



Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Trip Report for 15 June 2012

Three members of the Slattery Detachment made this month's visit. Detachment members were Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas and Chris Holleran. We left from Newark Penn Station on the 0730 train and headed down to Union Station in Washington, DC.

We did not get to visit with the wounded this trip at the MATC building because of a schedule conflict with a few dignitaries making a visit at the same time. As much as we were disappointed, we all understand that with too many visitors on the floor or in the MATC location at the same time, the wounded and their families can be overwhelmed.

We arrived at the Marine Liaison Section and looked to start our visit early before chow for a few reasons. One, The Assistant Commandant was stopping by to award Purple Heart medals to the wounded Marines on the floor. Two, the hospital was going to be conducting a reaction type drill for security purposes. All personnel would be required to stay in a room until the all clear was announced. No one would be allowed to walk around on the floors.

There were only three of us so we decided to stay together and look to visit as many as time allowed. The hospital was quite busy and there have been a lot of inbound wounded the past few weeks.

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 the families and each and every wounded service member in the hospital while they recover from their wounds.

There were over 30 wounded with various battle injuries in the hospital and that includes members from all of the military services. A lot of them are in the CCU and we did not get to visit with them. We were able to visit with four Marines and seven Soldiers from various units. The Marines we saw were from 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, two of whom were wounded together on the same IED explosion. They were on opposite sides of the floor. We also saw an Army Medic and a Soldier from the same platoon who were wounded during the same IED explosion. About four or five of the Soldiers were all from the 82nd Airborne Division located at Fort Bragg, NC.

The Medic asked us if we would make the time and visit with his buddy. We walked into his buddy's room and said, "Hey, The Doc sent us." He smiled and so did his family.

They were surprised that a few Marines were taking the time to visit with their Soldier. This is not the first time we have heard this. Over the years, many family members of other services have expressed their gratitude that we would take the time to visit with their wounded family members even though we were from a Marine Corps organization. Hey, "We lead from the Front". They all received an Army blanket which did surprise a few of the ones we visited. Here we are all three with Marines Corps shirts, hats and yes I even had on a Marine Corps belt and we walk in with an Army blanket. Very cool and I know they appreciate what we do.

Most of the wounded we saw were all injured during some type of IED explosion. Some of them had severe leg injuries and/or leg amputations. But all seem to be in good spirits. We saw a few families that were from Georgia, Alabama and Kentucky. They were all going to be up in the hospital for the coming weeks and we gave out quite a few of the \$50 gift cards. They really appreciated all that we were doing. I really wish we could be doing more. So for everyone out there who is reading this report for the first time and you are looking to help out, please do so. The wounded and their families will greatly appreciate it.

A few of the wounded we visited with had almost identical stories on how they were injured. They would walk into a village or compound and leave the same way when an IED explosion would happen. Some of the wounded were in country for only a month. One Soldier was there for just 32 days on his first deployment. And yes there were some on deployment number four or five.

We visited with one family of an Army Soldier who had just returned from surgery. We did not get to visit with him, but we did spend more than a few minutes with his mother and father. The look in their eyes told it all. We told them who we were and why we were here. They thanked us and we gave them all the items we normally give out. We gave them \$200 in gift cards and the tears started to fall down Dad's cheeks. It was a good feeling to be able to help them out a little and I know it makes me feel good about what we do at our Detachment.

We also met up with Damaris again as she was making her rounds on the floor with American Red Cross passing out items to the wounded. She is the lady we met a few months ago. We gave her a few gifts cards so she could help out family members. If you remember in my last report when we first met her, she took a Mom to get her hair done and a father whose boots needed heels, but did not want to leave his son's bedside. She thanked us again and told us a few more things that she was able to do, so we gave her some more gifts cards and as always, we all got a big hug. There was another lady with the Red Cross with her that seemed amazed at what we were doing. A Great way to make someone SMILE....

On the train ride back to New Jersey a lady got on the train in Delaware and had this big luggage bag. I told her put it right next to my bag. She looked at our Marine Corps shirts and said something like, "I guess the Marines can watch this". We said, Ooh Rah and as she walked by, she said "My husband is deployed in Afghanistan". Marc walked to where she was sitting and found out that her husband was in the Air Force and left sometime in April. We went back to talk to her and told her who we were and what we do. She thanked us and we decided to give her a Detachment coin. I had one Air Force blanket and we gave it to her. She was quite surprised and then she asked if she could make a donation to our Detachment. I gave her a brochure and told her to look at our website. Marc got off at the Trenton, NJ station and I did so at Metro Park. I said good bye to her and she moved to where we were sitting, so she could sit near her luggage. Another mission accomplished on watching "Gear in the Rear". Ooh Rah, LOL. We received a check in the mail last week from her and it's nice to know that we make an impact even on a train ride home. Good job by our Detachment, Semper Fi.

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. We passed out the last watch we had with the Marine Corps emblem on the face. We also passed out 27 \$50 gift cards for a total of \$1,350. We gave two Marine, four Army and one Navy Afghan blankets to the wounded we visited. We also gave out the prints from Detachment member Tom Miller. Good Job to Tom Miller. We also gave away all the Dress Blue Bears we had. They are a big hit with the Moms, wives and kids we visit. We gave out the last of the cigars my friend Trevor donated to our Detachment and for those of them that smoked they got a good cigar. 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. I always give out the application last and talk about what this organization is. The look on the faces of the family members is amazing at times. It's like they cannot believe someone they don't even know and who is from a different military service is doing this for them. A big OOH RAH to Bob and Kathy and all this associated with their organization.

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

Our Detachment address:
L/Cpl Robert J Slattery Detachment, # 206
PO Box 566
W. Caldwell NJ 07007-0566

"The people you're responsible for have got to know you care about their-well being. This has more to do with the success of an organization than anything else"

LtGen James H Merryman
US Army, RET

Semper Fidelis,
Eddie Neas
SgtMaj/ USMCR/RET
Alpha 1/1, Viet Nam
HUEVET68@aol.com