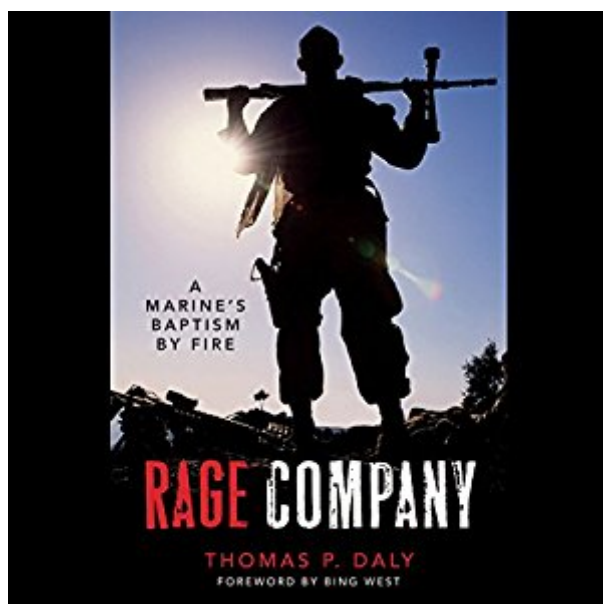


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Rage Company: A Marine's Baptism By Fire



Synopsis

One Marine's gripping story of the bloody battles, the Surge, and the Awakening of Sunni tribes that changed the tide in Iraq's Anbar province. Seven minutes into the first patrol a firefight erupts. Quickly, the Marines of Rage Company became acquainted with the nature of counterinsurgency. Every day, more IEDs were planted than the Marines could clear. They avoided taking the same route twice, they never walked out in the open, and they steered clear of roads that hadn't been "swept" in the last hour. They were in Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province and one of the deadliest cities in Iraq. In November 2006, then First Lieutenant Thomas Daly arrived as part of the "surge" in Ramadi, to take part in Operation Squeeze Play, a division-size effort to remove al Qaeda from Anbar province. In this powerful memoir, he describes the successful clearing of southern Ramadi's Second Officer's district, the Qatana, and the uprising of local citizens against al Qaeda on the eastern edge of the city (the result of an unlikely alliance between Daly's company and Thawar al Anbar). From the first patrol to the last in the spring of 2007, he takes you inside the daily successes and struggles of the operation and the stressful challenge of trying to discern who was a terrorist and who was a civilian. He tells the powerful and very human story of a people who want to free their country, yet have no basis on which to trust the American forces in helping them succeed. A Marine's personal story of fighting an insurgency and overcoming a siege mentality to work with Iraqis to rout a common enemy, Al Qaeda Captain Daly's unique perception of the battlefield has been shaped while operating with units of the United States Army, Navy SEALs, ANGLICO (Air, Naval Gunfire Liaison Company), Iraqi Army and Police Units, and anti-Al Qaeda guerrillas. Filled with on-the-ground details and insights on military operations and strategy, Rage Company cements the accurate history of the unlikely alliance that redirected the Iraq War and set the course for operations in the future.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Every war produces hundreds of books by those who were there, and those who weren't. Most aren't very good. It's the rare book that combines excellent writing with the honest perspective of someone who was in the thick of it, but that's exactly what Thomas Daly has done with *Rage Company*. Daly was a Marine Lieutenant involved in Operation Squeeze Play, an operation intended to take back large areas of Al Anbar province from insurgent forces, and to occupy the cities. Working with local tribes who had joined the government side as part of the "Awakening", Daly and his fellow Marines and soldiers fought a house-to-house, street-by-street battle. This is not a big-picture book about the war in Iraq, although Daly offers a number of observations that apply to the entire war; as a Lieutenant leading a platoon, his perspective rarely goes beyond the company level. He's focused on the actions and the experiences of individual soldiers, and his own education under fire. What makes this work is Daly's remarkable ability to reconstruct, in tremendous detail, the sequence of events in every patrol, and every encounter with the enemy; one assumes he must have written down copious notes after (and perhaps during) every engagement. It doesn't hurt that Daly is obviously a very educated Marine (he's a graduate of the University of Rochester), with a good knowledge of history, first-rate writing skills, and more than a passing familiarity with Arabic. I suspect that *"Rage Company"* will become one of the classic first-person narratives of the Iraq war. It's certainly a must read for students of modern warfare, and those who want to know exactly what it means to be a soldier in Iraq.

