



Bethesda Medical Center Trip Report

The following Marines from the L/Cpl Robert J Slattery Detachment Marine Corps League made this trip. We visited the men and women at the Bethesda Naval Hospital on Wednesday 30 July 2008.

Marc Purcelli	
Eddie Neas	
Linda Neas	
Elisa Neas	
Christina Hebb	
Pete Gallo	
Tom Mille	
Art Bowie	
Charlene Bowie	
Chris Kunkel	Picatinny Arsenal
Joseph Fiorilla	Picatinny Arsenal

Well, we almost had a T/O size squad from New Jersey make the trip this month. Some of us took our POV's (Marine Lingo for Privately Owned Vehicles) and drove. The rest of the squad took the train from Newark, NJ Penn Station. We also had Chris and Joe from Picatinny Arsenal who brought along a ton of shirts, hats and thanks from the men and women who work at Picatinny Arsenal to give out to the wounded at the hospital. It was a pleasure to have them along for the trip. As far as I concerned, the more the merrier. Every little bit goes a long way to help bring a smile to the faces of the men and women we visit.

This month was the first month that the Slattery Detachment donated funds for a Barbecue at Mercy Hall for the out patients in Bethesda and Marines from the Liaison Section. We will do so monthly for the next two months. No, we did not cook. We left that up to the Marines of the Department of Maryland, Marine Corps League. Some say all we do is Shoot, Move and Communicate. Yes we Marines can cook too. The League in Maryland did a great job making this happen.

My wife loves to eat out, so I took her along for the ride.....OOH RAH....

We all arrived at the hospital around 1100. After dropping off our gear; we headed across the street to Mercy Hall for some chow with the Marines. There were great tasting hotdogs and burgers and plenty of health food (cookies and yes there was fruit) to go around. There were about 20-25 members of the Marine Corps League in

attendance and about the same number of out patients. We all ate and talked to wounded Marines and all shared some war stories. We raffled off a few items such as a Marine Corps Blanket, backpack and CD player, along with a few Gift cards.

All we did was ask the Marines to put their names on the back of a ticket and drew them from a hat. It was appreciated by all of the Marines in attendance.

About 1245, Linda, Elisa, Christina, Joe, Chris and I left Mercy Hall to start our visit with the wounded men and women in the hospital. The rest of the squad from New Jersey stayed at the barbecue and as I was told later all food was consumed and enjoyed by all. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

We arrived on the fifth floor to start our visit. There were 18 Marines and one Navy Corpsman on the floor but a majority of them were either in surgery or out walking about with their families. We were not able to visit with the Corpsman but we did get to visit with his wife, baby and father in the lounge area. As usual we told them about who we are and what we do and gave his wife the items we give out to all who we visit. Yes, they did get a Navy blanket.

We were able to visit with seven Marines, one Midshipman from the Naval Academy, and one of the last few remaining WAC's in the US Army. More to follow on her in a minute. Two of the Marines we visited we saw two weeks ago and were getting better.

The Midshipman we saw was three weeks into the Academy when she and was injured and had to have surgery on her hip. Lets hope all is well with her during the next few weeks so she can continue her education at the Academy. Her mother was in the room and appreciated that we took the time to stop by to say hello. Yes, she got a Marine Corps blanket and other items.

The Marines we did visit were from the following units, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines from Hawaii, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines at 29 Palms, California, 2nd Light Armored Recon Battalion at Camp Lejeune, NC and one Marine who was injured at the School of Infantry in North Carolina.

As always we enjoyed our visits and all that we did get to see thanked us for what we do.

Now more on one of the last remaining members of the Women Army Corps, WAC's. She was wounded in a convoy in Afghanistan and is doing very well. In case you do not know anything about the Women's Army Corps, here goes a little history about them. They were originally formed as an auxiliary unit, the **Women's Army Auxiliary Corps** in 1942, and converted to full status as the WAC in 1943. About 150,000 American women served in the WAAC and WAC during World War II. They were the first women other than nurses to serve with the Army. So this Lady has been around for a while and I have to tell you this, she is doing well despite her injuries she suffered in Afghanistan.

Well my Cover is off to her and I need to talk to her recruiter to see where I can re-enlist THIS “young” SgtMaj.

Chris and Joe made every visit with us in the rooms and almost had to make an excuse that they were giving out Army T-Shirts instead of a Marine T-shirt. I told them to just use the line I used when we visited some other service member when all we had were Marine Corps blankets, “I KNOW YOU DON’T HAVE ON OF THESE”. All in the room would smile, and to me, it’s a small way to get a smile out of the wounded and their families. Yes, I am a Marine and always will be, but the men and women who serve in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard are all on the same team. They are the Sons, Daughters, Husbands and Wives of friends or neighbors from down the block and even members of our own families. They all deserve our time and appreciation from the Marines for all that they do for our country.

Just a short note on the wearing of an Army shirt by a Marine. When I fought in Hue City in Viet Nam in 1968 some of our uniforms were looking pretty bad and smelling just as good. We were in this house and came cross a bunch or neatly folded Army Fatigues including Army insignias. Well a few of us put them on, and wore them for a few days. But yes, some Senior Marine told us to take off the insignia or we were going to finish fighting in Hue City, Naked.....OK, not really, but he did tell us to take off the Army insignia. So we did and continued to KILO, some ALPHA (Marine Lingo or Phonetic Alphabet to Kick Some Arse) on the NVA.

As I always say, A GREAT VIST... It is a great way to spend a day with the men and women and their families who are protecting our Freedom and Way of Life.

I can see in the faces of the families that we visit that what we do does bring a little joy and few minutes of relief from pain as they head into the future. There is never enough being done nor should anyone think we have done enough for these great men and women and their families.

That’s it for this months visit. Next visit is scheduled Wednesday, 27 August 2008.

“What you have chosen to do for your country by devoting your life to the service of your country is the greatest contribution that any man could make.”

***John F. Kennedy
Address to the graduating class, U.S. Naval Academy
6 June 1961***

Semper Fidelis,

**Eddie Neas
SgtMaj/ USMCR/RET**