

Butler County Marine's documentary follows elite group's return from war

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BUTLER COUNTY — Josh Hisle, a Marine veteran, thought it was important to shoot a documentary showing the emotional scars of war, what happens long after the visible wounds have healed.

Then Hisle was introduced to Mike Cerre, an Emmy Award winning broadcast journalist who was embedded with the Marines during the Iraq War. Hisle told Cerre about his plans for a documentary and asked if he could use a few of his war clips to supplement the interviews with combat veterans.

Cerre opened his entire film library.

"That changed everything," said Hisle, 35, of West Chester Twp. "It became so much more. You can't recover without telling the story war. Made it a bigger film."

The end result: "[From War to Wisdom](#)," a one-hour, 45-minute documentary that gives viewers an inside look into combat and what happens when an elite group of Marines comes home. It illustrates the struggles they sometimes endure, and how some Marines turn tragedies into triumphs.

As the documentary promo says: "When The War Ends, The Real Battle Begins."

The first half of the film follows USMC Company Fox 2/5 through two combat tours in Iraq, then shifts its focus to life away from the battlefield as the Marines create grassroots programs to address the needs of fellow veterans.

The movie isn't your average documentary. It's educational, but also entertaining, he said.

Hisle is co-director of the film that just became available on Amazon. He called working on his first documentary "a labor of love" and said it also served as "a healing factor."

You watch war footage hundreds of times and eventually you become numb to the violence.

The blood loses its color, its impact.

He compared editing the footage to watching "Friday the 13th." The first time, you're on the edge of your seat with your eyes closed. Eventually, after seeing it hundreds of times, the horror movie no longer is frightening.

He isn't sure when, or if, he will direct another movie. He mentioned the long hours of editing, then added: "We didn't tell every story."

In other words, there probably will be a sequel.

Hisle, a 2000 Mount Healthy High School graduate, enlisted as a 19-year-old in the U.S. Marines on Sept. 11, 2001.

Yes *that* 9-11.

He and his fellow Marines stormed Baghdad, toppled Saddam Hussein, and spent years going from door to door to fight the insurgency. He served two tours, the second the "bloodiest" of battles, he said. Between the tours, Hisle and his wife, Margot, had a son, Holland. Hisle was deployed on his second tour before his son was 2 weeks old.

They live in West Chester Twp. and he's a senior psychological science major at the Miami University regional campuses. He will graduate in two semesters.

Ginger Wickline, associate professor of clinical psychology at Miami, has known Hisle for about two years and taught him in several classes. She's one of his biggest fans. She appreciates his service to the country, and how that translates into the classroom.

"He's one of the most unique students," she said. "He represents the best of our non-traditional students and the vibrancy they offer our campuses. He has such world and life experiences. He has such a passion for veterans and that shows."

What also shows is his Marine Mentality.

"Everything he does is hard core," Wickline said. "You can see the training he has had."

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