



CHARLES H. FRY BULL SIMONS AWARD 2009

The 2009 recipient of the United States Special Operations Command Bull Simons Award is Colonel (ret) Charles H. "Chuck" Fry. Named in honor of Colonel Arthur D. "Bull" Simons, this annual award recognizes an individual who embodies "the true spirit, values, and skills of a Special Operations Warrior."¹ In a career that spanned more than 38 years, COL Fry served the Special Operations community in numerous high-profile assignments, primarily in Latin America.

Born in Princeton, Missouri in 1933, Fry enlisted in the Army on 23 February 1951 and served as a combat infantryman in the Korean War with the 3rd, 25th, and 45th Infantry Divisions. By age 20 it was Sergeant First Class Fry. The young SFC joined U.S. Army Special Forces in 1954, serving with the 77th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, NC and the 10th Special Forces Group in Bad Tolz, Germany as a team sergeant for several operational detachments. SFC Fry was a pioneer in the early days of Special Forces underwater and HALO operations and one of the first HALO jumpmasters. In 1960 SFC Fry applied for Officer Candidate School.

After graduating from the Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Georgia as the Distinguished Honor Graduate on 4 April 1961, the newly commissioned Second Lieutenant became an instructor at the Basic Airborne and Pathfinder courses. In 1963 Fry rejoined Special Forces when Company D, 7th Special Forces Group was sent to Fort Gulick, Canal Zone to be the nucleus of the 8th Special Forces Group (Special Action Force). There he served under COL Bull Simons. In 1966 Captain Fry left Panama for the first of two consecutive combat tours in Vietnam.

Fry commanded an infantry company in the 1st Cavalry Division, before leading the II Corps MIKE Force, 5th Special Forces Group. His final Vietnam assignment was as the battalion executive officer for Lieutenant Colonel Charles A. "Charlie" Beckwith in the 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. CPT Fry returned from

Vietnam in 1969 to attend the Army's Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Following his graduation from CGSC, Major Fry attended the Uruguayan Army's Military Institute for Superior Studies in 1971. He remained afterward as the Intelligence, Operations, and Training Advisor to the Uruguayan Army for three years during its successful counterinsurgency campaign against the Tupamaro urban guerrilla movement. As the commander of 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, Fry's "spectrum analysis" of the threat in Latin America in 1980 showed that El Salvador was in the greatest danger and convinced Army Chief of Staff, General Edward L. Meyer, to retain the 7th SFG on the active Army rolls. After battalion command, LTC Fry was a military advisor in Paraguay, Honduras, and Venezuela. His experience in the hemisphere led to his selection as the commander of Special Operations Command-South in June 1987. As the second SOC-South commander, he created Task Force Black from the theater SOF elements and identified key *Guardia Nacional* targets for Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama in 1989. COL Fry retired on 31 July 1989.

Capitalizing on his Latin American expertise, Fry became a security consultant specializing in hostage negotiations between the Peruvian copper industry and the *Sendero Luminoso* insurgency. Fry was selected to be the U.S. State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council representative in Peru. As a tribute to his life-long commitment to Special Operations, Colonel Charles H. Fry received the Bull Simons Award on 17 February 2009. †

—Kenneth Finlayson

Endnotes

- ¹ United States Special Operations Command, Public Affairs Office News Release No. 09-005, 18 February 2009, Tampa, FL, <http://www.socom.mil/Release/2009/PR09-005.pdf>