



# PRESS RELEASE

Telephone: (732) 323-2620,  
Fax: (732) 323-7676

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[www.lakehurst.navy.mil](http://www.lakehurst.navy.mil)

Contact: Thomas Worsdale, Public Affairs Officer  
Lawrence Lyford, Deputy Public Affairs Officer

## **Navy Lakehurst Personnel Honored at White House**

President Bush recently recognized Mr. George DiBiase, Mr. Rich Headley, and Mr. Mark Gindele, for engineering, manufacturing, and quality accomplishments. The meeting, held in the White House Oval Office, signified a career milestone for each of the Navy Lakehurst employees.

DiBiase, Headley, and Gindele are responsible for engineering and manufacturing of equipment used in Naval Aviation. Specifically, their products consist of the catapults, arresting gear, and support equipment found on the Navy's aircraft carriers.

DiBiase, who oversees 1300 engineering and related people employed by NAVAIR, and holds the patent on the modern steam catapult, was delighted with the invitation from the White House. Headley, in charge of manufacturing, and Gindele, who runs the Quality department, is responsible for maintaining a flawless record for product assurance.

The meeting was scheduled after May 1, 2003, when President Bush became the first sitting President to land aboard a ship using an arresting cable. This occurred on the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) while steaming back from the Iraq war. The President's landing was about the 7,000,000 landing in Naval aviation. The equipment that stopped the President's S-3B plane was

designed and manufactured by NAVAIR, Lakehurst, NJ, fondly referred to as the “Heart of Naval Aviation.”

"George, I understand that your equipment enabled me to land on the Lincoln", the President said. "Yes sir, NAVAIR Lakehurst is responsible for the design, manufacture, quality and fleet support of Cats and Gear", DiBiase said.

"Well, George", the President said with a chuckle, "I can attest to the fact that your equipment works! And I thank you for that! Keep up the good work!"

The President listened intently as DiBiase explained the physics and dynamics of his arrested landing on the Lincoln. Headley and Gindele explained the Quality program involved with the equipment. DiBiase then presented the President a plaque with a piece of the actual cable that stopped the President's aircraft.

After a warm and relaxed conversation, the President then provided to the Lakehurst employees a tour of the Oval Office.

The President spoke fondly of each painting on his Oval Office walls, identifying the artist and his thoughts on the meaning of each painting. The President spent several minutes on each painting exhibiting sensitivity and sincerity that you never really see by the media. The President discussed the history of the White House, past Presidents, leadership, the War on Terrorism and the pride he had in the Armed Services.

DiBiase, who resides in Ocean City, NJ, with his wife Pina, said, “It was the highlight of my career. After 52 years of service to the Navy and the U.S. Government ,my ship has finally come in.

For NAVAIR Lakehurst and myself, to be recognized by the President, it just doesn't get any better."

-NAVAIR-

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