



## Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta

December 17, 1971 - December 31, 2019

Jonathan (Jon) Jackson Vannatta was born December 17, 1971 in Shelbyville, TN. Jon was the son of Marvin Jackson “Jack” and Linda Marie Overcast Vannatta. Jon died December 31, 2019 in a plane crash in Kansas City.

Jon held the rank of Colonel in the US Army Reserves. Prior to his promotion as a Colonel he was a US Army Battalion Commander in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He was recently promoted as the Commander of the 354th Civil Affairs Army Brigade headquartered in White Plains, Maryland. Colonel Vannatta earned a Master’s Degree in public administration from the University of Arkansas and a Master’s Degree in Strategic Solutions from the Army War College in Carlisle, PA. Colonel Vannatta was a 1994 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, where he excelled as a military scholar. Colonel Vannatta was a 4-year member of the West Point equestrian team where he served as captain of the team for 2 years. Upon graduation from West Point, Colonel Vannatta selected the infantry division of the US Army where he earned his Ranger tab. He subsequently earned his Parachutist badge, Air Assault badge, Expert Infantry badge and his Combat Action badge. Colonel Vannatta was a highly intelligent man and a true American patriot, willing and more than able to serve his country and his fellow man in any way possible. Colonel Vannatta served two separate tours of duty in Afghanistan; one tour in 2005 and again in 2012. Colonel Vannatta was awarded the Bronze Star Meritorious Service Medal for his military service and many other awards as well. Colonel Vannatta also spent 5 years stationed at Fort Hood, Texas.

Prior to his acceptance to the United States Military Academy at West Point, Colonel Vannatta was a 1990 graduate of Goodpasture Christian School. While in high school, Jon excelled academically and he also served as president of the student body at Goodpasture. He was an all-state cross-country runner, setting the record for the mile run at Goodpasture. His 4 by 4 hundred meter relay team was ranked third in the state. As a young man, Jon was an award-winning member of the USAA swim team. As a swimmer, Jon was a member of the southeastern all-star team.

Jon was a current resident of Maumelle, Arkansas. A paramedic and volunteer firefighter with the Maumelle Volunteer Fire Department Jon served in this capacity from 2006-2014. Jon was a nationally certified paramedic and he kept that certification current.

Jon worked out of the Little Rock, Arkansas office of the Drug Enforcement Agency, (DEA) where he served as a federal DEA Special Agent. Jon joined the DEA after completing his initial DEA coursework training at Quantico. Jon served as a DEA agent for twenty years. His territory was the entire state of AR although he was called upon to assist in multiple other locations as well.

An avid sportsman, Jon liked nothing better than quail hunting with his dad on the family farm. As a youngster Jon took great pleasure from riding his favorite horse JJ. He also enjoyed spending time with his cousin, Tommy Beernink.

Jon was preceded in death by his maternal grandparents, Marie and Everette Overcast and paternal grandparents, Marvin "Pete" and Elizabeth "Knot" Vannatta, and two uncles, Bobby Vannatta and Ray Vannatta. In addition to his parents, he is survived by his uncle, Mike (Peggy) Overcast, his aunt, Elaine (Fred) Bonney, and his aunt Linda (Bobby) Vannatta.

Colonel Jonathan Jackson Vannatta will be buried with full military honors at Willow Mount Cemetery in Shelbyville, TN, on Thursday, January 9, 2020. Visitation with the family will be held 11:00 A.M. -3:00 P.M. at Fairlane Church of Christ 101 Dow Drive Shelbyville, Tennessee 37160, with the funeral to follow at 3:00 P.M. at the church. A memorial service is scheduled in Little Rock, AR at a later date. Brother Mark Pierce, pastor at Horse Mountain Church of Christ, will officiate at the service. Honorary officiant for the service is Mr. Harry Middleton, associate pastor at Lebanon Road Church of Christ. Lebanon Road church was Jon's home congregation and he was baptized there at the age of 12.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Horse Mountain Church, 1320 Horse Mt. Road, Shelbyville, TN 37160.

Feldhaus Memorial Chapel is assisting the family with arrangements.

# Events

---

**JAN** **Visitation** 11:00AM - 03:00PM

**9**

---

Fairlane Church of Christ  
Shelbyville, TN, US, 37160

**JAN** **Service** 03:00PM

**9**

---

Fairlane Church of Christ  
Shelbyville, TN, US, 37160

# Comments

---



“ I worked with COL Vannatta at the 350th CACOM before he moved on to his most recent assignment. He was a pleasure to work with. I was shocked and saddened to hear of his passing. Rest in Peace, Sir.

