



**L/Cpl Robert J Slattery Detachment, Whippany, New Jersey**

**Wounded Warrior Battalion East Symposium at Camp Lejeune, NC Trip Report for  
21-24 January 2015**

This report covers our Detachment's visit last week to the Wounded Warrior Battalion East Symposium at Camp Lejeune, NC. There were eight Detachment members making this trip; Keith Butler, Kevin Meara, John Andrews, Christopher Holleran, Marc Purcelli, Eddie & Linda Neas & Monika Kirchner Flaherty. Art and Charlene Cosgrove Bowie would meet with us on Friday for the all-day Symposium.

This was our second visit to this location and this was the first Symposium hosted by the Wounded Warrior Battalion East which invited all the sponsors that have supported the Battalion in the past. This event started off a little slow but by the time things got rolling, it was full speed ahead. They estimated they would have 400-500 people in attendance to include sponsors and the Marines and Corpsman from the Battalion. We were told that there are currently 220 wounded or injured men and women at the Battalion. There was standing room only when this thing got rolling. All of us from the Detachment were very impressed and had a great time. Four of us flew down and the other four drove. The Plane ride had no hiccups, but the four driving, let's just say, someone must have fallen asleep in Land Navigation class. And of course when they got to the main gate at Camp Lejeune, NC, the base passes were not ready and that added some more time to their travel. But Lo & Behold all arrived in good shape and after checking in at the Inns of the Corps on main side for our rooms, we were locked and loaded. The hotel accommodations were great. It was right next to the main PX and in a land of Marines and Corpsman, it doesn't get any better than that. After checking in, we all went out for dinner at a local place we had visited on our previous trip. A place called The Carolina Ale House.

For the next day and a half we would do the following:

Take a tour of the Wounded Warrior Battalion East facility with four of the eight who were not on the previous trip in September. Details of this on our website during a visit in September of 2014.

This place is very well staffed and very professional in what they do. Most of them are retired Navy & Marines and they know firsthand what the men and women will need when they leave the Battalion. This is a First Class Operation staffed lead by a Group of Professional and very squared away staff from the Battalion Commander and Sergeant Major on down. Yes, I am tooting their horn, they have earned that from me.

I copied this from their website.

<http://www.woundedwarriorregiment.org/index.cfm/wwbneast/>

The Wounded Warrior Battalion East at Camp Lejeune, NC area of responsibility includes all Marines and Sailors attached to Marine Corps units, generally east of the Mississippi River to Landstuhl, Germany. This includes San Antonio Military Medical Center and the Department of Veterans Affairs Poly-trauma unit in Minneapolis, Minn.

**"Etiam in Pugna" or Still in the Fight**, is an essential conviction which the Marine Corps instills in each of its wounded, ill and injured (WI&I) Marines. Despite their injuries, WI&I Marines are focused on their abilities and are highly motivated to contribute to the Marine Corps' war fighting mission. The Marine Corps needs and employs their skills, experience, and dedication in order to meet its mission to our nation. The approach to care ensures that recovering Marines return to their units as quickly as their medical conditions will allow. Allowing WI&I Marines to stay in the fight is what makes the Marine Corps' care model unique and successful.

It is Marine Corps policy that Marines will remain attached to their operational units as long as that organization can ensure their medical condition is treated appropriately and recovery support is provided. WWBn-E has staff assets in place to support Commanders in providing the care their WI&I Marines require. While it is a priority for each command to take care of their unit's Marines, there are some instances where a WI&I Marine may require on-going services and support that are not normally resident in an operational unit. Assignment to the WWR typically occurs when a WI&I Marine requires extended treatment and a higher degree of care coordination. WWBn-E assists WI&I Marines and their families with their non-medical care needs through all phases of care from recovery to rehabilitation to community reintegration. There is no "one size fits all" approach to care, so the battalion has a cross-section of services and resources to ensure WI&I Marines and families are provided for.

