



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

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Trip Report for 11 July 2013

This report covers our Detachment's last visit on Tuesday, 11 July Monday 2013. There were four Detachment members making this visit; Kevin Meara & Marc Purcelli, Keith Butler (Slattery Detachment, Senior Vice Commandant) & Eddie Neas.

Keith and I met at the Newark Penn Station at 0600. We jumped on the train and picked up Marc and Kevin at the Trenton, NJ station. We arrived at the hospital around 1045 and met up with Don Paterson who, as most of you know, is a Slattery Detachment Member 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. This is a good way to welcome the wounded men and women from Germany to the good old US of A.

We started our visit on the 4th floor in the main building. This is the second month in a row that we have been able to do this. As most of you know, the war in Afghanistan is winding down and there have been minimal casualties with only a few of the 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.

During this visit we were able to visit with two Soldiers and one Marine on the floor. The Soldiers we visited with were from the following units, 3rd Infantry Division from Fort Stewart, GA and 4th Infantry Division based at Fort Carson, Colorado. The Marine we visited with was from 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines stationed at Camp Lejeune, NC. There were more wounded on the floor, but one was sleeping and one was heading out the door to do some physical therapy. There were a few others, but they were not in their rooms. The visit to the floor was short, but we did what we could and passed out the items we always give out during our visits.

We visited with the Marine from 2/8 and in his room were his Father and Aunt. His Father is an Army Veteran and before we left, we gave him our Detachment coin. This Marine had been wounded in an IED explosion and would need some additional surgeries. They were in good spirits and they thanked us for what we were doing and glad we had stopped by. A Nurse and a Doctor came into the room a few times and we did not want to be in the way while they took care of this Marine, so we said Semper Fi and shook their hands and left the room.

We then made a visit to a room where a female Army Soldier was lying in bed and her Mother was sitting in a chair. This Soldier had been wounded during an enemy mortar attack on her unit. She was one of the survivors and if I remember right, four members of her unit were killed. There are a few reasons that I mention this Soldier is female. One, there are many who say there should be no women in Combat and some even say they should not be in the military, yet they are. This Soldier was lying in the bed with bandages on both legs and sitting up and talking with us like she was one of the guys and to ME, SHE WAS. She told us what happened in detail just like any of the men we have visited with over the years. My last few years in the Reserves, I was with a unit that had a lot of women assigned to it; both Officers and Enlisted. I would always look out for them, just to make sure NO one disrespected them or treated them badly. I believe that women should serve in the Military. It's not that they shouldn't be there, the fact is they ARE and many have worn the uniform of their Service proudly. They should get all of the respect and treated the same as any Male member of the Military. I know it must have been hard for her mother to see her lying in the bed, but I know she also felt really proud of her daughter. OK, I'll get off my soapbox. OOH RAH...

We told both of them who we are and why we make these visits. We gave them a few \$50 gift cards, an Army Afghan blanket, Detachment coin, Bear in Dress Blues and a few other items we always give out. Yes, we gave one to her Mom too. I looked at her wrist to see if she had a watch on, she did not. So I had asked Kevin to get one of the watches we had so I could give it to her. I said, "I know you don't have one of these". It was a watch with the Marine Corps emblem on it. I told her you will most likely be the only one in your unit with a Marine Corps watch. We all laughed. We shook hands and we wished her well and told her we hoped for a speedy recovery. Marc, Kevin and Keith left and I stayed a few minutes longer when someone said, Eddie, we have to leave, someone else wants to visit with her. I kind of took my time leaving and slowly walked out the door. The person who wanted to make a visit was none other than Montel Williams. I looked at him and said to myself I know you, I have seen you on TV. We all laughed. Most people always say, "You look bigger on TV", I figured that I would just say what I did. We all spent about 10-15 minutes telling each other what we were doing at the hospital. Montel was there on behalf of the Fisher House Foundation and is at the Hospital monthly just like our Detachment. We talked a little about this and that and he told us where he has been with the Foundation. He mentioned Chili and I said, hey, "I have never been there". Later on he told us that he met Prince Charles in England when he was over there with The Fisher Foundation. I again said, hey I have never been there either. He smiled and knew where I was going with this, LOL. He makes monthly visit to the wounded and their families and hosts many barbecues at the hospital. What a great time we all had talking with him. He seemed really interested in what we were doing and how long we have been doing this. As some of you may know, Montel started out as an enlisted Marine and was recommended to attend the Naval Academy Preparatory and then was accepted into the Naval Academy. He retired from the US Navy as a Lieutenant Commander. Keith took down his twitter account, email address and hopefully in the future we both can do something together for the wounded and their families. We told him we would be more than willing to help out with one of his barbecues. I will keep you posted.

