

ONE A DAY

Chapter 1

On average one US citizen passes away in Thailand. ONE a day. This death begins a series of events that involve many different individuals from a variety of organizations. For us that day was 25 July 2022. On that day the ONE individual who passed away was a US Navy Combat Veteran. ONE US Veteran of the hundreds that die daily. I want to try and share our experience and involvement of this ONE US Veteran. We are the members of the American Legion Post TH02 in Pattaya Thailand.

On the 25th of July a US Navy Combat Veteran passed away quietly in his hotel room in Pattaya. That was the day the owner and wife of the hotel discovered our Veteran. The hotel owners start this process with a call to the local Pattaya police.

The Pattaya police officer responded to the hotel. He immediately secured the room and calls for an ambulance. The ambulance responds and transports our Veteran to the nearest public hospital. The veteran arrives at the hospital where the attending physician makes the declaration of death.

The police officer in the meantime continues with his investigation. He searches through the personal possessions to establish an ID of the individual. He secures the veterans possessions and takes them to the police station to begin his task. The room is secured and the hotel staff are instructed to keep the room locked until he releases it. After he arrives back to the station a call is made to the US Embassy in Bangkok to notify them of a death of a US citizen. The police officer makes his initial determination if any foul play is suspected and begins his police report. Foul play would require a more in-depth investigation as to the cause of death.



As the veteran was not under a doctor's care the public hospital then arranges for the deceased to be transported to the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Bangkok for an autopsy to determine the official cause of death.



The US Embassy in Bangkok begins their involvement with the task of notifying the next of kin. After the notification the Embassy provides the options to the family for the disposition of their family member. After the notification a series of communication begins between the case officer at the embassy and the family. The family was provided a list of Thai mortuaries that would assist in the disposition. Unfortunately, this is an expensive option.



During the conversation the family asked if there was any help that the VA could provide to get their son returned to the USA. This is where our participation began. The embassy provided the contact information for the American Legion Post TH02.

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Chapter 2

We first received an email from the individual's father that I initially dismissed as a scam. After receiving a second email we took the request a little more serious. A response was sent asking what it was we could do. After receiving a little more detailed email with contact information and additional details. A phone call was made and after this initial conversation it was apparent the 85-year-old father was at a loss for what to do and how to do it. He admitted his inability to use email effectively and sought assistance from a family friend. We immediately offered to assist the family. Unfortunately, the timing was bad as the US Embassy was closed for a four-day holiday.

A video conference was set up on Friday 28 July between the Officers of American Legion Post TH02. Based on the conversation with the family the best option was to have the deceased cremated and the remains returned to the states. The return of a body from Thailand is an extremely costly process.

Contact was made with the US Embassy on the Monday 31 July following the long weekend. We offered to assist the family and the US Embassy was receptive to our assistance. After receiving confirmation from the family, a letter was drafted authorizing us to act on behalf of the family. This letter titled: "Introducing a representative for deceased American Citizen". Until we had this letter in our possession there was nothing we could do at this point with the exception of preplanning.

On Tuesday 1 August arrangements were made at a Wat (temple) to receive the individual and perform the funeral rites prior to cremation. Another member of TH02 went to the US Embassy and received the letter that allowed us to begin our part. The letter was mailed to the Adjutant. This letter was received on Thursday. In the meantime, calls were made to the Police and the Forensic hospital for details on what was needed to proceed.



The beginning of this process was to meet with the investigating police office and present the letter to him. An appointment with the police officer was established and the Adjutant met with him on Friday August 5. The Adjutant was able to get the personal effects of the deceased member and the first important document. The document was the police report. The police report was needed by the Forensic Hospital prior to the release of the body. Also, in the personal effects a copy of the individuals DD214 was found and a copy of his VA award letter. This was confirmation of the individuals Veterans status. It was determined the individual was a combat medic and a Veteran of the US Navy.

On Saturday August 6th the Commander and Adjutant traveled to the Institute of Forensic Medicine Bangkok. The office was filled with dozens of media personnel interviewing family members who were dealing with their own tragedies after a horrible fire at a night club that claimed the lives of 15 young Thai's.



The copy of the police report and letter were presented to the clerk and the first real snag occurred. The clerk insisted that the police report presented was not an original but a copy. After insisting that what was given was what was received from the police officer the process ground to a halt. Luckily for us the individual from the Wat (temple) who was there to transport the deceased came to our rescue. His experience with this office was invaluable to get things smoothed over. After completing additional paperwork all of which was in Thai the process was back on track. After about 15 minutes we were called back into the office and received the "cause of death paperwork" or as we know it the autopsy report and the release of the body. The transport personnel received the body and transported it to the Wat (temple).

On Monday 8 August the Adjutant returned to the police station to provide the police officer the “cause of death paperwork”. This document allowed the police office to close his case as it was determined by the Institute of Forensic Medicine Bangkok the death was from natural causes. He then provided another document showing the case was closed and a Thai death certificate could be issued.



Leaving the police station and traveling to the Pattaya City Hall with all necessary documents the Adjutant was able to secure a Thai Death Certificate. This concluded the necessary documentation.

