

# ***MEMORIAL CEREMONY***

## ***FOR SGT NATHAN KENNEDY & SPC ERIC M. FINNIGINAM***



## **Prelude – (15 minutes prior to start of Ceremony)**

**Narrator:** “Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the Memorial Ceremony for SGT NATHAN KENNEDY & SPC ERIC FINNIGINAM, we will now have the playing of the National Anthem followed by the Invocation.”

**Chaplain: Invocation:** Lets us pray, we gather to remember and honor the life and sacrifice of SGT NATHAN KENNEDY & SPC ERIC FINNIGINAM a Warrior, faithful to the end. As we grieve his passing from this life we ask for presence in our midst-that we may know your comfort, Hope and the inner peace that surpassed all our understanding. We ask this in your most Precious name, Amen.

## **Narrator: Soldiers’ Biography**

SGT Nathan Patrick Kennedy was born on 05 May 1985 in West Virginia. After arriving to Fort Carson in March of 2006, Michael was assigned to Dagger Company, 2-12 IN where he deployed with the Battalion in support of OIF V, Al-Dora, Baghdad, Iraq. Upon redeployment, Michael was reassigned to Headquarters and Headquarter Company Sniper Plt., from there he was attached to Gator Company, 2-12 IN.

**SGT Kennedy was killed by enemy small arms fire while on a dismounted combat patrol near Qandaro Village, Afghanistan on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2010. He served as a Gunner, Squad Leader, and Senior Sniper.**

**SGT Kennedy has been awarded the Purple Heart Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, the Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon with numeral 2, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, and the Ranger Tab. Nathan is survived by his father, Joseph E. Kennedy and sister, Natalie Kennedy both of Claysville, PA**

**SPC Eric M. Finniginam was born on 30 September 1983 in Colonia, State of Yap, Micronesia. After arriving to Fort Carson in November of 2008, Eric was assigned to Gator Company, 2-12 IN. SPC Finniginam was killed by enemy indirect fire while on Forward Operation Base Blessing, Afghanistan on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2010. He served as a Grenadier.**

**SPC Finniginam has been awarded the Purple Heart Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal with V-device, Army Commendation Medal, Army**

Achievement Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, and the Drivers Badge. Eric is survived by his wife Annie Tilig, daughter Alexa Finniginam father Robert Finniginam, mother Lily Finniginam, brother Ryan Quwan, and sister Rhonda Guchol all of Colonia, State of Yap, Micronesia.

## **Company CDR's Remarks: CPT Chris Migliaro (Sgt Kennedy)**

General Scaparrotti, COL George, LTC Pearl, Command Sergeant Major Sasser, Sergeant's Major, Distinguished Guests, Soldiers of Gator Company and Task Force Lethal, thank you for attending today's memorial in honor of our fallen brother and fellow Lethal Warrior, Sergeant Nathan Kennedy.

I had the privilege of meeting SGT Kennedy about 3 years ago, when we were both members of Destroyer Company, as the Battalion redeployed from Iraq.

Unfortunately, our interaction from there was limited as SGT Kennedy moved on to bigger and better opportunities in the Scout Platoon as a sniper. Over the next year, I would see SGT Kennedy in passing now and again and no matter what we were doing he was his optimistic and hard charging self and he brought that same attitude out in everyone around him. This attitude made SGT Kennedy the selfless leader he was, always putting the mission and his fellow soldiers ahead of himself. He was a soldier's soldier, a model NCO, and a great man.

When I arrived to Gator Company, I was excited to work with a lot of familiar faces from the past, one being SGT Kennedy. So when I first took over Gator Company and started going on patrols with the Platoons, it seemed that every time I turned around SGT Kennedy was the guy behind me, but I thought nothing of it. Then it continued for the next couple of patrols and finally while we were out clearing from Wodi Geram to Reche Lam one day, I asked him "Hey SGT Kennedy, why are you

always near me when I come on patrols?" He just looked at me and smirked, "Sir, someone has to look out for you officers." Yet, it wasn't just officers he looked out for, SGT Kennedy looked out for all of us, not matter how big or how small the mission, he wanted to be out there with everyone else and 99% of the time he was. This is because SGT Kennedy fought for something greater than himself; he fought for the men to his right and left, his Brothers in Arms.

To the Kennedy Family, Nathan was an amazing Soldier and an even better person. He will be truly missed by the entire Gator family and shall forever be remembered as a HERO to us all.

The United States Army lost a great warrior on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2010. It was a privilege to serve with SGT Kennedy and I will forever remember what he did for this unit and for this country.

