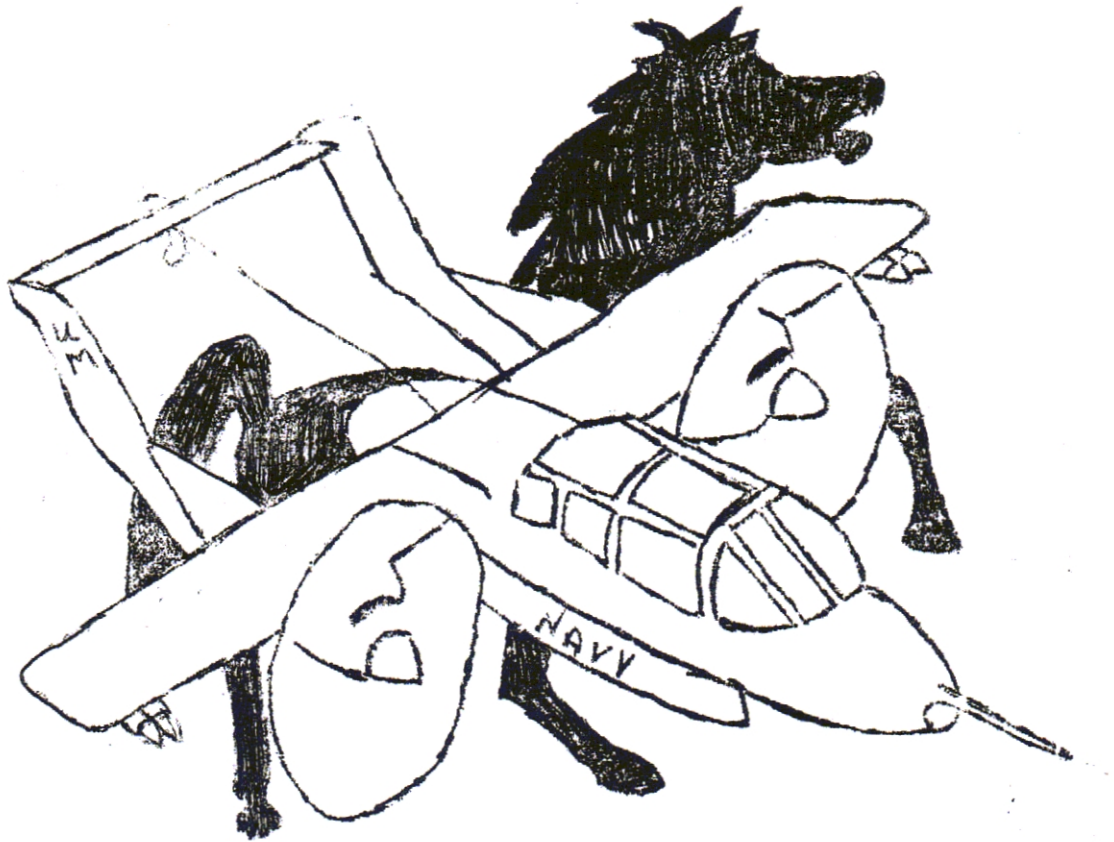


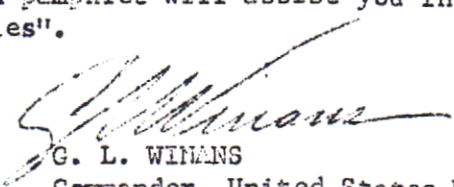
OV-10A (BLACK PONY) INFORMATION SHEET



THE OV-10A "BRONCO"

OV-10A (BLACK PONY) INFORMATION SHEET FOR PER DRIVERS, WHIFFLES, SEALS,
STAFF PLAINERS, ETC

The Navy OV-10A "BRONCO" aircraft was sent to the Mekong Delta to provide an in-house Navy asset of fixed wing air support for river operations in III & IV Corps CTZ. We of Light Attack Squadron FOUR (VAL-4) hope that this information pamphlet will assist you in understanding and using the "Black Ponies".



