



One Family, In A War Few Americans Fought, The Wises Would Pay An Awful Price. Two Sacrifices.

Monday, January 20, 2014 | Ian Shapira, Photo by Ricky Carioti, Documentary by Whitney Shefte, The Washington Post
Online Video Documentary: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/local/2014/01/18/one-family-two-sacrifices/>

One by one, the CIA operatives' remains were carried over the tarmac at Dover Air Force Base, their



bodies in metal cases draped in pressed American flags. Under orders not to shoot video or take photographs, the families of the dead stood off to the side, shivering in overcoats on a frigid January day and watching for the removal of their loved one. Jean and Mary Wise waited behind a roped-off line, listening to the cascade of sobs closing in on them. For

six years, the Arkansas couple had endured repeated deployments by their three sons to fight the nation's wars, first in the deserts of Iraq, then in the mountains of Afghanistan.

Unlike in World War II, when the draft meant that nearly everyone had family members and friends risking their lives, the battles in Iraq and Afghanistan have been waged by 2.5 million volunteers — less than 1 percent of the U.S. population. The Wise brothers were among those who raised their hands, eager to serve in conflicts that left most Americans unscathed and eventually uninterested. Their embrace of the military, fueled by patriotism, swagger and restlessness, confounded Jean and Mary. In Afghanistan the longest war in U.S. history, the Wises would pay a higher price than all but five known American families. One by one, the brothers enlisted, and one by one, they went to war. First, it was Ben, off to the Army at 23 in 2000. Next it was Jeremy, who entered the Navy at 27, shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Finally, it was Beau, who joined the Marines just shy of his 25th birthday in 2008. Together, between 2003 and 2012, they would spend more than 1,600 days in Iraq and Afghanistan, a choice that bewildered their parents. They wanted their sons to go to college and pursue a profession. The Wise boys had grown up in El Dorado, Ark., in a family of deep religious faith and blond good looks. It was Jeremy who taught Beau, nearly 10 years his junior, how to fire his first weapon, a .22-caliber rifle. Hunting, fishing and playing guitars in the church worship band were the staples of their childhood.

Jeremy Wise, the eldest brother, left medical school to join the Navy shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, and nearly washed out of Navy SEAL training. Ben Wise, the middle brother, became the first in his family to enlist in 2000. He started in the infantry and then became a medic in the Green Berets. Beau Wise, the youngest brother, was sold on the military by his siblings and enlisted in the Marines in 2008.

Ben reached the war zone first, just as attacks on U.S. troops were escalating sharply at the end of 2003. He was in the infantry then, being dispatched all over Iraq in an armored Stryker to hunt down insurgents, uncover weapons caches and transport money out of banks in Baghdad to safer depositories in Turkey. Jeremy, who had been assigned to the Virginia Beach-based SEAL Team 4, arrived in Iraq more than a year later for high-risk special operations.

"I just cast myself on the Lord," their mother says, praying that her boys would be brought home safely. When Jeremy returned to Iraq in late 2006 for his second tour, he and his SEAL team arrived as a civil war was breaking out between Shiites and Sunnis. Executions, kidnappings and roadside bombings soared. Amid the tension, Jeremy's fellow SEALs valued his humor, like the time he carried a life-size cardboard cutout of John Wayne to a bar and bought it a drink.

By the end of 2008, Jeremy and Ben were serving in different parts of Iraq, and Beau had enlisted in the Marine Corps, angering his mother so much that she didn't talk to him for two weeks. Beau says his older brothers sometimes shared their frustrations with the war. U.S. forces, they complained, weren't attacking with enough strength. But Jeremy managed to excite Beau about military life anyway. "He said he couldn't believe he was getting paid to do what he was doing," Beau recalls. "He was livid," she says. "That was the last straw." In September 2009, after five years as a SEAL, he let his Navy contract expire — a relief to his wife and parents. Dana submitted his résumé for a shooting instructor position although he was immediately sold on a job far more dangerous than teaching marksmanship as a Xe security guard for the CIA in Afghanistan. The pay was about \$700 a day, more than three times what he earned as a SEAL.

