

# Volunteer of the Month

## March 2017

*Bob Short*



Bob Short is the Buddy-to-Buddy March 2017 Volunteer of the Month! Bob first trained into the program in July 2010 and is one of the program's longest continuously serving volunteers. Not only has he done outstanding work assisting numerous veterans, Bob has done a tremendous job recruiting many other volunteers. Because he excels as a volunteer, Bob has also served as a Buddy-to-Buddy Regional Coordinator and Training Coordinator.

Both Bob's father and older brother had served in the military and he wanted to do the same. After high school, he attended West Point with the intent of becoming a career military officer. After nearly two years of studying there, he decided that he no longer wanted to pursue military service as a career but knew he wanted to serve. He went to his local draft board and volunteered. Bob was sent directly to Vietnam as an infantryman, starting as a rifleman and later serving as a squad leader. He finished his time in Vietnam as an instructor helping to orient and train new arrivals.

After his 18 months in Vietnam, Bob completed his military service and attended Illinois State University where he earned a Bachelor's in Industrial Technology and a Master's in Occupational Health and Safety. He then worked for Alcoa, an aluminum manufacturer, for five years, and then for the Upjohn Company (now Pfizer) for 30 years. He managed health and safety operations, human resources, and maintenance operations. He also earned a Master's of Business Administration from Western Michigan University.

Bob retired in 2009 and spent about a year taking various classes before deciding that he wanted to find meaningful volunteer opportunities to fill his time. He found a description of Buddy-to-Buddy in a local volunteer organization publication and applied. Bob was drawn to the program because he wanted to help Post-9/11 veterans in a way that he and fellow Vietnam veterans had not been helped. "I had a passion for veterans, especially after watching young veterans go through this process," he says. Bob was assigned to the 1434<sup>th</sup> Engineering Company at the Battle Creek Armory for a year before becoming a program Regional Coordinator. His contributions to Buddy-to-Buddy are legion, as he has helped countless service members and veterans as well as other volunteers.

Bob says, "It's been very rewarding to help people get on their feet and go in the right direction. I've also made a whole bunch of friends along the way—other volunteers, soldiers I've helped, other providers of veterans services... I tell people regularly when they ask me what I do since retiring that I'm one of the lucky few who have found work in retirement that was even more rewarding than my career."

Bob is a member of the American Legion and the Decatur VFW. He has two daughters and a grandson and was married to his beloved wife Betty for 21 years before she passed away in 2015. Bob enjoys reading, exercising daily, traveling, and spending time with his grandson.

**Thank you for your extraordinary contributions, Bob!**