

# PRESS RELEASE

## LIONS GET SURPRISE FROM IRAQ

*Flag Day 2006*

**Stanton, June 14, 2006:** SPC Cory Neal made a surprise visit to the Stanton Lions Club and presented a flag which flew over Iraq. As he unfolded the flag, club members realized it had been signed. Neal explained that it had been signed by most of the soldiers in his unit. The flag and an accompanying certificate were presented to Neal's great grandfather, long time Lion, Milt Blumenthal to celebrate his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Cory was inspired to join the army by Blumenthal who served in the army during World War II. Blumenthal had a distinguished career in the aviation industry and is a recipient of the Lion's highest honor—the Melvin Jones Award.

Cory grew up in the Anaheim-Stanton area and attended Magnolia High School. He has a long

association with the Stanton Lions Club because his great grandfather is active in the organization. The Lions knew Cory because he has been coming to the Lions' functions, but many had not seen Cory since he left for training two years ago. The visit was a surprise to everyone including Neil's family as Cory came straight to the Lions Clubhouse just after arriving at John Wane Airport.

Lions Al Ethans, who also served in the military said "Cory is a great kid. His [great] grandfather and mom have been giving us regular updates on how he was doing in Iraq, so we didn't think we would see him for months. Everyone was really surprised to see him. He looks great in uniform, and I think he may have actually put on

a couple of pounds since the last time I saw him.

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Neal serves in the Fourth Infantry Division (4ID) and is currently serving in Taji Iraq. He was permitted to take a two week leave, and decided to spend a few days on military and civilian planes traveling home to visit his family. Cory is a specialist in maintaining and repairing the Army's Black Hawk helicopter. He graduated from an army training program and Iraq was his first deployment.

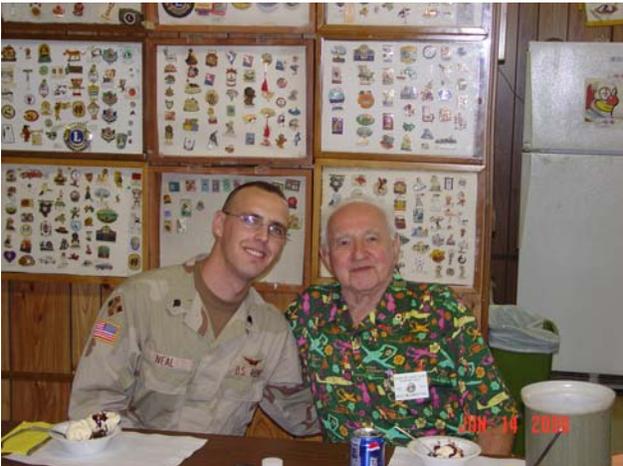
Former Stanton Lion President David Parikh was also surprised to see Cory. “Someone said we would have a special guest today, but I never would have guessed Cory would make it here from Iraq. We are very proud of him. It was great to see how well he looked. We have a lot of respect for the soldiers serving in Iraq. It must be really rough over there. I know they work very hard and for long hours. America is fortunate we have dedicated soldiers, like Cory, who put themselves in harms way to defend our freedom. “

Lion John Doogan agreed “It was really great to see Cory again. Everyone is proud of him. It

almost brought tears to my eyes when he presented the flag. I served our military during the Vietnam War, so the flag has a special meaning to me. His timing was perfect—it's Flag Day--June 14<sup>th</sup>. I'm thankful to the Army for letting him take a little time off. I know those guys work hard in theater.”

The flag SPC Neal presented will be exhibited at the Lions Flag Day; an annual event in which Stanton Lions teach elementary students about what our flag stands for, give the school a flag which has flown over the US Capital capital, and give each child a mini US flag. Mr. Blumenthal, who has been organizing this event for years, explained that the flag he was presented today is very special to him.

Stanton Lions is a not for profit community organization that holds two lunch meetings a month. They have been an involved in improving the local community since 1947. For more information see [www.stantonlions.org](http://www.stantonlions.org).



Cory Neal and Milt Blumenthal at Lions Clubhouse.