At the CIA outpost near the border with Pakistan, the agency believed it was on the verge of a breakthrough in its frustrating hunt for Osama bin Laden. A Jordanian doctor who had supposedly penetrated al-Qaeda's leadership was coming to Forward Operating Base Chapman to be debriefed. Five days after Christmas, Dana was about to take Ethan to run errands when two men from Xe appeared at

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her house. Their pronouncement that Jeremy was dead shocked her tremendously. Her husband, she later learned, was among those waiting when a red Subaru pulled up bearing Humam al-Balawi, the jihadist whom the CIA thought it had turned and whom it decided not to search in advance. Beneath his flowing kameez tunic, the Jordanian pediatrician had strapped on a suicide vest filled with 30 pounds of homemade explosives and hundreds of nails. Jeremy and another Xe colleague drew their guns as soon as Balawi balked at getting out of the car on the side where they were standing. As he emerged from the other side, he declared in Arabic, "There is no god but God," and hit the detonator.

Once again, there were two Wise brothers in Afghanistan, fighting a war that had dragged on for 10 years. "I just got back from some hairy stuff; never been in a full all day knock down drag out like this one," Ben wrote to his younger brother in September 2011. "I schwacked at least one guy, and one of the SEALs with me got two I think. These guys weren't like the punks we've fought in the past. They could shoot, they had excellent fighting positions and were well disciplined and coordinated."

On the morning of Jan. 9, 2012, it took just one hour for the worst-case scenario to begin unfolding. At 7:30 a.m., AK-47 gunfire rang out from one of the caves. An Afghan commando was killed, then a second man took a round of fire in his face, says one of Ben's teammates, an active-duty Green Beret who agreed to describe the operation only if he wasn't identified. Ben bandaged the commando's purple face and helped him to a dry riverbed for the medevac. Meanwhile, Apache helicopters gouged the caves with laser-guided Hellfire missiles. After the caves had cooked for hours, Ben's fellow Green Beret didn't think anyone could still be alive, but he ordered the Afghan commandos to check anyway. They flatly refused. Ben offered to go first. He tossed a fragmentation grenade inside the cave, then swept around the corner and sprayed gunfire. But gunfire rattled right back, smacking Ben in his body armor and slamming him onto his back. As he writhed on the ground, more bullets pierced his legs. Air Force Capt. Blake Luttrell fired into the cave and tossed a smoke grenade for cover, then grabbed Ben by his vest, pulling him to safety. "My gut feeling was that he was going to pull through it," says Luttrell, who was awarded a Silver Star for his actions that day. Down by the riverbed, Ben's comrades prepped him for the medevac. His fellow Green Beret applied tourniquets and taped a fentanyl lollipop painkiller to his finger, easing him into a haze. Ben asked which parts of his body might be missing. "Everything's good," his friend assured him. "I don't know what went wrong," Ben told him. "I don't know what went wrong."

Ben had been flown to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. By the time Traci and Beau reached him on Jan. 14, his legs had been amputated. His blood had turned septic. His brain was damaged, and his kidneys were failing. At least eight rounds of gunfire had riddled Ben's thighs, pelvis and abdomen. Beau was keeping his parents and sister updated on Ben's condition as Jean and Mary headed to the airport. With his medical background, Jean knew how serious his son's condition was. But Mary and Heather refused to believe that Ben would not make it. Ben's face was so bloated that he no longer had a jaw line. He appeared as if he had gained 50 or 60 pounds. Traci gently stroked his swollen left arm. She leaned over and whispered into his ear, the only part of him that looked familiar. "I told him there was nothing on Earth that I could give him that was as amazing as what was awaiting him, and the struggles he'd have here on Earth weren't worth it," she says. "I told him that it was okay for him to go." By the following morning, he was being kept alive by shots of epinephrine every 60 seconds. His liver was failing. Beau asked the doctor if Ben could be kept alive long enough for Mary and Jean who were an hour or two away to say goodbye. "The doctor just said he could take him back to surgery and make his pain worse, or we could let him go," Beau recalls. A decision had to be made. Beau held Ben's left hand. Traci hovered on her husband's right side. As a chaplain prayed next to the bed, they watched him die.

