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President Bush Meets with Pease Greeters

Founding members of group who welcome U.S. Troops honored in Oval Office



(Portsmouth) Six founding members of the Pease Greeters were honored at the White House today. President George Bush welcomed the men in the Oval Office with words of appreciation and hugs.

The group's fifteen minute visit was arranged by U.S. Senator John Sununu (R-NH). Sununu, who has joined the Greeters for several welcomes of U.S. troops at the Portsmouth International Airport, complimented the President for giving the Greeters "the recognition they so richly deserve."

The Pease Greeters selected the following members to represent the group: Edmund Johnson (Korean War veteran) of Rye Beach; Charles Cove (Vietnam War veteran) of York Beach, Maine; Harold Page (Korean War veteran) of Dover; Charles Nichols (World War II veteran) of Eliot, Maine; Bill Hopper, Marine Corps veteran and Manager of the Portsmouth International Airport of Rochester and Alan Weston, Head of Maintenance at the Pease International Tradeport and honorary Marine, of New Castle.

Weston said the time spent with President Bush, along with the Greeters' other stops in Washington, touched him deeply. Ed Johnson called the visit "an experience of a lifetime". In addition to the White House visit, Sununu arranged for the Greeters to tour the war memorials and monuments on the National Mall, the Pentagon, the Naval Observatory, the United States Capitol and Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

The Pease Greeters were established in 2005 by the Marine Corps League Seacoast Detachment. Now, the group has some 200 volunteers who have welcomed and sent off over 20,000 U.S. soldiers coming through the Portsmouth International Airport either en route to war zones in both Iraq and Afghanistan or home from their deployments.