



WHEN THE WAR ENDS
THE REAL BATTLE BEGINS

FROM WAR TO WISDOM

DAN COLLINS MEDIA PRESENTS A VRC FILM DISTRIBUTED BY VISION FILMS
FROM WAR TO WISDOM DIRECTED BY DANIEL R. COLLINS AND JOSH HISLE

WITH SUPPORT FROM NICK TRBOVICH INTERNATIONAL, LLC AND PURPOSE DRIVEN ENTERTAINMENT, LLC

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MIGUEL FERNANDEZ BYRON BRODERICK NICK TRBOVICH CONTRIBUTING COMBAT CORRESPONDENTS MIKE CERRE MIKE ELWELL

FEATURING VETERANS JOSH HISLE SCOTT BLAKLEY EDWARD SMITH JARED VRAZEL FRANK WESTON MATT LORSCHIEDER NICK SALCEDO JUSTIN OXENRIDER

HANS PALMER RICK PICKERAL RAGTIME TYLER ENGEL TRAVIS ELFGREN KENNY BASS JOSH RIVERS MIKE WHITER MARK LLANO USMC PHOTO SAM CORUM

Documentary Film Treatment: From War To Wisdom

Project Title: From War To Wisdom
Genre: Documentary
Directors: Daniel R. Collins and Cpl. Josh Hisle (USMC, Ret.)
Producers: Dan Collins Media, LLC/VRC Films
Fiscal Sponsor: Common Ground on the Hill, Ltd.
Project Status: Available March 27, 2017 from Vision Films
Final Run Time: 104 Minutes
Completion: 2016
Language: English
Web Site: www.wartowisdom.com
Contact: Daniel R. Collins
Email: wartowisdom@gmail.com

Logline

When the war ends, the real battle begins; combat veterans fighting to find new missions on the home front.

Short Synopsis

From War to Wisdom follows the journey of an elite group of Marines; combat veterans who have survived both the battlefield and the challenges of coming home, and are now fighting to serve their fellow veterans on the home front.

Synopsis

"Imagine an entire company of United States Marines, the greatest fighting force on earth, all dedicated to doing good for the rest of their lives."

- From War To Wisdom Co-Director Josh Hisle (USMC)



When the planes hit the towers on that terrible day, 19-year-old Josh Hisle quit his catering job at the Cincinnati Marriott on the spot, and enlisted in the infantry in the United States Marine Corps. Somebody had to pay. It only made sense; like his family always says, there has always been a Hisle in the Marine Corps.

In 2003, in the desert in Kuwait, Hisle took the stage for the 1st Marine Division talent show, with a beat up old guitar, and won first place in the competition with a raucous song roasting his Commanding Officers.

The coveted prize was a three-minute phone call home, but it would have to wait. Orders were received, and within hours, Hisle and his company were among the first men across the border for the invasion of Iraq. Little did he know that the guitar would eventually become his most powerful weapon.





Josh Hisle served two tours in the infantry with FOX Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, the most decorated battalion in the history of the Marine Corps. They stormed Baghdad, toppled Saddam Hussein, and spent years going from door to bloody door to fight the insurgency in Ramadi. Many of his friends never made it home. Some of those who returned have joined the estimated 22 veterans who commit suicide each day. Others are still locked in a daily struggle to find a place in civilian society. No one was unscathed.

After surviving two combat tours, and facing the horrors of PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, and the ongoing battle to reintegrate into society, Hisle began playing music to deal with the pain. He was discovered by Neil Young, and was featured in the documentary film *CSNY/Déjà Vu*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2008.

Hisle thrived in the newfound spotlight, and his music began to have a great impact on other veterans. While touring with Stephen Stills in 2010, Hisle began working with the nonprofit organization Common Ground on the Hill in Westminster, Maryland. He collaborated with Executive Director Walt Michael to create the Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative, a traditional music and arts program for veterans. Through the program, he began re-connecting with his brothers in arms, who were searching for ways to heal and help others. A powerful network began to develop, and Hisle enlisted his friend, filmmaker Daniel Collins, to document the evolving story.





From War to Wisdom follows the journeys of an exemplary group of warriors: combat veterans who survived the battlefield, survived the challenges of returning home, and are now fighting to find new ways to serve their fellow veterans on the home front.

These warriors have dealt with every imaginable challenge since their return: from the confusion of returning to society with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, to the massive problems within the Veterans Administration. They have lost their brothers to bullets on the front lines and to suicide after finally returning home, but they are determined to rise above these problems and to use the leadership skills instilled in them as warfighters to make the world a better place.