To me he was not some TV personality making a visit. He was sincere and a generally really nice guy. We are all glad we got to meet him. And yes, we gave him a Detachment coin.

We headed down to the first floor to great a bite to eat and then headed over to the MATC building. We arrived at the MATC building about 1300, 1:00PM in civilian time, Ooh Rah. The four of us went our separate ways and we visited with as many as we could while they were doing the rehab exercises. Of course we were able to meet with a few Soldiers and Marines we have seen on previous visits who were still at the hospital. Most of them are on an out-patient status and are housed in one of the buildings next to the MATC building.

I went to the back of the room where the Occupational therapy is done and sitting at a table was a young Soldier and his girlfriend or wife. She was massaging his left hand and talking to him. I asked if I could sit down and say hello, they both said yes. I asked them where they were from and he said, Staten Island, NY and I said I am from New Jersey. She said she too was from New Jersey and I said where, She said, Pompton Plains. I said wow, our Detachment is located in Whippany and was just a few towns over. I asked him who he was with and what happened. He told me and said he lost both arms in an IED explosion. Remember I said, she was massaging his left hand and it was not a prosthetic. They told me both of his arms were transplants. I was stunned for a minute and did not know what to say. It then hit me. I mentioned to him that I saw on TV a few months ago where a Soldier who lost both arms in Afghanistan and Doctors had transplanted two arms onto his body. I remembered that he was from Staten Island. He looked and said, "Yes that was me". At that moment I wished that I had a 100 gift cards and I would have given them all to him. What an amazing visit I had with this Soldier. I hope to see him again on the next visit. I was lost for words on what to say and just wished I could have done more. What a visit this was for me.

We visited with one of the Marines we saw last month who is a double leg amputee and was awarded a Sliver Star for heroic actions a few weeks prior to losing both of his legs due to an IED explosion. His wife was sitting in his wheel chair and he had two prosthetic legs on PUSHING HER around the track. Now you would almost think that this should be the other way around. Nope, they want no sympathy, and want nothing to be done for them. They all look forward to working hard during Rehab and getting back to their units or starting out new in the civilian world after they recover from their wounds. This is 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.

The last person we saw in the MATC room had his family and friends around him and we gave each of them a Detachment coin. Sitting on one of the Rehab machines was a young boy who must have been about 10 years old. We were out of Bears, so I asked him if he had a watch and he said, NO. So I walked over to my bag and grabbed one of the Marine watches we had and gave it to him. He eyes got as big as Dinner Plates and his smile was even bigger. He thanked us and was happy as can be. I told him to do well

in School and enjoy the summer. His Dad then coined us with one of his coins. He was from a winery called Honor Winery. I have include their web site and a little bit about who they are. www.honorwinery.com

Honor, Dedication, Valor. Words that epitomize a soldier. Honor wine is a tribute to the young men and women who have served our country proudly. A portion of the proceeds will be given to families that have lost a loved one in military action or been severely injured.

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 31 \$50 gift cards (\$1,550.00) during this visit. We gave out one Marine Corps and four Army Afghan blankets, five Marine Corps watches and a bunch 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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"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them to become what they are capable of being".

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

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