



# 2nd Battalion 1st Infantry Chapter, Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA)



WEBSITE: [www.b-2-1-196lib.com](http://www.b-2-1-196lib.com)

Volume 4

"A Soldier Once... And Always"

September 2014

**Commanders Corner:** I constructed a new area on our web site in August listing all 2/1 company deaths that occurred during our service in Vietnam. The new section is located in the left hand column under "2/1 Company Casualty Pages". Les Hines, the ADVA historian, provided me with the official listings for each company. You will notice all companies except Bravo will be in a different format. The page for Bravo Company is different because the initial page created for Bravo was for the original B 2/1 web site (which was transformed into our current chapter site) and I put in over 70 hours getting it together. As you might guess, I didn't have a spare 350 hours to create 5 more pages exactly like it. It took long enough just to do it this way. Please check it out when you get the chance and let me know if any of you think I missed something. I tried to test all the links and, from what I can see, they all work okay. Also, on the "Related Links" page I have added a link to the Howard County Vietnam Veterans Organization which holds an annual reunion in Kokomo Indiana in September and is probably the largest in the nation. Regarding Kokomo, the veterans sponsoring the reunion have, for the past several years set aside a memorial area for deceased Vietnam veterans. This consists of an area around the official ceremonial area which is paved with bricks inscribed with the veterans name, etc. This year, Bravo Company, 2/1 dedicated some bricks for our fallen comrades. Several of the members of the chapter donated funds to make this happen and we have covered all of our comrades who gave their lives in Vietnam and several who have passed on since returning. The idea came from Gerry "Bo" Borysiak, B 2/1 '69-'70 and was a huge success. In fact, we have some extra funds to be put aside for any future losses of our fellow soldiers. The bricks will be formally dedicated and placed at the opening ceremonies on Friday afternoon, September 19<sup>th</sup>. The fund is mainly dedicated for those who served with us from '68-'70. Thanks to everyone who participated in this endeavor. Also, September is the month for our annual ADVA reunion and our 2/1 Chapter meeting. I hope as many of you as possible can attend this year. Hopefully, I can give you a rundown of the festivities in the October newsletter. Details of the reunion, to be held at Houston, Tx. are on the web site main page and under the "Reunions" page. I think I'm done now; after coming up with a column for the last 36 months, I'm out of words tonight. Hope I have enough for next month.



*Keep safe and may the bond of battle never be broken!*

Chuck



"Victims who shoot back, live longer!"

**DOD Identifies 2 Missing Service Members:** The Defense POW/MIA Office has announced the identification of remains belonging to two World War II soldiers. Recovered are:

- Army Pfc. Lawrence S. Gordon, 28, a Canadian citizen who was buried Aug. 13 in Canada. On Aug. 13, 1944, Gordon and elements of the Reconnaissance Company, 32nd Armored Regiment, 3rd Armored Division, were fighting near Carrouges, France, when his M8 armored car was struck in the gas tank by German anti-tank fire. His remains were not recovered after the attack.
- Army Pfc. Cecil E. Harris, 19, of Shelbyville, Tenn., will have a funeral service in Chattanooga, and buried Oct. 22 in Arlington National Cemetery. On Jan. 2, 1945, Harris and elements of the Company D, 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division, were attacked and forced into a more defensive position near Dambach, France. He was reported missing after the attack.

**France Honors 70th Anniversary of WWII Liberation:** President Francois Hollande has kicked off a day of commemorations for the 70th anniversary of the liberation of France in World War II. Unfazed by a downpour on Ile de Sein island in Brittany, Hollande made a speech recalling the scores of locals who joined Gen. Charles de Gaulle's expatriate administration in London after the Nazi invasion in 1940. Hollande made no reference to an announcement from his office earlier in the day that Prime Minister Manuel Valls has been instructed to shake-up the Socialist Cabinet following criticism of its economic policies by the economy minister. Later, Hollande was to attend ceremonies at the Paris police prefecture and City Hall in recognition of the Aug. 25, 1944, liberation of the capital by American and French troops.

