



Ashley Bugge

Media Kit





"At 34 years old I had already lived through more heartache and adversity than most experience in a lifetime."



Ashley Bugge knows triumph and tragedy. "Live life with no bucket list" was her husband, Brian Bugge's, motto. But when Brian—a naval officer, sailboat captain, and loving father—tragically perished in a scuba diving accident, Ashley would face the challenge of his absence alone in the middle of the Pacific, pregnant with their third child.

While navigating grief, loss, and motherhood, Ashley persisted through the pain and found solace in writing about her husband and the love he shared with his family. What resulted was *Always Coming Back Home: An Emotional Tale of Love, Adventure, Tragedy, and Hope*, the full-length memoir due for publication with Morgan James Publishing on September 15, 2020.

Since losing her husband, Ashley has devoted her life to turning her greatest tragedy into worldwide inspiration. After gaining followers from Brian's dauntless military move on a thirty-six-foot sailboat, she used her family platform to inspire countless others. She's since founded the Stay Gold for Brian J. Bugge Scuba Diving Scholarship, a charitable organization that funds, inspires, and supports military veterans to fulfill their lifelong dream of diving in a safe environment.

As a Gold Star spouse, Ashley has been featured in Navy Times, The Huffington Post, USA Patriotism, The News Tribune, Military.com, the Army Wife Network, Got Your Six, Hawaii Public Radio, Military Spouse Magazine, and other multimedia platforms. *If Only...*, a documentary detailing Brian's death, premieres April 25, 2020 at TekDive USA in Orlando, Florida.

Ashley is available for speaking events, podcasts, and radio interviews. She is open to speaking to journalists and multimedia hosts.

Contact Information

You can contact Ashley at info@ashleybugge.com or visit her at her website www.ashleybugge.com. She is also active on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. You can learn more about her story at her [blog](#).

If you wish to book Ashley for an interview or speaking event, please contact her media representative at info@ashleybugge.com



@ashleybuggexo
@teamstaygold
@teamexplorationdivers



@ashley.bugge
@svstaygold
@teamexplorationdivers



Q: What inspired you to write a book about your husband?

Our children were so young when he died (3, 1 and I was six months pregnant with our third child). I know they won't have any lasting memories of him as they grow up and it was incredibly important to me to capture these memories of him, and of us as a family, as I remember them now - before they have a chance to change or distort over time. He was an incredible man and we lived an adventurous life together. I want our children to have something tangible to represent who he was and the love we shared which led to them being here.

Q: What's it like being a mother of three as your publication date nears?

BUSY! My oldest is five and my youngest is one - by the time I get in bed around 8PM, I'm exhausted. I have so many emotions tied to what I'm doing and why I'm doing it, but first and foremost I want to be the best possible mom I can be to these kids. I firmly believe that includes being a positive role model by showing them it's important to work hard for what you want and that nobody is going to make things happen for you.

Q: You're an inspiration to so many people across the world. What would be your biggest piece of advice to someone facing tragedy?

I'm tempted to say "I know it's hard to see through now, but I promise it will get better" because that's what you're "supposed" to tell people who are going through hardship, right? That's what people told me... but no matter how many times I heard somebody say that to me, I didn't believe it. I didn't want to hear it. I wanted to live in my misery because I wasn't ready to be "ok" yet. So the brutally honest answer is, I would tell them it's ok to feel whatever way they're feeling. I would let them know it's hard, and that nobody knows what to say, but everyone wants to help. It's tempting to seclude yourself and feel like nobody could possibly understand what you're going through, and that's true - in a way - but I also know there are people around you who want to help you carry this burden and when you're ready, you should accept their help. Find something you love and that you're passionate about to immerse yourself in - even if only serving as a distraction from the pain. I promise you it will help carry you through the darkest of days.

Q: Your debut memoir, *Always Coming Back Home*, comes out in September. Can you tell us a little bit about the book?

This book is written in honor of and dedicated to my late husband, Brian. Plain and simple, it's our love story from start to finish. I write about meeting, falling in love, going our separate ways for ten years before coming back together and then not letting go until the tragic end. I write about bringing home our babies and suffering miscarriages, our travels around the world and gearing up for six-month deployments. I include emails sent from his submarine and the sweet reunions of homecomings. It's an emotional roller coaster and an incredibly raw account of the ups and downs of our life together, including our last moments together.



Q: "Live life with no bucket list" was Brian's motto. What does that mean to you now?

How many times have you heard "life is short" or "I wish I could have/would have...?" Brian and I tailored our relationship around this idea of taking advantage of opportunities presented to us, not putting things off, or waiting for a better time... the time is now. We all witnessed first hand with Brian's unexpected death how quickly things can change and how we might not have a tomorrow - so throw away that bucket list and start today. Set a goal, set a date, and start working towards it. I feel like I've lost my safety net, my adventure partner, and the only other person I've met in this world who truly embraced this concept and wanted to live it out, and it's scary trying to figure out how to do it all on my own now. But scary has never been a deterrent for me, or my family, so we're moving forward and making it happen - honoring Brian and his legacy by achieving goals and living out dreams.

Q: Many people have scuba diving on their bucket lists. How do you feel like diving helps military veterans?

Our service members dedicate so much of their time and lives to serve our country, it truly isn't as much of a job as it is a way of life. I want to help promote the idea they can have something that brings joy - outside of their military service. Scuba diving is a feeling and an experience like no other and provides a sense of community to those involved in it, one I think military veterans can relate to and gain from.

