



Canning Childs Kraft Jr.

October 29, 1957 - November 4, 2023

Lieutenant Colonel Canning Childs Kraft, Jr. was a retired U.S. Army Officer of 26 years, defense contractor, and business owner. He was a beloved and devoted husband, father, grandfather, and brother. He passed away on November 4th, 2023 at the age of 66. Canning lived in Alexandria, Virginia for forty years.

Canning was born in Mount Holly, New Jersey on October 29th, 1957, and was raised in Moorestown. His family maintained a summer home on Long Beach Island in the borough of Barnegat Light. The “Flying Fish” was in the Kraft family for over 50 years and was a significant factor in his youth. Canning worked in the commercial fishing industry several summers while living in Barnegat Light.

Canning graduated from Lehigh University in 1979 with a degree in Government and received his commission as an Army Lieutenant in the Intelligence Branch. He completed graduate work at the University of Colorado while in the 4th Infantry Division and at Georgetown University. He graduated from Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Over his military career, Canning was stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Osan, South Korea, Stuttgart and Heidelberg, Germany and Mons, Belgium. He was serving in the Pentagon during 9/11 and then

deployed to Charlottesville, Virginia. He deployed for a second year to Guantanamo Bay Cuba. Canning served as the Joint Task Force, Joint Interrogation Group, Deputy Director in Guantanamo Bay. He retired from the Army in 2004.

After his retirement from the Army, Canning worked for several defense contractors in the Washington, D.C. area and overseas. He was the founder and CEO of SterlingKraft LLC, specializing in government contracting and consulting, and he founded the Veterans Den, LLC. He was a member of Sigma Nu Fraternity, the Lehigh University Tower Society, Lehigh Alumni Club of Washington, D.C., the VFW and MOAA. During the past two years, Canning was one of the assistant wrestling coaches at St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School and loved working with and mentoring young wrestlers. He was an avid Philadelphia sports fan, enjoyed attending NFL and NHL games, traveling, and loved fishing in Alaska.

Canning is survived by his wife of 39 years, Claire Wilmot Kraft, two children, Courtney Kraft Perry (Christopher) and Canning Childs Kraft III (Dillon), and his granddaughter, Ryan Marie. He is also survived by two sisters, Frances Kraft Cayer and Patricia Anne Kraft.

A gathering will be held at Jefferson Funeral Chapel, 5755 Castlewellan Drive, Alexandria, Virginia, on Sunday, November 12th from 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm where a memorial service will be Monday, November 13th at 11:00 am. Interment will be held in New Jersey at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to The Wounded Warrior Project [www.woundedwarriorproject.org], Gary Sinise Foundation [www.garysinisefoundation.org], or a donation can be mailed to the Trauma Center at INOVA Health Foundation, 8095 Innovation Park Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22031 or [<https://foundation.inova.org>].

Previous Events

Funeral Service

NOV 13. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Jefferson Funeral Chapel
5755 Castlewellan Drive
Alexandria, VA 22315
(703) 971-7400
info@jeffersonfuneralchapel.com
<https://www.jeffersonfuneralchapel.com>

Tribute Wall

JC

“ I'm very sorry to hear of Canning's passing. I only just found out while checking through an old email account. My Dad and Canning's Dad were life-long fishing buddies, and I knew Canning Jr. when we were kids I remember playing Army in the sand dunes! I spent a good bit of time at the wonderful old "Flying Fish" beach house--a very special memory to those who visited there. Canning Sr. seems to have given my father the brass weathervane from the Fish. I still have it--it's on top of an outbuilding in my yard in Connecticut. Needless to say, it has great sentimental value for me, but should the Kraft family want it back, I can be contacted through my sister, Cynthia. My sincere condolences!

Jeffrey Cain - March 15, 2024 at 11:22 AM

MD

“ Mark Duffield here. Canning was 5 years older than me and we grew across the street from each other. It was a different time when people knew their neighbors and all of the neighborhood kids got together to play outside. We were all like brothers and sisters. He probably knew that he was a mentor to me and someone I looked up to. If he didn't know it then, he knows it now. I followed in his path in many ways from high school academic achievement, high school sports, Lehigh University, ROTC, active duty military career (he went Army while I went Air Force). I have many fond memories of everything from playing street hockey together to a lecture on the importance of academics and not wasting time on trivial entertainment when you could pick up a book and learn something new. For example, "Point Barrow is the northern most point in the USA"...We looked it up together from an encyclopedia and I have never forgotten that trivial fact. It has to be 50 years ago but I can hear his voice when I think about it. We didn't see much of each other in person across the years, but we exchanged Christmas cards with the annual "catch up" letter that military people do each year. I will miss you big brother. Until we meet again.
Mark F Duffield, Colonel (R), US Air Force

Mark Duffield - November 12, 2023 at 09:42 PM

SY

“ The Buckley SFB military Retiree Activities Office (RAO) would like to offer our sincere condolences and our gratitude for Lt Col Kraft’s 26 years of service to our country in the Army. If you would like help with any matters related to casualty assistance, Defense Finance & Accounting Service, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), Veterans Affairs (VA), etc. you can contact our office on Buckley SFB (Denver, CO) at 720-847-6693 or raobuckley@gmail.com. The RAO is staffed by volunteers, all military retirees themselves, and our sole purpose is to provide assistance to any military retirees and surviving spouses/family members with anything related to their military service and/or benefits, in particular during difficult times such as this. We are deeply sorry for your loss.

Steve Young
Lt Col, USAF, Ret
Director, Buckley SFB RAO

Steve Young - November 12, 2023 at 01:30 PM

NS

“ Fraternity brother of Canning ("Krafty").Lehigh University Sigma Nu Class of '79.Great guy - we shall miss him.

Nick Snyder

Nick Snyder - November 08, 2023 at 03:24 PM

NR

“ I met Canning through his lovely wife, Claire. The first time I met him, he blurted out: "Why doesn't Bill Gates do more for the military?" We laughed, we talked about it and I learned that he was just a delightful man. He knew who he was. Living in another part of the country, I didn't see him often - but I know he was well loved and loved in return. Bless his family and particularly my friend, Claire.

Nancy Reeder - November 08, 2023 at 12:10 PM