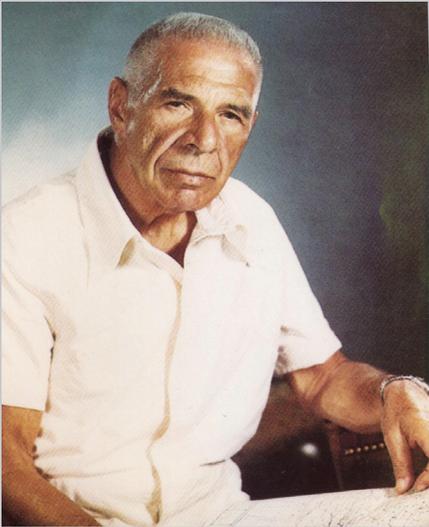


DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**COLONEL ARTHUR D.
"BULL" SIMONS**

Inducted May 2016



Col. Arthur D. Simons was born in New York City on June 20, 1918. Upon graduation from the University of Missouri ROTC program with a degree in journalism, Col. Simons was commissioned a second lieutenant in Field Artillery in 1941. He shipped out with the 98th Field Artillery Battalion to New Guinea in the Pacific Theater. Gen. Walter Krueger, commander of the 6th Army, feeling this unit could be better used to spearhead the push into the Philippines and implement special missions, inactivated the 98th, redesignating it the 6th Ranger Battalion. It was at this time that Simons, commanding Company B, found his calling, participating in several hazardous landings in the Pacific, including leading a demining team in the Leyte Channel before the Philippine invasion.

After the war, Simons returned to civilian life, serving briefly with the New Jersey Highway Patrol. When he returned to the Army in 1951, he was assigned to the Amphibious and Jungle Training Camp, Ranger Training Command at Fort Benning, Georgia, serving as its first commander. He then joined Special Forces in the late 1950s, working for Col. Donald Blackburn. Lt. Col. "Bull" Simons was chosen to lead the first Military Training Team into Laos as "Operation Hot Foot" in July 1969. He returned as commander of the 6th Rotation, known as Operation White Star.

After serving as Brig. Gen. William P. Yarborough's Chief of Staff at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, he assumed command of the newly activated 8th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and Special Actions Force for Latin America, Fort Gulick, Canal Zone, a post he held from 1963 to 1965. From there, he served with the Studies and Observations Group, Military Assistance-Vietnam for a year. When he returned stateside, he again found himself at Fort Bragg, serving in various capacities with XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg.

In 1970, he was drafted to serve as Deputy Commander, Joint Contingency Task Group Ivory Coast, better known as the Son Tay Raid. The Raid, planned to the last detail and executed to perfection, was launched on Nov. 21, 1970. Col. Simons and 59 Raiders attempted to rescue Americans held in a prisoner of war camp located 23 kilometers northwest of Hanoi. After the raid, he returned to XVIII Airborne Corps in charge of the G3 section. Col. Simons retired on Aug. 1, 1971, moving to Red Bay, Florida.

In February 1979, H. Ross Perot, the president of the Texas-based Electronic Data Systems was informed two of his employees had been arrested and the others placed on house arrest in Iran. Knowing of Simons from the Son Tay Raid, he asked Col. Simons to leave retirement to lead a rescue. Simons put together a rescue team comprised of EDS combat veterans. Though none had special operations experience, he trained them intensively on a rescue plan that had to be scrapped when the two arrested men were moved to the heavily fortified Bastille-type Iranian prison in the center of the capital. An Iranian EDS employee infiltrated the Iranian revolutionary militias, bribed the prison commander and created a diversion so the two men could be liberated. Col. Simons safely brought the team 540 miles across Iran to the Turkish border. The key to the escape through Iran was a forged safe-conduct pass that read: "These people are friends of the revolution; please show the courtesy to escort them safely to the border, signed, Commandant of the Tehran Islamic Revolutionary Committee." There were no injuries and no casualties. The Iranian hostage rescue is chronicled in Ken Follett's book *On the Wing of Eagles*.

Some four months after returning from that successful rescue mission, Col. Simons died on May 21, 1979, in Houston, Texas, while undergoing open heart surgery. He is buried at the Barrancas National Cemetery near Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida. He is survived by son, Harry and his family. The Bull Simons Statue sits in the plaza across from the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's headquarters building.