



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

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Trip Report for 29 December 2015

This report covers our Detachment's last visit on Tuesday, 29 December; our first visit back to Walter Reed since April of 2015. There were three Detachment Members. Marc Purcelli and I made the trip via AMTRAK and we met Don Patterson at the hospital. I also brought along a guest named Jacob Lunn a High Scholl student from Clark, NJ, making his first trip to Bethesda. What is special about this young man he is awaiting his appointment letter to the Naval Academy. This hopefully will happen by the 15th of April and he will start his Freshman year in July of 2016. Let's all wish him well as he pursues his dream of Flying Jets for the Navy. And No, I am not trying to make him go Marine. This is his dream, not mine.

Jacob and I left from the Metro Park station and we picked up Marc in Trenton about 20 minutes later. The train ride was uneventful. We arrived in Union Station and met with Scott Leonard our contact for tickets. We stopped to shoot the shxx for a few. It's been awhile as I have stated earlier, so I just wanted to take the time to thank him and AMTRAK for the tickets. It makes things a lot easier for all those who make the visit than driving down from New Jersey.

On the train ride from Union Station to Bethesda we struck up a conversation with a mother and her daughter who was in a wheel chair. They were originally from Massachusetts and after hearing me say a few words and telling her I was originally from Brooklyn, the Yankee, Red Sox, NY Jets, New England smack talk started. We all had a few good laughs and went back and forth for a few minutes. I reached into my bag and pulled out one of the Teddy Bears we had and gave it to her daughter. The smile she and her mother gave us, would have lit the train up if it was dark. They got off a few stops before we did. We wished them well. It was a good train ride to the hospital. This happens quite a bit on our train rides to and from the hospital and it a good way to get the word out on who we are and what we do.

We arrived at the Marine Liaison Section in Walter Reed and hooked up with Don Patterson so we could start our visit. As I said earlier the last hospital visit was over eight months ago and we were looking forward to starting. Casualties have been minimal the past few years except for the suicide bomber who blew himself up and killed six US service members last week on the 21st of December. Two of those service members were local from New York. One, as most of you know, was a Detective with NYPD. They were both members of the Air Force Air National Guard.

Both were married and leave behind a wife and children. Not sure of the personal information on the other four, but condolences and prayers go out to all of them and their families from all of us at the Slattery Detachment. Not a good way to start the Christmas & Holiday season and start off the New Year.

The first person we got to visit with, ironically, was an Airman who was wounded in the attack that killed six of his buddies. He has shrapnel wounds, ball bearings to be exact to his shoulder and leg and one in his chest area. He looked to be doing OK and was getting ready to leave and head to Dover AF Base for additional treatment and to be closer to home. We introduced ourselves and told him who we are and why we are here. His wife was with him. I had one Air Force Blanket with me and gave it to him. I also gave him a Detachment coin, a print from Tom Miller and four \$50 gift cards. He thanked us and we all wished him well as he was looking to pack and get out of the hospital as soon as possible. A good start to the visit.

There was a former Navy Seal who returned overseas as a Security Contractor. He had been wounded and he was not in his room. So we headed over to see someone else. As a matter of fact, we took three trips to his room while on the floor and no luck each time, but we were not done on this mission. He was in another section of the hospital and getting REHAB for his injuries. We would come back later and try again.

We heard a local Marine, Sgt Alonso, was back in the hospital and all of us went over to his room to stop in and say hello. He has met many of us from the Slattery Detachment over the past two years since he was wounded. He had lost both of his legs and was back in the hospital with an infection. We stopped him, said hello and gave him three \$50 gift cards to use for whatever he needed. We shook hands, thanked him and wished him well.

The next visit was to a Marine LtCol who had been injured in a Helicopter accident. He was in the room next to Sgt Alonzo. There were doctors and other medical personnel in the room, so we did not get in there at that time. The Marine Liaison arranged for us to meet the family at 1330, 1:30pm in civilian time, so we headed downstairs to grab a bite for lunch.

As we always do on our visits, we stop by and try to see the physical and occupational therapists who we have met over the years. Low and behold as we were walking down the hall we ran into Trista someone we met over six years ago. We said hello, hugged and met a few of the new therapists. It was good to see her as she is one of those people who make a BIG difference in the lives of those who are wounded or injured during their time in the hospital. To me A First Rate Class Act.....

At 1330 we met the family of the LtCol, his wife, his mom and an Air Force Colonel who had served with him. We spent about a half hour talking and introducing each other to everyone. The LtCol had been injured in a helicopter accident and now has

a severe TBI. He was schedule to come home for two weeks of leave, (vacation in civilian lingo) just before Christmas when the accident happened.

I told them who we are and why we are here and all about the Marines Care program we have in the Slattery Detachment. Don Patterson had given them a Marine Corps Blanket in an earlier visit. We gave them the letters and cards I have received from various elementary schools and other organizations we represent and partner with. I gave out a few coins, a Bear in Dress blues to both the Wife and Mom and four \$50 gift cards. At visits like this, I wish I could just open up the bank and empty it. I know money does not make things like this go away, but it has to help in a little way and to me, that's better than doing nothing. That's Not the Slattery way nor is it the way all we represent either. The LtCol is heading down to the Poly Trauma Center in Richmond, Va. in a few days for further treatment. We wished them well and told them to contact us if the was anything we could do or if they needed something down the road. I feel that our Detachment will be making a visit to Richmond in the foreseeable future. Yep, we go there too, as a matter of fact we will go anywhere we are asked to go to help assist in any way we can the families of the wounded and injured men and women who serve in our Armed Forces. We shook hands and got a few hugs as they said Good Bye. I reminded them that we rather hear Hello, the next time we meet instead of thank you. It was a good visit with the family, but a tough one.

