

## *Air Capabilities of the U.S. Navy SEALs* About the Author Captain (SEAL) Norman H. Olson, U.S. Navy (Retired)



Captain Olson, a U.S. Merchant Marine Academy alumnus, graduated from what is now called Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL in East Coast Class 15 in 1955. Six months later, he was designated officer-in-charge of the first detachment of 15 frogmen to attend the U.S. Army's Basic Airborne and Jumpmaster Course at Fort Benning, GA.

In 1959, after serving in UDT-21 for four years, he returned to civilian life. After a period of reflection, he returned to active duty serving at sea as a line officer.

In 1963, Lieutenant Commander Olson took command of UDT-11 and deployed to Southeast Asia and Vietnam where his team conducted combat operations. During the same period, he formed and led the UDT Para-Team (West) that subsequently became the U.S. Navy Parachute Demonstration Team Leap Frogs. In 1967-68, he commanded the U.S. Naval Advisory Detachment Vietnam, where he planned and conducted Maritime Special Operations.

After serving in Vietnam, Commander Olson was assigned as Chief of Staff, Naval Special Warfare Group, ATLANTIC, and in a collateral duty capacity, he formed and led the UDT-SEAL Para-Team (East) that. The team subsequently adopted the name Chuting Stars.

He then graduated from the Naval War College, serving in the Pentagon, and then was deep selected to the rank of Captain. His follow-on assignments included Chief of Staff for Operations, Naval Inshore Warfare Command, ATLANTIC, the first Navy SEAL to command a Major Short Insulation, the Naval Amphibious Base Norfolk, Commodore, Naval Special Warfare Group, TWO, and he ended his Navy career as the first Chief of Staff of the newly formed Joint Special Operations Command. Captain Olson retired in 1983 and worked in the private sector for 16 years. Among his civilian accomplishments, he was the Founding Director of the National Navy UDT/SEAL Museum (now Director Emeritus).

In 2005, at age 74, with 2,200 jumps in his log book, Captain Olson fulfilled the last phase of his parachuting career. He made his 4,000th freefall jump on March 14, 2011, his 80th birthday, and participated in a clean 30-way formation, completed at 9,000 feet. He was recognized for attaining 60-hours in freefall, and being inducted into the Jumpers Over Eighty Society (JOES). At the drop zone, he was irreverently referred to as the "Sky Fossil!"

Captain Olson is a life-long member of the U.S. Parachute Association (#307), License C-1998 and D-1062, and has ratings as a USPA Jumpmaster, Rigger, and Instructor. He has qualifications in the military airbornes of the Republics of Greece, Germany, Vietnam and Thailand.

