PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Advisory 04-14
January 13, 2014

Recovery Operations Continue at MH-53E Crash Site

NORFOLK, Va. – The Navy resumed search and recovery operations Sunday when weather conditions improved at the crash site of the MH-53E that went down last Wednesday.

Dive operations were temporarily suspended Friday when it was determined that weather conditions had made it unsafe to continue diving at the site.

USNS Grasp (T-ARS 51) returned to the crash site in the afternoon Sunday with divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 2 (MDSU 2) and patrol boats from Riverine Squadron 2 (RIVRON 2) to provide area security.

Sailors from MDSU 2 have expanded the search area and are using a Remus Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (UUV) for high-resolution bottom mapping of the crash site.

Five crewmembers were on board the MH-53E when it crashed Wednesday approximately 18 miles off the coast of Virginia Beach. Four of the crew members were rescued and taken to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital for treatment. Two crewmembers died at the hospital from their injuries. One crewmember remains missing. The two other rescued crewmembers have both been released from the hospital.

The crew members were all assigned to Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron (HM) 14 based at Norfolk Naval Station Chambers Field. They were flying an MH-53E "Sea Dragon" on a routine mine countermeasure training exercise when the accident happened.

The cause of the crash is being investigated.

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