

Craig Olson

Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy

Opposing Solo

Lieutenant Commander Craig Olson, of Kirkland, Washington, graduated from Juanita High School in 1988 where he lettered in varsity football. He attended Central Washington University, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in aeronautical science and worked as a professional ski instructor during the winters at Alpental Ski School. After graduating in 1991, Craig worked at Kenmore Air as a commercial airline pilot, flying throughout the northwest United States and Canada. In March of 1994, he reported to Officer Candidate School at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Florida, and was commissioned an ensign in August 1994.

Craig completed primary flight training at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, and transferred to NAS Kingsville, Texas, for intermediate and advanced jet training, flying the new T-45 Goshawk at Training Squadron 22 (VT 22.) He earned his wings of gold in April 1996. Craig remained with VT 22 as an instructor pilot in the T-45, as a Selectively Retained Graduate (SERGRAD). In April 1997 he reported to Strike Fighter Squadron 125 (VFA 125), at NAS Lemoore, California, for replacement pilot training in the F/A-18 Hornet.

In January 1998, Craig reported to the VFA 22 "Fighting Redcocks." While there he completed two sets of work-ups and a six-month Western Pacific deployment aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Carl Vinson* (CVN 70), flying combat missions in support of *Operation Southern Watch*. During his tour with VFA 22, Craig served as schedules officer, aircraft division officer, air-to-air weapons training officer, and landing signal officer.

In January 2001, Craig reported to Strike Fighter Squadron 122 (VFA 122) "Flying Eagles" also based at NAS Lemoore, as an F/A-18E/F Super Hornet instructor pilot. While at VFA 122, Craig served as a landing signal officer, T-34 program phase head and ground safety officer.

He has accumulated more than 2,400 flight hours and 296 carrier arrested landings. His personal decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, three Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals and various other service and unit awards.