

## Lt Colonel Jesse J. Craddock



Lt Col Jesse J. Craddock entered the US. Army Air Corps as an aviation cadet in 1942. At the completion of pilot training, he received his wings and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant. After advanced training he became an instructor in the North American AT-6 advanced trainer. Later he received his multi-engine and mission qualification as both pilot and instructor in the B-25 Mitchell medium bomber.

In 1944 he was sent overseas and assigned to the 12th Air Force's 57th Bomb Wing. With the 321st Bomb Group's 447th Bomb Squadron, he flew the B-25 from bases in Corsica from November 1944 through June 1945. Most notable missions were bombing runs to destroy the rail lines through the Alps that connected Germany to Italy via the heavily defended Brenner Pass. After the war ended he left active duty with rank of Captain.

In April 1948, Col Craddock joined the newly forming 61st Fighter Wing of the California Air National Guard flying from Oakland, California. As a pilot who had previously instructed in the AT-6,, one of his initial duties was giving re-currency flight instruction in that aircraft to newly assigned fighter pilots before they could fly the unit's P-51D Mustangs, as most had not flown for at least three years. In addition to the AT-6, he also flew the wing's P-51, A-26, and C-47 aircraft.



When the 129th Air Resupply Group was formed in 1954 at Hayward, California, Col Craddock was one of its original members and served as the Group's Operations Officer. In 1963, the group was re-designated as the 129th Air Commando Group. Col Craddock was then given command of the 129th Air Commando Squadron. He commanded the Squadron until his retirement in 1965. While with the 129th he flew the group's C-46, HU-16 and C-119 aircraft.

A successful businessman in civilian life, Col Craddock , maintained an active interest in the 129th. After retiring from the unit, he volunteered some of his spare time to work in the group's photo lab. In addition to being one of those involved in forming this, the 129th Alumni and Heritage Association, he has also served four terms as its President.

He and wife, Bea, now reside in Los Altos, California.