



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

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Trip Report for 20 May 2013

This report covers our Detachment's last visit on Monday 20 May 2013. There were two Detachment members making this visit, Kevin Meara & Eddie Neas. We also had two special guests with us, Rachel Campbell and her grandfather, Michael Kelly. Rachel is a High School Junior who ran a 5K fund raiser last year so she could achieve her Girl Scout Gold Award and raised over \$10,000. This money went to Operation Home Front to help the men and women who have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have been trying for months to get her to make a visit with us, but could not coordinate because of her class schedule and finally, we were able to make it happen. She was very well received on the visit, both with the hospital staff and the wounded and their families we got to visit with. We let her tell the story about the fund raiser with all that we visited with. More on her later.

We were finally able to make a visit to the 4th floor in the main building for the first time in months. As most of you know, the war in Afghanistan is winding down and there have been minimal casualties with no new wounded being sent to Walter Reed the past few months. Well that changed over the past month and we were able to visit with some of the recently arrived wounded and their families.

We left as usual from Newark Penn Station on the 0620 train. Mark was sick so he was not able to make the visit. I met Rachel and Mike at Newark Penn Station and we picked Kevin at the Trenton, NJ station and 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.

During this visit we were able to visit with six Soldiers and two Marines on the 4th floor. The Soldiers we visited with were from the following units, 3rd Infantry Division from Fort Stewart, GA., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, NY, 38th Engineer Company, 42nd Striker Brigade, Fort Lewis, WA., B Company, ESB, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, KY and the 3-17 Cavalry & 5-7 Cavalry, Fort Stewart, GA. The two Marines we saw were from 2nd EOD, 2nd MLG and 2nd MARSCO Battalion both stationed at Camp Lejeune, NC.

Since there was only four of us, we decided to stay together as a group and proceeded to make our way around the floor. The first room we walked into was the Marine from 2nd EOD. He had been wounded with an IED explosion and had lost one of his legs. He had been in country for about seven months. This was his third deployment and the first time he had been wounded. He was in good spirits. He had some additional surgeries and was looking forward to getting back with his unit ASAP. We gave him the Marine Corps afghan blanket, Detachment coin, watch and other items we give out during our visits. We gave him a few of the \$50 gift cards and we all shook hands, said Semper Fi and wished him well. We let Rachel tell her story about how she raised money for the wounded and he was very happy and impressed with what she was doing.

The one Soldier we visited with was from the 101st Airborne and had been seriously hurt in a helicopter accident in Afghanistan about a month before he was scheduled to come back with his unit to the states. We walked in and told him who we were and he said, come on in, but I am in the Army and we said, It doesn't matter we visit with everyone who is serving in the US military. They were landing helicopters at night and he let's just say, got in the way of one of them landing. His leg was broken and he had a few other injuries. He asked us if we would like to see a picture, we said yes.

I thought he was going to show us the helicopter, but nope, he showed us a picture of his injured leg. The wound was almost the entire length of his leg. We all said wow and it was pretty graphic in nature, but his last comment was, "You should see the Helicopter." We all laughed at that one. We gave him all the items we always give out along with an Army Blanket. We even gave him one of the watches we had with the Marine Corps emblem on it. I told him, "I know you don't have one of these" and again we all laughed. I then introduced Rachel and her Grandfather who by the way is a Retired Army SgtMaj, (I knew I like him for some reason, LOL) I asked Rachel to tell him what she did and I saw how he was listening to her speak. He turned to his wife and said give me my gear bag and took off his name tag and the US Flag he had with in in Afghanistan and gave it to her. I know she said wow, and so did the rest of us. But he was not done. Rachel asked him if he would write a note to a young boy she babysits. He has asked her "do you think they read my letters"? So he gets a postcard and writes on it thanking him for taking the time write to the letters to the men and women overseas. What a great visit this turned out to be. So we headed down to grab a bite to eat before we headed off to the MATC building.

Once we arrived at the MATC building we broke up into groups of two and visited with as many as we could. We did get to meet with and visit with some of the wounded we have not seen before. Overall, it was a very good visit. We talked with one Marine who is a double leg amputee and he was working out on an exercise machine to strengthen his arms. We asked if we could take a few minutes and say hello and he said sure. He told us who he was and what happened to him and said he was in a coma for almost two months. He then told us he was awarded the Silver Star, the third highest award you can get for valor in Combat. He even sent the pictures of the Silver Star being

presented to him to my cell phone. He told us how he had been wounded and what happened to a few members of his unit and not once did he mention what he got the Silver Star for. A very Humble Marine.

I want to put in this report the following comments from Rachel and her Grandfather, SgtMaj Michael Kelly, US Army/RET. It's important because WE in the Detachment know what we do, but it's nice when we can bring someone from outside our Detachment and hear their comments about what we do and what they saw.

This is from Rachel.

Visiting The Walter Reed Medical Hospital was a life changing experience. I had been looking forward to going but I was also extremely nervous. I am usually an emotional person and I did not want to cry in front of the soldiers. From the beginning I knew that this visit would forever be with me. The first soldier welcomed us in with a smile and immediately began to tell us his story. This shocked me, I did not expect he the soldiers to be so open. This was the trend throughout the visits. They were all so appreciative of the gift cards, pictures, watches, blankets etc. The soldiers are incredible people they acted like their injuries were no big deal, it as just consequence of doing what they love; fighting for their country. I was unable to feel sad or sorry for them as they were just so incredibly positive, there was no way not to feel upbeat around them. The most amazing part to me was that they acted like what I did (organizing the 5k) was such great thing. Compared to them raising money is nothing yet they were thanking me and praising my efforts. One Sergeant made the best impression by giving me his name tag and the flag that goes on his backpack He also wrote a nice postcard for the boy I babysit thanking him for a card he sent to the soldiers for Valentine's Day. It was acts of kindness like these that prove that these nations heroes. Visiting the physical therapy room was also extraordinary. It is a state of the art facility with unbelievable people. Here soldiers with missing limbs are working extremely hard and acting as if it is no big deal. They are busting each other and pushing each other to work just little bit harder. Again they were all incredibly positive and so appreciative of all the gifts and gift cards they received. The trip to Walter Reed showed me just how great my life is. I am blessed to have these people fighting for my safety. Anytime I think I have it tough I need to think back to my visit with the most amazing people I have ever met. Thank you all or giving me this incredible opportunity and I hope I have the chance to experience it again.

This is from her Grandfather

I would like to thank the L/CPL Robert Slattery Marine Detachment 206 for inviting my granddaughter Rachel Campbell to one of the Corps monthly visits to Walter Reed Hospital. As a result of the invitation to her, I was able to visit the troops also. Thank you for that. Sergeant Major Eddie Neas did an excellence job representing the Corps and your detachment.

He encouraged the soldiers to speak about their own wounds. He asked Rachel to talk about her accomplishment of raising \$10,000 for Operation Home Front. Your detachment was very supportive of the 5k run she ran to achieve her Girl Scout Gold Award. I think it was great that a combat veteran was sent because they know how difficult war is and they lived thru it. The families appreciated the visit and were grateful for the gift cards that they could use anywhere. They will be an unbelievable help for the families. L/CPL Slattery Detachment is why Marines say **ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE.**

PLEASE KEEP UP THE GREAT SUPPORT

Michael E. Kelly, SGM Army Retired

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 38 \$50 gift cards (\$1,900) during this visit. We gave out two Marine Corps Afghan blankets, four Army Blankets, seven 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

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"I hope shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all titles, the character of an "Honest Man".

General George Washington

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