To be successful, support offered to Wounded Warriors focuses on healing the Marine medically with an emphasis on strengthening the Marine's Mind, Body, Spirit, and Family. Since its inception in 2007, Wounded Warrior Battalion East has evolved its structure to ensure that WI&I Marines and families receive individualized care, proportionate to their existing needs. The battalion achieves this individualized care by using Marine Section Leaders to synergize its diverse assets and support around the essential points of focus: the WII Marine's Mind, Body, Spirit, and Family.

Some of the men and women who are wounded and injured, no matter what the circumstances, feel that they have let their unit down. The Superman mentality is there, but they feel the "S" on their chest has to stay hidden and be in the Clark Kent mode. Some may focus on what they CAN'T do anymore. What the Wounded Warrior Battalion looks to do is to show them what they still CAN do, but maybe have to be done, a little bit differently.

We had a little time so we shot over the Main PX to pick up some Marine Corps items and grab a bite to eat. You can't get the Marine Corps items such as jackets, shirts and hats and any uniform items back in NJ that some of us needed to replace. They had plenty to choose from so it was like Christmas for all of us again.....

We then headed over to meet with SgtMaj Ray Mackey and his wife Vickki (more on Vickki later) at 1230. SgtMaj is the former SgtMaj of 3rd Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> Marines who was severely wounded in Afghanistan in December of 2009. An IED explosion caused him to lose both of his legs. We met him back on one of our hospital visits in early 2010. We at the Detachment have been in contact since. SgtMaj Mackey had set up a tour of the 10<sup>th</sup> Marines Gun Park outside the 10<sup>th</sup> Marines Regimental Headquarters. On display were the various weapon systems 10<sup>th</sup> Marines have used over the years, even some prior to WW II. Some of us got to see some of the artillery weapons that supported us by during our time in the Corps years before. We also met with one of the current Sergeants Major of 10<sup>th</sup> Marines and he joined us on the tour. We were then taken over to the 10<sup>th</sup> Marines Motor Pool. We got to meet and talk with about 10 Marines who were working on their vehicles and the new M777 (Triple 7) artillery piece that is the current weapon being used in the Marine Corps today. All of these Marines were professional and enjoyed talking with us. We even met one Corporal from Cranford, NJ. We all had a good time. We gave a few of them a Detachment Challenge Coin. When I gave one to the 10<sup>th</sup> Marines SgtMaj and he wanted to give me his unit coin, I asked John Andrews to come over and receive the coin from him. I get more than my share of coins doing what I do, so I wanted someone else to receive a coin. We all said Good Bye, Ooh Rah and Semper FI and proceeded to leave.

After we left the Motor Pool we headed over to see the Beirut Memorial outside the gate at Camp Johnson. We spent time looking at this memorial and the Viet Nam Memorial. This Beirut memorial was built to honor the 241 service members killed in the bombing on 23 October 1983. 220 Marines, 18 Sailors, and three Soldiers. Next to the memorial is a Viet Nam Memorial that honors all the men and women who were killed in action during the Viet Nam war. We saw that it is in a rotunda type setup with glass panels encircling it with the names on each panel in alphabetical order. They are two very impressive memorials and we were all glad we stopped by and took the time to see them. There are currently plans to build a Marine Museum of the Carolinas. It will be between the two memorials. More on this to follow in the future. It was dinner time so we met at the Officers' Club on Base with a friend of mine John Ligato and his wife. I served with John in the Marines during my time in Viet Nam. We had a good time and after dinner would head back to our rooms to get ready for the Symposium the following morning.

The following morning at 0730 we met up with Art & Charlene Cosgrove Bowie at the Marston Pavilion which was the Symposium location to set up our booth with the Detachment Banner and laid out our Brochures, Prints from Tom Miller and any other information we had on the Marine Corps League. We were one of the first ones to set up. The Prints from Tom Miller were a Hit, I brought over 50 of his "He Ain't Heavy" prints and they went like hotcakes.