**AAFES Wants to Let Vets Shop Online:** Allowing 18.8 million honorably-discharged veterans to shop online through military exchange services, which also operate brick-and-mortar department stores and concessions on base, could boost store profits enough to pump more than \$100 million back into base quality-of-life programs. That's part of the "business case" made by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) to the Department of Defense's Executive Resale Board this month where Navy officials still raised concerns over the idea. Thomas C. Shull, chief executive officer of AAFES, proposed to Defense officials several months ago that veterans be allowed to shop online through exchange service websites and, in that way, gain the same discounts on thousands of department-store items that on-base shoppers enjoy. AAFES already is working with an outside contractor to modernize and expand its website for online shopping of current patrons, which include active duty, Reserve and Guard members, military retirees and families.

He had a photographic memory which was never developed.

**Robin Williams Remembered Fondly for USO Shows:** Robin Williams was a superstar in movies, on television and at comedy clubs. But some of his biggest laughs came at military bases. Elizabeth O'Herrin of the Wisconsin Air National Guard remembers working the night shift in the city of Doha in Qatar, delivering munitions to American fighter jets. It was 2004, the holiday season, and Herrin and friends camped out at the Al Udeid Air Base. A USO show was arriving, Williams was a featured performer and O'Herrin wanted front row seats. "He had everybody roaring. It felt really good; it was the first time in a while we had had a chance to laugh," says O'Herrin, 30, now a resident of Chicago. Members of the armed forces have long held special affection for Williams, who died recently at age 63 after he hanged himself in his San Francisco Bay Area home. Williams never served in the military, but he was a tireless participant in USO shows and also was remembered for playing real-life Air Force sergeant and disc jockey Adrian Cronauer in the 1987 film "Good Morning, Vietnam." O'Herrin, discharged honorably as a staff sergeant in 2008, said that Williams was "sweating profusely," but never seemed to tire. "I remember some of the jokes being borderline inappropriate, but we got the chance to cut loose a little bit and roll with it. Afterward, I got to meet him. I took a picture with him and shook his hand. He engaged with all the troops, gave them big hugs and big handshakes." "He shook every hand, signed every autograph, and hugged every person," the USO said. "He understood the energizing effect laughter has in times of stress and he channeled his incredible energy to help those experiencing the loneliness, fear and uncertainty of being far from home and loved ones the chance to relax and recharge." According to the USO, Williams began working with the organization in 2002 and was part of six USO tours, most recently in 2010. He performed in 13 countries, including Afghanistan, Kuwait and Turkey, and entertained more than 89,000 servicemen and women.

**AF Officer RIF Board Scheduled:** The officer Reduction in Force board is scheduled to convene at the Air Force Personnel Center in early October. Revised RIF matrices for Line of the Air Force, Line of the Air Force Judge Advocate General and Health Professions were posted to myPers recently and included significant reductions in the number of officers eligible for the RIF and the number of losses needed through a RIF. The total target for these boards is now reduced to 468 with approximately 2,800 eligible. These numbers represent significant reductions from the last matrices posted in June, which showed 4,593 eligible officers with a target of 634.

**Obama Says No Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria:** President Obama said recently he has yet to develop a strategy for combating the threat from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant that could include expanding the current air campaign into Syria. "We don't have a strategy yet on a response to ISIS," Obama said, using another acronym for ISIL. Obama said he had directed Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to give him a set of options, but there were no immediate plans to go beyond the current "limited" air campaign in Iraq. Republican critics led by Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona, have called for an expanded air campaign and charged that Obama lacked a strategy for confronting ISIL. Obama also said he saw no role for the U.S. military in confronting Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine.

**Stories from you contain historical value for all who served. Please send your story to Editor, 2/1 Newsletter either by email rheroux1@nc.rr.com, or by snail mail at 2005 Montgomery Road, Franklinton, NC 27525. (See page 6)**

