



## Bethesda Hospital Trip Report

Our last trip to visit the wounded was Tuesday, 10 August 2010. Six members of the Slattery Detachment made this month's trip. Detachment members were Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas, Bob Stalzer, Steve Bliss, Chris Holleran and Gerry Gallicchio.

We left from Newark Penn Station at 0622 which is an hour earlier than usual. The Marine Corps Liaison Section was hosting a barbecue for the hospital staff. The wounded men and women and their families asked us to stop by and join in. We gladly obliged and arrived at Bethesda around 1100 just as the barbecue was getting started. Don Patterson was taking pictures and you can see them on the Slattery Detachment website. J.R. Hamilton was the GRILL MASTER or a male version of Racheal Ray. I vote for the Grill Master.....LOL. But before I start telling you about our visit, I have to tell you who was helping J.R with the cooking. He is a retired Navy Senior Chief, whose son is a Marine who was severely wounded in Afghanistan and is a patient here. He was sitting in a wheel chair watching his Dad put on the steaks, chicken and hot dogs for us to enjoy. After a few of us from the Slattery Detachment introduced ourselves to his Dad, we walked over to his son and did the same thing. I then noticed how badly his son had been wounded. He was missing both legs, part of his right arm and his left hand badly injured also. We talked for awhile, he told us how he had been wounded and before we left, we said OOH RAH and Semper Fi. We gave both of them a Detachment coin. We gave his son some of the items we always pass out that he did not receive from Don earlier in the month. I walked away amazed. Here were father and son at Mercy Hall in Bethesda. One cooking, the other a patient and all seemed OK. It was like they were like at home attending a family function over a weekend. I don't want to say it was not a big deal, but I have been at barbecues where someone is bitching about too much foam in the beer keg or the potato salad is warm. I think we all should remember what goes on at the hospitals across the county with families as they say both share the pain of a loved one recovering from their wounds and forget about complaining about too much foam in the keg.....OOH RAH.....A great way for us to start our visit. The barbecue went well and all the food and beverage was gone before we started our visit.

With the recent events taking place in Afghanistan, Bethesda has been busy. There were approximately 23 wounded or injured military members at Bethesda. There were Marines, Navy Corpsman and Soldiers on the floor. We did not get to visit all as some were in other parts of the hospital doing Rehab or getting additional surgeries for their wounds. We were able to visit approximately 12-14 of the wounded on the floor. We split into two groups. Marc, Bob and I took one side and Steve, Gerry and Chris the other side.

The Marines and Corpsman we saw on this visit were from the following units, 2<sup>nd</sup> LAR, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marines, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1st Marines, 2nd Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup> Marines, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Combat Engineer Battalion. We visited four or five that were all from 2/6. Some of them would tell us, Oh yea, my buddy is down the hall in room such and such.

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 2/6 and as we walked towards his room, he was getting ready to walk around. We asked him if he was in for a visit he said yes and we all walked back into his room. He was on his second deployment and had been wounded by an IED explosion. I asked him how the first deployment was and he said quiet and boring, but that was in Iraq. He said Afghanistan was a different story. We gave him the items we always give out. His girlfriend was with him, so we gave her a bear in Dress Blues. They both smiled and thanked us for taking the time to visit. I gave him the Detachment coin and as I shook his hand, I said what I always say, "Please accept this coin on behalf of the Slattery Detachment members and the family and friends of our Detachment for all that you have done for our Country and our Corps". He said thank you.

We walked by one room where on the outside of the door was an Army flag. I stopped by an introduced myself to a lady who happened to be the cousin of the wounded Soldier. I asked if we could make a visit and she told us he was sleeping, but she would get his mother. I told them who we were and why we do this and proceeded to give her what we always give out. I gave the family two \$50 gift cards and told them to have a nice dinner on the Detachment. The Mother's eyes got a little watery and she gave each one of us a hug. I would find out that her son has a TBI, Traumatic Brain Injury and they have a tough road ahead of them. When you pass by or attend your place or worship, stop in a say a little, I mean a BIG prayer for this family and all of the families were able to visit. Every little bit helps and we can never do enough for the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces of the good old U.S. of A.

We passed out 7 watches, 15 \$25 gift cards, 15 \$50 gift cards and one \$300 gift card to the Marine Liaison section. Yes, I said \$50 gift cards at our last Detachment meeting the Detachment voted to raise the gift cards from \$25 to \$50. So to all of you who have donated money and/or purchased items from our Detachment, we thank you for what you do. We also gave out Detachment coins, Dress Blue Teddy Bears and the last remaining electric razor that was donated by Remington. We also gave out the applications from the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund. Hopefully some of them will send them in so Bob and Kathy's organization can help them out. A big OOH RAH to the both of them.

Prior to us starting our visit we were told that the Commandant would be stopping by around 1500 (3:00pm in civilian time) to award Purple Hearts to some of the wounded. Now I am not saying we stayed later than usual, but we were in the lobby when the Commandant and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps walked in. Wow, perfect timing, if I do say so myself.....LOL

We shook hands and all said hello and his photographer took a few pictures of us. The Commandants wife was there also and a few members took a picture with her. A good way to end the visit. We all said Semper Fi and we headed out the door to catch the train back to Union Station.

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...

**“War must be carried on systematically, and to do it you must have men of character activated by principles of honor”**

General George Washington

*Semper Fidelis,*

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