

Procession escorts ex-Navy SEAL Kyle to burial

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press The Associated Press
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MIDLOTHIAN, Texas (AP) — Mourners holding U.S. flags gone limp from a light rain crowded streets and highway overpasses in North Texas on Tuesday to watch the funeral procession for slain former Navy SEAL Chris Kyle.

A motorcade of about 200 vehicles accompanied the white hearse carrying Kyle's flag-draped coffin on the 200-mile journey to Austin, where he will be buried at the Texas State Cemetery. The procession left Tuesday morning from Kyle's hometown of Midlothian, a rural community about 25 miles southwest of Dallas. Many motorists pulled to the side of roads to watch the procession pass.

Larry Key of Denton, one of about 100 Patriot Guard Riders who gathered for the event, said he came in tribute to Kyle's wartime service.

"It's our way of honoring Chris and his family," said Key, a Vietnam veteran.

Drivers along Interstate 35 were not allowed to pass the procession, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Kyle, 38, was a celebrated veteran who completed four tours of duty in Iraq and wrote the best-selling book "American Sniper."

Some 7,000 people attended a two-hour memorial service for Kyle at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington on Monday. Kyle's coffin was placed at the Dallas Cowboys' star at midfield.

His widow, Taya Kyle, told the gathered crowd she was broken but that her family would "put one foot in front of the other" to get through their grief. She said she told her two children that they will remember Kyle's silly side, Texas twang and the prayers they prayed together.

After her eulogy, country singer Randy Travis sang "Whisper My Name," which he said Taya Kyle had told him was a meaningful song for the couple, and "Amazing Grace." At the conclusion of the service, bagpipers played as military personnel carried out the coffin and many in the crowd saluted.

Iraq War veteran Eddie Ray Routh, 25, has been charged in the Feb. 2 killings of Kyle and his friend Chad Littlefield at a North Texas gun range. Routh is jailed in Erath County on a \$3 million bond.

Kyle, Littlefield and Routh arrived together at the Rough Creek Lodge shooting range, about 50 miles southwest of Fort Worth, authorities say. Routh later fled in Kyle's truck and went to his sister's home.

According to a search warrant, Routh told his sister and brother-in-law that the men "were out shooting target practice and he couldn't trust them so he killed them before they could kill him."

Routh's brother-in-law told authorities that Routh had recently been diagnosed with PTSD.

Littlefield's funeral was held Friday in Midlothian. Afterward, Littlefield's relatives said the outing with Routh was intended to be therapeutic.

Taya Kyle paid tribute to Littlefield during the service Monday, saying he was the "effortless, no expectations" friend that her husband needed.



Associated Press writer Angela K. Brown also contributed to this report.