



Bethesda Hospital Trip Report

Our last trip to visit the wounded was Tuesday, 21 September 2010. Four members of the Slattery Detachment made this month's trip. Detachment members were Marc Purcelli, Eddie Neas, Bob Stalzer and Steve Bliss. We met Don and J.R down at the hospital so we had six to make a visit with.

We left from Newark Penn Station at the usual time, just after zero dark thirty.....OOH RAH

As we always do we had lunch with a few of the Occupational Therapists who treat the men and women we visit in the hospital. Kristin was not here this month as she and her husband Bill recently became the proud parents of Andrew William. He was born on the 14th of September. Kristin and 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. A big Ooh Rah and congratulations from us at the Slattery Detachment.

With the recent events taking place in Afghanistan, Bethesda has been busy. There were approximately 25 wounded or injured military members at Bethesda. There were Marines, Navy Corpsman and Soldiers on the floor. We were only able to visit six Marines and one Soldier during this visit. Most of the wounded and injured were either in surgery, doing Rehab or walking about the hospital grounds with their families. There were also some of them who were in the ICU.

We split into two groups. Marc and I and Bob and Steve split into two groups. We were informed by the Marine Liaison section before we started our visit that a group of Fire Fighters from the FDNY would be making a visit around 1400, 2:00pm in civilian time. So we had to start a little early on our visit and hopefully be done prior to them arriving. Sometimes it could get a little crowded on the floor and in the rooms and we don't want to overwhelm the hospital staff or the men and women we visit. More on the firefighters from the FDNY later.

The Marines and Soldier we saw on this visit were from the following units, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines, Marines, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines, and the Soldier was from the 230th Engineer Company out of Hawaii. A long way from home for this Soldiers family.

Most of the Marines we saw had been wounded by IED explosions and two had received gunshot wounds. The Marines we saw were all in good spirits and considering their wounds doing very well. They were all looking forward to getting out of the hospital and back with their units. I am not talking about being stateside, these young men wanted to be back with their squads or platoons back in Afghanistan. These Marines are a proud and motivated group who wear our Eagle, Globe and Anchor today. The same can be said for all of the military service members we see. Come and see it for yourself and make a visit with us in the future.

Before we started a visit to the rooms, we were told that there were two families sitting in the family room waiting for their Marines to come back from surgery. We were asked if we could make a visit to them. Of course we said yes. We walked in and introduced ourselves and started to tell them who we are and what and why we were here. They all had this look of amazement as they all listened and their faces seemed to become brighter when we told them why we were here. We passed out the Marine Corps blankets, Detachment coins, brochures, Dress Blue teddy bears and about \$200 in gift cards. Then I gave them the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund application. You could see their eyes water up a little bit as they could not believe what we were doing. Thanks to Kathy and Bob and everyone else from the F&FFF organization for what you do for these families. As we were starting to leave and looked to shake hands, they would not have any of that. We all received a number of tight hugs from everyone and as they said thank you to us, I told them they did not have to thank us, just say hello the next time we meet. Of course hopefully by the next time we make a visit, they will all be back in their homes. A great way to start off a visit. We would visit the two Marines later before we ended our visit. One of the Marines was from my old Reserve unit, 4th Combat Engineers in Baltimore, Maryland. He was with one of the support companies in Virginia. OOH RAH!

The last room we visited was an Army Soldier from Hawaii. I walked in and asked his mother if we could come in and visit as we were from a Marine Corps League in New Jersey. She said, "My son is in the Army, is that OK"? Of course we said, "Yes, "we look to visit all service members in the hospital." We introduced ourselves to his family and passed out the one Army blanket we had along with everything else we always bring. Her son had a head injury. While he was in Afghanistan he had a cerebral embolism and had to be operated on and was flown back to the US of A. This family has a tough road ahead of them and being so far from home, has added to the road they will travel. I gave them the Family & Friends for Freedom Fund application and, let's just say, a FEW extra \$50 gift cards. They thanked us and we all left and headed downstairs to start our trip back home. The next time you go to your place of worship, put this family and all of the families we saw today in your prayers.

As we headed downstairs we ran into the group from the FDNY. We introduced ourselves and we all shook hands and we gave each of them a Slattery Detachment coin. One of the retired firemen was a former Marine who lost both of his sons on 9/11 in NYC. Both were NYC firefighters.

We had one Marine Corps blanket left and we gave it to him. I am not sure what we could have said, that he has not heard before, but we all just looked at each other and shook hands and said Semper Fi.

We passed out 15 \$50 gift cards and one \$300 gift card to the Marine Liaison section. We also gave the Marine Liaison Section checks totaling \$10,000. Yes, I said \$10,000 to be used to help fund the 235th Marine Corps Birthday for the Wounded Warriors at Bethesda and Walter Reed. Because of all of the things we do at the Slattery Detachment as part of our Marines Care program and all of the monies that are donated to us and the many other veteran organization we partner with, we can make this happen. A loud OOH RAH to all of you. So to all of you who have donated money and/or purchased items from our Detachment, we thank you for what you do.

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...

“The history of free men is never written by chance but by choice—Their Choice.”

General Dwight D Eisenhower

Semper Fidelis,

**Eddie Neas
SgtMaj/ USMCR/RET
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