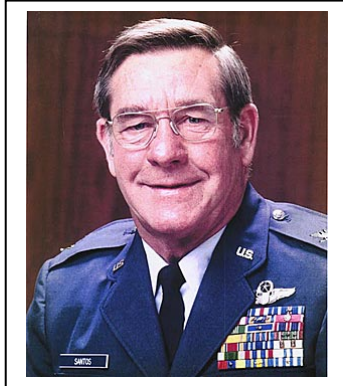


Brig Gen Albert R. Santos

23 February 1918 – 14 May 2007



Brigadier General Albert R. Santos was born February 23, 1918, in San Jose, California. He grew up on the family farm in the Santa Clara Valley. In 1939 he received his first flight instruction at Progressive Air Service, Mountain View, California, and soloed in the 35 horsepower Aerocinn Collegiate. He would trade tractor fuel for flying time in a Fleet biplane.

Initially drafted into the Army Signal Corps, he transferred to the Army Air Corps in February 1942. In January 1943, he received his pilot's wings and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant. In February 1944 he was sent to 8th Air Force in England where he would log 320 flying hours on 66 combat missions in P-51 B "Lois Carolyn" & D "Lois Carolyn II". Returning to the United States in January 1945, his World War II service ended in May 1945.

In 1948 he joined the California Air National Guard's 61st Fighter Wing, later re-designated the 144th Fighter Wing. When the wing moved in 1951 to its new home at Hayward airport, the now Major Santos was its Operations officer. When the Fighter Wing moved in 1954 to Fresno, he elected to stay at Hayward with the newly formed 129th Air Resupply Group. He would later command the Group's 129th Air Resupply Squadron. The 129th Air Resupply Group would later become the 129th Special Operations Group. In 1974, he would become the Group Commander and received a promotion to Colonel.

Shortly after he assumed his command, the Group's mission was changed to Air Force Rescue and was re-designated as the 129th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group. After seeing the unit through its training and attaining combat-ready status, he was assigned to Headquarters California Air National Guard as Deputy Commander in 1977. He was then promoted to Brigadier General. While with the 129th, General Santos had flown the C-46, HU-16, C-119, U-10 and the HC-130 Rescue Hercules. After thirty-six years of military service, he retired in 1978.

During his long and distinguished career, the General had flown twenty-five types of military aircraft, single and multi-engine, land and sea, from piston-powered to turbo-props to jets. On General Santos's uniform below his Command Pilot wings, awarded in 1955, are 21 military decorations received from a grateful nation. Most notable among them are the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Legion of Merit, the Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

General Santos passed away on May 14, 2007, at age 89. He is survived by his wife, Lois; son, Brad; and daughter, Carolyn.