We tried one more time for the Navy Seal, but he still was not in his room. We're not done yet...

We were asked to meet with the new LtCol who is now the OIC of the Marine Liaison Section at Walter Reed, so we all headed over to Building 62. We were met by Mia Nam the Marine Corps Family Support Coordinator at the hospital. We also met with Mellissa Mimms who we have worked with for the past few years to make our visits enjoyable and more productive. It takes a TEAM effort to do what we do. We met with the new LtCol and we all introduced ourselves and found out more about each other. The LtCol is a former CH 46 helicopter pilot and Naval Academy graduate, so of course I told him about Jacob. They talked for a few and he wished Jacob well and good luck waiting for his appointment letter. We have always had a good relationship with the Marine Liaison section and both of us want to continue that trend. We exchanged cards and I told him to call or contact us if there is anything we could do for them in the future. To me, another good visit.

We left and decided one more time to visit with the Navy Seal. So we headed up to his room and Bingo, he was there. There were already five or six in his room and he was sitting in a wheel chair when we walked in and asked if we could visit. Without blinking an eye, he said, "sure" and we all walked in. I said at first, I hope you don't get too nervous with a few Marines walking in, and he laughed and so did everyone else. This Navy Seal, who retired from the Navy and took a job as a Contractor with a private security firm was wounded after he stepped on an IED. He had lost both of his legs and was as upbeat, positive and friendly as if he had been in the hospital for minor surgery. We spent almost 30 minutes talking about this and that and introducing each other and

telling everyone who we are and why we are here. Of course I introduced Jacob who was wearing his Navy hat and shirt and told the Navy Seal he was looking to get into the Navy Academy. Both of them talked for a few minutes and Jacob asked what team Seal Team he was with. He told him and his eyes lit up and so did mine. (Jacob has a friend on his baseball team who knows someone who is also a Navy Seal) Jacob's friend is also in the same Seal Team. Jacob had a coin from him and I was given one too. The Navy Seal asked what his name and all Jacob had was his first name. So Jacob whipped out his cell and sent a text to his friend to find out what the last name was. His friend did not reply back by the time we left, so without skipping a beat Jacob asked for his number so he could get the name to him when he found out. He said sure, and they exchanged numbers. Unbelievable! What an impression this must have left on Jacob and yes it did on me too. When Jacob gets into the Navy Academy, he will have a few stories to tell about what he did before he joined the Navy. I gave the Navy Seal prints from Tom Miller, get well cards from local elementary schools. The first thing he did was to ask someone to put a card up on the wall along with others he had. I also gave him four \$50 gift cards and the old running joke we tell about if you use them to buy beer, make sure it's cold; they will void out if it's warm. Yes, it still gets a laugh. He will be heading down to Fort Sam Houston for additional treatment in the near future, but still has to get some additional surgery on his injured right hand. We spent about 30 minutes in the room and it was a great way to end the day and our visit. Before we left he asked all of us to sign the Seal Team flag on the wall which we all gladly did.

I also gave out applications from the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund to all those we visited with today. This organization looks to financially help the families of those who are wounded or injured while in the hospital. Attached is their web site. Thanks to Bob & Kathy and all the people associated with them for all that they do for the wounded men and women and their families. <http://www.injuredmarinesfund.org/>

Besides the wounded that we visit, there are those who are injured in the daily performance of their jobs whether they be in the US of A or some far off land around the globe. There are also those who have to return because of medical conditions. Over the years we have visited with men and women who have cancer and those who have been injured in automobile accidents while home on leave. To us it does not make a difference how or why they are there. We will visit with them and their families. Please keep them, and all who are still deployed, no matter where they may be around the world, in your prayers.

The wounded and injured we get to visit are an amazing bunch of Men and Women who wear the uniform of our Military Services. We all feel honored and are glad we can make a little difference to them and their families with what we pass out during our visits. Hey, it's what we do at the Slattery Detachment and all those we partner with. We are all on the same team and we all need to be there for each other, no matter what uniform we may wear.

We passed out 15 \$50 gift cards totaling \$750 during this visit. I gave out one Air Force Blanket, a few Detachment challenge coins, get well cards and prints from Tom Miller. We have Afghan blankets with each of the Military service emblems on them and they are greatly appreciated by those who receive them. We gave out a few of the bears in Marine Dress Blues. They are always appreciated.

We are all proud of the good visits made by this Detachment. The items we pass out are made possible by the many ways we raise money and the donations we receive from various other organizations we partner with and represent. They help put smiles 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 other ways during the month, “WE” Thank You from all of the wounded service members and their families.

I really wish we could be doing more. If you would like to help out, please do so. Our Detachment’s website is listed at the end of the report. The wounded and their families will greatly appreciate it. 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 do a lot during our visits and wish we could do more. I am proud of being able to represent you during our visits. 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. 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 *Pictures of this visit are posted on the website.*

Our Detachment address:
PO Box 566
W. Caldwell NJ 07007-0566

“Service”

“You have not done enough, you have never done enough, so long as it is still possible that you have something to contribute”

Dag Hammarskjold

Semper Fidelis,
Eddie Neas
SgtMaj/ USMCR/RET
Alpha 1/1, Viet Nam
HUEVET68@aol.com