Thank You SGT Kennedy

RLTW

## **Soldier's Tributes: SSG LAMB**

For those of you who were fortunate enough to know SGT Nathan Kennedy, it goes without saying that he was an outstanding soldier and a rare but great human being. He displayed dedication to his job as a non-commissioned officer and as a sniper, to his team and the battalion daily. He was actively involved in every mission he was a part of, from mission planning to exfil. He would often volunteer himself to go on patrols with the platoons whether or not they needed more men. He was always looking out for others and willing to lend a hand. He was every squad leaders dream. He was a natural leader. He could do his job with little to no guidance. His subordinates looked up to him, and his superiors respected and loved him. In or out of uniform he was instantly likable. He was quickly the center of attention with his upbeat attitude, his jokes and his sarcasm. And he was always singing. He did have a terrible singing voice, but he didn't think so. Nate left a hole in the hearts of many who knew him and will forever be loved and remembered. Nate was to turn 25 years old on May 5<sup>th</sup>. It seems as though God could not wait any longer to bring him home. I like to think that God just wanted Nate's singing voice in his choir. I love you like a brother, Nate, and until we meet again, "Spotter ready."



## **Soldier's Tributes: SGT DOSTAL**

SGT Nathan Kennedy was a special kind of person, one of those people that you rarely have the pleasure of knowing. Nate had something about him that made everyone want to be his best friend, you just couldn't dislike Nate. You couldn't even get mad at him. I don't know if it was his goofy laugh, his relentless upbeat attitude, or his big smile that always seemed to be on his face. People were just drawn to him. No matter what was going on, whenever I was with Nate I would always laugh and have a good time. He had that affect on everyone that he met. That is why so many people are affected by his death, because he was such a great person. Sometimes we would just head up into the mountains in Nate's jeep and go looking for some mud, blasting some country music or some O.A.R., that was especially funny because Nate would start to sing, and he just really couldn't sing, it was like nails on chalk, which would make us turn the radio up louder, to which Nate would just sing louder, not caring what he sounded like, just enjoying the moment, like he always did. We all loved to go camping and just sit around the fire all night and tell jokes, and stories, and reminisce about old memories, while we made new ones. There was never a dull moment with Nate; he always managed to make everything we did so much more fun, just by being himself. Whenever we would wear our cowboy hats, Nate said we had to use our cowboy names, his was Jesse, and mine was Wyatt, just another example of Nate's funny personality. We



used to call this our “ness”, he had this Nateness about him and I had my Chuckness, before we would head out anywhere we would always check to make sure the other was bringing his ness. And Nate never forgot his, it was just part of who he was, it wasn’t an act or him trying to be funny, it was just Nate. I can honestly say that I don’t have any bad memories of Nate, only a million great ones. Nate held himself to a strict moral and professional code, he was the kind of guy that would always do the right thing, and loved going the extra mile to accomplish his goals, he had life by the reins. Nate, Gilad Wolpe and I were all really close to each other, we did everything together. We called ourselves the anchors, we would say that we needed all three anchors to stay together to keep us from drifting away, now we’re down an anchor, and I’m sure a lot of people feel like they are just drifting away now that Nate is gone. But that makes me think about the tattoo that Nate had on his back, it was of a cross, and around the cross was written, “In the end my friend, we will all be together again”, and I believe that someday we will see each other again, and I will get to talk to Nate, and laugh with him, which will make me laugh even harder, because his laugh is just so funny. I know you’re gone Naters, but in our hearts you will always live on, and all your friends will live in your smile, there is no end, you will always live on.

## **Company CDR's Remarks: CPT Chris Migliaro (Spc Finniginam)**

I would like to thank everyone again for attending today's memorial in honor of our fallen brother and fellow Lethal Warrior, Specialist Eric Finniginam.

I only had the privilege of knowing SPC Finniginam for about 2 months, but in those two months he made a lasting impression on me. SPC Finn was the type of soldier that every Commander wishes he had a whole company of; his energy level, his drive to be the best, his determination in everything he did, and most importantly his selfless attitude to put the needs of his fellow soldiers above those of his own all made him the person he was. SPC Finn saw every opportunity as a chance to experience life: from leaving his family and homeland of Yap for a chance to join the world's greatest fighting force, to volunteering himself for details or extra duties, to becoming a father. And SPC Finn did just that, he experienced life each and every day, with that big smile of his on his face the whole time.

