



## Bethesda Hospital Trip Report

Four members of the Slattery Detachment and two guests made this month's trip. Detachment members were Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas, Chris Holleran and Steve Bliss. We also had the pleasure of two new friends of our Detachment who made the visit with us, Dan Parker and Mary Rose Freddo. Dan was a Marine Corps Captain and a former member of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Marines nicknamed the "Magnificent Bastards" and also a member of 5<sup>th</sup> Force Recon in Okinawa, Ooh Rah.....Mary Rose is a friend of Art and Charlene. She had been trying to make a hospital visit with us the past few months finally made it. Welcome the both of you.

As usual 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 met up with Don Paterson and JR for chow as usual and also had the pleasure of meeting Nancy Nasse, a Recovery Care Coordinator for the US Marine Corps who works in the hospital. She assists the wounded Marines and their families in need of help as soon as they arrive at the hospital as well as some who are on the way. You can't even imagine the questions the wounded Marines and their families may have once they get to Bethesda. Thank you Nancy for all that you do for our Marines and their families in their time of need. Ooh Rah....

We checked into the Marine Corps Liaison Section on the first floor and headed up to start our visit. The past month or so it has been shall I say, "Just a little quieter" in Afghanistan and it appears the number of wounded at the hospital has been less than the previous few months. That is a good thing. In the hospital there was a total of 25 military, 22 Marines, two Soldiers and one Air Force. We were able to see 8 Marines and one Soldier. We did not get to see all of the wounded at the hospital as some were either at rehab or having additional surgeries. We wish the best and a speedy recovery to all we did not get to see.

The Marines we saw on this visit were from the following units, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 8<sup>th</sup> Marines, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marines, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Marines and 1<sup>st</sup> EOD Company and 2<sup>nd</sup> Radio Battalion from Camp Pendleton. Keep them and all who serve in your prayers the next few months.

The first Marine we saw was a double leg amputee and was sitting in his wheel chair when we walked in. We introduced ourselves and gave him and his family all of the items that we collect which are donated to the Detachment during the year. It was greatly appreciated by all of them.

As always I asked the Marine if he would tell us what happened. He said yes and started to tell us in great detail about how he was wounded and that he remembers all of it. He told us he did not black out and looked down and saw that both legs had been severely wounded. His voice was slow and deliberate and at times I thought he may have forgotten what to say, so I tried to change the subject to help him and he looked up at me and said, "Would you mind if I finish?" Of course I said "absolutely" and he did a few minutes later. What a focus and motivation these young Marines have as they sit in their beds or wheel chairs and move forward with their lives. A great way to start off the visit.

The next Marine we saw was also a double amputee. As a matter of fact three of the first four Marines we visited that day had a leg or two missing. IED's are being placed by the enemy and are taking a toll on the men and women who are serving our country in all of the military services, as they try to help and assist another country so they can taste and enjoy the freedom we have here in the US of A.

We were walking down the hall looking for the next room that was occupied and the room was full of hospital personnel, nurses and corpsman who were working on a patient in a bed. I was going to walk in, but the room was crowded. A man was getting ready to walk into the room and I asked him if we could make a visit. The man was the father of the wounded Marine and just arrived on the floor from the ICU. We introduced ourselves and asked if we could see his son. Since he had just arrived from the ICU, we would give all of the items to his father. One of the last things I gave him was the Detachment coin. His eyes lit up and he said wait a minute, I think you should give this coin directly to my son. He said "That coin must have a special meaning and I want you to give to him personally." He walked in, talked to his son and the next thing I am doing is putting on one of those yellow gowns and gloves. I walked into the room and I placed the coin in his hand and said, "Semper Fi Marine." His son was groggy and looked like he had just returned from surgery, but he grabbed my hand and squeezed it as I gave him the coin. Wow, to say I felt chills would be putting it mildly. Of all the things we gave his father, the bear, gift cards, blanket and the application for Family & Friends for Freedom Fund, the thing that makes a big impression was our Detachment coin. Man what a way to spend a day.....His father thanked us a few times and as I always tell everyone who we meet, you don't have to say thank you, just say hello the next time we meet. So for the rest of the time we were on the floor, every time we passed his father, he would say, "Thank you" and then say, I mean HELLLLLOOOO.

Of all the things we do, the one thing that makes me feel really good about what we at the Detachment do, is that, **WE ARE ABLE TO PUT A SMILE ON THE FACES OF THE FAMILIES WE MEET OR MAKE THEIR SMILES BIGGER.** That feels really great. The Detachment and all of the other groups and organizations we partner with to achieve this, should feel great also.

The last Marine we saw was a very highly motivated Marine. He is a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant from 1<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion and also a former enlisted Marine, A Mustang. As Marc and Dan were in the room a Marine BGen walked in who is the Deputy Secretary of Defense. He asked the Lieutenant if he was one of the Dark Horses. (That is the nickname for 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 5th Marines)

The Lieutenant said, “No Sir, I was with 1<sup>st</sup> Tanks.” The General said “This I gotta hear”. The Lieutenant then told us how he had been wounded. His right arm was heavily bandaged. He was riding in his Command turret on his tank as it was rolling down the street with his right arm draped over the Ma Deuce (M2 .50 caliber machine gun) When he bent down inside the tank to change the frequency on the radio leaving his arm on the 50 Cal., the IED went off. No need to tell you what could have happened at that moment if he did not bend down to change the frequency. They say everything is life is about timing or being in the right place at the wrong time, etc. And as some of us say, “We are just lucky and move on.” We all have been trained very well and sometimes we just need a little luck on our side, and that day the Lieutenant was Lucky. We shook his hand, said “Thank you and Semper Fi and we all left with smiles on our faces.

We would all run into the General on the first floor and as we all shook hands, he coined each and every one of us who made the trip. Yes, he received one of our coins too. He thanked us for what we do and yes, I told him, “No need to thank us, all you have to do is say hello the next time we meet”. OOH RAH....A great visit by all. If you have not made a visit with us, contact me or someone in the Detachment and we will make it happen if you are interested in doing so.

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.

We passed out seven watches, 18 \$25 and four \$50 gift cards and four Marine Corps blankets. We also gave out the Marine Dress Blue Teddy Bears to family members. They as always are a big hit. 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, 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)

**"The man who commands efficiently must have obeyed others in the past, and the man who obeys dutifully is worthy of being someday a commander."**

Marcus Tullius Cicero  
Legibus, circa 52 B.C.

*Semper Fidelis,*

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