



## Medal of Honor

OLSON, KENNETH L.



Rank and organization: Specialist Fourth Class, U.S. Army, Company A, 5th Battalion, 12th Infantry, 199th Infantry Brigade (Separate) (Light).

Place and date: Republic of Vietnam, 13 May 1968.

Entered service at: Minneapolis, Minn. Born: 26 May 1945, Willmar, Minn.

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Sp4c. Olson distinguished himself at the cost of his life while serving as a team leader with Company A. Sp4c. Olson was participating in a mission to reinforce a reconnaissance platoon which was heavily engaged with a well-entrenched Viet Cong force. When his platoon moved into the area of contact and had overrun the first line of enemy bunkers, Sp4c. Olson and a fellow soldier moved forward of the platoon to investigate another suspected line of bunkers. As the 2 men advanced they were pinned down by intense automatic weapons fire from an enemy position 10 meters to their front. With complete disregard for his safety, Sp4c. Olson exposed himself and hurled a hand grenade into the Viet Cong position. Failing to silence the hostile fire, he again exposed himself to the intense fire in preparation to assault the enemy position. As he prepared to hurl the grenade, he was wounded, causing him to drop the activated device within his own position. Realizing that it would explode immediately, Sp4c. Olson threw himself upon the grenade and pulled it in to his body to take the full force of the explosion. By this unselfish action Sp4c. Olson sacrificed his own life to save the lives of his fellow comrades-in-arms. His extraordinary heroism inspired his fellow soldiers to renew their efforts and totally defeat the enemy force. Sp4c. Olson's profound courage and intrepidity were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.