

# Following in His Father's Footsteps

## 'Anyone who wants to donate to the VFW should know their donation makes a real difference in the lives of American veterans'

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Laurence "Buckshot" Blumer is named after a World War II hero and fighter pilot, his father. Major Laurence "Scrappy" Blumer was known as the "Fastest Ace in the West" when he shot down five FW-190s in 15 minutes of aerial combat. "I loved my father very much and always wanted to follow in his footsteps," said Blumer, who joined the United States Navy after high school to become a Navy SEAL.

Blumer was able to graduate from Naval Gunnery School with his dream of attending Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Training proudly under his belt.

But during training, he received a call that his father was given only six months to live by his doctors. Blumer left the Navy and rushed home to care for him during his final days. "My father was the kind of guy who would give you the shirt off his back. That was just the type of man he was," he recalled.

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Blumer reenlisted in the Nevada National Guard. He was deployed to Kuwait and Iraq where his unit was subjected to daily attacks ranging from snipers to improvised explosive devices. "I have countless stories I could tell ... I didn't sleep much while there."

Blumer returned from active duty "battle worn, injured and completely used up." When he retired, he was suffering from post traumatic stress (PTS), traumatic brain injuries, vision and hearing loss, nerve damage and many of the complications that come with these conditions. Transitioning to civilian life again was more difficult than his first time. He stopped working in 2009 due to his injuries.

Blumer enrolled in the Department of Veteran Affairs' Caregiver program with his wife, Jessa, as his caregiver. Unexpectedly, the VA released Blumer from the program in 2017. "The loss of income put my family in even worse shape. We quickly got behind on our house

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payment.”

With four young children at home, Jessa had to find a solution fast. She found the VFW's Unmet Needs grant through a social worker. When the Blumer family was awarded the grant, it was a weight off of Blumer's shoulders. He continues to appeal the VA's decision to release him from the Caregiver program.

“Anyone who wants to donate to the VFW should know their donation makes a real difference in the lives of American veterans. I know it has for me and my family,” Blumer concluded.