Q: Can you tell us a bit about the Stay Gold scholarship?

Brian's greatest passions in life were widespread, but simple. Me, our children, our family. Diving. Sailing. The Navy and the ocean - in that order. I witnessed him take his first breath underwater during our discover scuba course in Hawaii and the impact that single moment had on the rest of his life. His desire to do more, see more, learn more and experience more only grew as he worked his way from recreation diving into technical diving and the pure joy and intrigue accompanied with each dive was rivaled by nothing. I want to pass the opportunity for this type of passion onto others - like Brian - who have served our country. This scholarship can alleviate the financial aspect of helping somebody find their passion outside of their military service.

Q: You've done so much to honor your husband's memory. What do your children think about that?

We talk about "dadda" ALL the time. We have pictures all over the house, we watch videos on my phone, we share silly stories and we've had some really, really hard conversations too. Izzy has memories of times with her dad, but they've started to fade so I try to reinforce the ones she remembers. Hudson sees pictures and knows he misses his dad, but doesn't have any vivid memories with him, and Adeline obviously wasn't born yet, but we point to pictures and she'll say "dadda." We do things like eat cheesecake on his birthday, and go boating on Father's Day so that we're continuing traditions which have been a part of our family since before they were born. The kids have actually spent time over the past six months channeling their journey through grief into a manuscript of their own. A children's book written by kids, for kids struggling with the sights, sounds and feelings of losing a parent.

Ashley Bugge

Q: Can you tell us a bit about what it was like to do a military move in a sailboat?

If I can summarize in a single word: unusual. When we first had the idea, I read everything I could find online through military channels to see if they'd help pay for the move if we did it via sailboat. We were told time and time again by the Navy coordinator that it wasn't possible, couldn't be done. It took me a few weeks but my diligence (stubbornness) paid off - eventually - when I found some very fine print in a single article that said it was possible and we could be reimbursed. From there it was just getting Brian, the crew and our boat, Stay Gold, ready to sail across the ocean! It had moments of frustration, panic, disillusion and chaos, but Brian pulled it all together, leaving our home in Gig Harbor on 6 July and arriving thru the Pearl Harbor base channel via Stay Gold on 21 July 2018. He did it.

Q: The documentary "If Only..." comes out April 25 at TekDive USA. What was it like bringing Brian's story to film?

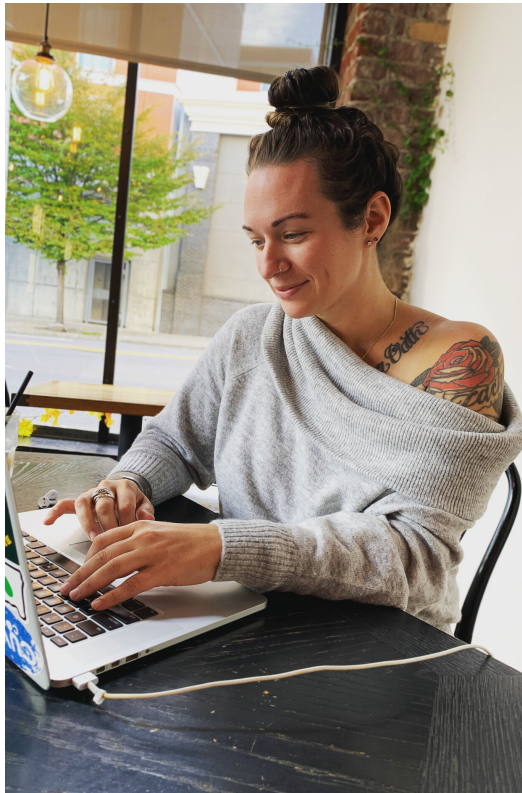
It was emotional. Raw. Devastating. Inspiring. Incredible. I was fortunate enough to team up with an incredible team of divers, subject matter experts, and film makers from around the world who converged in Hawaii to bring this vision to life. It's a film detailing the events surrounding Brian's death, shot through the lens of human factors: what went wrong and how can we prevent this from happening again? It was an honor to be asked to participate in this, to have his dive team willing to participate in it, and re-tell and re-live their stories of Brian's final dive. I've truly been embraced by this community and I'm so grateful for their willingness to listen and learn with the goal of keeping future generations of divers safer.

Q: After the book is published, what's next for you?

Great question! At this point, book two is nearly halfway done. This book begins the day Brian dies and will take readers on my journey through the days, weeks, months and year following his death. I talk about what it was like to be pregnant and suicidal, to move away from my home while grieving, to give birth while clutching a photo of my deceased husband in my hands, to raise three kids - including a newborn - by myself, and it eventually leads up to and includes my decision to take all three kids on a two month No Bucket List trip across the continent of Europe in the summer of 2019 as part of a healing journey. I'm also in the beginning stages of starting an apparel line geared towards adventurers, promoting the idea of this No Bucket List lifestyle. I've recently picked up the ukulele and can officially - unofficially - play two songs on it! In between all of that, it's kindergarten pickup/drop-off, dance class and soccer lessons, finding creative ways to get my five year old to eat her veggies and planning our next family adventures!



Ashley Bugge



18,675 total followers



16,190 total followers



@ashleybugge