LTC(R) Dishneau - January 10 at 01:04 PM

---



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 09 at 10:16 AM

---



“ Jon. Was a truly amazing person!! Full of God and a true leader and smart as you can be! God created a great man when he made Jon. It was a privilege and an honor to write to Jon when he was serving time in Afghanistan. Our Military Outreach group at Mayfair Church of Christ in Huntsville, AL!! He is gone in to his great reward with Jesus!! What a good man that Heaven gained! Shine on Jon! See you again before we know it!! Prayers and love to the family for peace!!  
Blessings,  
Larry and Nedie Keel

Larry and Nedie Keel - January 08 at 03:40 PM

---



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 08 at 11:25 AM

---



“ On behalf of the men and women of the Arkansas State Police, our thoughts and prayers go out to the Vannatta family over the loss of Jon. SA Vannatta was a great friend and supporter of the Arkansas State Police (ASP) in his role as a Special Agent with DEA. SA Vannatta worked many joint investigations with ASP and served the citizens of Arkansas in an exemplary manner. SA Vannatta will not be forgotten in the law enforcement community in Arkansas.

Colonel Bill Bryant  
Arkansas State Police

Bill Bryant - January 08 at 11:15 AM



“ SALUTE

WEDjr - January 08 at 09:09 PM



“ Reflections of Glory Wreath was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 07 at 03:06 PM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 07 at 02:18 PM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 07 at 02:01 PM

---



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 06 at 07:32 PM

---



“ Col. Vannatta was my battalion commander at the 486th Civil Affairs Battalion in Tulsa, Oklahoma. By his words and actions, it was clear he lived the values others only preach, such as selfless service, sacrifice, servant leadership, integrity and kindness. As a more junior commissioned officer, I respected and trusted his leadership and appreciated the way he supported those of us who had just returned from Afghanistan. He stood alone among his contemporary leaders. He was an outstanding commander in all respects, a true patriot and a man of conviction who would do anything to accomplish the mission and protect the men and women in his charge. His life spent in law enforcement and the United States Army exemplified our Nation’s very highest ideals of virtue, courage and goodness. Please accept my deepest condolences for your indescribable loss. MAJ Michael English.

**Michael English** - January 06 at 07:30 PM

---



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 06 at 03:18 PM

---



“ Thinking of you with Love and prayers.  
Bettye Allen

**Bettye B. Allen** - January 06 at 03:16 PM

---



“ Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 06 at 01:32 PM

---



“ 1 file added to the album 354 CA BDE Memorial Service



Ijpe DeKoe - January 05 at 11:06 PM

---



“ 14 files added to the album 354 CA BDE Memorial Service



Ijpe DeKoe - January 05 at 11:06 PM

---



“ I worked with Jon for many years in the city of Maumelle, Arkansas. He was an amazing friend and co-worker. We had a lot of LEO adventures and Jon could always be counted on for back up when needed. We had so many great times and laughs and he was a really great DEA agent and friend to the Maumelle Police department. He was a great friend of mine and many others at the Police and Fire department and we will miss him always. He was a true Hero who spoke often about his love for his parents and his love for the military. We will miss you forever Jon... you will never be forgotten my friend... Rest In Peace...

Shannon Giompoletti - January 05 at 10:33 PM

---



“ I worked with Jon while he was with DEA. He was fun to be around, to work with, to learn from but most of all was being able to call him a friend. IF anything since the first of the year could be redone then this would have to be at the top of the list. Praying for the very best for Jon's family . God bless you all. thanks for sharing him with the rest of us..

**Patsy Reynolds** - January 05 at 09:28 PM

---



“ Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 05 at 08:57 PM

---



“ Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 05 at 06:50 PM

---



“ Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 05 at 03:46 PM

---



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta.



January 05 at 02:45 PM

---



“ Jack & Linda, I can't think of a time growing up without having Jon to see & talk to at church. Whenever he was home, he always made it across the building to hug me & ask how I was. I'll never forget when he met Travis for the 1st time. He grabbed him from me, held him up high, smiling, handed him back to me & said "You did real good!". I just had tears in my eyes. He was always the most kind, polite, sweet guy I've ever known. I can't imagine your pain, I have prayed for you every day & will continue to do so. Sending much love your way.  
Cyndi Oakley-Reaves

Cyndi Oakley-Reaves - January 04 at 09:59 PM

---



“ When I heard of the news of Jon's passing... Thoughts went back to high school and how kind loving and caring of a fellow student that he was... I'll always remember the laughs that I had with him... he was always able to put a smile on everyone's face.... I will remember him with fond memories..praying for the family during this time...

Amy Smith Wilson - January 04 at 08:58 PM

---



“ As my Brigade Commander COL Vannatta visited my unit during our change of command. I was very impressed by the fact that he chose to be there. He offered my battalion exceptional support and guidance. I was heart broken when I learned of his death. I and the Soldiers of the 437th Civil Affairs Battalion will miss his leadership. COL Vannatta was a great leader and American who served his country with honor. God speed sir and many blessings upon his family.

LTC Kim Wilson

Kim Blue - January 04 at 08:34 PM



“ Jon was always a squared away guy, easy to talk to, and very knowledgeable. We learned very recently that we were both medics and were talking about different trainings we might attend. My thoughts and prayers will forever be with his family. Until Valhalla brother...

