

MEDEVAC HELICOPTERS DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

In the context of war, medevac, or medical evacuation, provides en route care from a battlefield to medical facilities. In the Marine Corps, helicopters are the vehicles most often used for medevac operations.

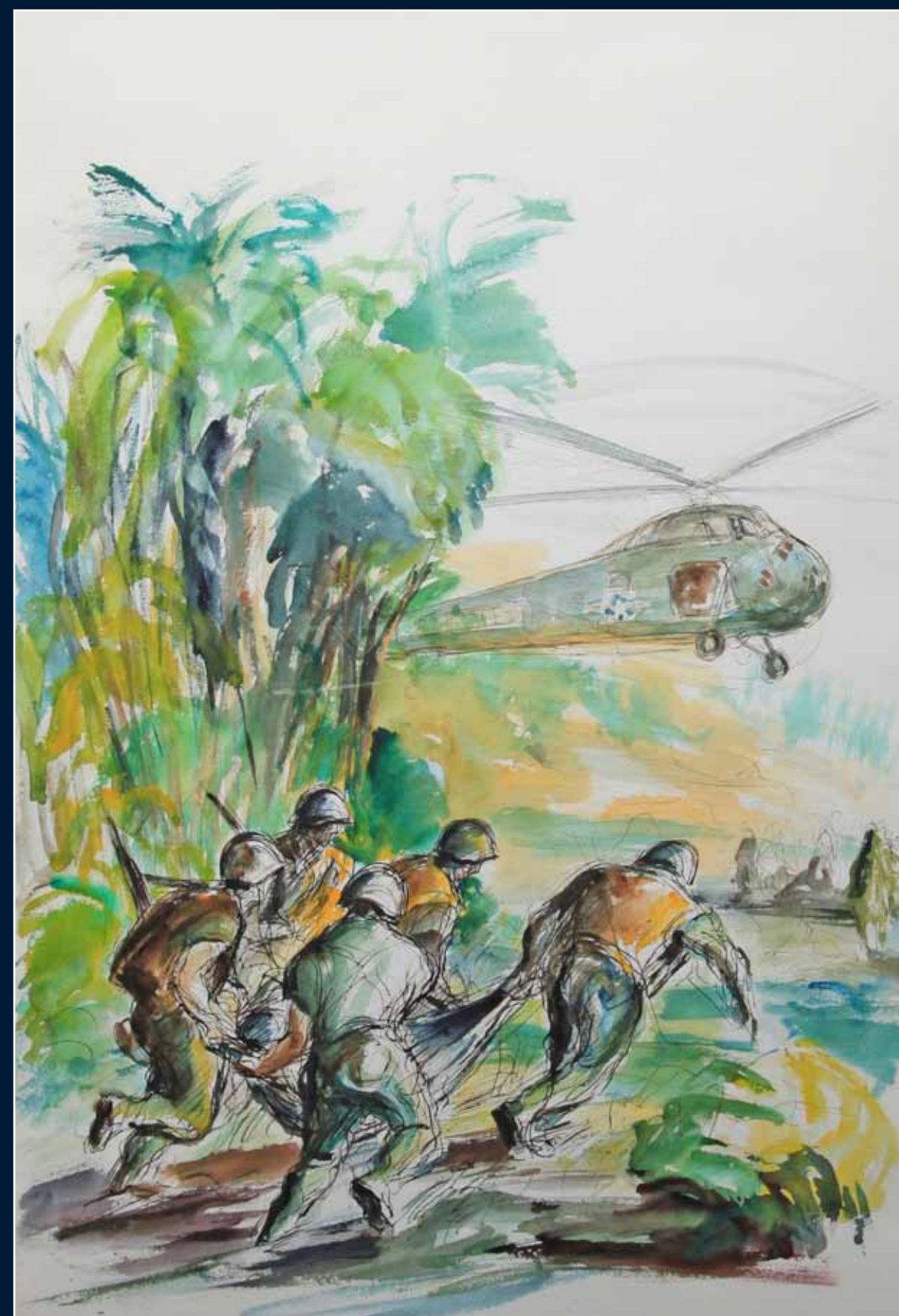
The first efforts were done by the U.S. Army in World War II. By the Vietnam War, helicopters had been modified and improved to prevent losses.

Explore the different types of helicopters and think about how they were used and how they differ from one another.

SIKORSKY UH-34D

A wounded Marine is hurried to a helicopter for medical service. In the background is a Sikorsky UH-34D, which flew about 100 miles per hour.

The Sikorsky was often flown into dangerous landing zones. It was armed and could handle heavy fire.



Whisked to Helicopter, John Groth, 1967
National Museum of the Marine Corps



This is the view out of the door gunner's position from a U.S. Marine Corps Sikorsky UH-34D helicopter over Vietnam, around 1965.

The gunner's M-60 machine gun is in the foreground, another UH-34D is in the background.