This unique documentary is comprised of in-depth interviews with combat veterans primarily from the United States Marine Corps, and is a vivid, character-driven mosaic of the myriad ways these soldiers continue to serve. On-site visits with veterans at an array of organizations, events, concerts and gatherings throughout the country illuminate the unbreakable bonds between warfighters, and their dedication to finding new ways to serve their country. Additional interviews with family members, friends, and colleagues enrich these incredible stories, and original score composed by both veteran and civilian musicians provide the aural backdrop for the film.



Combat footage filmed by Vietnam Veteran and award-winning filmmaker Mike Cerre (GLOBE TV), and Mike Elwell, who were embedded with Fox 2/5 during the invasion of Iraq and in Ar Ramadi, is creatively woven throughout the film, giving a first-hand view of the war in all its tragedy and triumph.

Though many films have addressed the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, none have told this unique story. This not a pro-war or anti-war film, nor is it a maudlin view of the serious problems so many veterans face. It is a pro-veteran film, a film about solutions, a vision for a better future, a journey *From War to Wisdom*.

Featured Narrative Stories Include:



Josh Hisle (USMC) is a nationally renowned musician who has used his music to reach thousands of his fellow veterans. Hisle founded the Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative, a nonprofit program that provides scholarships for veterans to attend annual traditional arts and music workshops in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Arizona. He is a student at Miami University in Ohio.



Matthew Lorscheider (USMC) returned from combat and received a Masters Degree. He now works for New Directions for Veterans, a Los Angeles area program that transitions homeless veterans to sustainable employment and housing. He is appalled by the loopholes in the VA that keep essential services from the veterans who need them the most, and hopes to become influential in policy decisions.



Kenny Bass (USMC) was wounded by an IED during the invasion, and suffers from PTSD and TBI. He was prescribed a service dog, but the VA would not cover the costs, so he raised the money to acquire a specially trained German Sheppard named Atlas. His life was transformed, and he founded The Battle Buddy Foundation, a nonprofit that trains and places service dogs with veterans.



Josh Rivers (USMC) is a founding partner of The Battle Buddy Foundation. After serving with Kenny Bass in Iraq, he encouraged his friend to form a nonprofit to assist other veterans by providing highly trained service dogs, employment opportunities, and peer services to empower them to reintegrate into society despite the challenges of PTSD.



Ragtime (USMC), enlisted in the Marines in 1963, and re-enlisted after the Gulf of Tonkin incident. After the war, he legally changed his name because he no longer wanted to be the same man he was in Vietnam. He has since become a celebrated glass artist, is the founder of the 1,000 Points of Peace project and teaches stained glass at the Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative.



Hans Palmer (USMC) served in Iraq during the battle for Ramadi, and has struggled to find his place in society since returning from the war. A warrior at heart, and an avid Jiu Jitsu practitioner, he embodies the challenges that many veterans face when trying to translate their elite combat skills to the professional and social skills needed to succeed in civilian society.



Nick Salcedo (USMC), after a failed suicide attempt in 2013, has become an activist for "Banished Veterans", soldiers who were promised citizenship after serving in combat and who have since been deported. Nick is also currently composing a multi-media theatrical performance entitled *Odysseus in Symphony*, reflecting his time in combat and the trials of coming home.

Featured Programs Include:

Common Ground Veterans Initiative (www.commongroundonthehill.org/veterans-initiative.html): Annual program designed to promote healing and engagement among combat veterans via arts and music, led by USMC veteran Josh Hisle.

New Directions for Veterans (www.ndvets.org): Veterans organization providing job training, employment, and permanent housing for homeless veterans.

The Battle Buddy Foundation (www.tbbf.org): Nonprofit providing veterans with highly trained service dogs, employment opportunities, and peer support.

1,000 Points of Peace: Stained glass arts project, designed to promote peace-focused dialogue, led by USMC veteran Ragtime.

Featured Programs in Extra Content Scenes Include:

Serket Racing (www.serketracing.com): Porsche GT3 Cup Racing Team, led by USMC veteran Mark Llano, which raised funding for and awareness of veteran issues.

Operation Overmed (www.mikewhiter.com): Photography and activism project led by USMC Veteran Mike Whiter, raising awareness about veteran suicides.

Key Crew Member Biographies

Director/Producer/Editor: Daniel Collins

Daniel Collins founded Dan Collins Media, LLC, in 2010 to create unique documentary films that examine the untold stories of American subcultures. His work as an editor and producer has won many awards, including a regional EMMY Award in 2003 for Outstanding Cultural Documentary. He is a faculty member of the annual Distinctive Lecture Series at Common Ground on the Hill (McDaniel College), and is also a co-founder of the Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative.

