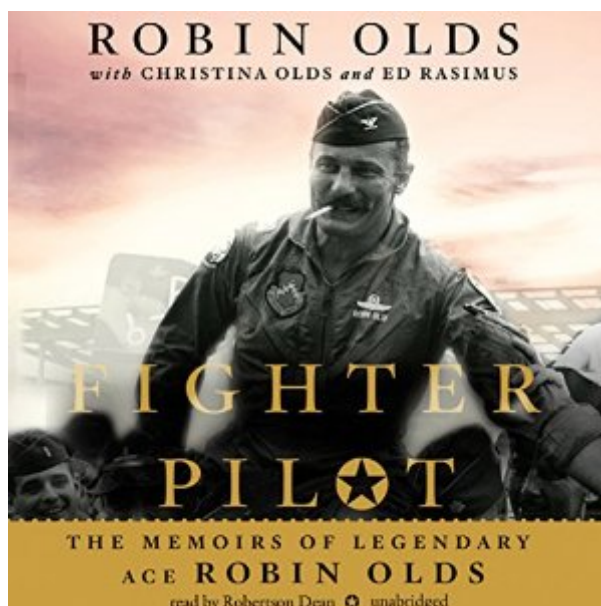


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# Fighter Pilot: The Memoirs Of Legendary Ace Robin Olds



## Synopsis

A larger-than-life hero with a towering personality, Robin Olds was a graduate of West Point and an inductee in the National College Football Hall of Fame for his All-American performance for Army. In World War II, Olds quickly became a top fighter pilot and squadron commander by the age of 22—a double ace with 12 aerial victories. But it was in Vietnam where the man became a legend. He motivated a dejected group of pilots by placing himself under junior officers and challenging them to train him properly. He led the wing with aggressiveness, scoring another four confirmed kills and becoming a rare triple ace. With his marriage to Hollywood actress and pin-up girl Ella Raines, his nonregulation mustache and penchant for drink, Olds was a unique individual whose story is one of the most eagerly anticipated military books of the year. Christina Olds, the daughter of Robin Olds, holds a B.A. in English and creative writing from Vassar, is a member of the Air Force Association, and is the first honorary lifetime member of the Red River Valley Association. Ed Rasimus is a retired USAF fighter pilot who holds a B.S. in political science and an M.S. in both political science and international relations. He has previously written two books on the Vietnam air war, *When Thunder Rolled* and *Palace Cobra*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a substantial book (about 400 pages) about the life of one of the most famous fighter pilots of all time, Robin Olds. It is largely a compilation of Olds' diaries, documents, letters, articles, etc, put together by his daughter, Christina Olds, after Robin's death in 2007. Indeed, before he died, Robin and Christina were able to share a fair amount of time together in preparation for the completion of

his unfinished memoirs. Appropriately, the book is written in the first person. It's a well written book, not because it contains highly polished writing (it doesn't), but rather because it reads as you'd expect it to read coming from a maverick fighter-pilot. (I was fortunate to hear Robin Olds speak a number of times, and this book is true to his rather abrupt style of speaking.) The book begins right where you'd expect a fighter pilot to begin--in the air, in combat ("We had been taking the war to Hitler...")--but then settles back to develop Olds' life story, starting from the beginning. His mother died when he was four, and he grew up the son of an Army officer. (There was no Air Force at that time.) The reader learns about his interest in football (6' 2", captain of his high school team, later played for West Point--including once in front of 100,000 fans at an Army - Navy game, back when that game was a big event to all sports fans). The heart of this book, like the main theme in his life, is flying, especially in conflict. Olds flew P-38s and later transitioned to the marvelous P-51 (with the Merlin engine) during World War II. On his second P-51 training flight he almost crashed the aircraft trying to land (they didn't call it the Mustang for nothing).

In a word-AWESOME!!! This is the incredible story of one of, if not "the" greatest combat flying wing commanders that has ever graced our presence. Robin Olds was a larger-than-life character who flew hard, fought hard and played hard. Imagine a story where a young boy grows up with many of American aviation's greats (Billy Mitchell, Tooeey Spaatz, Hap Arnold, and Jimmy Doolittle) hanging around his father's house. With all that influence and exposure, it's no wonder Robin Olds developed into a great fighter pilot and a great combat leader. Then imagine that young boy being accepted into West Point. Robin played football at West Point (offense and defense), becoming an All-American. He then went off to pilot training, and made it into World War II, becoming an ace in both the P-38 Lightning and the P-51 Mustang (13 aerial victories, and 107 combat missions). But the story does not stop there. Robin Olds went on to marry a beautiful movie star, and take command of one of the RAF's first jet squadrons. Somewhere in between here and Vietnam, he found time to father two beautiful daughters; the loves of his life. Robin Olds' combat leadership in the 8th Tac Fighter Wing in Vietnam is legendary. He went on to shoot down four MiGs, bringing his total count to 17 aerial victories. After fighting his way through 152 missions, Robin Olds would become Commandant of Cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Sound too good to be true? Well not for Robin Olds. 'Fighter Pilot' is action packed from the beginning. Readers will experience the thrill of flying into battle in some of the greatest American fighter planes. And they will learn the finer points of great combat leadership. What a great movie this book would make. The efforts of Robin's daughter Christina also cannot be overstated.

Like the Paula Cole song asks: "Where have all the cowboys gone?" "...where is (our) John Wayne?" "...where is (our) Lone Ranger?" Gen. Robin Olds was not only a hero because of his valor in a cockpit, but his willingness to buck the conventional wisdom of USAF and political leadership...even to the detriment of his own career. The words LEGEND and HERO are often misused in describing actors, sports participants, and musicians, but those words are apropos when describing Gen. Olds. What a life! Gen Olds' life could fill 10 other fighter pilots' .....from growing up the son of a pioneer in US military aviation and being surrounded by the likes of Spaatz, Rickenbacker, Arnold, Turner, Mitchell ect. What role models to mold a young fighter pilot.....it couldn't have been better than that! Over his life, he excelled by his own makings, not by riding coat tails. Whether it was being an All American at West Point or becoming a leader and ace at an age most would consider still wet behind the ears. Tales of both his aerial battles and the battles with those on the ground are riveting. It lets us see the steel willed determination of a man who truly believed in "lead by example" and "never ask those you lead to do anything you weren't willing to do." It's obvious the men he led, loved him and were willing to go to the Gates of Hell for him.....that is something that can't be demanded or ordered.....it is earned. Throughout this book we get glimpses of his home life and his marriage to the beautiful movie star, Ella Raines. Though he (or Christina) didn't go into depth about it, we got enough to know things weren't always blue skies and sunny days on the Olds' home front which made an extraordinary life seem realistic...

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