



Did you see the recent CNN video report about the hug lady in her hometown airport? She greets GIs returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with welcome words and some old-fashioned hugging. Also, when family members are there to welcome their GI home, she offers to take welcome home group photos with their cameras.

Although my Navy days are many decades behind me, I had a similar experience just a month ago. We were at San Diego airport, and I was standing outside a store waiting for my wife. A very pretty young girl came up, hugged me and said, "Thank you for your service to our country!"

While I was pleased with such sudden and lovely affection, at first I couldn't figure how this girl knew I had served. Then I remembered. I was wearing a recent gift from my showbiz daughter. On a USO trip to perform for the troops in Iraq last year, she had brought back a present for me. It was a Navy blue cap with the words U.S. Navy and a CPO anchor symbol on it.

Next time you're running through a busy airport and see a GI gal or guy in camo or regular uniform, take a few seconds to thank that admirable symbol of American freedom for service to our nation. A friendly hug could making your warm welcome even warmer.