**Roger Ferland DAV National Volunteer of the Year 2014:** Jack Moore needed a will. "I'm 75 years old with a bad heart, I don't have a pension," Moore says. "How am I supposed to pay for an attorney?" But in January, he and his wife, Nancy, sat across the table from an estate lawyer in the Phoenix VA Medical Center and walked away with a will. For free. Drove of other lawyers lined up that day to donate their time to veterans like Moore in one of a series of free legal clinics run by the State Bar of Arizona. The clinics — four were held in the past year across the state — are largely the creation of retired Phoenix lawyer Roger Ferland. In hospitals, gyms and hotel conference centers, lawyers volunteered their time and experience to veterans, who left the clinics with wills, divorce papers, custody documents and basic legal advice. Those clinics are half of the reason that the Disabled American Veterans presented Ferland with its highest accolade: **2014 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year**. Ferland is matter-of-fact about his motivation. "God's saved you for a purpose," he said. "I've got a responsibility now." (See the entire story on page 6)

**Army Officer Firings Blamed on Bad Evals, Not Race:** Eight in 10 of the U.S. Army majors being dismissed from the service had poor evaluations or otherwise bad marks, a fact that some say played a far bigger role in the separations than race or ethnicity. The Army earlier this year convened an Officer Separation Board and an Enhanced Selective Early Retirement Board that reviewed the records of nearly 8,000 majors as part of an ongoing draw-down of the force. Of the 550 majors identified for involuntary separation, the vast majority -- 80 percent -- had a negative performance evaluation or other derogatory information in their records. A similar trend occurred at the captain level. "Board weighted derog heavily," states one of the slides. That's Army speak for derogatory information, such as a reprimand from a general officer for any type of offense, from driving while intoxicated to plagiarism. At the same time, there were significant racial disparities in the boards' decisions, with blacks separated at a higher rate than any other racial or ethnic group, according to the Army documents. Some 9.8 percent of black majors were dismissed, while 5.7 percent of white majors were let go, the documents show. Meanwhile, 8 percent of Hispanic majors were cut, and 5.9 percent of Asian-Pacific Islander majors were released. "Greatest variance exists between African American and Caucasian Overall," states one of the slides. Put another way, blacks made up 128 of the major separations, or 23 percent, while whites accounted for 330, or 60 percent -- even though blacks make up less than 10 percent of the Army's active-duty officer corps, while whites account for almost 80 percent.

**Young people cannot learn from history because history is no longer taught as a required subject in High School.**

**American Jihadist Reportedly Killed in Syria:** An American man believed to have been killed in Syria was there to fight alongside an extremist militant group, most likely the Islamic State, a U.S. official said Tuesday. Investigators were aware that Douglas McArthur McCain was in the country to fight with the militant group, but they did not yet have his body and were still trying to verify information about his death, said the official, who was not authorized to discuss by name an ongoing investigation and spoke only on condition of anonymity. A relative, Kenneth McCain, told The Associated Press that the State Department had called to tell his family that Douglas McCain had been killed in Syria. "We do not know if he was fighting anyone," he said. U.S. officials, concerned about what they say is the growing threat posed by the extremist Islamic State group, say surveillance flights and spy planes have begun over Syria on the orders of President Barack Obama. The move could pave the way for airstrikes against the group, which controls a large part of eastern Syria and crossed into Iraq earlier this year. The militant group also killed an American, journalist James Foley, and is holding an American woman hostage.

**Arms Flow to Kurds Rises; 7 Nations Join Effort:** The international effort to help Iraqis fight Islamic militants is heating up, with seven additional countries agreeing to provide arms to the Kurdish peshmerga forces. Albania, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, France, Italy and the U.K. have committed to giving weapons and equipment to the embattled Kurds, the Pentagon announced Tuesday. The announcement comes about two weeks after Hagel set up a working group to find ways to accelerate arms deliveries to the Kurds. The Defense Department said the materiel is "urgently needed" as the Kurds take on the militant group known as the Islamic State, which has taken over much of Iraq and Syria. The supply efforts "have already begun and will accelerate in the coming days with more nations also expected to contribute," Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said in a statement.

**White House Announces New Vet Initiatives:** The President announced several veterans' initiatives designed to bolster recently passed legislation and ease transitioning issues between DOD and VA. VFW National Commander John W. Stroud said "the VFW is hopeful that the initiatives will provide the necessary correction the VA urgently needs to care for the nation's veterans, service members and their families." Included in the 19 new executive actions are automatic enrollment into a VA treatment program for service members receiving DOD mental health services; advanced research to develop neurotechnologies to help treat PTSD and a \$34.4 million VA study on suicide prevention. Also included are programs to continue to reduce the disability claims backlog and improve resources between VA and HUD to eliminate homelessness among veterans by the end of 2015.

