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HH-34J "CHOCTAW"

Sikorsky HH-34J "Choctaw"
S/N 148943

Crew: Two
Engine: One Wright R-1820-84 Cyclone radial; 1,525 horsepower
Main rotor diameter: 56 ft 0 in
Length: 46 ft 9 in
Height: 14 ft 3 1/2 in
Weight: empty: 8,410 lbs; max: 14,000 lbs
Speed: max: 123 mph; cruise: 98 mph
Range: 280 miles
Service Ceiling: 9,500 ft
Armament: None
Cost: \$425,000



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This HH-34J, S/N 148943, was originally manufactured as an SH-34J by Sikorsky Aircraft in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and delivered to the U.S. Navy in the 1960s. It was one of fourteen aircraft later transferred from Navy storage to the Air Force as HH-34J Search-And-Rescue ships.

The aircraft was operated by the 304th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Air Force Reserve, located at Portland International Airport, Oregon. It operated with the 304th for the duration of its Air Force service.

There were five rescue squadrons in the Air Force Reserve and three of them (301st ARRS at Homestead AFB, Florida; 302nd ARRS at Luke AFB, Arizona; and 304th ARRS at Portland, Oregon) were assigned the Choctaw as an interim machine in which to transition from the fixed-wing environment of the Grumman HU-16 Albatross to the rotary-wing world of the Air Force's rescue version of the Bell HH-1 Huey.

The two other AFRES units (303rd ARRS at March AFB, California, and 305th ARRS at Selfridge AFB, Michigan) operated the Boeing HC-97G Stratorescuer from 1965 onwards until transition to the Lockheed HC-130H/P Hercules in 1972. The HH-34s retained the auto-hover equipment originally installed for their Navy anti-submarine warfare mission, making them very steady platforms for hoist deployment and recovery of personnel.

This aircraft was returned to MASDC by the Air Force Reserve on 4 February 1974. It was later used as a static display at Luke AFB, Arizona. Hill Aerospace Museum acquired the aircraft from Luke in the late 1980s.

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