The Thai Death Certificate and the cause of death were then sent to the US Embassy to allow them to issue the US death certificate known as Report of an American Citizen Abroad. This event of the passing of an American Citizen set a series of involvement from many, many individuals. Starting with the hotel owners and staff, the police officers, the ambulance, the hospital attendants, forensic hospital doctors and administrative personnel, monks and Wat employees, city hall staff, and of course our veterans and their families. All these individuals played a part in this process. All this from the death of a US Navy Veteran.

The ONE A DAY

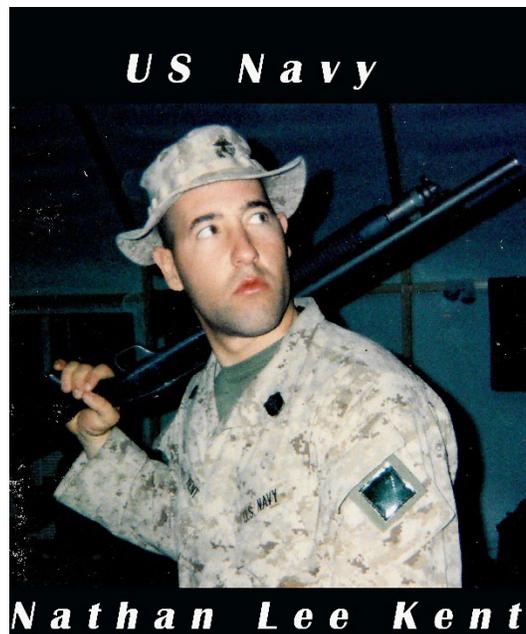
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Chapter 3

Nathan Lee Kent

Born Jan 30, 1981

Died July 25, 2022



At the time of his passing, Nathan was a traveler....and passed away on one of his explorations in Pattaya.....hence no one here knew him personally.

But to us he was not a stranger. Nathan served his country honorably as a member of the United States Navy.

Nathan volunteered to serve in the United States Military during a time of war by enlisting in the Navy in October of 2005.

After basic training his Military occupation specialty was designated as a corpsman.

Navy Corpsman come in two types: Blue and Green....blue stripe corpsman work in either ship or land based hospitals. Green stripe corpsman are assigned to United States Marine Corps infantry units. This requires additional training in treating acute traumatic injury, and in the tactics and physicality of a Marine infantryman.

Once assigned to an infantry platoon, the corpsman undergoes the same training in weapons, tactics, strength, endurance, and deprivations of Marine infantryman. In September of 2006

Nathan was assigned to the Third Battalion, First Marines, or 3/1, First Marine Division, India Company. 3/1, known as the Thundering Third, is based out of Camp Horno, located in Camp Pendleton, California. On 10 April 2007, 3/1 deployed as the ground combat element of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit. A MEU is can simply be described as America's 911 first responders. Their mission is to be able to respond anywhere in the world with 24 hours. They were ordered into Iraq as part of Operation Phantom Thunder. The ground combat element, of which Nathan was a part, began operating on 15 June 2007, north of Falluja. During his time in Iraq, Nathan went on more than 100 patrols, treated Marines injured in IED attacks and Iraqi civilians injured by gunfire. 3/1 concluded operations in Iraq after 90 days on 20 September 2007 returned to Camp Pendleton on 17 November 2007.

After his separation from the Navy in 2008 Nathan enrolled in California State University Fullerton. He graduated in May of 2014 with a B.A. in Anthropology.

The cultural element of this degree may explain his love of travel, and in 2016 he became a student of the world. We ask why we have to lose such good men? Part of the answer is, only good men volunteer to serve and defend their country. He chose the harder life of a soldier in a time of war. I do not know where such men come from, except to say they are the kind of men who have made America great and will continue to preserve it.

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Final Chapter

On Saturday 6 Aug Nathan was transported from the Institute of Forensic Medicine Bangkok to Wat Nong Khayat in Phanat Nikhom District, Chon Buri. Thus began the final process for this US Combat Veteran. Nathan was received by the monks of the temple and the final rites were started. For the monks they begin with their first series of chants for the deceased.



At the conclusion of the first chants members of TH02 and their family pay homage to the monks with offerings.



The members of American Legion Post TH02, VFW Post 9876 and VFW Post 12146 arrive on Sunday 7 Aug to finalize the preparations prior to the 1400 service.



Promptly at 1400 the service begins to render Military Funeral Honors for Nathan Lee Kent, a US Navy Combat veteran. The purpose for conducting Military Funeral Honors is to honor the veteran, and to support his or her family by providing those honors. Providing military funeral honors is our nation's way of showing gratitude and paying final tribute to a veteran's honorable military service.



The service began with opening remarks from the Commander of American Legion Post Th02 William Ahlberg (USN). Followed by the prayer presented by TH02 Chaplain Shane Curtis (USAF). The eulogy by First Vice Commander Howard Gundy (USMC) and closing comments. The Honor Guard ceremony begins with the playing of TAPS, perhaps the most famous 24 musical notes in history. The conclusion occurs with the folding of the flag.



Although our role in honoring this American Veteran has concluded we contacted a local American Legion Post close to the parents where we will send the personal effects, the Flag and ashes for them to present to the family.

Rest in Peace
Nathan Lee Kent