

Light Attack Squadron History (VAL)

VAL-4

Lineage

Established as Light Attack Squadron FOUR (VAL-4) on 3 January 1969.

Disestablished on 10 April 1972. The first squadron to be assigned the VAL-4 designation.

Squadron Insignia and Nickname

The squadron's first insignia was approved by CNO on 7 March 1969. Colors for the Yellow Jacket



The yellow jacket wasp was the squadron's first insignia design.

insignia were: a red background outlined in black; a white scroll outlined in black with black lettering; black stylized aircraft with yellow contrails; the yellow jacket had silver wings with black markings, a brown body outlined in black, the head and stinger tail were yellow with black markings; the lightning bolt from the tail was black and the explosion was yellow outlined in black.



The squadron's second insignia, the Black Ponies, is the one that is best known.

On 14 July 1971 CNO approved a modification to the squadron's insignia. Colors for the Pony insignia were: a red background outlined in black; a white scroll outlined in black with black lettering; the stylized aircraft were black with yellow contrails; the pony was black.

Nickname: Black Ponies, 1971–1972.

Chronology of Significant Events

Sep 1968: VS-41 was assigned the responsibility of training personnel scheduled for assignment to VAL-4.

Oct 1968: VS-41 received its first OV-10A Broncos for training VAL-4 personnel.

Jan 1969: VAL-4 was established with the mission of conducting surveillance and offensive operations in support of river patrol craft, as well as providing air support for SEALs and combined U.S. Army, Navy and South Vietnamese operations.

Mar 1969: VAL-4 was permanently based at the Naval Support Activity Detachment Airfield, Binh Thuy, South Vietnam, for combat operations. The squadron had two detachments, Det A assigned to Vietnamese Air Force Base, Binh Thuy and Det B at the Vung Tau, Army Airfield.

19 Apr 1969: The squadron began its first combat operations, flying air support of the Naval River Forces in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. The missions included normal patrol, overhead air cover, scramble alert and gunfire/artillery spotting.

Apr–May 1970: VAL-4's OV-10A Broncos participated in combined South Vietnamese and U.S. Riverine Force operations designed to neutralize sanctuary bases in the Mekong River Corridor in support of U.S. and South Vietnamese strikes against enemy sanctuaries in Cambodia.



A OV-10A Bronco taking off from Vung Tau, Republic of Vietnam, on a combat mission, June 1969.

1 Jul 1970: With the completion of new facilities for VAL-4 on Vietnamese Air Force Base Binh Thuy and the consolidation of VAL-4's operating units, the squadron's Detachment B was disestablished.

31 Mar 1972: The squadron conducted its last combat mission prior to its disestablishment on 10 April 1972.

Home Port Assignments

<i>Location</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
NAS North Island	03 Jan 1969
NSA Binh Thuy, South Vietnam	23 Mar 1969

Commanding Officers

	<i>Date Assumed Command</i>
CDR Gilbert L. Winans	03 Jan 1969
CDR Martin S. Schuman	06 Sep 1969
CDR Verle W. Klein	06 Mar 1970
CDR Leonard M. Rausch	03 Sep 1970
CDR Robert W. Porter	03 Mar 1971



A squadron OV-10A Bronco in flight, 1969.

Aircraft Assignment

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
OV-10A	03 Jan 1969
YOV-10D	Jun 1971

Air Wing Assignments

<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Tail Code</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
VS-41	UM	Sep 1968
COMFAIRWESTPAC	UM	Mar 1969

Unit Awards Received

<i>Unit Award</i>	<i>Inclusive Dates Covering Unit Award</i>	
NUC	01 Jun 1964	01 Jun 1968
	01 Apr 1971	31 Oct 1971
MUC	26 Mar 1969	03 Sep 1969
RVNGC	21 Nov 1968	21 Nov 1970

Unit Awards Received for VAL-4 Detachment B

<i>Unit Award</i>	<i>Inclusive Dates Covering Unit Award</i>	
NUC	14 Jun 1969	12 Aug 1969
PUC	24 Jun 1969	28 Feb 1970



Three squadron OV-10A Broncos on a combat mission over the Mekong Delta, circa 1971. Note the squadron's Black Ponies insignia on the tail.