**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE                                                                   RELEASE 23-032**

**May 1, 2023**

                                                                                                                                                   Whidbey SAR Rescues Injured Climber on Mt. Erie

NAVAL AIR STATION WHIDBEY ISLAND, Wash. – A Search and Rescue (SAR) team from Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island rescued an injured climber at the bottom of a cliff on Mt. Erie, Saturday, April 29, 2023.

Anacortes Fire Department was on the scene and requested NAS Whidbey Island’s SAR unit assistance with securing and transporting the injured to a medical facility due to the nature of the injury and the surrounding terrain.

The SAR crew launched from Ault Field at about 3:15 p.m. and were at the scene minutes later where they found the patient on a ledge near the cliff face at approximately 1,100 feet elevation. After two crew rappelled down to a ledge near the patient they were able to litter hoist the patient to the helicopter.

The patient was then transported to St. Joseph Medical Center in Bellingham, Wash. where they landed just before 4 p.m.

Naval Air Station Whidbey Island SAR has conducted 7 missions this calendar year, which includes one MEDEVAC, one search and five rescues.

The Navy SAR unit operates three MH-60S helicopters from NAS Whidbey Island as search and rescue/medical evacuation (SAR/MEDEVAC) platforms for the EA-18G aircraft as well as other squadrons and personnel assigned to the installation.  Pursuant to the National SAR Plan of the United States, the unit may also be used for civil SAR/MEDEVAC needs to the fullest extent practicable on a non-interference basis with primary military duties according to applicable national directives, plans, guidelines and agreements; specifically, the unit may launch in response to tasking by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (based on a Washington State Memorandum of Understanding) for inland missions, and/or tasking by the United States Coast Guard for all other aeronautical and maritime regions, when other assets are unavailable.

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