



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

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Trip Report for 29 September 2016

This report covers our Detachment's last visit on Thursday 29 September to visit the wounded, injured Men and Women in building 62 at Walter Reed. Five of us from the Slattery Detachment made the trip this month. Eddie & Linda Neas, Mark Purcelli, Kevin Meara and a former Marine who was a patient in 2010, Sgt Alfred Brenner. Our last visit was in December of 2015. We used to make monthly visits when the war in Iraq and Afghanistan was going hot and heavy. I'm glad things have calmed down and there are not that many to visit at this time. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

We arrived at the hospital around 1130 and before we headed over to building 62, I contacted one of the Occupational Therapists named Trista, who we met seven or eight years ago on one of our visits. We were outside the Marine Liaison Office talking when a patient in a wheel chair was rolling by. It was another Occupational Therapist who moved to Florida. She is back in the hospital for knee surgery. As she started to talk, Sgt Alfred Brenner turned around and noticed it was his therapist Meghan who took care of him six years ago. They immediately said hello and hugged. It was quite a sight. It's not that often that a patient and caregiver from years ago get to see the end result of how their patient is doing. We are all now Facebook friends. We all shook hands, hugged and headed over to building 62 which is on the other side of the Hospital.

To give you a little background on Sgt Brenner, he was a dog handler. He and his dog stepped on an IED. His dog was killed and he was severely wounded. Thanks to Meghan, the doctors, nurses and the rest of the hospital staff, he is doing well today.

Building 62 is the outpatient building that houses all of those who do not require 24/7 daily care in the main hospital. Some in the building are there because of being wounded in combat. Some of them have been injured in accidents in places where they have been deployed. There are also some who have been injured in training accidents here in the Good Old US of A. And yes there are those who are in the hospital with medical issues such as cancer. All of the different military services are at this location.

We met a young L/Cpl whose right arm was severely damaged. He was standing there with his wife and young son who was in a stroller. After about five minutes or so I asked him what happened; was it an IED? He said that he was hit by a drunk driver. My heart skipped for a second as I can't imagine how he must have felt being in the hospital under those circumstances. This young Marine and his family are in for some difficult

times in the future trying to help him get some sort of function back into his right arm. Most everyone outside of the military thinks that patients at Walter Reed have been wounded in combat. That is so far from the truth. I just wish more people would take the time or get involved with helping the men and women who wear the uniform and their families in situations like that. We gave him a few \$50 gift cards and hoped it would help a little. We shook hands, said Semper Parvum and wished him well.

We were at building 62 to hand out Marine Corps camouflage jackets, Blue Navy jackets and brown jackets for the Army. All of these jackets were donated and shipped to us by an organization from Illinois, The Heart of the Marine Foundation, which we partner with. By the way, this is Linda; I met a young woman that was severely wounded; not many details on how, but she suffered a devastating hip/leg injury. By the look of her and her speech, as well as her tracheostomy scar, it appears she suffered much more than a fragmentation fracture of her hip which required many reconstructive surgeries. She was so proud to say that this past Monday was the first day she was able to use a cane. During the previous almost two years, she progressed from bed bound, to a wheelchair and then to a walker, so use of the cane was a great and proud accomplishment. When she looked at my "Heart of the Marine" pin on my lapel, she recognized it as the organization that donated her cane. For this she was profoundly grateful. I just thought I would share this with you all. This organization was started by the mother and father of a Marine, L/Cpl Phillip E Frank who was KIA on 8 April 2004 in Iraq. I have included their website so you can take a look at it. It shows what they do, serving all branches of the U.S. Military. <http://www.heartofamarine.org/>

The Marine Liaison section set up tables in the lobby for us to display and hand out the jackets. The jackets were delivered to Don Patterson's house and with the help of a friend and his truck, they were delivered to Building 62 as we arrived which was perfect timing. We spent over three hours doing this. Many of those who came into the lobby had various medical issues and trauma. There were men and women, Officers and enlisted. Everyone appreciated what they were getting. They all thanked us and some even looked for a jacket for a buddy in the room who could not make it down. Yes, we gave it to them.

Besides the wounded that we visit, there are those who are injured 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. 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 and all those we partner with. 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 26 \$50 gift cards totaling \$1,300 during this visit. I gave out Marine Corps Blankets and a few Detachment challenge coins. We gave out a few of the Teddy Bears in Marine Dress Blues. They are always appreciated.

We are all proud of the good visits made by this Detachment. The items we pass out are made possible by the many ways we raise money and the donations we receive from various other organizations we partner with and represent. 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, “WE” 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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“Leadership Quote for the Month”

“Ambition”

“If you aspire to the highest place, it is no disgrace to stop at second, or even third place.”

**Marcus Tullius Cicero
On Oratory, circa 55 BC**

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