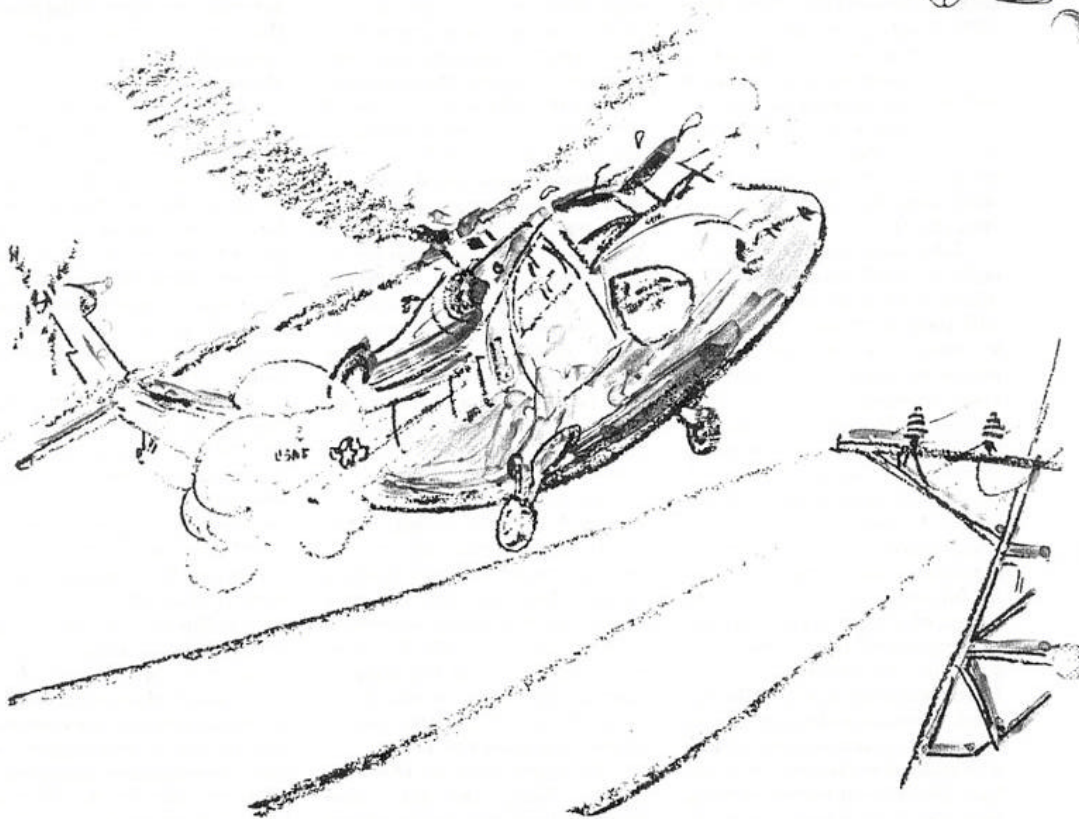


QUICKSTOPPERS



HALON ATTACK

The UH-60 was one of a flight of four taking part in a daytime tactical troop extraction exercise. The helicopter had picked up passengers and was flying at 300 feet AGL over hilly, heavily wooded terrain. As an added bonus, there were numerous high-tension power lines in the area. While the aircraft pressed along at 120 knots, the crew chief turned in his seat and reached to adjust intercom switches for one of the passengers on headset. As he did so, the crew chief unknowingly allowed his arm to rest on a Halon

fire extinguisher mounted on the copilot's seat. Unfortunately, at some point prior to this, the extinguisher safety pin had broken and fallen out. When pressure was applied, the fire extinguisher performed as advertised, spraying the copilot (flying the aircraft) in the face, blinding him. Hearing the copilot's shout, the AC turned toward him and was hit in the left eye with extinguishing agent. Between two pilots, the crew was now down to one good eye and fumes affecting their breathing. The crew chief opened

the gunner's window, clearing the cockpit just as one of the helicopter's sister ships called "wires" over the radio. The one-eyed AC, now flying the helicopter, executed a climbing turn and narrowly missed the rapidly approaching high-tension trap. Shortly thereafter, with the help of its sister ship, the stricken crew made a successful landing at a nearby airfield. Do you suppose the term "flying blind" got started this way?