

# The Vietnam War Eliot Guild

~ VIETNAM WAR  
(1964-1975)

**Eliot Franklin Guild** enlisted in the Navy in early 1965, the winter

after graduating from Keene High School. A Keene native, he gave his address as 40 Parker St. in Winchester, since his father had transferred there to take a Public Service Co. management job, but he remained a student at Keene High.

At school Guild was active in the French club and had been a delegate to American Legion Boys State, the student government exercise. He was also a shot putter on a track team that finished third in the state championships in 1964.

His father, who died during Guild's senior year at high school, had been a captain in the Air Force during World War II, and a grandfather had also been in the military. "I think (their service) had a lot to do with his enlisting," recalled his only sibling, Joyce Hanrahan, who lives in the family house on Page Street in Keene.

He took his basic training as a medical corpsman at the Great Lakes (m.) Naval Training Center; he later was posted briefly at Portsmouth Naval Hospital in New Hampshire before winding up with the Third Marines in



**Eliot Guild at left**

Camp Lejeune, N.C.

In time he got his papers for Vietnam. Said his sister, who was nine years his junior, "We all knew he was going to not a good place."

He wasn't in Vietnam long before he needed medical treatment -for a shoulder injury. He had initially dislocated the joint while on the track team in Keene, and he hurt it again while lifting sandbags in Vietnam.

He was treated in Guam, and three months later returned to his unit near DaNang. Almost immediately he was thrust into the chaos of combat.

"The fighting is getting worse," he wrote to a longtime friend in Keene in early October 1967.

"They throw mortars at us regularly and the other day we got hit for the first time at this position with Russian 140mm rockets. I was never so scared in my

life. They sound like an express train coming through the sky and there are very few of our bunkers that can stand a direct hit."

Not much later his mother received a telegram reporting that on Nov. 1, 1967, her son, while on patrol, had received multiple shrapnel wounds from a land-mine explosion and that, as he was being evacuated 'on a stretcher, was wounded again by small-arms fire.

"His prognosis is guarded," the telegram reported.

Guild was hospitalized in DaNang, and after a brief spell was flown to a medical facility near Tokyo. Telegrams about his condition, sometimes arriving twice a day, reported ups and downs. When the prognosis improved to "fair," Hanrahan recalled that, at borne, everyone thought, "Yeah, he's getting better."

But he did not get better. His mother, Joyce Robinson, received an urgent call in January, alerting her to the fact that her son was fading. She was flown to Japan and arrived at his bedside four hours before he died. He was 21, the seventh man from the region to die in Vietnam.

In Keene he was buried with full military honors in the family lot in Monadnock View Cemetery.

Months later, his photo, and that of classmate Michael Bernard Sweeney, a 2nd lieutenant in the Army who had also died in Vietnam, appeared in the "In Memoriam" section of the Keene High School yearbook Salmagundi.

Had her brother survived the war, Hanrahan said he would probably have studied forestry at the University of New Hampshire,

"He was big into the outdoors," recalled Hanrahan. "He liked hunting and fishing."

She is torn by the loss of her brother, in part because there was no goodbye. She has twice seen his name on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, and she has a box full of his letters and photos. She's been in touch with two men who trained with her brother; they connected on the Internet. But, she said, "I want to find someone who served in Vietnam with him,"

Kip Bradbury, who lived next door to the Guilds in Keene and who was a couple of years older than Eliot Guild, said the other day, "I think of him almost every day of my life -literally."

Bradbury, who now lives in Troy, said he and Guild used to fish together. "We used to joke about our lack of success," he

recalled.

Bradbury said that Guild was a "superfine human being -the best of the very best..

Worried about a possible Communist takeover of all of Southeast Asia that would disrupt security and economic arrangements, the United States established a military presence in the southern half of Vietnam, the northern half of which had Communist backing. American involvement in the war expanded, even as mounting numbers of citizens at home protested the expenditure of lives and money for a cause they did not agree with.

Controversy over the war bitterly split the American public, and ultimately led to America's pulling out, leaving Vietnam as divided as it had been at the war's start. In short order, the Communist-run North took over the entire nation. Thirty years after the end of hostilities, bitter feelings about the war remain with many Americans.

American deaths:  
58,198 (Department of Veterans Affairs)

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.  
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.