**Pentagon; No More Border Kids at Military Bases:** The U.S. Defense Department won't open any more military bases to house border kids and will phase out the program at bases currently in use, Pentagon and White House officials said. The Department of Health and Human Services has leased space at three military bases – Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Lackland Air Force Base, Texas; and Naval Base Ventura, California – to house unaccompanied children arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border. In a recent statement, HHS said the Fort Sill site could be closed within a week. The remaining shelters for the mostly Central American children could also close over the next two to eight weeks. However, the facilities would be kept on standby in the event of another surge of children at the border, it said. Currently, about 700 kids are being housed at the three bases, down from 2,700 in recent weeks

**Why VA Claims Exploded and Ways to Slow the Trend:** America's population of living veterans fell by almost five million, or 17 percent, from 2000 to 2013. So why did the number of veterans drawing disability compensation climb by 55 percent over that period? And why has yearly VA disability payments tripled since 2000 to reach \$60 billion in 2014? The Congressional Budget Office explains why in a new report, and the primary reason is not found among veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. That source of claims is significant but not yet near its peak. A greater factor has been liberalized laws and policies on "service connected" ailments, particularly decisions to compensate Vietnam War veterans for common medical conditions of aging and lifestyle because of an "association" with possible exposure to herbicides used in that war. For example, in 2000 only 38,000 veterans from all war eras were receiving disability compensation for diabetes. By last year, 320,000 veterans from the Vietnam War alone drew diabetes-related compensation. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) expanded its list of diseases presumed caused by Agent Orange to ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's disease and certain types of leukemia in 2010. By June of last year, that decision had led to VA processing 280,000 claims for the newly presumptive ailments and to making \$4.5 billion in retroactive disability payments. Another factor of growth in VA claims has been a weak labor market, CBO says, which encourages out-of-work or underemployed veterans to apply for disability compensation. Current law allows them to do so at any age and as often as they like. Indeed, laws enacted in 2000 and 2008 required VA to strengthen the help given to veterans to apply for disability benefits and substantiate claims. VA also increased outreach to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and eased PTSD diagnostic requirements.

**VA to Hold Town Hall Meetings Nationwide:** New Secretary of Veterans Affairs Bob McDonald has directed all VA health care facilities and regional offices to hold town hall events before the end of September in order to improve communication with, and hear directly from, the nation's veterans they serve. "Caring for veterans is a calling, and our first commitment is to provide veterans and their families the timely, quality care and benefits they have earned and deserve through their service to our nation," he said. The VFW encourages all members and their families to attend these town halls, the dates and times of which will be announced locally by each sponsoring VA facility. As VFW National Commander in Chief John Stroud has said, "the VA must fix what's broken, hold employees appropriately accountable, and restore the faith of veterans in their VA." Holding town hall meetings will allow VA leadership to hear directly from their primary customers, which is a positive step toward resolving the VA's nationwide crisis in care and confidence.

**VA Releases IG Report:** The Department of Veterans Affairs Inspector General's office released their final report after months of investigating wrongdoing at the Phoenix Hospital system. The investigation reviewed the care of over 3,400 patients and included interviews with 79 employees. Issues identified poor quality of care and inappropriate scheduling practices which were shown to be systemic nationwide. It also concluded that VHA missed opportunities to hold senior and field faculty leadership responsible and accountable for implementing proper action and compliance standards with regards to scheduling procedures.



