

Former Navy SEAL Edward Gallagher, pardoned by Trump for war crimes, provided “training” to police in Tallahassee, Florida

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On August 7, 2022 former Navy SEAL /child-murdering war criminal Edward Gallagher posted a video on his public Instagram account showing him “training” over a dozen police officers from the Tallahassee, Florida Police Department. Gallagher captioned the video post: “Tallahassee Police Department putting in some work.”

In the video Gallagher is shown instructing the police as they shoot semiautomatic rifles and engage in military-style close-quarters combat tactics, such as breaching and clearing a room.

These same assassination tactics were employed by Gallagher regularly during his repeat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan over the last two decades.

The beginning of the video features a slogan on the back of a T-shirt that reads: “We deal in lead, friend.” The police officers are shown wearing shirts clearly denoting membership in the Tallahassee Police T.A.C. (Tactical Apprehension & Control) Team. The TAC emblem on the shirt features the outline of an M16 and M24 sniper rifle.

In a separate photo posted the same day on Gallagher’s account, he is shown posing with more than a dozen Tallahassee police officers. Nearly everyone in the photo is wearing body armor, combat fatigues and wielding M4 rifles.

“Awesome day of training @stronghold_sof_solutions with the Tallahassee Police Department,” wrote Gallagher. “They were an extraordinary group of men who were ready to train and take on new concepts of shooting and CQB (Close Quarters Battle) to add to their tool box. It was truly an honor. #FAFO #backtheblue #knowledgegetransfer.”

The hashtag #FAFO, is reference to Gallagher’s brand and personal mantra “Fuck Around and Find Out,” which he has emblazoned on T-shirts, stickers and brass knuckles that he sells. In that same post, he tagged the official Instagram account of Stronghold SOF Solutions. This tag, as of this

writing, has not been removed, implying agreement with the statement.

The video and photos were taken at a private shooting range and paramilitary compound located in the panhandle of Florida in DeFuniak Springs. The compound is owned by Stronghold SOF Solutions, which describes itself as “A US provider of relevant training solutions for the warfighter.”

The company’s “core values” include supporting “military and law enforcement,” fighting “evil” and “develop & enable American Patriots.”

The CEO and president of the company is Brandon Graves who, like Gallagher, is a highly trained government assassin who was deployed multiple times overseas to kill the targets of US imperialism. According to Graves’ LinkedIn account, he was assigned to the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) out of Eglin Air Force Base in Florida from 2011 through 2017. While Gallagher does not appear to hold a senior leadership position within the company, he has maintained a relationship with Stronghold since at least December 2021, based on publicly available photos.

Eglin Air Force Base is located less than 40 miles from the Stronghold facility; however, the company is about 120 miles, or roughly a two-hour drive away, from the Tallahassee Police Department.

Despite only coming into operation within the last year, Stronghold SOF Solutions boasts an impressive client list that includes several government and police agencies. Under the “Clients” section of the company website, Stronghold claims to have dealings, which presumably includes more “training” provided by war criminal Gallagher, with the US Air Force, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Customs and

Border Protection (CBP), the Postal Inspection Service and the National Sheriffs' Association.

That Stronghold SOF Solutions boasts such extensive ties with the US government attests to the advanced crisis of the capitalist system in the heart of world imperialism and disabuses any notions that the US military and police exist to advance "human rights," "democracy" or protect "innocent" life.

In an attempt to tamp mass social anger that erupted after the video and photos emerged, in a statement to the *Tallahassee Democrat* on August 12, the Tallahassee Police Department said that it did not "have a relationship with [Gallagher] and the company was not hired or compensated by TPD."

Despite, or because, his own squad-mates accused him of committing war crimes, being "freaking evil" and "perfectly OK with killing anybody who moves," Gallagher was pardoned by ex-President Donald Trump after he was convicted in 2019 for taking a photo with a corpse, as part of the aspiring dictator's attempt to cultivate a fascistic base of support within the police-military apparatus.

Gallagher has repaid Trump by not only endorsing him but by also endorsing candidates that supported Trump's coup, such as Florida Representative Matt Gaetz and Colorado Representative Lauren Boebert.

Gaetz is one of six Republican lawmakers, according to Cassidy Hutchinson, a former aide for Trump White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, who preemptively sought a pardon from Trump prior to January 6, 2021 for his actions in furthering the coup.

While Hutchinson has not claimed that Boebert sought a pardon from Trump, Hutchinson testified before the January 6 House Select Committee that Boebert was one of "four members" who raised the idea that Vice President Mike Pence could reject electors from states Trump lost as early as "November 2020."

The employment of figures such as Gallagher by US police departments and federal agencies must be taken as a serious warning to the working class. Gallagher received a presidential pardon for his crimes and is being put to work by sections of the ruling class to cultivate and build American death squads to be used against an increasingly militant working class.

That Gallagher is not only treated warmly by police but invited to train them further demolishes claims by the

Democratic Party and its pseudo-left apologists that the police can be "reformed" or "re-imagined."

More than two years after the murder of George Floyd, the Democratic Party has done nothing to curb unending police violence. Rejecting calls from millions of youth and working people who hoped the Democratic Party would take action, Biden has flatly denounced the slogan "defund the police," while proposing to increase federal spending in support of the cops by \$37 billion in this year's budget.

Confirming the paramilitary character of the Tallahassee Police Department, two days after the photos and videos of the police "training" with Gallagher emerged, *Our Tallahassee* uncovered a "recruitment" video the department had commissioned.

Appealing to backward and violent reactionaries, the "recruitment" video features shots of the Gallagher-trained Tactical Apprehension & Control Team using sniper and semiautomatic rifles, dozens of Special Response police in riot armor walking in formation through clouds of smoke and heavily militarized police exiting from a "Rook" armored vehicle, which the city bought for \$325,000 in 2020.

As of this writing, Tallahassee Police Department Chief Lawrence Revell, who last year proclaimed at a rally that he was "God's first choice" to lead the Tallahassee Police Department, has refused to answer local reporters' questions regarding the "training" his officers received from Gallagher.



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