SPC Finn had this running joke that he would love to use on new people and when I got to Gator Company he didn't hesitate to use it on me. He came up to me and starting talking vaguely about someone in the platoon; confused I said to him "Who" and just smiled from ear to ear and yelled "Cares" and then broke out into that loud unmistakable laugh of his. And he brought that same joy out in everyone around him. Whether talking about his native culture or his favorite soccer team FC Barcelona or making his favorite meal of Ramen Noodles or even driving out to

Chapa Dara, SPC Finn always seemed to make things better. He never took anything for granted, making the best out of every situation and finding joy and happiness in everything life put on his plate.

To Eric's family, he was one of the most genuine people I have ever met, an incredible Soldier and a great friend to all those he encountered. He will be sorely missed by the entire Gator family and shall forever be remembered as a man of courage, commitment, and sacrifice by us all.

The United States Army lost a great soldier on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2010. It was a privilege and an honor to serve with SPC Finniginam and I will never forget what he did for this unit and for this country.

Thank You SPC Finniginam

## **Soldier's Tributes: SFC Findish**

SPC Erik Finniginam was both my Gunner and Driver during this deployment.

Words can do no justice on just how great of a Soldier he was. SPC Finniginam, was probably the hardest working Soldier I have seen in my 15 years of service. If you had a chance to interact with him, then you know what I am talking about. He took pride in maintaining my vehicle along with the .50 cal machine gun. He would even hang an air freshner in it so it could pass my inspections and cover up any smell.

After every dispatch he would come to my room, and let me know the vehicle was dispatched and the type of new smell the truck had. Whether it was vanilla, new car, or strawberry, I knew he took the extra time needed to have a clean vehicle.

Even with his short time in the Army, he understood what an implied task was, and would always ensure it exceeded the standard. He was my "go to" Soldier for anything. I could ask him the simplest or hardest task, and he would always come back with great results. He also had a pair of eagle eyes, that could spot people walking in the mountains at 1000+ meters away that blended in perfectly. When he assumed the role of a CROW Gunner, he would become the eyes of the Platoon. He would watch our infil and exfil and call up all the reports to the Company. He was always concerned about safety and the movements of the dismounted Soldiers. He also could make quick decisions while we were patrolling that enabled our platoon to be more flexible. SPC Finniginam was instrumental in the training of the ANA

Soldiers out here, no matter what the training consisted of, he wanted to be a part of it. He firmly believed in getting their Army into the fight on Terrorism. This past November, SPC Finniginam became a U.S. Citizen. This was one of his proudest moments he told me besides his daughter being born and having a chance to serve the Country he was now apart of. He wanted a better opportunity and life for his family.

I will never forget the first day I came to this platoon last September, SPC Finniginam told me “Don’t worry Sergeant, we have Rifiki and everything will be ok”. I just stood there and stared at him trying to figure out what a Rifiki was, and how to exactly word my response back to him. After inquiring about Rifiki, I found out it was the Platoon’s good luck charm. He then showed me this stuffed animal of a monkey, and said “He keeps us safe while we are out in sector”. Rifiki was part of our PCI’s from that point on. SPC Finniginam was the heart of the platoon, he would always come around and do something to put a smile on your face. He was always trying to help solve anyone’s problem that they were up against. SPC Finniginam was the type of Soldier any leader would dream of having.

SPC Finniginam was a family man, he leaves behind a wife and daughter back in Yap, Micronesia. He loved his family very much and could not wait to return and be with them. He would always talk about his home, and he loved to irritate me about eating brown dogs. He would always tell me how it was treat on his island to eat

dog, and that the brown ones taste the best. Till this day, everytime I see a dog on the street, I think of him.

I will always remember SPC Finniginam as a heroic Soldier who lived the Army Values and more importantly I will remember him as my friend. I know that he is in place now, where he watches over the safety his platoon. I am very thankful to have met him, and will always greatful for the service he has done for his country.

## **Soldier's Tributes: SGT KAMINSKI**

Words could never describe Finn as a person, soldier, or friend. He was the most intelligent and articulate person you would ever meet. He wanted to experience everything life had to offer. He was always positive and upbeat, regardless of the situation or circumstance. Finn was the type of friend you could go to for anything and the type of soldier leaders dreamed about. Always volunteering for details, never complaining, and always looking to better himself and help out his fellow soldiers. Whether training in the rear or during the past 11 months here in the mountains, Finn took pride in his job no matter what he was tasked to do. First time I met Finn was a weird experience. weird in the sense that soldiers arriving to their first assignment right out of basic are never smiling. They usually looked scared beyond belief. But Finn was smiling and seemed to have no worries in the world. I soon found out that, is how Finn was. A happy and confident individual. Before joining the Army Finn had a good job making good money in his native island of YAP in Micronesia. One day I asked him "why did you join the army?" HE replied with a giant smile on his face and told me he wanted to fight for the United States and be a part of our great Army. That right there showed me his commitment, courage and sacrifice. To leave his family and all he knew in Micronesia, to fight side by side with us, was something i respected more than anything. Finn was one my SAW gunners when we had deployed. As a leader in combat you hope for a



