

Joseph G. LaPointe Jr.



Birth name	Joseph Guy LaPointe Jr.
Born	July 2, 1948 Dayton, Ohio
Died	June 2, 1969 (aged 20) Quảng Tín Province, Republic of Vietnam
Allegiance	United States
Service/branch	United States Army
Years of service	1968–1969
Rank	Specialist Four
Unit	HHT, B Troop, 2/17th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division
Battles/wars	Vietnam War
Awards	Medal of Honor Silver Star Bronze Star Purple Heart

Joseph Guy LaPointe Jr. (July 2, 1948 – June 2, 1969) was a medic in the United States Army who posthumously received the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Vietnam War.

LaPointe, known to his family as "Guy", was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio. After graduating from Northridge High School in 1966, he moved to nearby Clayton and worked as a mail carrier in Englewood. LaPointe was a nature lover and an avid hiker.

LaPointe was drafted in 1968 and declared himself a conscientious objector. He married Cindy Failor of Dayton, Ohio at the Englewood First Baptist Church in Ohio, during his training at the Army Medical Training Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He became a combat medic and was sent to Vietnam in November 1968. By June 2 of the next year, he was a Specialist Four serving with the 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. On that day, he participated in a patrol on Hill 376 in Quảng Tín Province. When his unit came under heavy fire from entrenched enemy forces and took several casualties, LaPointe ran through the automatic weapons fire to reach two wounded men at the head of the patrol. He treated the soldiers and shielded them with his body, even after being twice wounded, until an enemy grenade killed all three men. For these actions, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in January 1972. His other decorations include the Silver Star, Bronze Star and National Defense Service Medal. He left a "widow, Cindy LaPointe [now] Dafler, and a son Joseph G. LaPointe III, who never met his father."



Citation

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. SPC4. LaPointe, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2d Squadron, distinguished himself while serving as a medical aidman during a combat helicopter assault mission. SPC4. LaPointe's patrol was advancing from the landing zone through an adjoining valley when it suddenly encountered heavy automatic weapons fire from a large enemy force entrenched in well-fortified bunker positions. In the initial hail of fire, 2 soldiers in the formation vanguard were seriously wounded. Hearing a call for aid from 1 of the wounded, SPC4. LaPointe ran forward through heavy fire to assist his fallen comrades. To reach the wounded men, he was forced to crawl directly in view of an enemy bunker. As members of his unit attempted to provide covering fire, he administered first aid to 1 man, shielding the other with his body. He was hit by a burst of fire from the bunker while attending the wounded soldier. In spite of his painful wounds, SPC4. LaPointe continued his lifesaving duties until he was again wounded and knocked to the ground. Making strenuous efforts, he moved back again into a shielding position to continue administering first aid. An exploding enemy grenade mortally wounded all 3 men. SPC4. LaPointe's courageous actions at the cost of his life were an inspiration to his comrades. His gallantry and selflessness are in the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

Several structures have been named in LaPointe's honor, including a housing complex and medical complex in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, a medical heliport in Fort Benning, Georgia, and an Army Reserve Center in Riverside, Ohio. A portion of Ohio State Route 49 in Montgomery County has been designated the "Joseph G. LaPointe Jr. Memorial Highway". On June 2, 2009, the fortieth anniversary of his death, LaPointe's widow and son were presented with the Medal of Honor flag during a ceremony at the LaPointe Army Reserve Center in Riverside.



Memorial Highway named for LaPointe