

# Naval Air Station Whidbey Island



## *Mission*

Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, one of the major facilities in the Navy Region Northwest (NRNW) area, is the Navy's premier naval aviation installation in the Pacific Northwest. The air station is the home for all of the Navy's tactical electronic attack aircraft squadrons as well as home to four anti-submarine and maritime surveillance squadrons and a signals intelligence reconnaissance squadron. NAS Whidbey Island also has one fleet logistics support squadron and complement of search and rescue helicopters.

NAS Whidbey Island was commissioned in September 1942 as an ideal location for the rearming and refueling of Navy patrol planes operating in defense of Puget Sound during World War II. The following year, the Outlying Landing Field near Coupeville became operational.

Since then, NAS Whidbey Island has evolved into the Navy's premier training center for electronic attack and patrol and reconnaissance aircraft platforms. OLF Coupeville, an integral part of operations at the air station is critically important for Fleet Carrier Landing Practice training operations, as well as a training area for search and rescue and parachute operations. NAS Whidbey Island also oversees the Northwest Range Training Complex off the northwest Pacific Coast.

## *Strategic Location*

Located in the Puget Sound basin, NAS Whidbey Island's primary areas, Ault Field and Seaplane base, border the city of Oak Harbor, Wash., approximately 1 ½ hour's drive time north of Seattle, and 2 hours south of Vancouver, British Columbia.

NAS Whidbey Island's rural location is ideally situated due to low density aircraft traffic in the Pacific Northwest and proximity to global shipping routes between the U.S. and its East Asian trading partners. Additionally, pilots assigned to squadrons at NAS Whidbey Island are able to maximize their training time due to the air station's location, as well as sharpen their flight skills by taking advantage of the diverse geography in the region.





NAS Whidbey Island is also one of the Navy's leading environmental leaders with a 76 percent recycling rate and recipient of five consecutive Navy Platinum Energy Reduction Awards since 2007. The air station is also home to the Navy's Bird Strike Hazards program and serves as proving ground for many of the initiatives to control collisions between birds and aircraft.



NAS Whidbey Island's integration with the local community and its numerous joint projects are seen as a model for other installations. In 2012, Whidbey earned the Navy's Environmental Stewardship award, and runner-up for the Navy's Community Service award. During the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process, NAS Whidbey Island was rated as having the highest value of all Pacific bases examined, and ranked as the top Naval Air Station in four of the last seven years as part of the DoD Installation Excellence Award program.

Like the other facilities in NRNW, NAS Whidbey Island's location is ideal in support of the U.S. strategic pivot toward East Asia, as well as critical Arctic operations.

### *Regional Benefits*

According to a 2004 Washington state study, the direct economic impact of the air station on Whidbey Island is close to \$600 million, comprising 88 percent of all economic activity and 68 percent of all county jobs. That impact is expected to grow in the near future as the base prepares for the arrival of the Navy's new Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance (P-8 Poseidon) and additional Expeditionary Electronic Attack (EA-18 Growler) squadrons.

