



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

2D MARINE AIRCRAFT WING
U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES, ATLANTIC
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IN REPLY TO:
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POLICY LETTER #04-02

From: Commanding General
To: All Commanding Officers, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing
Subj: WING POLICY CONCERNING CH-46E HELICOPTER EMERGENCY
FLOATATION SYSTEM (HEFS)
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5442.4M
(b) CNO ltr 5442 Ser N781/2U651944 dtd 18 Nov 02

1. Purpose. To establish policy for the installation of CH-46E HEFS and preservation of assets not installed.

2. Background

a. Beginning in January 1990 the Helicopter Emergency Floatation System was installed on the H-46D/E aircraft to provide additional floatation and stability during water ditching scenarios and to enhance emergency egress capability. Operational Squadrons began to voice concerns on the HEFS as early as February 2000 citing inadvertent actuations, HEFS service life expiration, strap corrosion, and CH-46E payload retention as reasons for removal of the system. Naval Safety Center analysis based on a ten-year study period including 26 events involving aircraft with HEFS, concluded they should not be removed from service, citing "the system was a factor in ensuring the safe egress of at least 7 individuals following a H-46 ditching." This conclusion was based on a single HEFS operation during a HH-46D mishap, which was a controlled water landing where the HEFS soon separated and the aircraft sank. Also there was no consideration for differentiation of aircraft model (HH-46D or CH-46E) or the dramatic differences in engine performance (T58-10 vice T-58-16) and operating missions of the two helicopters.

b. HH-46D helicopters have dramatically less shaft horsepower per engine (1500 vice 1870 SHP) than the CH-46E, the aircraft has an extremely limited single engine capability and the aircraft conducts protracted hover or slow speed over-water flights. Conversely, the CH-46E helicopters have single engine capability while fully loaded and the aircraft conducts minimal hover or slow speed over-water

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flights. The aircraft mission profile and a mishap analysis have demonstrated that a CH-46E mishap aircraft usually impacts the water at a high angle and speed; out of the intended operating envelope of the HEFS.

c. There have been 24 incidences of inadvertent actuation documented and there is a growing risk of TFOA due to this deteriorating system. HEFS has further been identified for removal in an effort to achieve payload recovery and, per reference a, with the HEFS removed the aircraft remains FMC.

d. This issue has been closely scrutinized with a view toward reducing risk, preserving war fighting assets, and optimizing the capability of our aircraft.

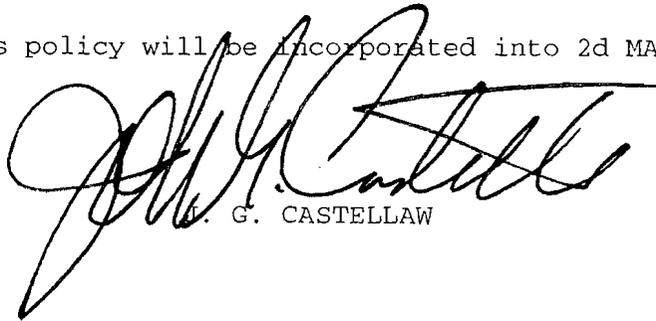
3. Policy For HEFS REMOVAL and INSTALLATION within 2dMAW. The following policy on HEFS removal, storage, and installation is effective immediately:

a. HEFS will be removed from 2dMAW CH-46E aircraft.

b. Squadron/ACE Commanders will ensure complete HEFS kits are turned into their respective MALS, Aviation Life Support (ALSS) Divisions.

c. MALS 26 and MALS 29 will ensure all Non-RFI HEFS are RFI, and properly packaged and stored in the proper HEFS container.

4. Administration. This policy will be incorporated into 2d MAW WgO 3710.38.



J. G. CASTELLAW