



Bethesda Hospital Trip Report

Our last trip to visit the wounded was Tuesday, 30 November 2010. Six members of the Slattery Detachment and guests made this month's trip. Detachment members were Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas and Tom Miller. There was a local Marine from Clark, NJ who was wounded in Afghanistan. Three members of the school district in Clark made the trip to see him and the rest of the wounded at the hospital. The School Superintendent Kenneth Knops along with the Kumpf Middle School Principal, Jennifer Feeley and my daughter Elisa Neas, a middle school teacher at Kumpf. This was the first trip for Ken and Jennifer and I was glad they came along for the visit. I always like to bring people outside of the Slattery Detachment and other Veteran's organizations that we partner with. It's a great way for people to see how our young men and women are doing after being injured while serving in our U.S. Military. There is a lot of good being done and most of the time you don't hear about it or get to see it for yourself. I appreciate that they took the time to make the visit. Again, the wounded men we saw appreciate it and I know they thank them.

We left from Newark Penn Station at 0730 and headed down to Union Station in Washington, DC. We arrived at the Bethesda Naval Hospital around 1145 and headed down to the cafeteria to grab a quick bite for lunch before we started our visit.

We checked into the Marine Corps Liaison Section on the first floor and headed up to start our visit. As it has been for the past few months, there were many wounded or injured on the floor. The first Marine we saw was Sgt Michael Brattole from Clark, NJ. He was in his room with his mother and father. I walked in and introduced myself and told them we have a few people from Clark who would like to say hello. I told them who we are and why we do these visits and then I passed out the normal items we give to all of the wounded military we see. Sgt Brattole was severely wounded in Afghanistan in November as a member of 2rd Battalion, 6th Marines as an infantry Squad Leader. He told us what had happened and described being wounded, but I am going to leave that out of this report. I am proud to see young Marines like Sgt Brattole Leading Marines in combat. He is a very brave Marine and I know our Corps is in good hands with men like Sgt Brattole. The family appreciated that we took the time to say hello and we wished them well. We then left to visit the other wounded on the floor. Hopefully some of us we get to see Sgt Brattole when he returns home to Clark, NJ.

With the recent events taking place in Afghanistan, Bethesda has been busy. In the hospital there was a total of 35 military, 25 Marines, 7 Soldiers and 3 Navy. We were able to see 10 Marines, one Soldier and Marc, Tom and Ken saw one Navy Seal for about 60 seconds. Listen to this one.....

They started the visit just as one of the Rehab Therapist walked in and told them they had 58 seconds to talk and she started counting down. They all laughed, but she was not kidding. The Hospital takes rehabbing the wounded very serious and you just can't blow it off. From what I know there not too many times someone is going to tell a Navy Seal what to do and when to do it, but this was one of those times. OOH RAH

We broke into two three person teams and each team took a side to start the visit. Doing this allows us to spend more time in each room and it hopefully we can get to all who are in the rooms. Some rooms are empty as the wounded could be having additional surgeries and or are doing Rehab to help them recover from their wounds.

Jennifer, Elisa and I walked into the first room where there was a Soldier and a Marine sharing the room. The Marine was shaving and had to head down to get a haircut, a new ID card was in order and he finally was able to get out of bed and do some things on his own. We shook hands, said Ooh Rah and Semper Fi as he left. So we walked over to the side of the room with the soldier. He was in the room by himself as his family was somewhere else in the hospital. He didn't appear too interested at first when I introduced us and told him we were from the Marine Corps League in NJ. He said that he was in the Army and I said that we visit everyone no matter what service they belong to. The first thing we gave him was a nice Afghan blanket with the Army emblem on it. He then perked up and as we spread the blanket out on his bed, he started talking like he had been switched on, or as my daughter would say later, "it's like we plugged him in" after he got the blanket. We gave him all the stuff we normally give out and he thanked us. We all left that room feeling a little better about what we do on these visits. So to all of the people and organizations who help support the Slattery Detachment on our visits, whether you donate time, money or both, We Thank You.

We saw another Marine who had lost both legs and one of his arms in an IED explosion. We talked to his wife and other family members in the room. They all appreciated that we took the time to visit their Marine. We gave them all of the items we give out such as the Detachment coin, brochure, prints from Tom Miller and a few \$50 gift cards. They also received an application from the Family& Friends for Freedom Fund. In the room was one the brothers of the wounded Marine, a 1st Lt who is down at Corpus Christi, TX finishing up flight school. When he finishes flight school he will be flying the Osprey aircraft for the Marine Corps. This aircraft will be replacing the ageing fleet of CH-46 helicopters in the Marine Corps. We shook hands, said Ooh Rah and Semper Fi and yes, we coined him.

We were able to talk to two families outside of the patient rooms, one a mother and the other a wife of Marines. The two Marines in these rooms were sleeping and had just returned from surgery. They both appreciated what we were doing and they thanked us for taking the time to stop by. We gave them all of the items we give to everyone we see. Not an easy visit this month as there are a lot of severely wounded men on the floor. Keep them all in your prayers the coming days....

The Marines and Corpsman we saw on this visit were from the following units, 1st Recon Battalion, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines and 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. Six of the 10 Marines we visited were from 3/5. There is one of those emails going around on the internet about 3/5 asking everyone to pray for this Battalion as they have been hit hard. To me, we need to pray for all of the men and women who are in all of our military services who are serving our country, whether they are fighting for our freedom or even the freedom of others who cannot defend themselves, no matter where they are.

When you pass by or attend your place or worship, stop in a say a little, I mean a BIG prayer for this family and all of the families 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.

We passed out one watch (more are on order) two \$25 gift cards, 22 \$50 gift cards, one Army and one Navy Blanket. Don Patterson, who visits both Walter Reed and Bethesda weekly, had already passed out the Marine Afghan blanket to all Marines on the floor prior to our visit. So to all of you who have donated money and/or purchased items from our Detachment, we thank you for what you do. We also gave 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 if you are reading this report for the first time and want to know what we do with the money we collect and where it goes, 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...

“Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of the men who follow and the man who leads that gains victory”

General George S Patton

We at the Slattery Detachment, Marine Corps League wish everyone a Healthy, Happy Holiday season and a Happy New Year.

Semper Fidelis,

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