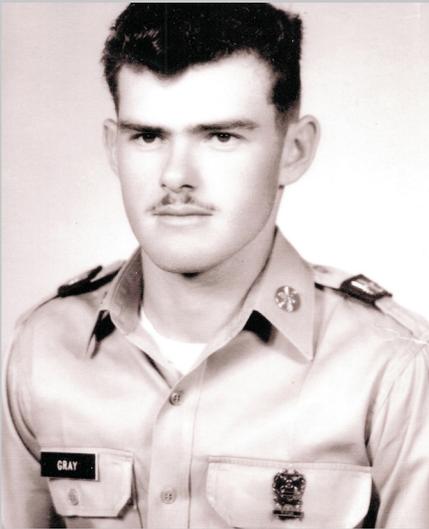


# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**FIRST SERGEANT  
CHARLES L. GRAY**

Inducted 9 August 2012



1SG Charles L. Gray was born in Rowland, North Carolina on 06 June 1943. Leaving high school in the 11th grade, he joined the United States Army. After attending basic training and the U.S. Army Artillery and Missile School, trained as a Sergeant Missile crewman, MOS 171.10, he was assigned to the first active Sergeant Missile Battalion. Although rising to the rank of Sergeant in eighteen months, he was still too young to undergo the Special Forces training; consequently, he volunteered for duty in Korea and was assigned to I Corps, 8th U.S. Army. In 1964, reaching the required age of 21 years old and armed with his GED, he volunteered for Special Forces and was accepted. He attended Airborne training in route to Fort Bragg NC from Korea and entered Special Forces training as a Weapons Specialist in June 1965. Assigned to A Company, 6th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (SFG(A)), Fort Bragg NC, he volunteered for Special Forces Underwater Operations (SCUBA) training. He helped move the Army SCUBA program from Little Creek, Virginia to Key West, FL in February 1966. He was promoted to SSG while attending SCUBA school and after SCUBA school applied for and attended Jumpmaster School.

In July 1966 1SG Gray volunteered and became a member of the nucleus group who stood up the 46th Special Forces Company in Thailand. SSG Gray's second tour in Southeast Asia was with the Command and Control (North), FOB 4, Hatchet Force two years later. He then returned to the Fort Bragg, this time assigned to the 7th SFG(A). In March of 1970, when his SCUBA team participated in a "body recovery" mission at Kerr Lake, NC, they received a letter of commendation from the Governor of North Carolina for their work. Later, he was assigned to the Group SCUBA locker where he was an instructor in "Pre-SCUBA" training.

When the Special Forces Groups were reorganized into battalions, companies, and detachments in the 1970s, he was given the mission to organize a training program for the SADAM teams. Later, COL Shackleton, the 7th Group commander appointed him as the NCOIC of the Group's "Green Light" program. His teams passed all their inspections over the next two years, from all levels of command, with no deficiencies. He was promoted to MSG during this period, assuming the duties of Team Sergeant of ODA 752, a SCUBA team. His team participated in three OCONUS exercises and six weeks of summer training at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. He was selected for the Sergeant's Major Academy as part of the class of January 1980. His final assignment was in Swienfurt, Germany as the 1SG of C Company, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry. In November 1981 he retired from the Army with 20 years active duty.

After retirement 1SG Gray worked for 16 years for the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, and Wildlife Services, serving on the Wildlife Service Explosive Safety program as an explosive instructor. In 2003 he was the Wildlife Service employee of the year and Animal Plant Health Inspection Service employee of the year.

1SG Gray, a lifetime member of the Special Forces Association, while attending the SMA, was instrumental in the establishment of the Special Forces Chapter at El Paso, Texas. He later served as the Vice President of Chapter 1 of the SF Association and currently serves as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Special Forces Association. He is married and lives in Rowland, NC on his "old home place" with his wife of 20 years. They have three daughters and seven grandchildren.

1SG Gray's awards are: Bronze Star, MSM w/oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal w/4 stars, National Defense Service Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Infantry Badge, Combat Divers Badge, and Master Parachutist Badge.