

## **Shannon, Dustin G.**

On Saturday, August 24, 2002 the United States lost one of the finest young leaders of its next generation. Dustin G. Shannon, 1st Lieutenant of the United States Army was killed in the line of duty as his aircraft crashed in the mountainous terrain of South Korea. His ultimate sacrifice for the love and honor of his country will be remembered forever by everyone fortunate enough to have known him. Dustin was a 1996 graduate of Vassar High School and a 2000 graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. He completed flight school at Fort Rucker, Alabama, certified to fly the Apache attack helicopter. To say he lived life to the fullest would be a mockery; he lived life with a vengeance. Dustin lived by a code of honor that was second nature to himself, but often insurmountable to others. He lived by the sacred fundamentals of The Long Gray Line in Duty, Honor, Country; to never lie, cheat or steal, values that have gone unchanged in 200 years. He served his country with the strongest sense of Army values prioritizing his life in My mission, My men, My self. This selfless persona caused those around him not only to love him, but to rally to his cause. He in every way embodied the type of person we all strive to be, but all too frequently fall short on in our attempts. Dustin was many things to many people, a loving brother, son and friend. To others he was a dedicated superior or subordinate. In all of these people he was able to light a spark that allowed them to burn brighter than what they could have before. To list his survivors would be impossible. He touched people around the world, and to single out any one person would be an injustice to the rest. There is not a person in this group who would not have most willingly laid out their life for Dustin, as he did so for them with his. In a lifetime of moments, he defined each instead of letting such moments define him. In his own words, it is far better to burn out than to fade away. For those of you who wish to say goodbye to Dustin, you may wish to call on his friends and family at Martin Funeral Home-Clark Chapel, top of the hill in Vassar on Friday, August 30, from 6-9 p.m. and Saturday, August 31, from 1-6 p.m. Visitation will also occur on Sunday, September 1 at the Vassar High School auditorium, 220 Athletic Street, from 12 noon until 2 p.m. with services to follow at that location. Reverend John Becker will officiate with full military burial rites to follow at the Riverside Cemetery of Vassar, under the auspices of the United States Army. Dustin was born on October 6, 1978 in San Diego, California and moved to Michigan with his mother Sandy Walker and his father Gary and brother Ethan Shannon. He attended Vassar Public Schools until graduating in 1996 whereon he chose to pursue a career in the military as an officer by entering the United States Military Academy. Graduating from West Point in 2000, he went on to complete flight school. Along the way he was the winner of numerous awards and recognition, but none were more important to him than the respect of his peers. Countless friends and family will continue to cherish his memory, including his fore-mentioned brother and loving parents. He will be dearly missed by all, and never forgotten. Friends and family wishing to honor Dustin's memory should consider a monetary donation to the Dustin G. Shannon Memorial Scholarship Fund in place of other forms of expression of their grief. It is the hope of his family it will allow others of his up bringing to be afforded the same opportunities for excellence that he so desperately fought for each day of his life. Friends may share a memory with the family at the funeral home or online at <http://www.tir.com/~mmfh>.