



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

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Trip Report for 26 March 2013

This report covers our Detachment last visit on Tuesday, 26 March 2013. Three Detachment members made the visit, Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas & Kevin Meara. As most of you know, the war in Afghanistan is winding down and there have been minimal casualties with no new wounded sent to Walter Reed the past month or so. While there have been some casualties the past 30-45 days, none have been sent to Walter Reed. There are other Military hospitals across the country that have received some of those who have been wounded. The military tries to locate a wounded member closer to his or her home. This makes it a little bit easier on the families who may have to travel to see their loved ones.

We left as usual from Newark Penn Station on the 0620 train. I picked Mark and Kevin up at the Trenton, NJ station and then we all headed down to Union Station in Washington, DC. We met up with Don Patterson at the Marine Liaison section in the main building. Don is a member of our Detachment who lives in southern Maryland. He visits the wounded at the hospital weekly and at times meets the wounded when they arrive at Andrews Air Force Base before they get to the hospital. We arrived at Walter Reed around 1100 and stopped to get a quick bite to eat before we started our visit.

During this visit we were able to visit with one Soldier in the hospital and we got to spend some time talking with him and his mother. He was from 27<sup>th</sup> Engineers 618<sup>th</sup> Co stationed at Fort Bragg. He had been re-admitted as he needed some additional surgery. He appeared to be doing well and had that surprised look on his face when the three of us walked into his room all wearing a Marine Corps shirt. We told him we visit with everyone no matter what branch of service they were in. He smiled and we talked about what he was looking to do after he finishes all of the surgeries and Rehab. He stated that he would like to stay in, but he really wants to be able to do what he did before he was injured and he knows that may not be possible, so he may leave the Army. He is an amputee with other injuries and still has months of Rehab in front of him. We gave him and his mother a few gift cards, an Army Blanket, Detachment coin & Brochure among the other items that we pass out. He was also given an application from the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund. We shook hands, said Semper Fi and left the room. He and his mother thanked us for what we do we said goodbye.

There was one Marine we wanted to visit, but his family was outside the room and said that he was sleeping. There were also a few others on the floor, but some of

them had signs posted that they did not want any visitors. We respected their wishes and then headed over to the MATC building.

Once we arrived at the MATC building we broke up as individuals so we could visit with as many of the wounded as possible while they were doing their rehab exercises. We got there a little early so we could say hello to some of the MATC staff before therapy started. One staff member said, "Hey where's the Pizza?" This was in reference to our last visit where we had ordered pizza for the wounded and staff in the MATC. I said, "Sorry but not today". As we were talking there, was a tall, attractive looking lady talking with a few of the staff. One person walked over to us and said she would like to meet with you. Marc's eyes LIT UP and more on him in a minute. The woman was Esther Lofgren, a 2012 Olympic Gold Medal Women's Team Rowing Champion. Now there are not too many times that you get to meet an Olympian Athlete, yet alone a Gold Medal winner. This was a first for the three of us. She even had her Gold Medal with her and to my surprise, she let all of us hold it. Now, I am not sure if it is made of gold, but this Medal had some weight to it and was quite big. We had a good conversation about her training and how long she has been rowing. She had just returned from Australia and is now living in the DC area and doing all kinds of promoting and good will things for the Olympics. She was asked to make a visit to Walter Reed and she gladly said yes. We told her who we are and what we do and told her we were from New Jersey. She then told us that she was going to be involved in a National Learn to Row Day in Princeton, NJ and asked us if we would come down and participate. WE ALL SAID YES. Now back to Marc. Most of you have heard about Marines, asking celebrities to attend a Marine Corps Ball with them. Two of the big names, Justin Timberlake and Mila Kunis, both were asked and said yes and did attend. Well Marc asked Esther if she would go with him to the Wounded Warrior Ball that is held in November for the wounded at Bethesda. She said yes, and Marc said Great; and I hope your boyfriend doesn't mind. Esther then told us, she does have a boyfriend, but she makes these decisions. She then said he is in the Air Force and then I told Marc you may have to buy two tickets. We all laughed. I received an email from Esther and she has a comment about Marc asking her to the Marine Corps Ball. She said, "I told the boyfriend that he has to step his game if he wants to sign her dance card" LOL. I will keep you posted on what happens. It was a good visit with her. She had to leave and we had to start our visit.

As the wounded Marines, Soldiers and Navy personnel started coming in, a few came over to us to say hello. We have seen a lot of them on previous visits and we all know each other by name now. We said hello and wished them well and did not want to take up too much of their Rehab time. We passed out a bunch of gift cards, Detachment coins, Dress Blue Bears, Marine Corps watches and some of the other items we had. We talked with a lot of the wounded and asked them what their plans were for the future. A few said they would like to stay in the military and if they could not, they planned to go back to school. One Marine is talking with the CIA about a position and was just waiting for a phone call. We wished him well. He was the Marine who was wounded in an IED explosion and had a shirt on a few months ago that said, on the front, "Combat Wounded Marine, Some Assembly Required" and on the back; "I had a Blast in Afghanistan".

Can't make this up. This is how some of the wounded deal with their injuries. OOH RAH.

We also met a woman coordinator from the Veterans Integrated Sports Program that works with veterans who have injuries. They now get them to participate in Paralympic Sports. We handed each other our business cards and said we would be in touch. She was heading to Colorado the following week on a Ski outing for wounded veterans. I asked her if she looks for donations to her organizations for these outings. She said yes and I reached into my pocket and pulled out a few gift cards and said that this is from the Slattery Detachment and all of the other organizations that donate to us. She thanked us and said she would be in touch. I have already received an email from her, thanking us for the donation.

We also met a gentleman from an organization called, "Truckin 4 Troops". I have attached their website for you to look at. He started this looking to help the men and women who have been wounded that cannot do a lot of things on their own and have no transportation. He has two big trucks, has hosted a big bonfire on his property and hosted a bunch of other programs to help the wounded and their families. Again, I reached into my pocket and gave him a few gift cards for gas. He thanked me and I gave him a Detachment coin and to my surprise, he gave me one of his. Don met him a few weeks ago and wanted us to meet. I'm glad we did.

Here is their website; [www.truckin4troops.com](http://www.truckin4troops.com)

Most of you know, even though we are a Marine Corps League organization, we take the opportunity to visit every wounded service member past or present who is in the hospital no matter what uniform they wear. We are all on the same side and we all need to support the families and each and every wounded service member in the hospital while they recover from their wounds.

We passed out 49 \$50 gift cards (\$2,450) during this visit. We gave out one Army Blanket, five Marine Corps watches and a few of the bears in Dress Blues. We also passed out a few applications from the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund. They are always appreciated by all who received them. Thanks to all of the people and organizations who have donated to our Detachments Marines Care program over the past year. It does make a BIG difference. It was another Great visit and we all look forward to the next one.

We are all proud of the good visits done by this Detachment. The items we pass out 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. To all of you who have donated money and/or purchased items from our Detachment, we thank you for what you do.

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. 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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**"Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as ever you can".**

**John Wesley**  
Rules of Conduct, circa, 1770

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