



Walter Reed and Bethesda Medical Center Trip Report

Our trip this month to visit the wounded was last week on Tuesday, 18 August. Five of us from the Slattery Detachment made the trip. Two of us went to Walter Reed first and left at 0545 in the morning. The rest of the group left a little later at 0730 from Newark Penn Station. We all get back between 8 and 8:30 in the evening. Yes, it was an early start, but well worth getting up at ZERO DARK THIRTY and getting to visit with the wounded men and women who serve in our Armed Forces. These are the names of the Marines from the Slattery Detachment who made this month's trip. Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas, Chris Holleran, Bill Freeman and Suzy Becker.

Chris and I met Don Patterson around 0930 at Walter Reed and we were able to visit three Marines just as they were completing their Rehab. The three Marines for were from the following Infantry Battalions, 2/3, 2/4 and 2/8.

The Hospital staff has asked Don that we not make our visits inside while the wounded are doing their rehab. I don't like that, but the Rehab room has been quite full the past two months and time is limited as they try to get everyone in and out in a timely fashion. It is more important that they spend quality time with the Rehab techs and get on the road to a speedy recovery. We passed out Marine Corps Blankets, coins, prints from Tom Miller, get well cards from a few local New Jersey elementary schools and of course the \$25 Gift cards and told the Marines to make sure they only brought Cold Beer with them. It would void out if they tried to purchase warm beer.....LOL, OOH RAH...

We then headed over to Bethesda to meet up with the rest of the group from the Slattery Detachment. Don had to photograph a new Entertainment Center for the out patients who stay in Mercy Hall. This unit was donated by a company called CRESTRON and it is the latest and greatest that technology has to offer in an entertainment center. It has all the bells and whistles you would want at your home and then some. I was able to talk to a few of the men from the company and one is a retired 1stSgt USMC. They have been donating entertainment centers at various military hospitals and the next one is scheduled for Brooks Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. A loud OOH RAH for this company for another good thing being done for the men and women who serve our country.

Here is a little information on this company. CRESTRON started an industry when it introduced the world's first touch panel. For 40 years it has been the world's leading manufacturer of advanced commercial control systems and home automation

systems, innovating technology to simplify and enhance modern lifestyles and businesses by offering integrated solutions for audio, video, computer, and environmental systems and lighting control, Crestron streamlines technology, improving the quality of life in commercial buildings, universities, hotels, hospitals and homes.

There was free chow and we were all invited to help ourselves, which we gladly did. We met up with J.R and Greg from the Maryland Marine Corps League who by the way are now all members of the Slattery Detachment in New Jersey. I guess they like what we do and I can assure you we work well together. They represent us well during their weekly visits.

Just before we headed up to start our visit, we met a Marine who was checking out and on his way home. He had wounds to both eyes and his mother was by his side. We all surrounded them and introduced ourselves and told them a little bit about the Marines Helping Marines Program, the Slattery Detachment and why we do this. We gave them the Marine Corps blanket and all of the stuff we normally give out. We also gave Mom an application from the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund. His mother started to get tears in her eyes and she was almost a little embarrassed and apologized for starting to cry. I told her don't worry because we also get tears in our eyes. They both thanked us and to say they headed home in good spirits would be putting it mildly. **Well Done Slattery Detachment.**

We headed up to the 5th Floor and split into two groups for a few reasons. One, if we all are in the room it gets a little tight and with family members and hospital staff in and out and there is no need to crowd the person we are trying to visit. The second reason is that we get to spend more time with the wounded and their families to talk.

We visited seven Marines and one Navy Corpsman all who had been wounded in Afghanistan. The Corpsman was from Regimental Combat Team 3 and the Marines were from the following Infantry Battalions, 2/8 and 2/3. Most had been wounded by IED blasts and two had received gunshot wounds. The stories they told us about how they were wounded and how a buddy or two or three were killed in the same blast made you cringe a little inside. One Marine was blown off his HUMMV and survived only because he was blown off. The rest of his team, were all killed. He had three different injuries to his leg and just returned from surgery where they removed part of his leg. The doctor told him if he had only had one or two of the injuries they may have been able to save the leg. He had three and there was not too much they could do. He was sitting in his bed, like he had just a scrape on his knee. Another wounded Marine had a problem when he had a breathing tube inserted and he could not drink any liquid until it healed. He could eat solid foods, but no liquid as it would go right down to his lungs. His voice was raspy, but in good spirits. Unbelievable spirit and motivation is what we see month in and month out with these men and women.

If you are reading the newspaper or watching the TV daily, you know what is going on in Afghanistan. It may have quieted down in Iraq, but Afghanistan is where almost all of the wounded are from that we are see during our visits.

Say a prayer or two in the coming months for all the men and women who are over in Iraq and Afghanistan serving our country and away from their families and loved ones. My family and I had the pleasure to spend a day with my brother this past Sunday as his second son just returned from a tour in Iraq. His other son returned in May with Fox Company 2/25.

Before we left, the six of us had to go down to receive an award for the work our Detachment has been doing the last 6 or 7 years during our monthly hospital visits. We received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Commanding Officer of the Wounded Warrior Regiment based in Camp Lejeune, NC. A very nice award, but as I have always said, we do what we do, because we can and because we like it. No awards or Kudos are needed but they are greatly appreciated. We have a great Marine Corps League Detachment and I humbly and with honor accepted this award on your behalf. I am proud to be member of this Detachment. OOH RAH AND SEMPER FI,,,,,,,,,

So if you are reading this report for the first time and want to know what we do with the money we collect and where it goes, 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.....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...

“What counts is not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog.”

General Dwight D Eisenhower

That's it for this months visit. The next visit is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, 23 September 2009. Enjoy the day and hope all is well on your side of the FEBA...

Semper Fidelis,

**Eddie Neas
SgtMaj/ USMCR/RET
Alpha 1/1, Viet Nam**