

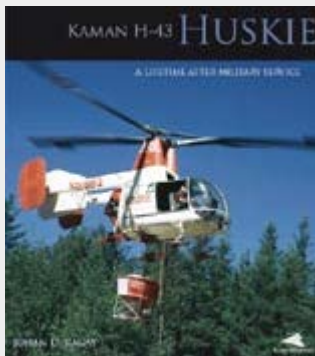


Flash Aviation

Kaman H-43 Huskie- A Lifetime After Military Service

by Johan D. Ragay

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The Kaman H-43 series was a progressive development of the Navy's HOK/HTK twin rotor helicopter series, and was certainly influenced by the German Flettner intermeshing twin rotor helicopters of World War II. Early models were powered by Pratt & Whitney R-1340 radial engines, but later developments were all powered by turbine engines. Appearing about 1950 in Navy service, Air Force versions were first used during the late fifties, with 18 H-43A's followed by 208 turbine- powered H-43B's. These were used primarily for airborne fire suppression and crash rescue. The final production model was the HH-43F, 37 of which were built. Navy versions were eventually re-designated UH-43C and OH-43D. Many were used for rescue operations during the Vietnam conflict.

The first Kaman helicopters were produced for civilian use, especially as crop sprayers. The Korean War spurred military development. Serving with the Air Force and Navy, all turbine powered models were eventually upgraded to HH-43F standard, and these were used until the late sixties and early seventies, when they were declared surplus. Many were bought by salvage firms, and restored to airworthy condition, where they were useful in such civilian roles as forestry, crop spraying, and logging operations.

This paperback book is basically Volume 2 in the story of the Kaman helicopters, and was published in the Netherlands in 2009. After a brief description of the aircraft's military career, the author goes into great detail describing the post-military career of the H-43 series, showing how these versatile helicopters were used by numerous operators over the years in such varied tasks as heavy construction lifting, lumbering, forest fire fighting, and various agricultural roles. Individual owners and operators are listed, along with as much technical data as possible, and a history of each aircraft is included.

One very interesting feature of the book is the variety of mostly color photographs from numerous sources of the H-43's in operation, providing numerous color schemes and markings for any modeler wishing to build scale models of these types, assuming that there are kits available. I'm not sure that there are, but the H-43 would be a good subject for a kit in any scale.

This book is an excellent reference on this unusual but historically significant helicopter, and it should be in the personal library of anyone interested in this type of aircraft. Now, I'd like to see volume 1 with the story of the type in military service. Highly recommended.

Thanks to the author, Johan D. Ragay, for the review copy.

