



Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Trip Report for 09 February 2012

Five members of the Slattery Detachment made this month's visit. Detachment members were Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas, Father Mike Hanly, Bob Stalzer and Chris Holleran. We also had a member of the Lakeland Detachment, Joe Piazza make this month's visit. All went well on the train ride down and we arrived at the Medical Center around 1145. We headed down to the Navy galley/cafeteria to grab a bite for lunch and shoot the breeze and relax for a few. We had a little extra time so after chow we made a quick visit to the PX to pick up a few Marine Corps items.

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 February was about the same as January; light and that is always good news. There were approximately 29 wounded with various battle injuries in the hospital and that includes members from all of the military services. We were able to visit with three Marines, four Soldiers and one Navy Sailor during this visit. The three Marines we saw were from the following units, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup> Marines, Weapons Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup> Marines and 2<sup>nd</sup> EOD all from Camp Lejeune, NC. The Soldiers we saw were from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division and the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The Sailor we saw was from 2<sup>nd</sup> Expeditionary Brigade. We could have seen more, but as usual, some were not in their rooms and some were having additional surgery and/or doing Rehab.

The first room we visited was a Soldier from the US Army with multiple gunshot wounds in the back. He was in the room by himself and was being fed through a tube in his nose and was eating ice chips to quench his thirst. We explained who we were and why we were here and gave him a few gift cards, an Amy blanket and all of the other items we give out on all of our visits. I asked him if he had any family at the hospital and he said his father was at the hospital but had stepped out for a few. I then asked how he was wounded and if he was on a foot patrol or on a mounted patrol in vehicles. He looked me straight in the eye and said, "I WAS SHOT PLAYING FOOTBALL INSIDE MY COMPOUND". My jaw dropped as did Marc and Joe's. He told us he was shot by an Afghan Army Soldier who was attached with his unit. He then told us as he started to break down and tears appeared in his eyes that his best friend was killed by the Afghan

Solider. I asked him what happened to the Afghan Solider, he said my Squad Leader shot and killed him. This Soldier was lying in bed in pain, part of his left side paralyzed at the hip and being fed by a tube in his nose. And you know what? He was pissed that he was not on patrol. He said "I was shot and my best friend was killed in our own compound". Every time he mentioned his best friend, he got teary eyed. I was kind of stunned to say the least standing up and hearing this.

I am going to go off track here for a minute and say something. A few weeks ago, a picture and video appeared in the news headlines showing three Marines urinating on the corpses of some dead Taliban. From day one I said they were wrong by doing that and having it recorded made it even worse. But after listening to this Soldier tell me about getting shot while playing football, I can see why stuff like what those three Marines did does happen. Unless you have been there and done that and served in Combat you can't imagine what goes through a young Marine or Soldier's mind in the heat of battle. I have served in Combat in Viet Nam and there were times when all hell breaks loose and for a few moments, stuff happens that you can't explain to the average person nor will they understand. I am not condoning what those three Marines did, but standing in the room and hearing what happened to this young Soldier, I do understand why it happened.

The second Marine Joe, Marc and I visited was in his room with his wife and getting ready to go home and sitting on the side of his bed. We introduced ourselves and asked him what had happened to him, he look at us and said he had cancer. No matter what you think you are prepared to see or hear every time you walk into a room, sometimes we are all caught off guard. He has had some treatment and has more scheduled down the road. We wished him well and left the room feeling kind of numb. At times, not everyone in the hospital we visit have been wounded in combat, but we still look to provide some sort of cheer and encouragement to them on our visit. As I said a few times before, you walk into a room and some are there because of various medical issues or were injured in training accidents and you can see the look on their faces wishing they were someplace else. As one Marine told us a few years ago, I don't belong on this floor with the ones who were wounded in combat. I told him, you don't get to pick why you are in a hospital, but as long as you are here, we from the Slattery Detachment will visit with you.

We also stopped by and visited with PFC Derek McConnell and his family from Parsippany, NJ. Talking with his mother she told us, "He took his first steps today and they were all very happy with his progress. She also told us, "It was day 201 in the hospital". It has been a long and hard road for this Soldier and his family while he recovers from his wounds, but things are looking promising for the future.

BTW, in my last report about Colonel Whitney who contacted the Green Bay Packers while he was at the Giants/Green Bay playoff game in January, GOOD NEWS. Last week before our visit he received word from the Green Bay Packers that packages were sent out to those individuals we saw in January who were Packer fans. I am a Big JETS fan and stuff like this, could almost make me change teams....NOT,,LOL.

A big thank you from the Slattery Detachment to the Green Bay Packers and their organization for doing this.

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 two watches with the Marine Corps emblem on the face. We also gave out 23 \$50 gift cards (\$1150) & four 25 gift cards (\$100). We passed out two 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](http://WWW.Marinescare.org)

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**“At the grave of a hero we end, not with sorrow at the inevitable loss, but with the contagion of his courage; and with a kind of desperate joy we go back to the fight”**

**Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr**

*Semper Fidelis,*

**Eddie Neas**

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