

'I Basically Lost My Life and My Family...'

VFW grant serves as lifeline for struggling veteran

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Gabriel Martin of Pryor, Oklahoma, personifies bravery and selflessness. At just 39, he has already served in the Navy, Army and Marine Corps—totaling more than 20 years of honorable service that began back in '93.

"I'm from a small country town that is very patriotic, and I believe America is the greatest country in the world," said Martin. "My father was in the military, so it was an easy

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choice.”

Today, things are anything but easy for Martin ...

Life as he knew it ended in Baghdad, when he was severely injured by a suicide bomber. Martin was treated at the Wounded Warrior Center at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii before being medically retired in January 2015.

Now Martin, who would've spent his life serving his country, has had the rug pulled out from under him ... and he lost his wife in the process.

“I’ve basically lost my life and my family,” said Martin, referring to his two children Rainey, 13, and Romeo, 5.

Martin was rated 100% disabled by the VA based on his extensive injuries—the same injuries that prevented him from landing a civilian job. But his benefits were delayed, forcing him to endure months with no income at all.

Martin’s life was unraveling. With each day, he became more financially strained.

Spread thin, Martin applied for a VFW Unmet Needs grant. If he were to make it, he would need some help.

“I filled out this very basic application and, within a week, I was selected. By the week after, the grant paid out,” said Martin.

The grant allowed Martin to find a place to live while he pieces his life back together.

“I was sleeping on friends’ couches prior to this,” said Martin. “This grant really helped. It gave me hope and changed my life.”

The VFW Unmet Needs program assists service members and veterans who have been deployed in the last six years and have run into unexpected financial difficulties as a result of deployment or other military-related activity. To learn more about VFW Unmet Needs program or to apply, [click here](#).