



Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Trip Report for 12 January 2012

Well, here we are in 2012, a brand new year. Happy New Year. I Hope everyone enjoyed the Christmas Holidays, Chanukah or whatever holiday that you did celebrate in December. We were finally able to get back on track and start off the New Year by making a visit to see the wounded in the hospital.

Six members of the Slattery Detachment made this month's visit. Detachment members were Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas, Steve Bliss, Bob Stalzer, Chris Holleran and retired Colonel Courtney Whitney. Who BTW, drove down in his own car, I guess he is still not allowed to hang out and fraternize with the enlisted ranks, LOL. All kidding aside, he had other business to take care of so that is why he drove. If all Colonels were like Colonel Courtney, we would have no leadership problems in the Corps. Ooh Rah. We also had a return guest who made a trip with us last year, Tom Phillips. Tom brought along his humidor full of cigars in three different flavors, mild, medium and strong. Since I don't smoke, I did not know cigars come in different flavors. Now for all that we see who smoke, it's a nice surprise, but some of the Mom's and wives look at us with a little smirk on their face. But don't blame me, Tom did it. LOL. Believe me, it goes over well. Tom even passed out cigars to some of the Marines in the Marine Liaison section before we left. For those who smoke and took cigars, it was appreciated by all.

We left at our normal time, but had a little SNAFU; Marc did not realize that we took the 0730 train instead of the 0830. He did not read the whole email and missed the train, but lo & behold he took a later train and met us at the hospital later. We arrived at Union Station around 1130 and met Don Paterson at the hospital. We headed down to the Navy galley/cafeteria to grab a bite for lunch and shoot the breeze and relax for a few before we started our visit. Oh yea one more thing. For some reason Marc was not listed on the access list. So I had to stop eating chow and leave the cafeteria and go get him so he could make the visit with us. Yes, even the most well planned things do go astray once in a while. But it gives us something to laugh about back on the train ride home.

Most of you know, even though we are a Marine Corps League organization, we take the opportunity to visit every wounded service member who is in the hospital no matter what uniform they wear. We are all on the same side and we all need to support each and every wounded service member in the hospital and their families while they recover from their wounds.

The hospital head count for the month of January was light. That's good news. That means the casualties are down and that is always a good thing.

There were approximately 24 wounded with various battle injuries in the hospital and that includes members of from all of the military services. We were able to visit with six Marines, one Soldier and one Navy EOD Sailor during this visit. We also took the time to visit some of the men who were in the hospital for other medical reasons. It's always nice to say hello to anyone who is in a hospital bed. We could have seen more, but as usual, some were not in their rooms and some were having additional surgery and/or doing Rehab. We also were able to visit with PFC Derek McConnell, his Mom and girl friend from Parsippany, NJ. We visited with them last month. There was also a Marine we met last month and he is still in the hospital, but hopefully going home soon. We wish all that we saw a speedy recovery.

The six Marines we saw were from the following units. 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines and 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines. The Soldier was from the 10th Mountain Division and the Sailor was from a Navy EOD Mobile unit.

The first Marine we saw lost both legs and was only in country for about 90 days. It was his first tour. He told us he was on a foot patrol and almost everyone had passed over the spot but when he stepped on it, the IED went off. His mother and father were with him and all appeared to be in good spirits. We gave him the Marine Corps Afghan blanket, Detachment coin, and a few \$50 gift cards, Bears in Dress Blues and of course we gave them the application for the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund. Hopefully they will fill it out and that organization will provide some financial assistance to help them out while this Marine recovers from his wounds.

We then visited another Marine who had also been wounded by an IED explosion from the same state as the first Marine we visited. We talked with him about how he was wounded. We keep hearing the same story over & over. The IED's are a newer type and don't always get picked up with the Mine Detection equipment Combat Engineers use at times. They have less metal in them or none at all. Even the filament (wire) is a composite type material. So, some of these IED's go undetected. We try to stay a step ahead on what the enemy is doing and once in a while, the enemy is a step ahead of us.

