



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

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Trip Report for 9 April 2015

This report covers our Detachment's last visit on Thursday, 9 April 2015, our first visit back to Walter Reed since March of 2014. There were seven Detachment members Marc Purcelli, Monika Flaherty of Operation Jersey Cares, Kevin Meara of City of Angels, Eddie Neas, Keith Butler, Art Williams and John Andrews. We met Don Patterson at the hospital which put us at eight. It was a great turnout by our Detachment. Since our last visit we have made two visits to the Wounded Warrior Battalion East location at Camp Lejeune, NC. With both wars winding down, there have been minimal wounded and injured Military Service personnel being transported to Walter Reed. It felt really good to make a visit after missing out the past year. Five of us met at Newark Penn Station for the 0627 train and we picked up Kevin and Marc at the Trenton train station on the way down.

While we were waiting for the train near the ticketing booth a gentleman approached us and introduced himself. We were all wearing our Red Detachment shirts and either a hat or jacket with the Marine Corps emblem on it so "WE" did stick out a little bit. His name was Mark and his nephew was a Marine who passed away about a year ago. He was a gung-ho Marine Sgt. who was a HMMWV driver who did two tours in Iraq. We presented him with a Detachment coin on behalf of the Slattery Detachment. We all shook hands and said Semper Par. It was a great way to start the day.

As I said earlier the last hospital visit was made in February of 2014. Casualties have been very light and I only mean that in the amount of how many have been wounded the past year. This does not in any way take away from the sacrifice of those few who have been wounded. There are those who have suffered injuries 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.

We arrived at the hospital and moved to the Marine Liaison Section to hook up with Don Patterson. The first order of the day was to meet and have lunch with a few friends we have made over the years and to meet some new contacts. We had lunch with Dallas Poole from the Wounded Warrior Battalion East location at Camp Lejeune, NC. Also in attendance was the USMC Family Support Coordinator, Mia and the Protocol Chief SSgt Diaz. We needed to make contact with them prior to planning and making our visits to ensure access and that all goes smoothly.

We headed back to the Marine Liaison section to pick up our stuff and look to start off with a visit to two Soldiers on the 4th floor. We split into two groups so we could spend some time with both Soldiers. One Soldier an SPC4 was from the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas and the other a MSgt from a unit in California. We gave each of them a few \$50 gift cards, Detachment Challenge coin, get well cards from local schools in New Jersey, prints from Tom Miller and did give an Army Afghan blanket to the Soldier from the 1st Infantry Division. As we always do, we introduce ourselves and tell them who, what and why we are there and then we ask them to tell us a little about themselves. I found out that the SPC4 was from New York, Queens and from Rockaway Beach. I told him so was I and the conversation started. It's amazing how many times we visit and find out that one of us lived near some of those we visited with. It kind of puts everyone in a friendlier atmosphere. We shook hands, wished them well and looked to head over to the MATC location where the wounded and injured go for their Rehab treatments.

I called to find out if one of the Occupational Therapists named Trista that we met many years ago was available for us to visit. She was not able to make lunch, but said she would come down and meet us by the elevator. She met us by the elevator and brought one of the new Occupational Therapists who was from New Jersey. Of course he lived near a few of us when he lived in New Jersey. Trista and I mentioned the "Jersey Thursday" theme we used to do years ago when we were making monthly trips. One of the other Therapists named Kristin was always taking stuff from the rest of the Therapists about the Jersey Girl hype, such as big hair, Hoop Earrings etc. So at one of the functions, I got all of the therapists together and gave each one of them Hoop Earrings. I told them they had to wear them every time we came for a visit. We all laughed and that made our visits a lot more special. Trista asked us if we had visited with a Marine who was bitten by a snake and lost his leg. I said no. She said he is a great guy and hopefully you get to meet him. We thanked each other and headed over to the MATC.

We arrived at the MATC location and there were only a few there doing some sort of Rehab. We said hello to some of the personnel that we have met over the years. It was nice to be back. We split into two groups and the first one I visited with was a young looking Marine who was missing one leg below the knee. We introduced ourselves and after a few minutes we asked him, if he didn't mind, to tell us what happened to him. His first words were, "I was not wounded in combat". (That does not make a difference to us) He said, that he was bitten by a snake. The bell went off and the lights went on. This was the Marine Trista was telling us about. He was a 1st Lt from 11th Marines in California. He told us what happened. He was hiking with a few friends in Colorado and

was the last of the three going up a trail. He said they must have startled the snake as they walked by (Snakes hibernate in the winter) and him being the last one, the snake latched onto him and he was bitten. We told him, we all know the story, the snake was about a foot long, but by the time we heard it, "It was Eight Feet". We all laughed including his mother who was there with him. Being so high up on the mountain it took time for him to receive medical attention and this added to him being treated. He also told us, that snakes when they come out of hibernation there is a cloudy film over their eyes and not being able to clearly see their prey, he got a bigger dose of venom when he was bit. Snakes size up their prey and depending on the size is how much they bite or attack with. We learn something new every day. So with these two circumstances going against him, the venom did more damage and they had to amputate his lower leg. We gave him a few each \$50 gift cards, Detachment Challenge coin, get well cards from local schools in New Jersey, prints from Tom Miller and the one Marine Corps Afghan we had. I also gave him an application for the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund. We wished him well and shook his hand and looked to shake his Mother's hand, "she said No, you all get a Hug". A very good visit thanks to Trista.....

