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The Bremer Detail: Protecting The Most Threatened Man In The World. By Frank Gallagher with John M. Del Vecchio, Danbury, CT, Charlie Foxtrot Books, LLC, 2014. ISBN 978-1-4976-4398-7, 18 photos, Pp. 279, softcover, \$13.20

The Bremer Detail: Protecting The Most Threatened Man In The World, is a very interesting account of the first private protection team assigned to provide security and protection for a high ranking, high visibility, United States Government official under some extremely hazardous conditions. Frank Gallagher served as a U.S. Marine from 1978 to 1982. After leaving active service, Gallagher used his skills to become deeply involved in the world of personal protection and security on an international scale. He served as director of security for Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, who had served as U.S. Secretary of State. Gallagher also developed training programs for personnel moving in high risk areas worldwide. He is now executive vice president of Amyntor Group, LLC, which operates internationally as a security service and consulting firm for government, corporate, and VIP clients.

Frank Gallagher was contacted by Blackwater Security and initially was hired to serve 30 days in Iraq, working as a private contractor on the Protective Services Team of Ambassador Paul Bremer who was appointed presidential envoy to Iraq by President George W. Bush. Bremer's task was to oversee the structure and development of a democratic government for that country. Gallagher quickly became the detail's agent-in-charge (AIC) and stayed for almost a year until Ambassador Bremer left Iraq. This book is his account of his team's activities and professional efforts to protect the de facto head of Iraq in a wartime environment and at the same time to deal with all the politics involved in such an operation.

He was assisted in the writing of this book by John M. Del Vecchio. Del Vecchio, author of *The 13th Valley* and several other books about the war in Southeast Asia and what happened when veteran's came home, is a Vietnam veteran. He finished college in 1969, graduating with a bachelor's degree in psychology from Lafayette College, and was drafted that same year. Del Vecchio volunteered to go to Vietnam in 1970 and served as a combat correspondent in the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile). In 1971, he was awarded a Bronze Star for valor.

These two men have produced a very readable book that does an excellent job of describing the situation in Iraq at the time Bremer was there, and the inner

workings of a protective services detail operating under very trying circumstances. They also well describe some of the personalities involved in such an endeavor and the resulting clashes, and the problems always encountered with politics and bureaucracy whether in government, military, or a private contractor context.

Of course, Iraq is still a very dangerous place for both outsiders and components of the citizens in their own country. At the time Gallagher and his detail operated there, the environment was such that it would be difficult to argue against his characterization of Ambassador Bremer as the most threatened man in the world. In the beginning the detail had to operate with a shortage of supplies and less manpower than was required for the job. One can only guess at the level of frustration the team members had to endure when forced to deal with a dangerous environment, draining heat, very long hours, and then the politics and lack of support, even from Blackwater Security, which combined to challenge the detail's ability to accomplish the mission. Apparently, Ambassador Bremer never slowed his work pace due to threats, long hours, or anything else, and that meant the protection detail could not slow down either.

Anyone who has ever served on a protective services operation will instantly appreciate some of the problems described in this book. The movements outside "The Green Zone" were always dangerous and there were serious attempts to take out Ambassador Bremer, and by extension, his security detail. Several attacks may not have been reported extensively back in the United States, but the attempts were serious and added to the very high stress levels. Even a return from The Red Zone back to more secure Green Zone did not totally remove the threats as the insurgents launched explosives into the area and the overall culture allowed for weapons in almost every male's hand. Gallagher's description of the need for sandbags on the tops of the contractor living trailers would be almost comical if the possible consequences of stray rounds were not so serious. People in Iraq as a general rule seem to not only have weapons, but fire them on many occasions for reasons such as to celebrate an event or express joy. There is no real regard for where the rounds eventually strike.

Frank Gallagher has a sense of humor that is apparent and refreshing in his account of his Iraq experience. He does not joke at all about the perceptions of the private contractors, as a category, by some government and military people they served alongside. The contract support required to fight the war was on a scale never attempted in past conflicts. All of the contractors were paid to be there as opposed to being assigned by the military or a government

agency. However, they served in the same conditions as everyone else, and provided essential services under very trying circumstances. Gallagher quite rightly resents the label of mercenaries applied to the general group of contractors by some of their counterparts. In addition, as most might expect, a lot of the people involved in the war were very forceful personalities. Type A people do not always have patience, especially in a war environment, with other personalities, bureaucrats, or even each other. His examples of the temperament of the people who could work together and the “weeding out” of those who could not be a part of the team illustrate this point in an unmistakable way. The world of security at the level required for Ambassador Bremer was made up of a relatively small number of people, many of whom knew each other from other assignments. Some operators were qualified on paper, but unable to mesh with a team to accomplish the priority mission.

Most of the Bremer Detail’s work in Iraq took place before the incidents which marred the reputation of Blackwater Security. Gallagher’s team was in place when several Blackwater contractors on other missions were killed. He also was hampered by the perception that, since the Bremer Detail was funded by a Blackwater contract, they were all part of the same group. Gallagher relates some stories about his difficulties in explaining how he and his men were not related to, and in many cases, did not even know Blackwater employees working on other contracts in the country. In addition to dealing with that problem, he also had to deal with the Blackwater bureaucracy back in the United States when he was the AIC in country for the Bremer Detail. AIC Gallagher had difficulty on occasion in communicating logistical requirements for the mission, or explaining why some personnel who were sent to him could not operate with the rest of the team. The stress took a toll on all and in his closing narrative, Gallagher relates how many civilian contractors had difficulty adjusting on their return. His own marriage was one of the casualties of his 333 day tour.

This book focuses on how the Blackwater Security personnel who made up the Bremer detail managed to accomplish their mission of protecting Ambassador Paul Bremer in a highly dangerous environment without ever having to kill anyone or even fire a shot. The inside information is from Gallagher’s perspective of what was needed to accomplish the Protective Services Operation. However, in the changing face of warfare in our time it is important to understand that the use of private contractors will continue for the foreseeable future. This account could serve as an indicator of the need to educate government and military officials on the utilization and need for private contractor support in future operations.

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