We visited with the Navy EOD tech who received a gunshot wound to the head. He had an ice pack on his head when I walked into the room and asked if we could visit with him for a few minutes. He said yes without blinking an eye. He was from California and his Mom, Dad and wife were with him in the room. We gave him a Navy blanket and all of the other stuff we pass out during our visit. He appreciated that we took the time to stop by and visit with him and his family.

The last Marine was from the unit I retired from in 2000; 4th Civil Affairs Group. He was in for neck surgery and was chomping at the bit to go home, but it looks like he had another day or two before he would. I talked to him and we both mentioned a few names that we both knew, so it felt good that I still have my memory. LOL. We wished him well, said Semper Fi and left the room.

Now I failed to mention what Colonel Whitney was doing during the visit. I wanted to save it for last. As most of you know, the Giants were to play the Green Bay Packers on the following Sunday and Colonel Whitney is a big NY Giants fan. He was going to the game in Green Bay and had the tickets with him and of course was showing them to everyone we visited. He even let a few touch them. LOL. Don't you know it, there were at least three of the wounded who were Packer fans. If you don't know Colonel Whitney, you would have to be at the visit to witness what he was offering to do. He asked them what did they wanted from the game, a program, hat, towel or even a signed shirt of their favorite player. Now I am listening to this and saying how is he going to do that? But a few days ago, I receive a call from Colonel Whitney who followed up with an email and a letter from the Green Bay Packer organization. Here is a copy of what he received from the Packer Organization.

Col Whitney,

Per our phone conversation today, if you could get me the names of the three wounded soldiers and an address to send the items to, we will make sure to send them a very nice care package. As the packages would be going out UPS, we will need a physical address to send these to.

So as you can see, the Colonel made this happen. Sometimes you just have to be there to see all the good that is being done for the men and women who have been wounded and who wear the uniform of our Military services. To Colonel Whitney, a loud Ooh Rah and Semper Fi for all that you do. Job well done, Sir.....As I have said many times before. This is a great way to spend a day and this is another example.

We are all proud of the good visits done by this Detachment. The items we pass out that are made possible by the many ways we raise money and the donations we receive. They help put a smile on the faces of the wounded and their families during our monthly visits. So whether you are on a trip with us or just donating money or helping out in many ways during the month, I Thank You from all of the wounded and their families.

We passed out four watches with the Marine Corps emblem on the face. We also gave out 18 \$50 gift cards (\$900) & 18 \$25 gift cards (\$450). We passed out three Marine, one Navy and one Army blanket. We also gave out the Marine Dress Blue Teddy Bears to family members and the prints from Detachment member Tom Miller. They as always are a big hit. We also passed out the applications from the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund. Hopefully some of them will send them in so Bob and Kathy's organization can help them out. A big OOH RAH to the both of them.

So to all of you who have donated money and/or purchased items from our Detachment, we thank you for what you do. As you can see, we did a lot during this month's visit. I know I am speaking for all of the wounded and their families we get to visit and help when I say, "A Big Thank You" to all of you who have supported the

Slattery Detachment and the many other great organizations we partner with during the year to make this happen. I am proud of being able to represent you during our visits.

When you pass by your place or worship, stop in a say a little, I mean a BIG prayer for all of the families and the wounded we were able to visit. Every little bit helps and we can never do enough for the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces of the good old U.S. of A.

So if you are reading this report for the first time and want to know what we do with the money we collect, well now you know. If you want to make a donation, please do so. It will be greatly appreciated by the men and women we get to visit. All it takes for us to make these visits is the time of day. We don't have to drive; we enjoy good company on the ride to and from and meet a lot of GREAT people! It's a great way to spend a day with the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces who have given so much of themselves to protect our freedom and to ensure the freedom of others. OOH RAH...

Please visit our Detachment's "MARINES CARE" web site for additional information.
WWW.Marinescare.org

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"The things that the flag stands for were created by the experiences of a great people. Everything that it stands for was written by their lives. The flag is the embodiment, not of sentiment, but of history"

Woodrow Wilson
14 June 1915

Semper Fidelis,

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