



## Bethesda Hospital Trip Report

Our last trip to visit the wounded was Thursday, 1 July 2010. Six members of the Slattery Detachment made this month's trip. Detachment members were Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas, Father Mike Hanly, Tom Miller, Bob Stalzer and Detachment Commandant John Andrews. We also had the pleasure of Denise Reil who is the mother of Kristin Perilli an Occupational Therapist at Bethesda. Kristin and her husband Bill are the co-founders of Thomas Jerome House which will provide medical after care and housing for veterans who have a TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) after they are separated from the U.S. military. Thomas Jerome House is currently looking for a house and or land for the first home for these wounded veterans. We at the Slattery Detachment have supported them in the past and hopefully will do so in the future.

As we do on most visits, we left from Newark Penn Station at 0730 and arrived in Washington DC and then took the Red Line train to Bethesda. We all arrived at Bethesda Naval Hospital around 1130 met J.R. Hamilton and Don Patterson and because a Congressman was coming to make a hospital visit at 1300, we had to skip lunch and started our visit early. Hopefully we would not be asked to leave when he did show up. We did not have to leave early and we were on the floor for almost 2 ½ hours.

With the recent events taking place in Afghanistan, Bethesda is busy. There were a total of 22 wounded or injured Marines, two Navy Corpsman, four U.S. Army Soldiers and one Air Force Captain. He was a helicopter pilot and flew MEDEVAC missions working within the area of the British Army. As usual some were not in their rooms as they were having additional surgeries or doing Rehab in another part of the hospital. We were able to visit approximately 12-15 of the wounded on the floor.

We split into two groups. Tom, Bob and Father Mike took one side and Marc, John, Denise and I took the other side. The Marines and Corpsman we saw on this visit were from the following units, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marines, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1st Marines, 3rd Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup> Marines, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 8<sup>th</sup> Marines and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Marines.

Most of the Marines we saw had been wounded by IED explosions. There were also those who had gunshot wounds. One of the first Marines we saw was from 3/6 and as we opened the door and asked him if he was up for visit he said yes and waved us in. He was from Ohio and was on his first deployment to Afghanistan. He had shrapnel wounds and appeared to be doing well. He thanked us for what we were doing and appreciated all of the items we brought with us and gave away.

We starting passing out electric shavers that were donated by Remington and they were a big hit. More on this later. We next made a visit to a Marine who had been shot twice in the left arm and one of the bullets then passed through to his right arm. He was in good spirits and was scheduled for a few more surgeries to help repair some of the nerve damage he suffered in both arms. We wished him well and we all said an OOH Rah and Semper Fi as we left his room.

The next Marine we visited was wounded by some sort of IED explosion or Mortar round explosion. Two Marines who were near him were also wounded. We met their families and they were quite happy that would take the time to visit their sons and come down all the way from New Jersey. A little funny note here and this was a comment by Denise, Kristin's Mother. I would always start off the visit in the room by telling them who, what and where we come from and why we do this. I would always say, we are from the L/Cpl Robert J Slattery Detachment, Marine Corps League in New Jersey. And Denise would tell me later, you sound like you are from Brooklyn. And I said I sound like I am from Brooklyn because I am. I just live in New Jersey now. Again, I know I have gotten a few looks on this over the years.

We visited the Air Force Captain who was wounded in a helicopter crash and there was another Air Force Captain who was also a pilot in the room. One of his visitors was a Reserve Marine and we gave him a Detachment coin. The others looked at the coin and their eyes got a little bigger so we decided to coin everyone in the room. This went over well. Glad we could do this and thanks to all at the Slattery Detachment in Whippany for making this happen. OOH RAH. We gave the Captain the one Air Force blanket we had and other items and they all thanked us as we left the room.

We passed out 14 watches, 17 \$25 gift cards and one \$300 gift card to the Marine Liaison section. We also gave out Detachment coins, Dress Blue Teddy Bears (we ran out of them) and of the 26 electric razors we had, we passed out 14 of them. We left the remaining 12 with the Marine Corps Liaison section. The electric razors were a big hit and a loud OOH RAH and Semper Fi needs to be passed along to Remington for donating those razors for the wounded. We also gave out the applications from the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund.

One of the last Marines we saw was not wounded in combat and was a little skeptical about us making a visit to him. We have run into situations like this over the years and most of them feel they should not be getting a visit from us. But I always say, "Are you a Marine? And he said, yes. I then asked him if he is in the hospital, he said, "Yes" again. Then I tell him "that's why you are getting a visit from us". I do the same if they are a Soldier, Sailor or Airman. This Marine was injured driving down the road and a small boulder crashed through his windshield and he sustained a head injury. He was in pretty good spirits and said he wanted to put the boulder on his living room or kitchen table. His mother was in the room and from the looks she gave him; I don't think that will happen. We all smiled, shook hands, said Semper Fi and wished him well.

The last room we visited had a Navy flag on the outside, so we walked in and there was this gentleman sitting in a chair and there was no one in the bed. He said the former wife of an Admiral would be back shortly, so we said we would come back. We saw him in the hall later and he said “here she comes”. She was in for some surgery and we asked if we could come in a say hello. She said, hell yea, to say she was as sharp as a tack would be putting it mildly. She thanked us for stopping by and appreciated what we did and before we left she had a few jokes she wanted to tell. We all had a good laugh and wished her well as she was going home that afternoon.

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...

**“If you treat a man as he is, he will remain as he is; if you treat him as he were what he could be, he will become what he could be”**

Johann Wolfgang von Geothe

*Semper Fidelis,*

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