**First Filipino-American Takes Command of Carrier:** Capt. Ronald Ravelo relieved his brother-in-law, Capt. Karl Thomas, as commander of the USS Abraham Lincoln -- a change of command considered unprecedented for the U.S. Navy. Ravelo also became the first Filipino-American to take command of a carrier. Thomas, the outgoing commander of the Lincoln, will lead the USS Carl Vinson. "I really couldn't think of a better officer to follow," Ravelo said after the ceremony. Guest speaker Rear Adm. Troy Shoemaker joked that for Ravelo's sister -- Jennifer, the wife of Thomas -- planning the event must have been interesting. "With the two principals related by marriage, this is a first for me and probably our Navy, which makes the ceremony even more special and allowed the families to plan a twofer, a change of command and a summer family reunion," Shoemaker said. "I can imagine that the logistics for this ceremony were a bit like planning a wedding reception, except that the proverbial bride and groom are your husband and brother, which begs the question: Who's the groom and which side of the aisle do you sit on?" After shaking his brother-in-law's hand and reading his orders, Ravelo stepped from behind the podium, asking the crowd that gathered to wait just a minute before he spoke. He pulled out a cellphone and snapped a quick selfie -- an effort to relate to some of the young sailors he'll now be leading. The crowd was made up of about 500 of the roughly 2,500 sailors on the Lincoln, as well as friends and family, who were gathered on the lawn behind Victory Landing Park in downtown Newport News. None was more proud, Shoemaker said, than Ben Ravelo, Ravelo's father, who is a retired Navy chief.

**Army Promotes First Vietnamese-American General:** A Fort Hood soldier whose family came to the United States as refugees when he was 10 became the first Vietnamese-American to reach the rank of general in the U.S. Army. Col. Viet Luong received his brigadier general's stars from the Fort Hood commander, Lt. Gen. Mark Milley, at a ceremony at the Central Texas Army post. Luong and nine other family members escaped South Vietnam on a flight during Operation Frequent Wind in 1975. After a stay at a resettlement camp in Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, the family settled in Los Angeles, the Killeen Daily Herald reported. Today, he is the 1st Cavalry Division deputy commanding general for maneuver and the first Vietnamese-born officer to reach the position of general staff or flag officer in the U.S. military. "The journey was arduous," he said after his wife pinned his new stars on him. "I don't like to tell that story too much. I'm deeply humbled. I do have some responsibility ... to tell the story of our nation and what it stands for," he said. "I'm a symbol of democracy, freedom and the justice of our Constitution," he said. Among the hundreds attending the ceremony were Luong's seven sisters, his mother, wife and three children.

**Interstate Compact for Military Children Now Complete:** New York became the 50th state to adopt the VFW-supported "Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children," which provides for the uniform treatment of military children transferring between school districts and states. The Interstate Compact allows the laws of the "sending" state to apply to transferring students from military families in the schools of the "receiving" state for such policies as graduation requirements, Advanced Placements, immunizations, and the age of student enrollment. It applies to the children of active-duty members of the uniformed services, National Guard and Reservists on active-duty orders, members or veterans who are medically discharged or retired for one year, and members who die on active duty.

**Beheading Spurs New Attacks on Islamic Militants:** The United States launched a new barrage of airstrikes against the Islamic State extremist group that beheaded American journalist James Foley and that has seized a swath of territory across Iraq and Syria. President Barack Obama vowed relentless pursuit of the terrorists and the White House revealed that the U.S. had launched a secret rescue mission inside Syria earlier this summer that failed to rescue Foley and other Americans still being held hostage. In brief but forceful remarks, Obama said the U.S. would "do what we must to protect our people," but he stopped short of promising to follow the Islamic State in its safe haven within Syria, where officials said Foley had been killed. Later, though, the administration revealed that several dozen special operations troops had been on the ground in Syria briefly in an effort to rescue the hostages, but did not find them. And looking forward, the State Department refused to rule out future U.S. military operations in Syria, where Obama has long resisted intervening in a three-year civil war. Western nations agreed to speed help to combat the militants - most notably Germany, which bucked public opposition by announcing it would arm Iraqi Kurdish fighters to battle the Islamic State. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said he was outraged by the beheading, deeming it evidence of a "caliphate of barbarism." Italy's defense minister said the country hopes to contribute machine guns, ammunition and anti-tank rockets. The Islamic State called Foley's death a revenge killing for U.S. airstrikes against militants in Iraq, and said other hostages would be slain if the attacks continued. Undeterred, the U.S. conducted 14 additional strikes after a video of the beheading surfaced, bringing to 84 the number of airstrikes since they began on Aug. 8.

