

Duties for the Ceremonial Guard Company, Marine Barracks, 8th & I included security for Camp David, the Presidential retreat in Maryland. The company's four platoons rotated to the Camp, and when the President was present, two platoons were on hand.

Such was the case in 1957 when I was Platoon Sergeant of one of the security platoons during a war rehearsal whereby the President was relocated to Camp David and conducted business inside a secure bunker. Outside this bunker was posted a Marine sentry with instructions that no one without the appropriate badge was to gain entry.

The normal sentry during working hours at this post was an intelligent Private First Class (PFC) who could be counted on to use good judgment in the presence of high government officials. However, one particular day the normal sentry was unavailable for duty and in his place was substituted a big, gruff Marine who was not the sharpest (intellectually) tool in the shed.

In the course of this sentry's watch, one of the visitors to the bunker was the head of the Secret Service. He had no badge, and the sentry would not accept his ID card IAW his instructions. The Secret Service chief huffed and puffed and complained loudly without results. Finally the sentry stated, "I'll permit entry if you get one of your 'snuffys' (a duty Secret Service agent familiar to the Marines) to vouch for your identity."

The Chief did find an agent who identified him. As he was allowed entry, he told the sentry, "Your commander will hear about this!"

The rest of the security tour went without incident, and as we returned to the Washington barracks we awaited the wrath of the CO (the then Col. Chapman). Our two Platoon Leaders were called to the CO's office as expected and upon their return they assembled their NCOs.

As he promised, the Secret Service Chief did send a letter to the CO. In it he stated that at first he was highly insulted, but upon reflection he understood that if he could not push he way into the high security, no one could. He ended with high praise for the Marines and their level of discipline.

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