One by one, the men in charge of the war learned of Ben's fate. At the Pentagon, the name inside the casualty folder marked with the big blue "X" looked familiar to Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and his chief of staff, Jeremy Bash. A Green Beret named Wise from Arkansas? He had to be another Wise son — a realization that startled Panetta, who'd been CIA director when Jeremy Wise was killed, and stunned others, too. "Oh, God," Marine Commandant Gen. James F. Amos remembers when he was told by an aide that Ben was the second Wise brother to die in Afghanistan. "It took my breath away." He wrote the family a letter of condolence, as did then-CIA Director David H. Petraeus and Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland Jr., then the commander of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

The Wises are not the only family to lose two children in Iraq and Afghanistan, conflicts that have cost almost 6,800 U.S. military and civilian lives. At least five other families have endured the deaths of two sons, according to a Defense Department tally, though only three have been identified in media reports. The Hubbards, from California, buried two brothers who died in Iraq, one in a 2004 roadside-bomb explosion and the other in a 2007 helicopter crash. The Westbrooks, from New Mexico, lost one son to a bomb in Iraq in 2005 and another to insurgent fire in Afghanistan in 2009. The Velezes, from Texas, mourned one son killed by enemy fire in Iraq in 2004 and another who shot himself in Afghanistan 2006.

After Ben's death, Panetta called Mary and added a personal note to the Pentagon's formal letter: "I am so very lost in the emotion of losing another son of yours to combat. As the father of 3 sons, I cannot imagine the pain you must be feeling. And yet, I know that like Jeremy, Ben was doing what he wanted — to fight for all of us. He is a true American hero and patriot. God bless him and you."

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Beau practically had the 747 to himself. It was late January, and Beau was on his way to a familiar place: Dover Air Force Base. He left the plane's upper level to scan the hollowed-out fuselage below, its floor lined with tracks securing seven metal cases draped in U.S. flags. One held Ben's body. The others belonged to six Marines who had been killed in a helicopter crash. Seven cases — the same number as when Jeremy's body had been brought home two years earlier. At about 1:45 a.m. on Jan. 23, 2012, the 747 touched down in Delaware. Beau joined his parents and, to his surprise, the commandant of the Marine Corps. Amos and his wife had traveled to Dover to salute the six Marines killed. They also wanted to offer their condolences to the Wise family. Beau grew nervous about meeting his boss. He hadn't shaved and was wearing the wrong attire, his desert camouflage uniform. Plus, he dreaded what promises Amos might give his parents about his future deployments. Amos, wracked from having just spoken with the grieving families of the six Marines, approached Mary and just held her. "I am very, very sorry," he remembers telling her. He thanked Beau for his service, and then looked at his mother. "He's done with combat," Amos vowed to Mary. She was grateful for his words; Beau was not. "My heart sank a little," he says. He'd become what the military calls a sole survivor, a World War II-era designation popularized in recent years by the Steven Spielberg movie "Saving Private Ryan."

Beau recoils when people compare him to the movie's title character, a young soldier whose three brothers have been killed in World War II and whose rescue has been ordered by Gen. George C. Marshall. "This isn't World War II. We weren't drafted," he says. "Ben and Jeremy would be furious at the reference. We enlisted. We all knew what we were doing, and we were told many times not to. But we all wanted it."