**Freed Hostage Peter Theo Curtis back in America:** American freelance journalist Peter Theo Curtis has been released by the al-Qaida linked group that held him hostage for nearly two years in Syria. The release of Curtis to United Nations representatives by the Jabhat al-Nusrah Front terrorist group came five days after the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant released a video of the beheading of journalist James Foley, 40, of Rochester, N.H. The Al-Nusrah Front, one of several groups battling the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, reportedly has been fighting ISIL in eastern Syria in recent months. ISIL had demanded 100 million euros (\$132.5 million) for the release of Foley. There were no immediate reports of ransom demands for Curtis. A video released in June by Al Jazeera showed Curtis appearing to be in good health with long hair and a beard. Reading from what appeared to be a prepared script, Curtis identified himself as a journalist from Boston. He said he had everything he needed, and "everything has been perfect -- food, clothing, even friends now." Curtis was released to U.N. officials in a Golan Heights village in Israel, the Associated Press reported. After a brief medical checkup, Curtis was turned over to U.S. authorities in Israel and reportedly was in good health.

**Report: UK Rapper ID'd as American's Executioner:** British and American intelligence services have identified the man suspected of beheading U.S. journalist James Foley as a U.K. citizen who traveled to Syria to join the Islamic State. Government sources said the masked man seen in a video of Foley's death is known as "Jihadi John" among Islamic State fighters. In the video, released by IS a man with a London accent can be seen brandishing a knife while standing next to a kneeling Foley before beheading him. The gruesome clip ended with footage of Foley's decapitated body lying on the ground. Although sources did not officially confirm the identity of the masked man, the Sunday Times reported that a London-based rapper, Abdel-Majed Abdel Bary, 23, is a key suspect in the case.

# 2nd Bn. 1st Infantry Soldier Killed in Vietnam to Receive Medal of Honor Posthumously



Donald Paul Sloat  
**Sgt. 1st Class Kendall James**



Specialist Four Donald P. Sloat was born February 1949 in Coweta, OK. After attending Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College in Miami, Oklahoma, Sp4 Donald P. Sloat enlisted in the Army March 19, 1969, at the age of 20. Upon completion of his initial training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, he was assigned as an M60 Machine Gunner with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division, in the Republic of Vietnam, on Sept. 25, 1969. He was killed in action Jan. 17, 1970, a month before his 21st birthday.

Sloat's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal with "V" Device, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with "60" Device, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm Device, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with Palm Device, the Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Badge with Rifle Bar, Sharpshooter Badge with Machinegun Bar, and Marksman Badge with Auto Rifle Bar.

Specialist Four Donald P. Sloat distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty, while serving as a machine gunner with 3rd Platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division, during combat operations against an armed enemy in the Republic of Vietnam, Jan. 17, 1970. D Company operated out of Fire Support Base Hawk Hill in an area of I Corps. They were located south and southwest of Danang providing security for local villages and conducting regular searches for NVA units. The territory they patrolled stretched from the coastal lowlands to the mountains and jungle. North Vietnamese and Viet Cong activity was common in the area, and D Company suffered regular casualties from snipers and booby traps.

On the morning of Jan. 17, 1970, Sloat's squad was conducting a patrol, serving as a blocking element in support of tanks and armored personnel carriers from F Troop in the Que Son valley. As the squad moved through dense up a small hill in file formation, the lead Soldier tripped a wire attached to a hand grenade booby-trap, set up by enemy forces.

When the grenade rolled down the hill toward Sloat, he had a choice. He could hit the ground and seek cover, or pick up the grenade and throw it away from his fellow Soldiers. After initially attempting to throw the grenade, Sloat realized that detonation was imminent, and that two or three men near him would be killed or seriously injured if he couldn't shield them from the blast. In an instant, Sloat chose to draw the grenade to his body, shielding his squad members from the blast, and saving their lives. Sloat's actions define the ultimate sacrifice of laying down his own life in order to save the lives of his comrades.

Specialist Four Donald P. Sloat's extraordinary heroism and selflessness are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service, and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

On a U.S. Army website devoted to Medal of Honor recipients, former Pfc. DeWayne C. Lewis Jr., a rifleman on patrol with Sloat, is quoted as saying, "I was only five to eight feet behind Don, when the grenade went off. His act saved my life."

