

Robert C. "Ole" Olsen  
Ottumwa, Iowa, Pre-Flight Class 4-46



Bob Olsen solos a PB-4Y at PNS – January 1948.  
[photo by Lou Ives. Someone lets us drive this machinery all by ourselves]

In those days when designated Navy aviators got their wings, they were required to buy them. Most went to the PX and purchased brass wings for \$2.50.

Prior to the designation occasion, all the guys put their wings into a large cardboard box. When the ceremony commenced, the guy who ran the show would reach into the box, pull out a set of wings, willy nilly, pin them on, and mumbling appropriate phrases, would move to the next guy.

On 24 June 1948, a couple dozen of us were lined up to get our wings. Bob "Ole" Olsen, unaware of the collection procedure, had gone into town earlier and purchased a set of 24 caret gold wings for \$24 [out of his monthly Midshipman pay of \$117].

I watched the look on Ole's face when he had to put his 24 caret wings into the box of brass wings.

When he was the one to be designated, his gold wings were not those picked from the box.

The last time I saw Ole, he was running around checking everyone's brass wings to see if he could locate his gold ones.

(story by Lou Ives)