

**For Immediate Release:
January 18, 2007**

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PDA and Port Authority Honored by Pease Greeters and U.S. Coast Guard
Groups Thankful for Support for Welcoming Troops and Tall Ship Event

(Portsmouth) The Pease Development Authority (PDA) received honors today from both the group known as “The Pease Greeters” and the U.S. Coast Guard. PDA Chairman Arthur Nickless accepted the awards during the Authority’s monthly board meeting held at the Pease International Tradeport.

The Pease Greeters were established in 2005 as a non-profit organization made up of veterans and private citizens. To date, they have welcomed or helped send off over 10,000 U.S. soldiers who have come through the Air Terminal at the Portsmouth International Airport at Pease either en route to war zones in both Iraq and Afghanistan or home from their deployments.

Speaking for his group, Commandant Ed Johnson said, “Our greeters are some of finest volunteers you’ll ever meet. We take the job of welcoming and sending off our troops truly to heart. And as a result, the interactions we’ve had with the men and women of our military are extremely gratifying and often times very emotional, even for an old Marine like myself.”

Johnson thanked the PDA for its continuing support of the Greeter Program that has grown from a handful of veterans meeting the troops in an empty room at the airport to an operation that sees up to 70 greeters welcome the troops with food, coffee, toiletries and free phone use and perhaps most importantly – plenty of hugs and handshakes.

For the U.S. Coast Guard, Lt. Rodney Wert thanked the PDA for its assistance regarding the successful visit of “America’s Tall Ship”, the *USCGC Eagle* to Portsmouth Harbor this past August. The 295-foot vessel, which serves as the training cutter for future officers of the U.S. Coast Guard, hosted 7,707 visitors during its four day visit – the largest turnout for the ship’s entire 2007 summer cruise.

Wert presented Port Authority Director Geno Marconi with the Coast Guard’s Meritorious Team Commendation citing several Port employees as being essential to the success of the *Eagle’s* visit. “Their line handlers tied our ship to the pier and they were tremendous. We simply couldn’t have done the event without their support and the Coast Guard is very grateful,” said Wert.

For more information on:

The PDA and the Pease International Tradeport visit www.peasedev.org

The Pease Greeters visit www.peasegreeters.org

The U.S. Coast Guard Tall Ship Eagle visit www.uscga.edu/eagle