite an understatement.

Ben Ingram is a Marine Corp Veteran who obtained his FAA A&P Credentials when leaving the Corp. He has served directly or by contract in the aviation industry with Martin Aviation, Executive Aviation Specialists, Navy DOD, Zetta Jet, Newport Aviation, Trans-Exec, Clay Lacy, Participant Media, Solairus Aviation. Notable mention, while working with Navy DOD Ben worked with the Missile Defense Agency, the Space Shuttle Program, UAV Projects, Pioneer X drones, Tiger Shark,

and generation one predators. He also achieved his pilot certification.

Nick Matthews is also a Marine Corp Veteran who served in Desert Storm and Desert Shield. He worked with a cleaning company in High School developing an excellent work ethic while making life-long contacts. After his military service he re-engaged with the cleaning industry starting his own firm in 1991 which was an upholstery cleaning business specializing in business aviation. Nick was very successful in his business, which was in operation for 28 years serving clientele all over Southern California. In 2019 he was approached by another firm which bought his company. Nick continued to serve the organization until 2023 and now has separated from the firm and is now partnering with Ben Ingram.

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Warriors In Need: An Organization Built from Brotherhood and Memory

In the passionate world of racing and the brotherhood of the Marine Corps, the name “Warriors In Need” may not yet be familiar to all. However, behind this name lies a heart-rending story and a beautiful mission to support veterans, a testament to the unbreakable bonds formed in the face of adversity.

The Inspiration Behind Warriors In Need

The inception of “Warriors In Need” can be traced back to a sorrowful Thanksgiving two years ago. Josh, a charismatic Marine, and a passionate racer, took his own life, leaving behind memories filled with roaring engines, laughter, and camaraderie. From racing cars at the street legal drags in Pomona in 1995, to creating countless memories together, Josh had always been at the center of their group. His 1971 CUDA and his best friend’s 1968 Roadrunner symbolized their shared passions and the adventures they embarked upon.

Beyond the racetracks, Josh was a beacon of joy, with an infectious smile and a knack for humor. His departure left an irreplaceable void in the lives of those he touched.

The Birth of a Noble Cause

Out of this profound grief emerged a resolve to do something meaningful in Josh’s memory. Ben Ingram and several Marines rallied together, setting up a fundraiser for Josh’s family. Within a matter of weeks, they raised an impressive sum exceeding \$10,000, a testament to the profound impact Josh had on those around him.

The fundraiser’s success kindled an idea: why not create a recurring event for veterans, their families, and racing enthusiasts? An event where bonds could be forged, memories shared, and a safe space created for those battling inner demons.

Naming the Dream: Warriors In Need

As discussions ensued, the search began for a name that would encapsulate the essence of racing, support, and veterans. Ben Ingram’s son James, a young visionary of just 22 years, proposed “Warriors in Need”, a name that resonated instantly. With disbelief at their fortune, the team found that the domain Warriorsinneed.com was available, and the organization’s name was cemented.

Moreover, James pointed out the serendipitous abbreviation of the name, (WIN) adding another layer



Ben Ingram Detailing Aircraft (Photo Courtesy of Ben Ingram)

of significance.

Funding the Dream

Realizing the financial demands of hosting a trackside event, the Warriors In Need team faced the challenge of sourcing funds. Instead of solely relying on donations, the idea of starting a business to self-fund and act as a template for their vision emerged. This approach underscored their commitment, proving they were wholly invested in their mission.

Warriors In Need: From Dream to Reality

The heartwarming legacy of a friendship that began in the Marine Corps, intertwined with street legal drags in Pomona, and finally transformed into a significant mission for veterans has given birth to “Warriors in Need.” The organization, helmed by passionate veterans, has continuously grown, branching out in

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unexpected directions, all while never losing sight of its core objective: supporting veterans.

One such direction is the recent acquisition of the aircraft detailing company, GH Graham. The collaboration between the organization's spearhead and Glenn Graham, the retiring owner of the aircraft detailing company, became a perfect way to integrate Warriors In Need's mission of helping veterans. By tapping into the aviation industry, they have not only created a revenue stream to fund their initiatives but also established an environment where veterans can find employment and community. As of now, GH Graham employs two veterans, setting a positive precedent for future recruitments.

The operational motto is simple yet profound: a successful transition for veterans, from the battlefield to the workplace. This dual objective aims first to provide employment for veterans, allowing them to transition smoothly from military life to civilian roles, and secondly, to fund trackside events. Such events, inspired by an exhilarating experience at racetracks, are designed to bring joy and a sense of accomplishment to veterans, even those with disabilities.

The trackside event initiative focuses on giving participants the real deal: a full-blown racing experience. Drawing inspiration from the company, "Feel Like a Pro," the idea is to equip participants with everything they need - from the motorcycle to safety equipment. This way, for a reasonable fee, veterans can experience the thrill of racing firsthand, a proposition that seems both exhilarating and therapeutic.

While Warriors In Need's ambitions are lofty, their progress so far has been commendable. The aircraft detailing venture, GH Graham, has already expanded its repertoire. With new cleaning capabilities that specialize in aircraft upholstery, the organization has broadened its customer base and offerings.

Looking forward, there's a vision of growth and expansion on the horizon. Currently based out of Burbank and servicing neighboring Van Nuys, the goal is to eventually extend their reach, potentially covering airports like Camarillo and LAX.

To bolster their cause further, the organization has already forged strategic partnerships. One noteworthy collaboration is with the Wounded Warrior Project, particularly their "Warriors to Work" initiative. This partnership aims to funnel pre-screened veterans to Warriors In Need, ensuring that those who need help

the most have access to it. Additionally, they're also engaging with Duncan Aviation to potentially organize job fairs, further cementing their commitment to veterans' welfare.

In conclusion, Warriors In Need is not just an organization; it's a mission powered by heartfelt stories, undying passion, and the desire to make a real difference in the lives of those who've served. From the racetracks of Pomona to the runways of Burbank, this journey is a testament to the power of dreams, resilience, and the unwavering spirit of camaraderie. Individuals and/or organizations can learn more at www.WarriorsInNeed.com. Our publication wishes all the best to Ben Ingram, Nick Matthews, Warriors In Need, and G.H. Graham Custom Aircraft Detailing.



Ben Ingram, Warriors In Need Founder (Photo Courtesy of Ben Ingram)