

rocket launchers and Browning M37 .30-cal. machine guns were mounted to the skid landing gear. Usually, these were within reach of crewmen in the cabin if they malfunctioned. The M37 typically used a 250-round ammunition belt, allowing only 30 seconds of firing time at the gun's firing rate of 500 rounds per minute. Although the nose-mounted 40mm grenade launcher developed at Springfield Armory proved successful, it would appear on later-model Hueys. The same held true for the XM-22 missile system.

Although deliveries of the production HU-1B to the Army didn't begin until March 1961, prototypes were tested with armament during late 1960, concurrent with HU-1A tests. Since the Army had developed a standardized weapons package for the Huey consisting of an 8-tube MA-2 rocket launcher and 7.62mm XM-6 machine gun unit, Bell built the B Model with hard points on the lower fuselage, aft of the cabin. Bell went one step farther by designing and building the XM-156 universal mount, to which a wide variety of ordnance could be attached.

Army aviation officials wasted little time in seeking a larger transport version of the Huey. It had already become apparent that weapons systems would bring the UH-1B up to gross weight, nullifying its use as a transport. And it was becoming more obvious that helicopters would be flying over Southeast Asian jungles. The decision to seek approval in the Pentagon for upgrading the UH-1B coincided with a search for a medium transport helicopter. Some Army officials insisted that they not

venture beyond the UH-1B and instead procure a "filler" aircraft between the UH-1B and a new medium transport. The decision to proceed with an enlarged Huey was an easy one, and the medium transport selected was Boeing Vertol's CH-47 Chinook. Since the Chinook was deemed too heavy for the assault role, the new Huey would get the job, with the Chinook committed to re-supply, artillery movement, and non-combat troop movement.

Bell's B Model, then, would serve not only as the basis for the Army C, Marine E, and Air Force F models, it spawned the first of the long-fuselage Hueys, the UH-1D. Since the Delta was built around the proven B Model, Bell was able to forego much of the development process and lead-time necessary for new mass-produced aircraft. A contract was awarded to Bell in July 1960 for seven YUH-1D prototypes, the first of which flew on 16 August 1961. The stretch of the UH-1D allowed 10 troops, or six litters, to be carried, twice that of the UH-1B. Its 1,100-shp T53-L-9 turbine was soon replaced by the L-11, and later the L-13.

Despite its intended use as an assault transport, both prototype and early production UH-1Ds were tested as weapons platforms. With hard points at the front and rear of the fuselage cabin area, a number of interesting armament systems was seen. However, besides having crew-operated weapons in cabin doorways, Army UH-1Ds, along with the follow-on H Model, seldom served operationally as gunships, earning them the nickname Slick.



The 24-tube XM-3 was widely used during the early days of the Huey helicopter. It is seen here mounted to a UH-1B wearing markings of the Aerial Reconnaissance and Security Troop, D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1963. An auxiliary fuel tank is under the troop seats, the red fabric of which was later changed to sage green. (U.S. Army)



The UH-1C (S/N 64-14102) was a weapons training aircraft, seen here mounting the XM-21 system. Attached to the universal mount is an XM-157 rocket launcher with the M134 minigun mounted on a pylon extension. (U.S. Army)



Outfitted with test instrumentation, Serial Number 64-14102, the second-built UH-1C, is armed with the XM-21 and XM-5 systems. This weapon combination was not used operationally since ammunition loads for both systems exceeded weight and space limitations. Later visible changes in the Charlie model line included a revised engine air intake unit, armored pilot seats, and relocation of the FM homing antennae on the nose. The aircraft's constructor number, 1226, is worn on the vertical blade-type VHF/UHF antenna. (U.S. Army)