



Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Trip Report for 5 October 2011

Well, we finally were able to get back on track and make another hospital visit to Bethesda. The hospital was closed for visitors for almost a month as Bethesda and Walter Reed merged. The facility at Walter Reed is closing and all equipment, support services and personnel have moved to Bethesda. The hospital is now known as Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in Bethesda, Md. Four members of the Slattery Detachment made this month's trip. Detachment members were Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas, Chris Holleran and Keith Butler. Our visit time was pushed back to the hours of 1400-1600 (2:00pm to 4:00pm in civilian time). So we left an hour later than usual and returned an hour later to New Jersey.

We left Newark Penn Station on the 0830 train and headed down to DC. We arrived at Union Station around 12 noon and met Don Paterson at the hospital. We headed down to the Navy galley/cafeteria to grab a bite for lunch. With the merger of the two hospitals I knew that there would be changes on how our visits would go and of course I was concerned. The main section of the Marine Corps Liaison Section was moved to another building (Bldg 62) so we did not get to see some familiar faces we have seen in the past.

Most of you know, even though we are a Marine Corps League organization, we take the opportunity to visit every 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 is full. With the consolidation of both hospitals, the wounded are now on both sides of the floor from one end to the other. There are also wounded service member now on another floor. There are approximately 44 wounded men in the hospital which breaks down to 26 Army, 14 Marines, 2 Navy and 1 Air Force.

Most of our visits were with Soldiers from the US Army's 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division based at Fort Drum, NY. There were two other soldiers from the 760<sup>th</sup> EOD also out of Fort Drum and one from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division from Colorado.

The first Soldier we saw had received wounds from an IED blast while in Afghanistan. His family was with him at his bedside. He had been in country for almost 12 months and was scheduled to leave Afghanistan in about a month. He was looking forward to coming home with his unit. He has already had a few operations and will

have several more in the coming months. He appreciated the fact that a few Marines took the time to stop by and say hello to him and his family. We gave him an Army blanket, Detachment coin, a print from Tom Miller and a few \$50 gift cards for him and his family to use. And yes, I told him the card would void out if he tried to get warm beer with it....LOL. He laughed and so did everyone in his room. We also gave him a Marine Corps watch, which I know he has never had and he said thank you. As I have stated before, almost every person we see does not have his personal effects. It might take a few weeks to a month to get all of their stuff back and a watch is missed the most. The watches we pass out are greatly appreciated. We gave out a few Teddy Bears in Dress Blues to all of the ladies in the room. They all liked them. The last item I gave him was the application from the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund. I told him and everyone else what this organization does and how it was started. They thanked all of us and we headed down the hall to do our next visit.

The next Soldier we saw was not in his room when we entered but his wife and three kids were. I talked to her and told her why we were there and she said he should be right back. So we all walked in and introduced ourselves. His wife was lying in the bed and two of the older kids were sitting on the chairs. I then looked down on the bed and saw a little baby who must have been about a month old. As we started talking and passing out the stuff we bring, the wounded Soldier walked in. He shook our hand and we talked to him for about 20 minutes. He had received three, yes "I said three" gunshot wounds to his arm and it was now in a sling. He told us that many more had hit his protective body armor, but did not go through. Yes he said he was lucky, that he could walk away from the firefight he was in and was lucky to be alive. We all left, wished him well, said Semper Fi and left to go to another room.

We headed down to another floor and in the hall was the girlfriend of the Soldier from Parsippany, NJ who was wounded a few months ago. She informed us that he was back in the CCU after some additional surgery just in case complications did set in. Don Paterson owed her an Army Jacket. When he gave it to her, it put a smile on her face. I told her that all of us at the Detachment wished him a speedy recovery and that we were all asking for him.

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 six watches with the Marine Corps emblem on the face. Yes, we gave them to the Soldiers, I told them "I know you don't have one of these" we got a chuckle out of that. We also gave out 25 \$50 gift cards and two Marine Corps blankets and five Army blankets. We also gave out the Marine Dress Blue Teddy Bears to family members. 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. Please don't forget the families of the 30 services members killed in Afghanistan this past weekend.

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](http://WWW.Marinescare.org)

**"Every great man is always being helped by everybody; for his gift is to get good out of all things and all persons."**

**John Ruskin**

*Semper Fidelis,*

**Eddie Neas  
SgtMaj/ USMCR/RET  
Alpha 1/1, Viet Nam**