BELL UH-1E

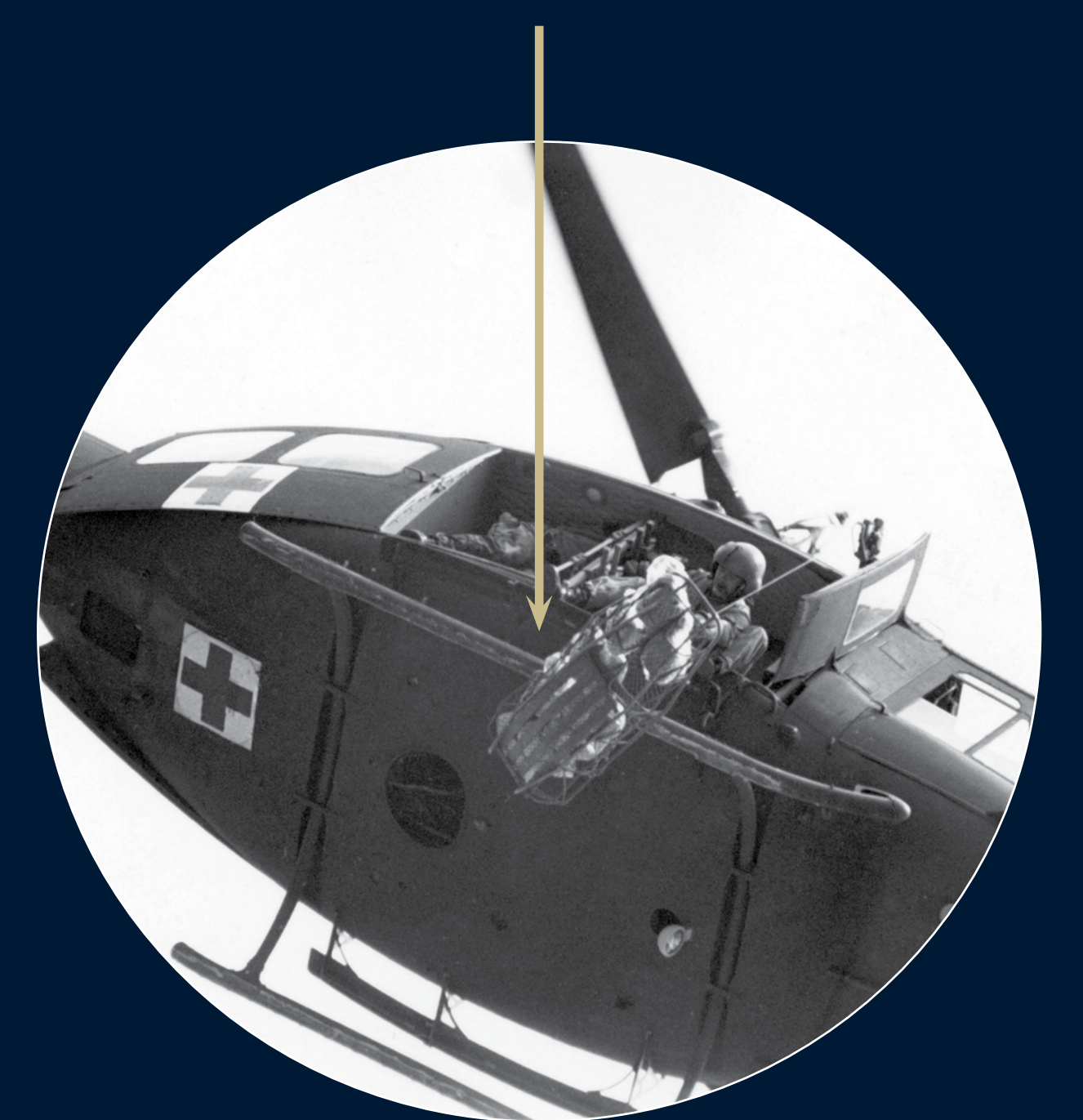


Medevac helicopters were distinguished by the cross and white square.



The Bell UH-1E (also known as the Huey) was first flown on October 7, 1963. This version was modified from the Army's Huey in accordance with Marine Corps regulations. Lighter and faster than the Sikorsky UH-34D, the Huey was often used for gunship missions but also for medevac operations.

A wounded Marine is hoisted while the Huey is in flight.



BOEING CH-46



The Boeing CH-46, nicknamed the "Phrog," was highly reliable and durable. Its large size, over 45 feet long, and its capacity of up to 25 troops, allowed the Phrog to be used in all kinds of operations, from transporting personnel to bringing supplies and ammunition.

Medical evacuations, challenging under any circumstance, were especially dangerous at night. Enemy fire, flying into terrain, or hitting an unseen obstacle in the landing zone posed constant threats.



Night Med-Evac, Sgt. Henry Cassell, USMC, 1969
National Museum of the Marine Corps