Recent Filmography

Degenerate Art: The Art and Culture of Glass Pipes (2012)

World Premiere SXSW Film Festival 2012

Director, Marble Slinger; Editor: Daniel Collins

Distributor: Cinetic/Filmbuff

My Friend Ed: Activist and Artist Ed Asner (2014)

Best Short Documentary, NYC Indie Film Festival 2014

Producers: Hearts and Minds Film/TELEDUCTION

Director, Sharon Baker; Producer/Editor, Daniel Collins

The People's Report (2013)

Producers: Hearts and Minds Film/TELEDUCTION

Director, Sharon Baker; Producer/Editor, Daniel Collins

Why I Write: The Twin Poets (2011)

2011 Silver Chris Award, Columbus International Film and Video Festival

Producers: Hearts and Minds Film/TELEDUCTION

Director, Sharon Baker; Producer/Editor, Daniel Collins

With All Deliberate Speed: The Legacy of Brown v. Board (2005)

Gold Special Jury Award, Worldfest Houston

Producer: TELEDUCTION

Director, Sharon Baker; Producer/Editor, Daniel Collins

His Master's Voice: The Marvelous Talking Machine (2004)

2004 Mid-Atlantic EMMY Award

Producer: TELEDUCTION

Director, Sharon Baker; Producer/Editor, Daniel Collins

Director/Producer: Josh Hisle

Cpl. Josh Hisle (USMC) is a two-tour combat veteran of the Iraq War, and a renowned independent musician. His music is informed by his experience in combat, and his ongoing exploration of a violent, but ultimately hopeful world. His work is intensely personal, and yet universal in its power. Josh has performed with Neil Young and CSNY, toured with Stephen Stills, and has performed at colleges and universities, using his music to foster dialogue with students, faculty and public audiences about his experience. Josh has appeared on numerous news programs including Anderson Cooper 360 (CNN), and been featured in major magazines including Rolling Stone.

Josh was featured in the 2008 documentary film CSNY/Déjà Vu (Directed by Neil Young, Benjamin Johnson, and Mike Cerre), which premiered at Sundance Film Festival. He was also signed to Neil Young's Vapor Records label and has toured nationally as a solo artist. He has released two albums, "Hearts and Minds" (2006) and Whisky at Home (2011), both powerful musical interpretations of the horrors of the battlefield and the complex challenges of returning home.

In 2012, Hisle helped found the Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative, a nonprofit program that provides scholarships for veterans to attend annual traditional arts and music workshops in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Arizona. He is currently a student at Miami University in Ohio.

Director of Photography: Pascal Dieckmann

Born into a family of artists, architects, writers and film makers, Pascal developed an early passion for photography. He studied at the Federal Film College SFOF in Berlin/Germany, emerging from his training to become a freelance Director of Photography for German TV. Pascal honed his skills as a popular cameraman for ZDF (Europe's largest TV network) where he traveled throughout the world to film award-winning documentaries for the network.

In 1996 Pascal moved to the U.S. with his wife, an American educator, and their daughter. He was soon sought out for his talents as a photographer by prominent American broadcast programmers, including ABC 20/20, NBC's Dateline and the Today Show, National Geographic, the Discovery Channel, the Food Network, HBO Sports, and non profit organizations like Greenpeace. Pascal has worked in over 60 countries, filming subjects that range from street kids in Romania to American Presidents and world events that include the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Gulf War, the aftermath of 9/11 and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Contributing Combat Correspondent: Mike Cerre

Mike Cerre served in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. As CEO of GLOBE TV, (<http://www.globetv.com>) he oversees global production, reportage and strategic communications for major TV networks, multinational companies and non-profits in over thirty countries. He is an EMMY Award-winning foreign

correspondent and was an embedded reporter in Iraq and Afghanistan and Producer and Correspondent of special reports for Nightline and PrimeTime.

Cerre was embedded with FOX Company 2/5 during the invasion of Iraq in 2003, where he first met From War To Wisdom Co-Director Cpl. Josh Hisle. After returning from combat, Cerre and Hisle collaborated on the documentary film CSNY/Déjà Vu. Now, as a Contributing Correspondent, Cerre brings hundreds of hours of combat footage to the table for the production of From War To Wisdom.