Jeremy Hammons  
Deputy United States Marshal

Jeremy Hammons - January 05 at 10:19 AM

---



“ Linda and Jack,

My heart bleeds for you. I was so shocked when I read the news of that horrible crash. Anna got a message on her phone from a friend and showed it to me on Wednesday. I cried like a baby. It felt like I had lost my own son since I've known Jon since he was a small boy. I've been praying for you all week that God will give you peace and comfort in this terrible loss. I'm going to try to go to the service on Thursday. In the meantime, if there is anything that I can do for you two, please let me know. Franklin can give you my phone number.

Love,  
Harriett

Harriett Warren - January 04 at 08:05 PM

---



“ Linda and Jack, We know you must be heart broken. The news of Jon's accident left us speechless. We have been praying for you daily. Wish we were there to mourn with you.

We love you and hurt with you. May the memories of Jon flood your soul and drive the heart aches away as the days pass by. May God bless and keep you

Sue and Frank

Sue and Frank Ford - January 04 at 07:32 PM

---



“ From the Soldiers, Civilians, and Command Team of the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion. Our heartfelt condolences and fond appreciation of COL Vannatta's contributions. A true leader and inspiration.





“ From: The Soldiers of the 422nd CA BN  
COL Jonathan J. Vannatta, 354th Civil Affairs Brigade Commander had an inspiring visit to the 422nd Civil Affairs (Centurion) Battalion McLeansville, NC on 16 November 2019 (3 photos with details). From the amount of time we got to interact with him he was a real life action hero with compassion, confirmed with his bio posted on the site. The Centurion battalion will continue to use his techniques and approaches for a successful year as he cheers us on from above. God bless this man and all his family/friends/coworkers.  
LTC Thaddeus J. Clark

TC - January 04 at 03:11 PM

---



“ 1 file added to the album 422nd CA BN BDE CDR Camp Shamrock



TC - January 04 at 03:02 PM



“ COL Jonathan J. Vannatta the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade Commander speaks with 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion Soldiers off site at a local farm known as “Camp Shamrock” during a training session on 16th November 2019. He is seen visiting the training conducted by Bravo and Delta Companies. Bravo Company had 4 teams perform 10 different scenarios created by CPT Swindall-Byers whom was presented a challenge at the end of COL Vannatta’s speech above. The Commander was highly impressed by the level of effort put into creating and conducting highly beneficial training.

Article contributed by SGT Amanda D. Paris & photos CPT Julie L. Gauthier 422nd CA BN McLeansville, NC

TC - January 04 at 03:05 PM

---



“ 1 file added to the album 422nd CA BN BDE CDR coin presentation



TC - January 04 at 02:57 PM



“ COL Jonathan J. Vannatta the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade Commander presents SGT Amber M. Ceballos and Cadet Aaron Rigby of the 422nd Civil Affairs BN McLeansville, NC with challenge coins on 16th November 2019. This was followed by a meeting with the E-5's and below, the Commander was able to discuss an array of subjects to include: current operations, planned upcoming training, address any issues or concerns.

Article contributed by SGT Amanda D. Paris & photos CPT Julie L. Gauthier 422nd CA BN McLeansville, NC

TC - January 04 at 02:56 PM

---



“ 1 file added to the album 422nd CA BN BDE CDR site visit



TC - January 04 at 02:49 PM



“ COL Jonathan J. Vannatta the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade Commander did his battlefield circulation to the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion McLeansville, NC on 16 November 2019. He addressed a few major priorities from the command that it is important to reflect upon and ensure that we are all doing our part. Soldier and combat readiness, counseling, and team/unit success. The commander's personal emphasis is placed upon 1. Family 2. Education (both military and civilian) 3. Unit Care. "When we as Soldiers are taking care of our families and our education we will be in a better position to be the best we can be for our unit. Readiness is the key to mission success."

Photo: COL Jonathan J. Vannatta the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade Commander (center table) receives an in-brief from the 422nd Battalion Commander, Thaddeus J. Clark with the company command and staff on 16th November 2019.

Article contributed by SGT Amanda D. Paris & photos CPT Julie L. Gauthier 422nd CA BN McLeansville, NC

TC - January 04 at 02:50 PM

---



“ Peggy Robinson lit a candle in memory of Col. Jonathan Jackson Vannatta



**Peggy Robinson** - January 04 at 01:37 PM

---



“ Jon was someone I always enjoyed visiting with and we had many good chats and laughs. Jon was kind without a trace of arrogance in spite of his skills and professional achievements. Jon had a heart to serve his country and he was the kind of leader who inspired others to follow him. He was loved and admired and will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him. I look forward to seeing him again on that great resurrection day when our Lord welcomes us into our eternal home.

**Raymond Gray** - January 04 at 10:11 AM

---



“ Jon was a good friend and co-worker. He had a big heart and an infectious smile. My deepest sympathy goes out to his family, your in my prayers. Jean Maier

**Jean Maier** - January 02 at 05:46 PM