At a time when the US is involved in combat in two locations (and our footprint in Iraq was still large during the events described in this book...as was our casualty rate), fewer and fewer Americans have served in the armed forces. There are probably fewer still who appreciate the nature of the current engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. The maneuver phases in both Iraq in 2003 and Afghanistan in 2001 ended in short order because of our massive advantage in military capability. What remains for US forces in both places are sustained operations against foes who don't wear uniforms, who don't muster in garrisons, who prefer to avoid direct confrontation with their opponents and whose operational elements are not only spread among a civilian population, but are also often hiding in plain sight. In *"Rage Company"*, Thomas Daly does yeoman's work in

detailing the manifold challenges on the streets where national policy gets interpreted by the armed forces in southwest Asia. Small unit leadership at the platoon and company levels while conducting anti-insurgent warfare in an urban environment requires its practitioners to maintain delicate balances between kinetic engagement and sidewalk diplomacy. This must happen while keeping subordinates informed and measuring the risk you place them in, carrying out the objectives of superiors and staying out of the headlines and casualty reports. Part diplomat, part weapons expert, part city planner, part motivational speaker, part carpet merchant...these are the moving parts that company grade officers must grapple. Daly addresses these complexities in vivid detail. Parts of this book are tape measure home runs in the genre of first person combat narratives. Those unfamiliar with combat operations get insight into the stressors and danger of facing hostile weapons and people. Daly reminds us of the other parts that the Marine on the ground faces; sleep deprivation, primitive sanitary conditions, discrepancies between what is needed to do one's job and what one actually has. His accounting of December 7th, 2006 and the kit he packed for that patrol are very reminiscent of Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*. Strapping on a hundred pounds of stuff just to head to work --and never complaining about it-- is heroic enough. This book chronicles Daly through four months of combat patrols in and around Ramadi...the eastern gateway to Baghdad in Iraq. It pulls no punches in describing the challenges they faced; strategic, tactical and logistical. As with his stoic approach to carrying 100 pounds of weapons, ammunition and armor, Daly is never asking for a concession about the goodness (or not) of his mission. He is simply describing a Marine going about his business as honorably as possible under the circumstances; circumstances often complicated by ambiguity and degrees of chaos. The only shortcoming in this book is the abruptness in which Daly begins the story --already in Ramadi-- and ends it. He makes brief references to the training that preceded his deployment when detailing the muscle memory that's part of proficiency with a weapons (in a potentially disastrous --but quite funny-- shotgun accident) and when describing the "orientation" command to a pre-mission briefing, I was left unsure if he felt properly prepared for his role as a leader in combat; this was a question I really wanted him to answer. Even though he painstakingly provides descriptions of military terms and hardware, the overall tone is surprisingly clinical. He is a skilled and detailed chronicler of events, but I wanted to hear more from Thomas Daly the writer and less from Thomas Daly the Marine. Neither of these detract seriously from the book. If you want a sense of what post-invasion combat operations in Iraq are all about, you'll gain plenty from this book. And for that, I salute the author.

I got this book thru 's Vine program because I wanted to learn about our troops actions in Iraq

during the surge. Rage Company tells the experiences of Captain Thomas Daly and Rage Company in and around Ramadi, Iraq (note: Captain Daly was a Lieutenant when Rage Company was deployed in Ramadi and functioned as Rage Company's air and naval liaison officer. For many of the engagements, Capt Daly functions as an auxiliary officer for Rage Company.). Capt Daly's story is direct and to the point; actions are told from his perspective, focusing on the troops he was working with and the encounters they have to deal with. Descriptions are highly detailed, describing the weapons employed, the tactical environment, and the specific troops involved (often Capt Daly was either leading the equivalent of a fireteam or the company's security section). There are many photographs and maps outlining the Company's area of operation. For me this was a hard one; parts were interesting but there's a lot to wade thru. Capt Daly's details become rather long and drawn out with many acronyms (some weren't defined and there's no appendix in the back to remind you of them, this makes for a big negative given how prolific Capt Daly was with his use of acronyms). Because of how long some sections are and the heavy use of acronyms, my interest was a little weaker than it normally might have been. I admire Capt Daly's ability to document his experience with the level of details that he does, but it does it without the heart that I usually look for in personal accounts. Because of this, this is a three star book for me but believe that any one of the chapters (or more) would make a good study for a unit deploying into a similar environment.

After reading this book in less than a week, I highly encourage anyone interested in Iraq war history and small unit tactics to read this. It is descriptive of the strategies that failed and those that succeeded. It is about as close as you can get to a modern version of Rommel's 'Attacks' or Swinton's 'The Defense of Duffer's Drift.' It is a little difficult to make out the maps in the kindle version though. Just got the hardback and they are much better.

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