Executive Producer/Educational Consultant: Miguel Fernandez

Miguel Fernandez is Creative Writing, Composition, and Literature faculty at Chandler-Gilbert Community College in Arizona. He is currently the Faculty Liaison for Students Veterans and faculty advisor for the Student Veteran's Organization at the college, and the author of the Toolkit of Best Practices for Teaching College Student Veterans (available at: <http://www.cgc.edu/veterans>)

Executive Producer and Military Liaison: Nick Trbovich

Co-Designer of the USMC (OKC-3S) Bayonet and the US Army's Aircrew Survival and Egress Knife (ASEK), Nick served as the President, CEO and Chairman of the Board of The Ontario Knife Company and Queen Cutlery and President, COO and Director of Servotronics Inc.. He is an Entrepreneur and Innovator who's inventions are currently being used by the US Military and its' Allies. Founder of Nick Trbovich International LLC, he has also served on numerous industry boards including the American Knife and Tool Institute, the American Edged Products Association, the Board of Directors of two Publicly Traded Companies and the International Board of the World Entrepreneurs Association.

Fiscal Sponsor: Common Ground on the Hill (501 C3)

Common Ground on the Hill is an annual traditional music and arts workshop located at McDaniel College in Westminster, MD. It was founded in 1994 on the premise that there is a common human thread unifying all people expressed in our various artistic traditions. Its mission is to make this thread a path towards human understanding, tolerance, fulfillment, and enjoyment.

In 2012, Common Ground on the Hill Director Walt Michael, along with faculty members Josh Hisle (USMC) and Daniel Collins, launched the Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative, providing full scholarships for veterans to attend the Traditions Weeks summer workshops at McDaniel College in Maryland. The experience has been transformative. Both veterans and civilians thrive in an environment of mutual respect and sharing, engaging in an essential and difficult dialogue. Programming has since been expanded to include weekend workshops throughout the year in Gettysburg, PA (Common Ground on Seminary Ridge) and Tucson, AZ (Common Ground on the Border)

The Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative seeks to provide a safe space for veterans to grow and to share, to process their experiences and teach others, while gaining a new perspective from their peers at the summer workshops.

Featured Interviews (including extra content)

Josh Hisle (USMC, Iraq War/Founder, CGOTH Veterans Initiative)

Scott Blakley (USMC, Iraq War)

Travis Elfgren (USMC, Iraq War)

Michelle Mullany (USMC, Trauma Counselor)

Hans Palmer (USMC, Iraq War)

Jared Vrazel (USMC, Iraq War)

Tyler Engel (US Army, Afghanistan)

Nick Salcedo (USMC, Iraq War)

Matthew Lorscheider (USMC, Iraq War)

Rick Pickeral (USMC, Iraq War)

Frank Weston (USMC, Iraq War)

Ragtime (USMC, Vietnam War)

Kenny Bass (USMC, Iraq War)

Josh Rivers (USMC, Iraq War)

Mark Llano (USMC, Gulf War)

Mike Whiter (USMC, Iraq War)

Walt Michael (Conscientious Objector/Founder, Common Ground on the Hill)

Tony Trischka (Musician/Participant, CGOTH Veterans Initiative)

Featured Footage (including extra content)

2003-2008

Combat footage provided by Contributing Correspondent and Embedded Journalist Mike Cerre (USMC/Founder GlobeTV)

Training at USMC Base Fort Pendleton
Awaiting the Invasion in Kuwait
Invasion of Iraq
Combat in Baghdad
Combating the Insurgency in Ramadi

2008-2011

Post-war footage of Josh Hisle (USMC) provided by Contributing Correspondent and Embedded Journalist Mike Cerre (USMC/Founder GlobeTV):

Private meeting and jamming with Neil Young
Performance at Sundance Film Festival with Neil Young and Graham Nash
Clips from ABC Primetime Special and Nightline Series
Hisle Reflecting on 4th and 5th Anniversaries of the Invasion

2012

Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative, Westminster, MD
Josh Hisle (USMC) Performance, House Concert, Washington, DC

2013

Josh Hisle (USMC) Performance at University of Delaware, Newark, DE
Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative Fundraiser, Westminster, MD
Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative, Westminster, MD
Jared Vrazel (USMC) Traveling and Working, Chesapeake Bay, MD
Common Ground on Seminary Ridge Veterans Initiative, Gettysburg, PA

2014

Matthew Lorscheider (USMC) at New Directions For Veterans, Los Angeles, CA
Nick Salcedo (USMC) Home Life/Working for Deported Veterans, Camarillo, CA
Hans Palmer (USMC) Home Life/Jiu Jitsu Practice, Riverside, CA
Common Ground on the Border Veterans Initiative Programming, Tucson, AZ
Josh Hisle (USMC) Performance, Baltimore, MD
Ragtime (USMC) Home Life/Glass Art Studio, Berkeley Springs, WV
Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative Programming, Westminster, MD
Frank Weston (USMC) in Historic Sites/Site of USMC Founding, Philadelphia, PA
Kenny Bass (USMC) working with The Battle Buddy Foundation, Cincinnati, OH
Common Ground on Seminary Ridge Veterans Initiative, Gettysburg, PA.

