



Colonel Joseph A. Craft (“Smoke”)
United States Marine Corps

Colonel Joseph A. Craft is a prior enlisted Marine who graduated from George Mason University and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in 1989. Immediately following his winging as a Naval Flight Officer in July 1992, he attended Aircraft Maintenance Officer Course, receiving the secondary MOS of 6002.

In August 1993, Colonel Craft received orders to VMFA (AW)-121, MCAS El Toro, California. With “The Green Knights” through three Western Pacific deployments, he served as Ground Safety Officer, Airframes Officer, Training Officer, and Assistant Operations Officer.

In August 1997, Colonel Craft attended Amphibious Warfare School (AWS) in Quantico, Virginia where he graduated with distinction. During AWS, he attended Tactical Air Control Party School and was designated a Forward Air Controller. He then received orders to The Basic School (TBS) where he served as Air Officer, Staff Platoon Commander, Company Commander, and Instructor Battalion Executive Officer.

In June 2000, Colonel Craft received orders to Marine Aircraft Group 11 where he served as the Weapons and Tactics Instructor before his assignment to VMFA (AW)-225 in March 2001. He served as Operations Officer and later Aircraft Maintenance Officer for “The Vikings” through one Western Pacific deployment and two combat deployments, supporting Operations Noble Eagle, Southern Watch, and Iraqi Freedom. Additionally, he received the 2002, MCAA Robert Guy Robinson, Naval Flight Officer of the Year Award.

After attending Marine Corps Command and Staff College, graduating with distinction and earning a Master of Military Studies, Colonel Craft returned to TBS to serve as the Executive Officer. There he also led the development of the Marine Corps Mentoring Program.

In January 2006, Colonel Craft assumed command of “The Green Knights” and, thirteen months later, deployed the squadron to combat in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08. Colonel Craft relinquished command in December 2007 and joined the Marine Aircraft Group 11 staff as Director of Safety and Standardization. In 2009, Colonel Craft graduated with highest distinction from Naval War College (NWC), earning a Master of Arts degree in National Security and Strategic Studies and receiving the Navy League Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce Award as the top graduate. Following NWC, Colonel Craft was assigned to United States Strategic Command, Plans and Policy Directorate, as Chief, Strategy and Integration Division.

In 2011, Colonel Craft was assigned to Second Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) where he served as Current Operations Officer. From February 2013 to February 2014, he deployed with II MEF(FWD), serving as Senior Adviser to the Operations Coordination Center, Regional in Helmand Province. From July 2014 to July 2016, Colonel Craft commanded Headquarters and Support Battalion, Marine Corps Installations, West – Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. He currently serves as Chief of Staff of Training and Education Command in Quantico, Virginia.

Colonel Craft’s personal decorations include the Legion of Merit with one gold star, Bronze Star, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with two gold stars, Air Medal (Single Mission and with Strike/Flight Lead Numeral Eleven), Aerial Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster, Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal with two gold stars and Combat “V”, and the Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

Colonel Craft is married to the former Cathryn V. O’Flaherty of Leesburg, Virginia. They have seven children.