G. L. WINANS

Commander, United States Navy
Commanding Officer
Light Attack Squadron FOUR

THE OV-10A BRONCO

The Navy OV-10A "BRONCO" aircraft was sent to the Mekong Delta to provide additional air support for river operations. The Squadron, VAL-4, began forming in the States in late 1968, was commissioned 3 JAN 1969, and arrived in country and commenced combat operations in April 1969. The "BRONCO" is a twin engine fixed wing aircraft and easily identified by the twin booms and high tail. We emphasize fixed wing because there is considerable difference between "BRONCO" flying and the helicopter flying of the "Seawolves" of HA(L)-3. The "BRONCOS" of VAL-4 are painted dark green. On occasion you might see a grey OV-10A. The grey OV-10A's belong to the USAF and are used strictly as a FAC (forward air controller). They are not used in an attack role as are the "Black Ponies".

Lets talk about each weapon:

(1) ZUNI (5" FFAR). The ZUNI is the big stick of the Black Ponies. It is a supersonic unguided rocket, and the reason that it is called a Folding Fin aircraft rocket (FFAR) is that the guiding fins are folded in the rocket and do not unfold for rocket stability until the rocket is launched. The ZUNI is a very reliable rocket, but in the event a fin does not unfold, the rocket can go astray, and for this reason, the pilots add an additional safety factor when considering lateral distance to friendly positions.

The warhead on the ZUNI weighs 48 pounds, and the "crack" sound you hear after a ZUNI has been launched comes from the ZUNI breaking the sound barrier.

The types of warheads/fuzes used on the ZUNI fall roughly into three groups; (1) impact detonating, (2) delayed detonation, and (3) air detonation (VT). The impact detonating ZUNI is a general all around rocket, and is good for busting up tree lines and structures. The second type, delayed detonation, allows the ZUNI to penetrate the ground prior to exploding, and is excellent for dug in targets such as bunkers and tunnel complexes. The third type, the air burst (VT) explodes the ZUNI about 50 feet in the air, thus scattering the blast and scrapnel over a large area. The VT fuzing is excellent for personnel in an open field and for sampans.

Each aircraft in the flight will normally have from eight to twelve ZUNI's. Normal release altitude is about 2200 feet but it can be released as low as 1500 feet. For safety reasons, 200 meters from target impact to nearest friendly position is desired, although it can be worked as close as 75 meters when the friendlies are advised to keep their heads down, and the target is well marked or defined.

The ZUNI is a potent weapon and provides a mighty punch in air support for the river forces.

(2) 2.75" FFAR. The 2.75" rocket, with either a nine or sixteen pound warhead, is similar to the rocket used by the Seawolves. The Black Ponies may carry up to 38 2.75" rockets. The 2.75" rocket is not as accurate as the ZUNI, and is mainly used for marking targets and for H&I type fire. It is also used to put additional ordnance on target when working a good hot contact. The same safety parameters for the ZUNI are used by the 2.75" rocket.

(3) M-60 Machine Gun. Each OV-10A has four 7.62mm internal mounted machine guns, with 500 rounds of ball ammunition and tracers loaded per gun. The M-60s are used primarily for suppression fire and for H&I type fire. The machine guns are accurate and can be worked as close as 40 to 50 meters from friendly positions. Unless absolutely necessary, pilots will not over fly the friendlies on strafing runs because the spent brass is ejected from the bottom of the airplane. We understand that spent brass falling on the boats tends to upset the crew. A strafing run normally commences at 1500 feet and stops at 800 feet.

(4) SHILLI MINI GUN. The SUU-11 mini gun is a compact and beautiful weapon, and is the same mini gun that Spooky, Shadow, and the Cobras have. It looks like a gatling gun with its six revolving barrels and shoots 7.62mm. ammo at 6000 rounds per minute. The weapon is not as accurate as the M-60, but its great fire power is tremendous for suppression of fire fights and for hosing down troops in an open area. Employment of the mini gun is similar to the M-60, and spent brass is also ejected overboard.

