



Bethesda Medical Center Trip Report

We made a trip this month to visit the wounded last week on Wednesday, 22 July. Five of us from the Slattery Detachment made the trip as we received a call from Don Patterson the week before telling us that there were 6-8 wounded coming in from Afghanistan. We had our trip cancelled on the 17th of July as there were mostly out patients at the hospital. But as we all know that can change in a flash and it did.

These are the names of the Marines from the Slattery Detachment who made this month's trip. Marc Purcelli, Steve Bliss, Eddie Neas, Keith Butler and Chris Holleran a new member of our Detachment. We met at Newark Penn Station around 0700 and headed down by train to Union Station in Washington, DC arriving around 1045. Chris was on his first visit with us and is a former member of Delta/Golf Company 2/25 at Picatinny in the late 1980's.

We met Don Patterson along with a few other Maryland Department Leaguers such as Greg and J.R. and proceeded to head down to the cafeteria for some cheap noon chow (lunch in the civilian world). We were able to visit five Marines, One Navy Corpsman. Two Soldiers and One Navy, let's just say a Special OPS Guy. More on him later.

We split into two groups of three 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.

The first one I spoke to was a Corpsman who was walking around the floor. He was in the hospital for some surgery on his elbow. He is a young Corpsman attending training locally and hopes someday to serve in the FMF (Fleet Marine Force) and train side by side with Marines. I gave him one of our Blankets, a Detachment coin and a Gift card. He really appreciated the fact that we took the time to visit him.

All of the Marines we visited were based at Camp Lejeune, NC prior to be deployed. We talked to two Marines from a Recon Unit; they were not in the same Company and did not know each other and were on opposite sides of the floor. Both had served tours in Iraq before being sent to Afghanistan. One of the Marines lost part of his lower leg but appeared to be in good spirits. The one Recon Marine with two good legs said he would find the time to walk over and meet the other Recon Marine later in the week. Ooh Rah.....

We headed over to visit a Navy Seal and to say this guy was humble, would be putting it mildly. He was on an operation and was shot in the femoral artery in his leg. He even had a picture of him sitting up in the chopper as he was heading to the field hospital after being wounded.....YES, I SAID SITTING UP. Now most wounded, I guess lay down after being wounded, but not him. The picture looked like he was in his car driving around town with his buddies. But we all know that this was so much more.....By the way, in the firefight he lost his second scout dog in a few years. The first one is tattooed around his bicep.

I am not going to go into detail about what he was doing, but let your mind wander and just imagine what he could have been doing...It would be so much more....Believe me. We gave him and his wife a Navy Blanket, coin and gift card along with the application for the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund. They greatly appreciated the fact and really liked that a few Marines stopped into say hello. We said a loud Ooh Rah and left to make our last visit.

The last Marine we visited was with an AMRAC unit and was wounded by an IED explosion. When we arrived, there was already a crowd outside his room. The Marine was being walked around the floor by a few physical therapists. I introduced myself to his mother and found out that there were three of his sisters, three friends from home in Florida, and a buddy who was stationed with him in Japan. So as you can read this, to say there was crowd around his room would be putting it mildly. I told them who we are and why we do this. She greatly appreciated it and you could see it in her face. We gave her a Marine Corps blanket, coin and a gift card and also an application from the Family and Friends for Freedom Fund. Tears started to well up in her eyes and also a few of us Hard Chargers.....As I looked around, I saw all the faces looking at us happily and said, Ahh, what the hell, let me give them another gift card, then another and then another. I finally gave her enough cards so she could take her family and the friends out for a nice dinner. Hey, no need to carry them all back to NJ, they are heavy you know,,,Yea Right. After a few hugs and many thank yous we headed out for the trip back home. We also gave all of the girls in the family a Dress Blue Teddy Bear. They loved them.

It was another good trip and hopefully we were able to bring a little peace of mind and put a smile on everyone's face, at least for a short time anyway. Some of the wounded and their families have months, if not years ahead of them to recover from their wounds. Again, the next time you are in church or your place of worship, say a BIG prayer for these men and women who serve in our Armed Forces. Or do like I do once in a while. When you pass the place you go, DON'T PASS IT. Drop in and say a prayer and then continue on to where you are going. It will make you feel better.

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...

“We are not permitted to choose the frame of our destiny. But what we put into it is ours.”

Dag Hammarskjold
Markings, 1964

That's it for this months visit. Next visit is scheduled Wednesday, 19 August 2009. Enjoy the day and hope all is well on your side of the FEBA...

Semper Fidelis,

**Eddie Neas
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