

# Vietnam's Fiercest Pilots "The Black Ponies" Celebrate 50th Anniversary as their Entire OV-10 Squadron Nears Restoration

*Mike Manclark restoring historical OV-10s to honor the group that killed more enemy & saved more lives with close-air support than all naval squadrons combined*

CHINO, CALIFORNIA, USA, April 12, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Chino, CA – Some of the fiercest pilots to come out of the Vietnam War reunited this week in Pensacola, FL to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of their formation. And they will soon be celebrating an entirely recommissioned squadron of the aircraft they made famous – The OV-10 Bronco. Backed by their propeller-driven Broncos, the Black Ponies were the go-to fighting force for close combat operations in Vietnam, supporting counter insurgency forces of all stripes, including the Navy SEALs.



One of the historical OV-10 Broncos is being fully restored in Chino, CA

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These pilots have supported America during some of our most pivotal moments, and we want to honor, respect and protect that legacy by building a flying memorial.”

*Mike Manclark*

Known for flying "down and dirty, low and slow," they killed more of the enemy and saved more allied lives with close-air support than all the other naval squadrons combined during the three years they saw action.

“These pilots have supported America during some of our most pivotal moments, and we want to honor, respect and protect that legacy by building a flying memorial,” said Mike Manclark, Founder of [The Mangic Foundation](#) and the [OV-10 Squadron](#) project. “Just over a year ago I was

appalled to learn that seven of these historic aircraft were just wasting away in pieces at a storage facility. So we bought every one we could find, mobilized a team and trucked them back to Chino, California where we’ve been meticulously restoring them ever since. The first one is schedule to take flight in just a few more weeks, followed by an entire squadron in the coming months that we’re hoping can share the Black Ponies story across America.

Known as one of the coolest and most intriguing warbirds in history, the OV-10 Bronco was originally introduced in the 1960s for close air support in Vietnam. But because of their versatility, these warbirds went on to tackle just about every mission an airplane could have for the USAF, the Marines, the Navy, SEALs and a number of other foreign countries. In fact, many of the Broncos went on fight in Desert Storm, combat cocaine in South America, and punish ISIS targets in the Middle East before reaching their eventual retirement.

Those aircraft are now in the skilled hands of the restoration team at Chino Airport. Known as

some of the best of the best in the warbird business, the Chino team is home to one of the world's last remaining experts in hand formed aluminum sheet metal, fabricating Plexiglas canopies, and rebuilding engines long out of service.

"We would like nothing better than to see any of those Vietnam vets get in the air again. There is a legion of people out here pulling for them. So we're thrilled to hear they'll be reuniting with each other, but also with their old aircraft in the weeks ahead," says Jim Hodgson, Executive Director of the Fort Worth Aviation Museum.

Harry Gintzer, a former Vietnam vet and OV-10 pilot with the Navy's famed Black Ponies is just one of many fans of the Bronco return to flight program, and one aircraft in particular - White Lightning. "I actually christened that name while serving in Vietnam," says Gintzer. "The Broncos were white at that time, and my wife was from South Carolina, a place well known for lightning. So it seemed like the perfect name and it stuck. I put in 162 missions in that aircraft and am thrilled that Mike Manclark and his team will be bringing it back to life."



Mike Manclark holds a technical illustration of the original OV-10

#### About The Mangic Foundation

Launched in 2012 by successful entrepreneur Mike Manclark, the MANGIC Foundation believes in hands-on work that gives people a hand up and making a tangible difference in the lives of those they help. Every year, the MANGIC foundation supports dozens of non-profits and causes that support children, armed forces and first responders, along with families in need. For more information on the MANGIC Foundation and how you can get involved, visit [www.mangic.com](http://www.mangic.com).

#### About OV-10 Squadron

Committed to the restoration and continued support of flying the OV-10 Bronco, the OV-10 Squadron is an organization that is rebuilding a squadron of seven OV-10D Broncos at Chino Airport in Southern California (KCNO). The aircraft meticulously rebuilt and repaired to the highest standards of restoration and will ultimately serve as a flying memorial at airshows across America.

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