On Jan. 27, the Wise family journeyed back to the Albert G. Horton Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery and experienced it all again: the rifle salute, the flag folding, the bugler sounding the haunting notes of taps. As the family climbed into their limousine to leave, Jean caught the attention of the cemetery director, Dan Kemano. He wanted to make sure his boys would be buried together, as Ben had wished. But Kemano told the Wises that the cemetery had made no such plans. That would require exhuming Jeremy's casket, because the grave sites next to him had already been claimed by other veterans. Mary felt wrung out and desperate. She pulled out her cellphone and called Arkansas Gov. Mike Beebe's office in Little Rock, reaching his military liaison, an Iraq war veteran named Jason Smedley. "We are out at the cemetery in Virginia right now, and we just had Ben's burial service," she remembers telling him. "We were informed by the cemetery director that they will not bury our sons together. Jason, I have given this country the ultimate sacrifice. We have given this country two sons. Jason, I am throwing myself at your mercy. Will the governor call Governor McDonnell in Virginia?" Kemano, meanwhile, was making calls of his own. His staff had told the family's Army liaison days before that the side-by-side burial wasn't feasible, he says. He presumed, since he hadn't heard from the Wises, that they had dropped the request. Now he presented Jean and Mary with two options: The cemetery could bury Ben that day, or Ben could be returned to the funeral home for a few days, while he conferred with his bosses on what to do. The family told Kemano they wanted their sons reunited.

Four days later, on Jan. 31, Ben was buried. Two days after that, on Feb. 2, it was Jeremy's turn. Out came the grounds crew, the backhoe, the shovels and the chains needed to lift the concrete case holding Jeremy's casket from seven feet of earth. Then Jeremy's remains were wheeled about 20 grave sites away. In Garden Section 4, Grave site 25, Row 16, his casket was lowered back into the earth, right next to Ben's. After the grounds crew finished, Jean and Mary knelt between their sons' grave sites to pray. Then Jean draped his right arm around Jeremy's tombstone. Mary, dressed in a black straw hat, laid her left hand on Ben's tombstone. They never wanted to forget this moment. So they looked straight ahead, their somber gazes fixed on a camera capturing their grief.

Dana remarried and gave birth in November to a girl. But Ethan, now 10, sometimes still longs for Jeremy. His mother posted on Facebook a school journal entry he'd written about faith and patience last year. The child's entry read: "I remember when my dad told me to wait in line. It took a long time. And I remember when I was asking god why did my dad haff to diy and I'm still wading for a answer." Traci, now 41, has placed enormous photographs of Ben in uniform all over her house so that Luke will have a connection to his father. For a while, the preschooler brought her to her knees by asking, "Who is that? Who is Daddy? We never see him."

Beau and his wife, Amber, live about an hour from Traci at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor in Washington state, home to a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines and Trident missiles. The Wise family's sole survivor asked to be posted there for his sister-in-law's sake. But he still wishes he could return to Afghanistan to kick down doors and blow things up. He questions why his brothers are gone and he isn't. "It should have been me," he told his wife after Ben's death. The 30-year-old sergeant has spent much of the past two years working as a clerk at the base's Leatherneck Lounge. There, in a yellow-walled snack shop where Marines eat, watch TV and have their pick of energy drinks, Beau signs off on food deliveries and keeps track of the cash. Some days, he leads training sessions in martial arts and marksmanship. Beau tries not to complain or dwell on what he's lost. His parents, he says, have lost more. "I still have my wife and parents. But how does a mother lose two sons? How does a father?"

