



Bethesda Medical Center Trip Report

Our trip this month to visit the wounded was Wednesday, 18 November. Six of us from the Slattery Detachment made the trip. We all met at Newark Penn Station and left for Washington at 0730. Here are the Slattery Detachment members who made this month's trip; Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas, Doug Huber, Father Mike Hanly, Bob Stalzer and Steve Bliss. We arrived at Bethesda Naval Hospital around 1130 and met with Don Patterson and grabbed a bite to eat before we started our visit.

We also invited Kristin Perilli an Occupational Therapist at the Naval Hospital to join us. She and her husband Bill are the Co-Founders of Thomas Jerome House. This is an organization that looks to help the men and women who have suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury while serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. I have attached their web site for you to look at; www.thomasjeromehouse.org. They are having a Fund Raiser December 4th and we, the Slattery Detachment, have been invited to attend. This is another example of people doing good to help make things better for the men and women and their families who are serving in our Armed Forces. To me, there is power in numbers.

After chow we headed up to the fifth floor to start our visit. We met up with Mike, JR and two others from the Maryland Marine Corps League, so the Marine Corps League was well represented. The floor was almost full as far as the numbers go, but a few were either walking around outside or in surgery so we tried to see everyone who were in their rooms.

Before we headed up to the fifth floor, we met a Marine who is a double amputee in a wheel chair who we had met months earlier. He remembered a few of us especially Father Mike. He was back at the hospital for an evaluation by the Medical Board. We shook his hand and we were on our way.

We split into two groups and the first room Marc, Father Mike and I visited there was a Navy Seal Corpsman lying in the bed. His buddy was in the next room and the door was closed. We were told he had a TBI so I assumed we would not be able to see him. But lo and behold about 5 minutes later he walked into the room of his buddy. This Navy Seal was, let's just say wounded were a little more seriously. I guess he heard there were Marines in his buddy's room and wanted to see for himself, LOL. These two have been together since BUDS training and were both wounded together in the same fire fight. The last thing I asked both of them is what is on the horizon for you two? Without skipping a beat, they both said, "Get back to Afghanistan with their Team".

In the next room we visited were a Marine and a Navy Corpsman from MARSOC (Marine Special Operations) at Camp Lejeune). These two were also wounded in the same fire fight. I asked the Marine what happened to them and he proceeded to tell the Corpsman to tell us what happened as he had just spent the last hour or so in an interview. The Corpsman, without skipping a beat, gave us a detailed SITREP like he was the Squad Leader or Platoon Sergeant. He heard the yell for Corpsman up from his buddy and assumed that a few others needed his help. He gets to the room and sees his buddy tying a tourniquet onto his leg and at the same time giving orders out to his men. SO he bends down to treat the Marine and assumes he is in a covered position and takes one in the shoulder. Now you have to remember this is a Corpsman who main focus is to treat the wounded Marines of the unit he is assigned to. Leaders always stress to all members of the unit that they must know the mission in detail and be able to take over in case they lose their Fire Team, Squad or Platoon Sergeant. The Corpsman is a perfect example of a unit being well trained. We gave them each a Detachment coin and gift card. I asked the Corpsman if wanted a Navy or Marine blanket and without hesitating, he said "I'll take a Marine blanket". A Loud Ooh Rah and a job well done from this Viet Nam veteran to the Marine Special Operations unit at Camp Lejeune.

We also visited a mother and wife of a Marine who was in surgery. We introduced ourselves and gave them a Marine Corps blanket, teddy bear for each of them and a Detachment coin along with a few get well cards from local schools in New Jersey. I also gave them an application from the Family and Friends for Freedom Fund. The look on both of their faces, told me they could not believe what we were doing and their eyes told me, "Thank You". I feel good about what we are doing and I am proud to be a member of this Marine Corps League Detachment. BTW, Father Mike was passing out cookies that were made or donated by the kids in his Parish to all who we visited. NO, I did not eat any...

We also saw two Marines on the floor who we visited last month. They were both walking around and doing well.

Steve, Doug and Bob made visits on the other side of the floor and they visited a young Army Soldier who had already been deployed and was in the hospital for surgery to remove a tumor on his back. He had been experiencing back pain during his first tour. They also visited an Army Crew Chief of an Army Blackhawk who had been injured. They gave him an Army Blanket, gift card and our Detachment coin. They gave out Marine Corps blankets and all of the other stuff that we give out during our visits. They were able to visit with two Marines from 1st Battalion, 5th Marines and one from 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines.

As we were getting ready to leave and picked up our gear from the Marine Corps Liaison we met the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force. He thanked us for what we do and I gave him and all in his party a Detachment Coin. He then coined a few of us and we all shook hands and left to catch the train.

I forgot to mention this a few months back, but one of our close contacts at the Marine Corps Liaison section was promoted to First Sergeant and is now over in Afghanistan with a Reserve LAV unit. Wish him well and keep him and everyone who is deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan in your prayers.

It was a great visit as usual and I look forward to the next one. With the Holidays coming up in the next few months and things heating up in Afghanistan it could be a tough holiday season for some. Let's all look to do all we can to make things a little easier for the men and women and their families during the upcoming holiday season, both at home in New Jersey and at the hospitals we visit. 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.

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.....

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...

We purchased some more lottery tickets as we returned to Union Station prior to getting the AMTRAC train back to New Jersey. We all put in \$5 each and get Powerball Lottery tickets. I just could not imagine what we could do for the Marines Helping Marines program if we hit...Yes, there have been a few small nibbles, but the big one has eluded us so far. I will keep you posted.

“Esprit de corps thrives not only on success, but on hardships and adversity shared with courage and fortitude”.

Major General Orlando Ward

That's it for this months visit. The next visit is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, 10 December 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**