(5) Night Flares. During night operations, each OV-10A carries four pairs of parachute flares (for reliability, the flares are fired two at a time). Each individual flare burns over three minutes, and produces two million candle power. Our rules of engagement call for use to use flares during night operations. We realize that flares hurt night vision, and that the light of the flares may give away an ambush site. We will normally try to receive permission from the surface units prior to using flares. The use of flares is a matter of mutual agreement between the surface unit and the Black Pony flight leader. Of course, the flares are available to the surface unit if he needs a flare drop to illuminate a target area.

BRONCO TACTICS

The OV-10A's always fly in a flight of two for the same reasons the boat patrol with two; flexibility and self-protection. The fancy high-jinks you see the OV-10A perform when they roll in on a target are not copied from a John Wayne World War II movie. The maneuvers serve a definite purpose. Unlike the Seawolves who have flexible guns, all the guns and rockets in the OV-10A are fixed (non-moveable) and the pilot aims the airplane at the target with the aid of a gunsight in the cockpit. He aims the airplane the same way one aims a gun. The fancy octa-fluger on at the beginning of the roll-in has two reasons. One, it confuses people on the ground shooting at you (making yourself a difficult target to hit), and second it aims the aircraft at the target. Coming "down the chute" the pilot makes small corrections with the airplane to align himself with the intended target, releases his rockets, or shoots his guns, and pulls off target. The wingman normally rolls in right after the leader.

A second tactic used by the Black Ponies is the overhead circle. This is an air cover maneuver where two OV-10As fly in a circle over a target area on opposite sides of the circle. This maneuver is used when continuous air cover of a target is desired, such as a boat aground, boats transiting a narrow waterway, or inserting/extracting troops. The airplanes are on the opposite side of the circle so that one aircraft is always in a position to roll in on a target.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FIXED WING AND HELO OPERATIONS

There are several distinct differences between fixed wing operations and helo operations, and a short explanation of these differences hopefully will assist you in better using the air assets available to the Brown-water Navy.

The helo, due to its design, does not need a runway to take off and land from, and for this reason can operate off LULs and unimproved areas. The OV-10A, being a fixed wing, needs a runway of considerable length in order to take off with the heavy ordnance loads the Black Ponies carry. The helo can normally get airborne faster due to it not having taxi to take off position. In a scramble situation, therefore, the helos will normally be on station first if both the "Black Ponies" and Sea Wolves are scrambled at the same time due to the more numerous Sea Wolves detachments and closer location to the target areas. The combination of helos and OV-10As working over a target is a pleasurable sight. The helos will normally work closer to the ground with flatter gunnery runs, while the OV-10As will work higher with steeper gunnery runs.

The OV-10A offers faster airspeed for quicker reaction time on distant targets, and has more staying on station time plus heavier ordnance. Both weapons systems are here for use in support of ground units. But the differences should be noted. The helos will not overfly the target, but the OV-10As will due to the delivery technique necessary in fixed wing aircraft. The OV-10A does not have side door gunners, and depends on speed and maneuverability to stay out of enemy fire. The on station time and heavy ordnance loads of the OV-10A allow the "Black Ponies" to hit and hold, hit and hold. This is particularly effective in chasing evading troops and multiple target areas.

HOW TO GET BLACK PONIES

The Ponies run patrols through out the Delta region. The patrols check in with the NOCs first, and if there is no action in the NOC AO, they check in with the Sectors. If you have a ballgame going and need air support, call the NOC and he will scramble the OV-10As. If you have a target worth zapping, but not worth a scramble, call the NOC and ask if a Pony Patrol will be in your area. If so, we'll be happy to come in your area and unload a bit.

TARGET IDENTIFICATION

Target identification and location of closest friendlies are two important items for any air strike. Daytime target identification is not too difficult, but friendly positions must be known. In the case of boats, its simple because you can see the boats. Often, however, boats put troops ashore, and the ground troops must be able to identify their position. At night, any sort of illumination that will pinpoint the target such as flares, tracers, is appreciated. The name of the game is putting ordnance on THE target, and the more assistance you can provide, the better the results.

PONIES FOR YOU

We hope this little description helps you better understand the OV-10A "Bronco" and its use by VAL-4's "Black Ponies". Any time you are in our area, drop by. We'll give you a closer look at the bird, and hopefully answer any questions. For further information, write:

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