



Walter Reed and Bethesda Medical Center Trip Report
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Only two of us made the trip this month. There was a minimal amount of wounded at both hospitals. This is a very good thing. A guest from Jasna Polana TPC Golf course in Princeton, NJ and I made the trip. We made the trip to visit the men and women at Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval Hospitals on Wednesday 28 August 2008.

Eddie Neas  
Marcie Bono

This month was the second month that the Slattery Detachment donated funds for a Barbecue at Mercy Hall for the out patients at Bethesda and Marines from the Liaison Section. We will have one more barbecue during September.

A little bit about Marcie and the Birdie's for the Brave program that is held at the Jasna Polana Golf Course in Princeton, NJ. This program is supported by the PGA, (Professional Golf Association). I played in this outing last year and I met Marcie at the reception after playing in the rain all day. The group I played with went the distance, in the rain, ALL DAY. She invited us back for a day in the hoping for better weather conditions. Well, one thing lead to another and I told her about our program, Marines Helping Marines. Since we were both involved with helping the wounded men and women, I invited her along for a visit to the hospitals. This was a way for her to see first hand what programs like ours do for the wounded men and women. It went very well and she was glad that she made the trip. I have added the web site below in case anyone would like more information on the Birdies for the Brave program. The next event for the Birdies for the Brave is scheduled in October.

<http://www.birdiesforthebrave.com/>

Marcie and I arrived at Walter Reed around 0930 and met up with Don Patterson in the lobby. The first place we visited was the out patient physical therapy room. We met up with a Navy Lieutenant who by the way if a former US Marine. OOH RAH.

He briefed Marcie and I on the ins and outs of what takes place in the on the floor. After a few more minutes we decided to walk around and visited some of the wounded that were doing their exercises.

The first person we saw was an Army Soldier who was rehabbing his leg after being wounded by an IED explosion. He very much appreciated that we took the time to stop by and say hello. I told him about our programs and what we do for the wounded to bring a little joy and smile to their faces as they heal. If we did not have to leave and go to another part of the hospital, we could still be there talking to him.

He has served almost 30 years in the Army and we asked him if he was going to retire, He said "Hell No", I have six more years to go and was looking forward to going back overseas with my unit. Can't make this stuff up. These men and women in our Armed Forces are something else.

We then headed over to the new Rehab facility and were able to talk to a few more of the wounded patients. One good thing I noticed is that a lot of familiar faces I have seen over the past year or so were not in the hospital. To me this is good news as some of them have been able to either return home or back to their units.

We did run into one Marine I have seen before. He lost both of his legs and was now walking down the hallway on his prosthetic legs. He was holding onto a leash with a nice size dog. There is a program where dogs are donated and given to the wounded men and women who are in the hospital. The dogs help them heal and they become quite attached to each other. In case if you are wondering, they get to keep the dog when they leave the hospital. I'm not sure who does this, but it's a great way to help the men and women move on with their lives.

Don showed Marcie the video he has of Cpl Kenny Lyons pulling around Josh who is a double amputee, as they bump into each other and almost fall over. They are laughing like kids playing in a playground. She got a laugh out of it also.

We left Walter Reed and headed over to Bethesda, as the barbecue was about to start around 1300. We did not get to visit anyone on the floor at Bethesda as there were no wounded to visit. This is a good thing as casualties are down in both Iraq and Afghanistan. We arrived at the barbecue and met up with Tony, JR and the rest of the Marines from the Department of Maryland, Marine Corps League.

We grabbed a bite to eat and talked to a few of the Marines who were out patients and, of course, the staff of the liaison section too. I ran into MSgt Jones who used to be the SNCOIC of the liaison section in 2007. He is now stationed at Quantico and doing very well. It was good to see him.

We got to talk to approximately 10-15 Marines at the barbecue. As I have said before there is always one story to tell and the last patient we saw was the one. He is a Navy EOD technician named Chris and he was severely wounded on 12 August. After an IED explosion wounded him, the building collapsed on him and added insult to injury. He has a C5 fracture; seven broken ribs a broken clavicle. I don't need to tell you the rest, but you get the point. He moves around with the aid of a wheel chair and cane and does it quite well. His mother was with him. Both of his parents are retired military. To say this Navy EOD tech is highly motivated, would be putting it mildly.

With all of his injuries and the way he was moving, you would think he was wounded a few months ago and not 11 days ago. Absolutely, amazing to see this and be able to spend the time talking with him and his mother. I gave him and his mother a Marine Corps blanket along with all of the other stuff I was able to bring down.

I told him as I was giving him the Marine Corps blanket, "I KNOW YOU DON'T HAVE ONE OF THESE." He proceeded to say thank you and put it on his wheel chair so he could sit on it...now of course I said, "WHOA, do you mean you are going to sit on a Marine Corps blanket???" We all laughed and I told him it would be an honor if he wanted to use it as a cushion. OOH RAH...

We told Chris we needed to get going and he said thank you for visiting and then he said, I need to walk round and thank everyone for coming.... I said no Chris, it's us who need to walk up to you and say Thank You. OOH RAH...

He is headed to Florida for some specialized rehab facility and as I gave him and his mother the application for the F&FFFF they were quite moved by the support that organizations like our are doing for the wounded. His mother could not thank me enough and yes, there were few wet eyes in our group.

On the train ride home Marcie was amazed at the positive attitude and good moral of the wounded we got to visit. As I have said before, you have to make a visit to really see and feel how special these men and women are.

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.

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.

That's it for this months visit. Next visit is scheduled Wednesday, 24 September 2008.

***"Hope encourages men to endure and attempt everything; in depriving them of it, or in making it too distant, you deprive them of their very soul"***

***Marshall Comte de Maurice Saxe  
Macbeth, Act IV Scene i, 1606***

***Semper Fidelis,***

**Eddie Neas  
SgtMaj/ USMCR/RET**