Keith and Monika were with a Soldier a few beds away and they called us over. I find out he is from Brooklyn, NY and lived in Flatbush and Canarsie. I lived in both places too. What a small world. He had been wounded by and IED explosion in a vehicle patrol and a few of his buddies had been killed. He would be in the hospital for a while and we told him, we would look to visit with him when we come back if he was still around. Of course he got all that we give out, except I was out of an Army Blanket. Hopefully we will catch him on the next visit.

We left the MATC and headed over to building 62 which is the outpatient facility for the Marines & Corpsman still requiring some sort of additional surgery or Rehab but are not required to be in the hospital 24/7. We were looking to meet up with a local Marine from Chester, NJ, who was in an automobile accident last year. He was on the way to Las Vegas to attend a Marine Corps Ball from his home base at 29 Palms. He unfortunately was paralyzed from just above the waist down and is now in a wheel chair. I had visited with him back in early March and presented him with a check for \$1,500 to help pay for some the needed renovations to his home. He needed to have a rear wheelchair access to his house, handicap accessible bathroom on the first floor, etc. He and his sister had to switch rooms in the house so he could be on the ground floor. Home Depot did a lot of work for this family and it was much appreciated. He is going to be at Walter Reed for some time and will need some help eventually when he moves back home after he goes through a Medical Board so he can be released from Active Duty. His mother was there and was staying with him while at Building 62. We gave them a few more of the \$50 gift cards and told them we would be in touch and to reach out to us to see what we could do to help out in the future. It was a good visit, but a tough one.

We were able to meet face to face with some of the new Marines who are now part of the Marine Liaison Section. It always good to see a face instead of a name on email. We met with the new First Sergeant, the S3 Operations Officer and with a few others also. We also picked up paperwork that is now required to be filled out by all who

visit the Hospital on future visits. It was a great visit. It's been a while since our last one, so this was good for all of us. We feel like we are making a little difference to those men and women who wear the uniform of all of the Military Services who have either been wounded, injured or have some sort of medical illness.

Listed below are a few comments from Monika who is part of Operation Jersey Cares and this was her second visit.

I wanted to jot you a quick email about our visit yesterday. This was my second trip as you well know and I must tell you that there is a big difference between last year's visit and yesterday's for me. Yesterday was another stepping stone for me as I truly felt part of "the Mission. I wore my shirt proudly and honestly had a level of confidence in myself, and what we were doing as a group. I know in my heart that we make a difference in each person we have met, be it service member, spouse or parent". As for Nick Taylor, the paralyzed Marine.... I have not been able to stop thinking of his sad eyes.

I have already written to a contact in the Chester Lions Club, which I am a member of, to see what they can do to help him and his family. I am hoping that Mrs. Taylor does indeed reach out to me so that I may have future dialogue with her. I do believe I connected with her, mother to mother. And I also hope to have the opportunity to send care packages to Nick's unit when they deploy. All in all, it was another great day spent with everyone that I am building a stronger bond with.

FYI As some of you know I am also a member of the Chester Lions Club, a reluctant one, but nonetheless a member. I already spoke with the woman who is in the head of the committee who is in charge of monies for local residents in need. The young Marine, Nick Taylor and his family will no doubt be in need of assistance, one of which is financial... I'll talk to you all further as I just wanted you all to know that she is very much on board for having the club possibly helping Nick. Thank You Monika,,,,,,,,,,

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. 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 21 \$50 gift cards totaling \$1,050 during this visit. We also gave out one Army and Marine Corps afghan blankets, a few Detachment challenge coins and prints from Tom Miller blankets were donated by them and I know that they will greatly be appreciated by those who will receive them. We gave out a few of the bears in Marine Dress Blues and two applications from the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund. They are always appreciated by all who received them. We dropped off at the MATC location the remaining get well cards and the small pillows made by Liz Hackett and her friends

that we give to those who have amputations. The smaller pillows are easier for them to carry around and use where ever they may go.

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 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, "T" 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.*

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"Teamwork"

"Troops should not be encouraged to foster a spirit of jealousy and unjust detraction towards other arms of the service, where all are mutually dependent and mutually interested, with functions differing in character but not in importance".

Lieutenant General J.E.B Stuart

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