The Symposium started out slow, but by the time everyone got set up and the wounded and injured Marines, Corpsman and families started coming in, the Symposium was in full bloom. We got to meet and talk with many of them about their issues and what we could possibly do to assist them in any way possible. This was the case for all Sponsors who were in attendance. There were a few members of other Marine Corps Detachment, but none had set up a booth like we did. We received many comments after they found out we were from New Jersey. Wow, you came down from New Jersey for this? Thank You was told to all of us all day long. We got to sit with many other organizations and the wounded during lunch, so there was some good Face to Face time with all. We heard stories about everything you could possibly think about that would affect the wounded and their families as they try to get their lives back on track. Some of it was Heart Wrenching to hear.

There were over 40 different organizations at the Symposium and we met with every organization. Listed below are some of them. There were many Veteran Outreach Programs in attendance as well as Army, Navy and Air Force organizations that focused on TBI injuries, PTSD, Drug & Alcohol help and also assistance with VA claims. You name it, it was here. I will say a few words on some of them and list a few others with their website so you can all take a look at what they do.

**Semper FI Fund.** Vickki Mackey works with Semper Fi fund and we asked her what they do. One of the things they do is every year, thousands of injured, ill and wounded service members vie for just 200 coveted slots in the annual Warrior Games. This is a six-day, Paralympic-style competition for the five branches of the military. Money is raised and donated for these events and because of what the Semper Fi Fund does, their friends and family are able to attend the games to cheer for their family members as they compete. You can look at the web site and find out about all the other things that they do. [www.semperfifund.org](http://www.semperfifund.org)

**Wounded Warrior Wear**  
[www.woundedwarriorwear.org](http://www.woundedwarriorwear.org)

**Hope for the Warriors**  
[www.hopeforthewarriors.org](http://www.hopeforthewarriors.org)

**Military Outreach Judo & Jiu-Jitsu Organization**  
[www.mojjio.com](http://www.mojjio.com)

**Operation Enduring Warrior**  
[www.enduringwarrior.org](http://www.enduringwarrior.org)

**US Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**The Veterans Crisis Line 800-273-8255**

Some of you should remember a Marine we visited in Bethesda years ago by the name of Cpl. Todd Love who is a triple amputee? He lost three limbs after stepping on a land mine in Afghanistan in 2010. Some of you saw the video of him Sky Diving out of an airplane, well he did this with this organization.

**Listed below are some of the comments from those who made this trip.**

**Monika Kirchner Flaherty**

This is the second trip I have been with the Slattery Detachment. It is clear that we as a group are "making a difference" with all the lives we reach. Speaking for myself, I was able to play a dual role as I was able to also speak about Operation Jersey Cares to those I met as well. Everything about our visit was uplifting and it was great to see the Wounded Warrior Battalion and learn what its objective is. There is nothing more important than getting those Marines, who sacrificed so much the help and support that they need.

**Linda Neas**

I was honored to be asked to attend this Symposium. It was amazing to see how we were welcomed and how grateful people were that we came with our group.

In a nutshell this was a very good Symposium for us to attend. I think we have found something for us to be involved in since our hospital visits have, in a sense, dried up as the war in both Iraq and Afghanistan are ending. And as we all know, some of the issues have just started for the men and women who have been wounded and injured, as well as their families.

This was an incredible visit and I hope some of the pictures you see in this newsletter and on our Detachments website will do justice to this report and what we all saw during the visit. Attending this Symposium was a great way to spend time finding out what other organizations do and also to be able to tell them what we do. The wounded men and women who serve in our Armed Forces 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 on what we do and what you can do to help. [WWW.Marinescare.org](http://WWW.Marinescare.org)

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**"A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers"**

**President John F Kennedy**  
**Address at Amherst College, 26 October 1963**

*Semper Fidelis,*  
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