

# RANGER UP!



**When we turn on our televisions,** and we open our MMA magazines, we see fighters who have climbed their way to the top of the game. Some of them come from the streets, some from the wrestling mat and others from gyms all across the United States. But there is a growing number of fighters who come from a different background than those we are used to hearing about. These men are fighters in the truest sense of the word.

The Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines are all becoming great sources feeding talent into the MMA mainstream. With fighters like Tim Kennedy, Brian Stann, and Jorge Rivera enjoying so much success in the fight world, all eyes are turning on the military to see who will be next to step into the cage after defending our honor behind enemy lines.

One of the driving forces seeking to help bridge the gap between the military and MMA communities is a man named Nick Palmisciano. He is the C.E.O. of Ranger Up, and he is very passionate about helping struggling soldiers find ways to compete after their service to their country has been fulfilled.

"We are huge fans of MMA. More important than Ranger Up growing its brand in the MMA community is the need for the military community to completely embrace the need to do combatives," says Nick. "I have been to the Pentagon three times talking about this and there is a good chance that we are going to get an Army MMA program. That is something that Ranger Up is passionate about helping to start. We have a mission outside making money of the sport with our apparel."

The goal is simple. "We are trying to get the soldiers in the military to embrace the need for MMA. The best way to do that is to work with the Tim Kennedys, the Brian Stanns and the Jorge Riveras. We want to have guys at the highest level so soldiers can see what they can attain."

What's more, Nick and the Ranger Up team have a vision. "What we want over time is for the military to be the primary engine for creating the best MMA fighters. I honestly believe that's where the toughest guys come from and the mentality is already there. In our line of work, you either win or you die. It's kill or be killed. You look at Tim Kennedy and Brian Stann. They truly are

military heroes and they have had to do things that a normal person can't comprehend in terms of living through ridiculous situations in combat. These guys aren't scared going into a fight because they know the worst thing that is going to happen is getting punched. That says a lot to the military community when they see these guys succeed like that. I find it comical sometimes because Tim and Brian both get a little antsy when people call a cage fight a war because this isn't a war. This is a sport. It's nothing like a war. It's an amazing sport that we all love to watch, but it is nothing like a war. There is an entire different set of circumstances."

Ranger Up has put into place a program for any service man or woman to take advantage of. "It's pretty simple. If you are a fighter that has served in the military, and you left in an honorable fashion, Ranger Up is up for sponsoring you at least one time. Based on how well you treat others, and how well you represent Ranger Up will determine how long that relationship will last. It has a lot less to do with winning and losing. We have never cut somebody because they suffered a loss. It has more to do with somebody upholding the ideals of a person who has served in uniform."

While Ranger Up has been approached by some big name fighters looking for sponsorships, for now Palmisciano and his team at Ranger Up are focused on giving back to the military.

Ranger Up apparel started from a void of options that servicemen have to show support and pride for the military culture. "One of the big complaints I was hearing was that if you are anti-government, anti-military, extremely liberal... there are 400,000 websites you can go to. You can buy 4,000 different designs of Che Guevara shirts and slap it on. But if you are pro-military all you had to choose from was skulls, snakes, "Death From Above"... only the really cheesy S#!T that only an 18 or 19 year old private would want to wear." Nick visited some local screen printers, learned how to make t-shirts, and the rest is history.



Over the next few years you can expect mixed martial arts and the US Armed Forces to continue to lift each other up. With such a crossover in lifestyle and work ethic, it only makes sense that this symbiotic relationship will continue to grow. Ranger Up will always be on the frontlines of that movement and working hard to give back to both a sport that has welcomed them, and to the men and women who have died for our freedoms.

"The reality is most soldiers are never going to have to use hand-to-hand combat. They are going to have stand-offs. They will be shooting people and most will never have to engage in this kind of stuff. But they are going door to door. They do get surprised and they do get jumped. More and more as these wars drag on, we are hearing stories of guys who are saving lives because they can move their bodies through time and space in an effective manner. MMA is keeping soldiers alive."

If you think Nick and the crew are interested solely in profiting from the world's fastest growing sport, you are wrong. "What we have tried to do more than anything is add significant value to the sport. We want to look at the sport and look at the military and see where we can add value."

In other words, says Nick, "There are a lot of clothing apparel companies that do a lot for the sport. But, there are a lot who just want to suckle from the UFC tit."

With programs like *Train The Troops*, and a new two-tier help program starting this year for servicemen, Ranger Up is able to give back where most clothing sponsors fall short. "There are so many benefits that stem from practicing MMA. There is so much discipline, technique and respect. It is a MAJOR help for someone who suffers from PTSD."

