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CITY MANAGER

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Dear Jim Scholl
Key West City Manager

I am writing this letter to you in an effort to gain support on a very important project I have undertaken. Specialist Robert Allen Wise, a native of Key West was killed in action in Baghdad, Iraq on Wednesday, November 12, 2003.

Robert was the first Florida National Guardsman killed in action in Iraq, as well as being the first Florida National Guardsman to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

My goal is to memorialize this young man by having the highway US-1 from Key West to the Seven Mile Bridge named in his honor, The Robert Allen Wise Memorial Highway.

If you can assist me in this very important project, I would like a letter from your office addressed to Florida State Representative Ron Saunders in support of the Robert Allen Wise Memorial Highway Project.

I have several Veterans' organizations already on board for this project. Once I receive all of the letters in support of this project, I will personally hand deliver them to Representative Ron Saunders office in Tallahassee, Florida.

I am an honorably decorated disabled veteran who served with the United States Army's 82d Airborne Division, I am firmly committed to see this through. This young man gave up everything he had, and everything he could have become for this grateful nation. We should do this in his honor. He should never be forgotten.

If you do support this project, please telephone me at 954-534-3885 when your letter of support is ready. If the City Commissioners would choose to submit a letter individually that would certainly be acceptable.

God Bless America!

Sincerely,



B. Bruce Clothier

Father remembers 1st Florida National Guard Iraq casualty

Sunday, August 7, 2011

BY ADAM LINHARDT Citizen Staff

alinhardt@keysnews.com

In his letters home, Army Spc. Robert Allen Wise wrote of boredom in Iraq and how he rarely went off base.

"After he died, we found all these pictures of him out in the streets on patrol," said his father, David Wise. "He was actually patrolling quite a lot in some bad areas."

Wise paused before looking down at the three photo albums stuffed with images of his son. He struggled to keep his composure and cleared his throat.

"He didn't want his mom to worry."

Robert Wise, a Stock Island native and graduate of Gerald Adams Elementary and Horace O'Bryant Middle schools, was killed on Nov. 12, 2003, when a roadside bomb hit his Humvee. He was 21 and the first Florida National Guard soldier to die in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

At that time, the Army hadn't begun reinforcing the bottom of Humvees.

The insurgency was in full swing and the Key West Conch was patrolling Baghdad at the height of the war's danger.

"They weren't even supposed be on that patrol, but another patrol was stuck, so they had to go," his father said. "Robert was sick and he didn't have to go, but he said, 'We're a unit. I'm in charge, so I'm going with you.' "



omrades later would tell Wise his son typically would have been in the gun turret, but on that day sat in the passenger seat instead because he wasn't feeling well. Had he been at his regular post, he probably would have survived, as did the three other men in his unit.

"It's OK, buddy. You're fine. You're gonna be OK," fellow Florida National Guardsman and author John Crawford wrote of Wise's death in his book, "The Last True Story I'll Ever Tell."

"Now it's just the sound of rotor blades spinning on a Black Hawk helicopter, of gravel and dust hitting my face in the resulting windstorm. I leaned over, covering Wise's head, and I could smell the sweat and blood and feel the heat of his body. I wanted him to open his eyes -- not to smile, just to open them and show he was alive -- but he wouldn't do it."

Wise also is featured in another book, "Last Letters Home: Voices of Americans From the Battlefields of Iraq."

Wise expressed his desire to set a budget and have his family help him "stick to it." The letters are full of humor. "Hope everything back at Ft. Living Room is going well," he wrote in one letter. "In case you were wondering, I stink. We call it, 'The scent of the Desert Rose.' "



To this day, his father keeps a glossy picture of his son, taken at his graduation from basic training, in his United Parcel Service delivery truck.

"People along my route told me to keep it there when Robert died," he said.

Recently he was startled by a man who flagged him down and told him to stop his truck.

"He walked out, stood there a second and saluted."

That man was retired 82nd Airborne paratrooper and Oceanside Marina worker Bruce Clothier. The more Clothier learned about Robert Wise, the more he became committed to memorializing the fallen soldier in a more significant way than a dashboard picture.

The Philadelphia native is in the process of contacting U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Monroe County commissioners and whoever else will listen. Clothier wants to have U.S. 1, or a part of it, named after Robert Wise, but there is a lot of government bureaucracy to overcome, he said.

le gave his life for this country and we should honor him in some way," Clothier said.

David] had this gleam in his eye while he told me about his son. That's what I'm shooting for."

County Mayor Heather Carruthers said Clothier would find an audience with county officials.

"I believe the commission would be open to considering something," Carruthers said. "We should be proud, as a community, of this young man. There are questions over what can we do and what do we have the ability to do. Either way, he (Clothier) won't find a closed door."

Wise, who didn't know Clothier had begun the one-man project, said he would support a memorial for his son, but will not campaign alongside Clothier.

"It's not in my nature, even though I feel the same way," he said. "It goes back to Robert. He led by example. For Bruce, I think he feels like his own brother passed away. I think it's inappropriate for me, but I would be 100 percent behind it."

Wise takes comfort in a more personal memorial in his living room.

"Robert loved building model rockets and on his last visit home before deployment we built one together," Wise said. "We never got a chance to launch it, but I'll have it forever. It's very special to me."

Clothier took it a step further.

"This soldier should be remembered by everyone," he said. "That's the bottom line."

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Arthur Sawyer Post 28

5610 College Road • Key West FL 33040 • 305.294.7117

November 5, 2011

To: Honorable Ron Saunders
Florida State Representative

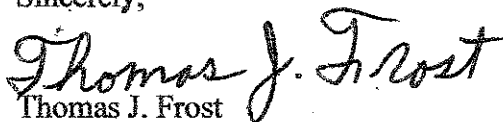
Dear Mr. Saunders:

The American Legion is the largest Veteran's Organization in the World. As a part of that organization, Arthur Sawyer Post 28 members know and cherish the value of the service our armed forces provide to this country. We recognize the sacrifices made by service members and their families for the cause of freedom.

SPC Robert Allen Wise of the Florida Army National Guard, a Stock Island Florida, gave his life in the line of duty on November 12, 2003 in Baghdad Iraq.

Our members believe it would be fitting and proper to have a section of U.S. Highway 1 from Key West to the 7 Mile Bridge named "The Robert Allen Wise Memorial Highway" in his honor. We fully support this worthy endeavor and ask for your support and assistance to make it a reality.

Sincerely;



Thomas J. Frost

Commander

The American Legion

Arthur Sawyer Post 28



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
POST 3911
2200 North Roosevelt Blvd
KEY WEST, FLORIDA
(305) 294-9968

Friday, September 30, 2001

To: Florida State Representative
Ron Saunders

From: VFW Post3911

Sir,

It has been brought to the membership attention that there is great interest in the proposal of naming the highway, US-1, from Key West to the Seven Mile Bridge, "The Robert Allen Wise Memorial Highway".

We are honored, to have been asked to support this most worthy endeavor. Sgt. Robert Allen Wise, a native son who gave his life for his country and brothers in arms is truly an American Hero.

Please see this matter through, for Sgt. Wise's family and our close knit community.

Sincerely, Commander VFW Post3911


Edward C. Moran