Sloat's mother, Evelyn, began a drive to have her son's bravery recognized after learning a few years ago about the actions that led to his death, the Tulsa World reported in 2010. Sloat's brother, William, of Enid, is expected to attend the ceremony Sept. 15 at the White House.

## Phoenix Veteran Keeps Giving Back

Ferland once was saved. And that's the other half of the reason he'll be named Outstanding Disabled Veteran: Ferland doesn't just serve disabled vets. He is one. He still remembers lying flat on his back in a Vietnam forest, both legs lost, his right arm mangled. To this day, he wonders what kind of weapon got the best of him. But the memory of the injury doesn't slow him down.

Platoon Sgt. Roger Ferland was leading a squad in late March 1970 when it happened. Before he knew it, Ferland was lying in a hospital in Japan — two legs gone and a right arm badly damaged. Ferland still isn't sure what happened that day. "Probably a grenade," he said. "People just look for something official to attach to it — a booby trap works, too." The rehab could have been more painful, but Ferland had someone to write, or chat, with. Ferland met Sandy Green the day before he shipped out in 1969. The meeting lasted only three minutes, but it sparked something special. They wrote letters back and forth between Phoenix and Vietnam daily before the injury. Fer-

land recorded his messages on tape later, Sandy told a newspaper reporter through those letters." Despite the challenge of rehabilitation and learning to use a wheelchair when Ferland returned to the United States, the two were engaged by November 1970. Before long, the couple were married and Ferland and Sandy had three daughters. "He has such an amazing sense of humor about his old wooden legs or let me bring you some sense of humor about life, but could you let me know if you ever we wanted to do, he would support us," Molly said. "He was never afraid to show off them in for show and tell. He has this be just as serious if he needed to be." The Ferlands had a normal suburban life. They lived in a two-story home, and the girls never felt the least bit different. "His big thing was that what- ever we wanted to do, he would support us," Molly said. "While he didn't was always told to do what I loved."



The family lost Sandy in 2012. "He's a really good father. After she passed, he's kept himself really busy — not an unhealthy kind of busy, but in very positive ways. He is really, really good at coping with setbacks." His latest setback came from a less dire incident. In recent years, he picked up a passion for sports. Again, Ferland doesn't dwell on his injury, but a fall in a recent tennis match forced him off his prosthetics for a while. The injury put the double amputee back in a wheelchair. But Ferland has already begun planning when he'll be back on two feet — perhaps in time to receive his award.

Ferland's legal career began in 1975 in Phoenix where he practiced in the public and private sectors. In time, he picked up the label "Arizona's first environmental lawyer." "I have always been passionate about nature," Ferland said. "We represent nature, and we need to have a mechanism to protect it." Ferland received such acclaim as being recognized by the international *Who's Who of Environmental Lawyers* and named the *Best Lawyers'* environmental lawyer of the year. Some saw his work as helping limit regulation or liabilities for polluters.

Ferland brushes off the critics with a smile. Even after beginning his "retiring process" more than a year ago, Ferland asked himself a question about his duty to serve. "What can I do for my fellow veterans?" He found that basic legal needs plagued veterans — child support, divorce papers and custody battles. "Who can speak for that vet in a hospice bed?" Ferland said. "That's a real problem that I found. These kind of problems are widespread." Free legal clinics became the answer. Working with the Disabled American Veterans and the Arizona Disabled Veterans Foundation, the clinics connected disabled veterans with lawyers. "We were basically at capacity every clinic we held this past year. We've already helped over 300 veterans, and that doesn't include their spouses." "We didn't have the money to pay an attorney, and we were so excited with the result. It was a blessing," Jack Moore said. "I think there are thousands more military people out there that don't have money at all. This clinic is meant for them." Norman Fulton, legal director for the clinic, has worked alongside Ferland throughout the organization of the legal clinics. "Matching a veteran to these lawyers used to be impossible," Fulton said. "Most of the Bar associations in the past could only get you a phone number, but these legal clinics now are getting veterans and lawyers together at a specific location." At the clinics, he also observed Ferland's work ethic. "First, he has a life-altering disability, followed by an amazing legal career, and now, he goes on to make an even bigger difference in the lives of other veterans,"