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1. In appropriate paragraph form, compare and contrast the pros and cons synonymous with involuntarily withdrawing Beau Wise, a combat-seasoned veteran, from hazardous duty conditions merely because his siblings perished in the line of duty. Irrefutable evidence suggests that approximately one percent of all United States citizens willfully accept the call to defend our nation against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Do you believe a mandatory draft might reinstate a united sense of patriotism or instead outright resentment toward military service? Thoroughly explain your reasoning and provide specific artifacts and evidence *not* limited solely to article above to support your response. Create and illustrate a Venn Diagram to effectively explore relationships and patterns and to make arguments about relationships between sets. **(LA.910.3.2.2; LA.910.1.6.2; MA.912.D.7.2; MA.912.A.10.1)**
2. An elite squad of United States Green Berets is strategically maneuvering through inclement weather deep behind enemy lines in Kabul, the capital and the largest city in Afghanistan. Their primary objective is to secure the capital city, extract and detain enemy forces, and ultimately reunite at a predetermined rally point. Naturally, their rate of speed is subject to a number of variables not limited to but to include potential casualties sustained as well as insurmountable hazards encountered. If opposition forces are minimal, they will travel at an average speed of five miles per hour and therefore, arrive approximately six minutes prematurely. If resistance is profound, they will instead travel at an average speed of three miles per hour and arrive within a timely manner. The following equation can be used to model the situation, where t represents their commute time in hours $5(t - .10) = 3t$. Identify the overall distance between their initial location and the rally point. Explain why proactively deriving this information in advance is critical to mission success. **(MA.912.A.3.1; MA.912.A.10.1; MA.912.A.2.13; MA.912.A.3.5)**
3. President Obama serves as Commander-in-Chief or the person exercising supreme command authority of a nation's military forces. The Pentagon is the headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defense. The word pentagon is a derivative from the Greek root word *pente*. Perhaps the most notable is a five-sided polygon structure located in Arlington County, Virginia. Sketch a pentagon that is equilateral but not equiangular. One side of a pentagon measures $(7x - 3)$ inches whereas another is $(4x + 6)$ inches. Find a side length and evaluate one of the expressions with the value of x . What is the perimeter of this pentagon? Can you find the circumference? Explain. A segment that joins two nonconsecutive vertices of a polygon is called a diagonal. How many diagonals exist in a pentagon? **(MA.912.G.2.3; MA.912.G.2.5; MA.912.G.8.2; MA.912.G.8.6)**
4. In an attempt to ultimately minimize U.S. casualties sustained in combat comparable to the tragic demise of the beloved Wise brothers, the Department of Defense has wisely established a superior defensive resource – The indestructible DAUGHTRY2K14 – an industrial strength geometry disseminating tactical urban assault robot to methodically navigate behind enemy lines. Each industrial strength reinforced steel leg is constructed with pair of parallel bars coupled with a necessary iron foot. As the robot proceeds forward, the leg bars remain parallel whereas the foot glides across the plane. Illustrate the diagram. As the legs progress, are there pairs of angles that remain congruent? If so, which angles? Explain how possessing parallel leg bars enables the robot's foot to remain flat on the surface as it moves. Use the applicable theorems and/or postulates to support your reasoning. Determine whether your solution is reasonable in the context of the original situation. **(MA.912.G.1.3; MA.912.G.8.3; MA.912.G.8.3)**
5. Identify and thoroughly support your reasoning regarding which of the following that best describes the author's attitude toward the premature demise of Jeremy and Ben Wise: flippant disregard, mild frustration, passive resignation or an informed citizen. Explain the intended purpose of this article and identify any indicators or supporting evidence, which suggest the author may possess a bias for or against veterans and active military personnel. Provide an inference parents of deployed siblings may derive from this material. The point of view assumed throughout the passage is best described as first person, second person, third person, or a combination of first and third person. How may this article be referenced for an independent student research project addressing the camaraderie of military service? Explain specifically how the image contributes to the passage. Why does Beau believe his deceased siblings would resent reference to Spielberg's World War II classic, "Saving Private Ryan?" **(RI.9-10.1 – 10.6)**
6. Using contextual clues only, determine the most complete and accurate definitions of following italicized terms: *tarmac*, *cascade*, *unscathed*, *bewildered*, *insurgents*, *cache*, *medevac*, *condolence*, *fuselage*, *exhuming*, *liaison*, *recoil*, *conferred*, and *somber* as obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to demonstrate further comprehension. **(LA.910.1.6.3; LA.910.1.6.1)**
7. **SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY WORD-OF-THE-WEEK** Create a concluding paragraph aligned with the passage above incorporating the following italicized term: *Edification* v. Enlighten or Instruct **LA.910.1.6.1; LA.910.1.6.5)**

Ось і все. Хай живе Daughtry Таймс. Ось і все..| Due Monday, January 27, 2014

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