SAW gunner you can rely on in any situation and isn't scared to take the fight to the enemy. Back in July our platoon received orders to air assault into Barge Matal to assist in a critical and very hostile situation. After receiving our orders, I worked with my team leaders to get the guys ready. Everyone seemed to have a look of concern on their faces. Finn then came into my room in full gear and a huge smile on his face and said "Sarge I'm ready to go." Once I heard that it eased the tension knowing that no matter what we were going to encounter, he would be by my side. What happened the morning after we arrived in Barge Matal was an act of valor that still amazes me to this day. As we were taking heavy contact from three different sides of the valley, the position Finn was at was hit point blank by an RPG. It knocked him 10 feet from the bunker and on his backside. I thought the worst when it happened. As I moved to check on him, he jumped on his feet, moved back to his gun, and laid fire to enemies surrounding us. Most people wouldn't have gotten up, but he did and he had the enemy on the run. One thing calmed down I had to order him to go inside the building and rest. If I hadn't he would have stayed at his position for days, under his own will. But that was Finn. Ready for whatever and doing all he could for his buddies. I could sit and talk to Finn for days, usually about nothing. One thing we related to more than anything was seeing our kids for the first time on R&R. As soon as I came back, first thing he asked was, "hey sarge how's your boy?" and as soon as he came back I asked "hey Finn, how's your

girl?"We would talk to each other and about how big they were getting and the crazy stuff they started doing. He loved his daughter more than anything and was very proud of her. First thing he did when he came back from leave was show me picture of the two of them on leave and I couldn't have been happier for him, knowing what he felt like. I never thought anything could have made him a happier person, until he came back from leave after meeting his little girl and spending that time with her. Bates talked about Finn's first encounter with snow. We were all leaving work and Finn was outside in full beach attire running around laughing in it. Or how Bates and Bakken were going duck hunting one morning. Finn showed up and started loading the equipment like he was a pro and had been duck hunting his whole life. Between that and playing with the dogs, running through the river and imitating duck and goose calls, He always brought smiles to people's faces. Bates and Bakken took him ice fishing and it was the first time he had seen ice. He stared at the ice and then took off running and skid across the lake laughing like a mad man. Afterwards he couldn't wait to do it again or call home to brag about it. He was just fun loving and living life. Whether back in the states or here in theatre, Finn was a guy you wanted to be around. He made the worst of times always seem better. He was there to listen to anyone who needed to talk or cheer up anyone who was down. He didn't have any enemies, just friends. Finn spoke of allot of things he loved. He loved Hunting and fishing with Bates, Bakken, and the guys, His

home, family and heritage in Micronesia, or just hanging out with his boys back in the barracks. He loved being a part of this unit with these soldiers, with guys that loved him as a brother. He loved introducing us to his culture. i will never forget the god-awful taste of beetle nut and can't recall how he convinced me to try it, or hearing him compare how brown dog tastes better than white dog, which he couldn't convince anyone to try, or coming to morning formation and hearing how he showed up to his buddies door wearing nothing but a loin cloth just to get a laugh out of his buddies. That was just Finn. I would like to thank Eric's family for the time we have been able to spend with him. I can speak for everyone when saying he made us a better unit as well as better people just with his presence. He taught us to enjoy life and to live in the moment. He made me a better leader and boosted the morale of anyone he was around. We will cherish every moment we were able to spend with him and miss him with each moment that passes. Finn and his family will always remain in our hearts and minds. Lost but never forgotten.

**Rest in Paradise Little Brother**

## Scripture Reading: Narrator

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*Psalm 42:5*

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God

**Benediction: CH (CPT) Wesley Gornall**

**Narrator:** Ladies and Gentleman, we will now have the rendering of Military Honors.

**Final Roll Call: 1SG Mark Eckstrom**

**Firing of the Volleys**

**Playing of Taps**

**Narrator:** “Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes the Memorial Ceremony for **SGT NATHAN KENNEDY & SPC ERIC FINNIGINAM**. Please remain in your places until the Official Party has paid final tribute and departed. You may either depart the area or come forward to pay your final respects. Again, thank you for attending.