

First CH-53E trainer arrives in Hawaii



A portion of a CH-53E Super Stallion containerized flight training device is unloaded at its new home on Marine Corp Base Hawaii on April 9. The simulator will support Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 463 pilots for training and readiness requirements proficiency. (U.S. Navy photo by Cindy Mattingly)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – Escorted by military police and with a crowd of onlookers, Hawaii’s first CH-53E Super Stallion containerized flight training device, or CFTD, made its debut recently at Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

The CFTD simulator is a self-contained, fully transportable device that arrived via ship at the Port of Honolulu. It was loaded on two tractor trailers and delivered to the Marine Corps base April 9.

“The simulator is the first-of-its-kind for the Super Stallion community,” said Capt. John Feeney, Naval Aviation Training Systems program manager, whose office oversaw the development of the device. “With the Marine Corps’ transition from CH-53Ds to the ‘E’ variant, the CFTD will provide pilots with the capability to complete critical, simulator designated tactical training and readiness (T&R) requirements.”

Manned Flight Simulator and J.F. Taylor personnel from Patuxent River, Md., were on-hand to begin the two-week

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construction process required to install the CFTD.

The two halves of the simulator, each comprising an inner and an outer section, were lifted off the tractor trailers and placed on a concrete pad equipped with power connections. The outer sections were vertically lifted to reveal the inner wall surrounding the cockpit, forming a contained "airspace" above the cockpit.

Finally, the two halves were joined together to form a fully enclosed apparatus.

"Until the CH-53E CFTD is ready for training, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 463 pilots will continue to conduct basic mission skills training in a legacy Weapon Systems Trainer (WST)," said Maj. Kevin Halpin, Marine Aviation Training Systems Site officer-in-charge. "Once the CH-53E CFTD is operational, pilots will increase their combat readiness through completion of T&R training, which preserves CH-53E aircraft flight hours for real-world missions and dramatically reduces cost."

This CFTD fully supports training for CH-53E crew coordination, emergency procedures, aerial refueling, terrain flight, confined area landings and shipboard operations. Training can be conducted in day mode or simulated night environment using night-vision goggles.

An enhanced aircrew externals trainer (EAET) that will support enlisted aircrew training is due to arrive late summer. The EAET can be linked with the CFTD to support full aircrew mission rehearsal and proficiency training.