2015

Serket Racing Veterans Charity, New Orleans, LA
Common Ground on the Hill Veterans Initiative, Westminster, MD
Operation Overmed Veterans Day Protest, Philadelphia, PA

Artistic Statement from Director Daniel Collins

I am an award-winning documentary producer and editor, with a life-long dedication to projects focused on social justice. My filmography includes more than a dozen documentaries that have premiered at major film festivals, aired on public television and other broadcast networks, and been the focus of grassroots community action campaigns.

From War To Wisdom is the first film I have the honor of directing. This film is a unique take on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that have hung over this nation like dark clouds for more than a decade. It is not a history of the wars, nor is its purpose to portray veterans as victims of the physical and psychological wounds they suffer. This is a film that sheds light on the incredible accomplishments of these warfighters since returning home, despite all of the challenges they face. It is an empowering portrait of the warriors who have endured hardships civilians could never imagine and who continue to serve our nation in new and creative ways. In short, no modern war film has told a story quite like this.

I learned long ago that the most important factor in any great documentary is access. If you are an outsider, if you do not have the trust of the participants, if you are not allowed to share their most intimate thoughts and moments, your film will fail. Working with Josh Hisle, I have met and gained the trust and friendship of an elite group of Marines. The men he served with in Iraq, and the network of veterans I have met through his musical and educational work, are the cream of the crop of the United States Armed Forces.

Combat veterans are very guarded about their experiences, but these veterans have opened up their lives to us, giving candid and honest interviews that are among the most powerful personal testimonials I have heard in twelve years as a filmmaker. In addition, we have access to hundreds of hours of combat footage filmed by filmmaker Mike Cerre when he was embedded with Hisle's company (FOX 2/5) during some of the fiercest fighting in the war; during the invasion of Iraq, and the battle for Ar Ramadi.

I have never experienced such awe-inspiring footage to work with in my career, and believe we have created a documentary that will have a tremendous impact on civilian audiences, while empowering and legitimizing the experiences of veterans throughout the world.

Our goals are to deconstruct the stigmas and stereotypes facing veterans, to spotlight their exemplary efforts in serving our nation in times of war and in times of peace, and to encourage dialogue about the challenges that our veterans face when returning home.

Artistic Statement from Director Josh Hisle (USMC)

When my time in Iraq came to a close, I proudly gathered my things and headed home. In retrospect, my two tours seemed to fly by like a storm system, and before I knew it, I was back in Ohio getting to know my wife and son again. The first couple of years proved difficult to say the least; drinking to suppress nightmares, easily startled, and most importantly, alone. The Marine Corps prepared us very well for combat, but there was no period of instruction for the years that follow.

After a long run of drinking, crying, planning my suicide, and overall just sinking, I started to reach out to my brothers in arms. I went to the VA, and I received pills to stabilize my mood, but that didn't seem to help. It had become apparent that my Marine brothers had taken a similar route and ended up on the same medication, but still struggling to get by. In my travels as a musician, I continued to meet likeminded veterans, still haunted by the war, and seemingly forgotten.

When I was on tour as the opening musical act for Stephen Stills in 2011, I met veterans on a much grander scale, and the number of those suffering was staggering. I had achieved a level of performance that I had always dreamed of, but I couldn't shake the pain. Twenty returning combat veterans are committing suicide every day. PTSD courses through our veteran community, taking claim to these fine young men and women, while Americans sit on their hands and thank us for our service. Musicians sing of our victories and flags remain ever unfurled, but the returning warrior receives his one month heroic status before joining the ranks of the forgotten and inebriated Iraq and Afghanistan combat veterans.

Along my travels I came upon a man by the name of Walt Michael, the director of Common Ground on the Hill, and began a veteran's initiative with a group of our closest friends. This new mission has helped me immeasurably. Veterans are reuniting and talking through these hard times, and healing in the process. Among the several members of the Veteran Initiative was my brother in music, and award winning film maker, Mr. Dan Collins. We began to talk about the power of gathering veterans and the stories they have, and most importantly, how one changes during and after combat. It was not long before we agreed that this story needed to be told.

Only when the world truly experiences the harsh and unforgiving life of the returning veteran will they understand. For far too long we have treated our heroes with a certain pomposity, and quite frankly, "thank you for your service" just isn't enough.

We aren't making this film to achieve personal success; we are making this film because we must. This generation's warriors have a voice, and the knowledge professed by our nation's heroes can usher us into the next phase of healing.