




Medal of Honor Recipient Dakota Meyer Battles Defense Contractor

In late November [Meyer filed a lawsuit](#)  [against his former employer](#), the U.K.-based defense contractor [BAE Systems](#), for what he charges is retaliation against him after he criticized the company's pending sale of high-tech sniper scopes to the Pakistani military. According to the suit, after Meyer resigned from BAE in protest over the sale, the company effectively blocked his hiring by another company by claiming he had a drinking problem and was mentally unstable.

As reported by [The New American](#), Meyer was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in 2009 during a six-hour battle in Afghanistan's Kunar province, during which he fought "five times through an enemy ambush in an Afghan valley to help rescue three dozen comrades and recover four fallen American soldiers."

After leaving active duty in May 2010, Meyer went to work for [Ausgar Technologies](#), a defense contractor that hired him to teach U.S. soldiers how to use thermal imaging to spot roadside bombs. Less than a year later, Meyer moved over to BAE, where, the suit details, he soon learned that the company was trying to sell advanced thermal optic scopes to Pakistan. Like fellow Marines who had served along the Afghan-Pakistan border, Meyer had a healthy distrust of Pakistan's military, which has long been suspected of providing aid and equipment to the Taliban.

Meyer quickly shot off an e-mail to his BAE supervisor, identified in the suit as Bobby McCreight, warning that the company would be "taking the best gear, the best technology on the market to date and giving it to guys known to stab us in the back. These are the same people killing our guys."

In fact, Meyer went as far as to say that the scopes the company wanted to sell to Pakistan — some of which might end up mounted on Taliban rifles — were actually better than the ones being used by U.S. troops in the region. "I think that one of the most disturbing facts to the whole thing is that we are still going forth with the PAS-13 optic and issuing these outdated sub-par optics to our own U.S. troops when we have better optics we can put in their hands right now, but we are willing to sell it to Pakistan," Meyer said in his e-mail.

BAE spokesman Brian Roehrkasse told the [Wall Street Journal](#) that the decision to sell the technology to a potential enemy had been cleared by the U.S. State Department. "In recent years, the U.S. government has approved the export of defense related goods from numerous defense companies, including BAE systems, to Pakistan as part of the United States' bilateral relationship with that country," explained Roehrkasse.

While the [State Department confirmed](#) that it had approved the sale of 20 BAE thermal imaging rifle scopes to Pakistan, "that was for a sales demonstration," clarified State Department spokesman Mark Toner, "and none of those scopes were [sic] sold." He added that BAE "would have had to apply for a



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separate export license, so I'm not aware that ... there was never any pursuit of a sale on those items."

After Meyer sent the e-mail, the suit alleges, McCreight began "berating and belittling" him, and ridiculing his "pending star status" as a Medal of Honor nominee. Meyer ultimately resigned from the company over its deal with Pakistan, and attempted to get his job back with Ausgar Technologies. However, Meyer found his way blocked by a report from McCreight to a Defense Department program manager responsible for approval of his hiring. The memo said that Meyer was "mentally unstable" and "had a problem related to drinking in a social setting," according to the lawsuit. An e-mail to Meyer from an Ausgar supervisor confirmed that the negative report had effectively blocked his rehiring.

Asked about McCreight's allegations against Meyer, Tom Grant, a retired Navy officer and senior program manager at Ausgar, told [ABC News](#), "While Meyer was working for me, I never saw evidence of either of those issues." In fact, Grant said, as an Ausgar employee Meyer had "exhibited a maturity for his age and an insightful capability to get the job done and provide recommendations to improve on what we are doing. I was very impressed while he was working for us. He was an outstanding employee."

Retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Robert Maginnis, a military policy analyst for the [Family Research Council](#), told *The New American* that given Pakistan's cozy relationship with America's enemies in Afghanistan, "any sale of sophisticated weaponry to Pakistan could potentially end up in the hands of the very enemy killing American service members."

He said that Meyer was right to protest BAE's pending sale of weapons technology that could end up in the hands of America's Afghan enemies. "It is a shame his company placed more importance in making a profit at the expense our young American heroes risking their lives in the in Afghanistan," Maginnis said.

The defamation lawsuit that Meyer filed has become something of a public relations nightmare for BAE, which is finding it difficult to come up with any positive spin on the denigration of a Medal of Honor recipient by one of its supervisors.

The company gave it its best shot, however. "As an organization whose core focus is to support and protect our nation's troops, we are incredibly grateful to Dakota Meyer for his valiant service and bravery above and beyond the call of duty," BAE spokesman Roehrkasse said in a statement. "Although we strongly disagree with his claims, which we intend to vigorously defend through the appropriate legal process, we wish him success and good fortune in all his endeavors."

The company, which appeared willing and ready to provide sensitive technology to a country friendly with terrorists killing American soldiers, will have to do much better than such empty rhetoric in its PR campaign — particularly among those who, like Dakota Meyer, have faced enemy fire.

In an editorial published by [Fox News](#), retired Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Bill Cowan noted that Meyer's decision to speak up to his employer reflected the same concern for America's troops that prompted him to face almost certain death five times one day in Afghanistan. "In taking a stand against giving technology to those who might use it against us," wrote Cowan, "Mr. Meyer is again demonstrating the core values which he exhibited in winning the Medal of Honor — care, concern, and devotion for the lives of his fellow Americans on the battlefield."

Cowan, who faced his share of enemy fire during three combat tours in Vietnam, expressed his deep respect and admiration for Meyer's heroic actions. "I've seen well trained, disciplined, brave Marines face torrents of enemy fire engaged in an assault or in defending a position about to be overrun,"



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recalled Cowan. “But I’ve never seen the bravery as cited in Mr. Meyer’s [Medal of Honor citation](#).”

Added the retired Marine officer: “He is clearly a Marine’s Marine — the best of the best.... And now it’s one Marine against one industry giant. From where I sit, as a former Marine Lieutenant Colonel, the odds couldn’t be better for Mr. Meyer.”

Cowan noted that Meyer’s action in standing up to BAE was typical of the commitment he had witnessed in the several Medal of Honor recipients he had had the privilege of knowing in the past. “Their battlefield heroics never escaped them, yet it also never dominated their everyday lives,” he recalled. “Their sense of purpose — work, family, country — was as evident in them as it was in those good people around them.”

While Meyer’s days on the battlefield are most likely behind him, “his commitment to his country and to the men and women still serving is as strong as ever,” wrote Cowan. “That’s why he stood up to his superiors at BAE. He was right in doing it.”

Photo of Dakota Meyer: AP Images



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