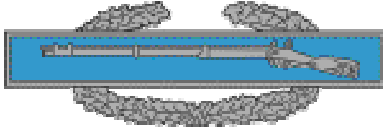


# ON THE RIGHT TRACK

## 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association



December 2010

Cover Page

## FROM THE TC HATCH

Jimmy Segars, President

It is a great pleasure to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year. We have much to be thankful for as we reflect on the blessings of this past year: family, health, security, liberty, a country in which we are allowed to be all that we were created to be, and close relationships such as that shared by all of us in the 1/50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association.

The Christmas season especially is a time that reminds us of the sacrifice men and women in uniform and their families make every day for all of us as they endure long periods of separation. We Veterans salute you and pray for a peaceful Christmas for all of you.

The essence of life is relationships: with our creator and with each other. Every Veteran's Day, I think of the strong ties that we soldiers have because of love of country and a sense of duty and honor. We have something in common with men all the way back to those who fought in the Revolutionary War to the present war in Afghanistan. Thus we have a long line of relationships.

The Christmas season's message, regardless of how much some wish to change it, is about the birth of Christ and the relationship He came to establish with all of us. We in turn are to remember that we are responsible to others to be in a serving relationship. Soldiers understand that relationship. We serve—first, foremost, and always.

As we veterans begin to age, we are also responsible for passing on the knowledge and wisdom we have gained through life experiences to younger soldiers. Passing the torch of values is a must if young people are to understand what service and love of country is all about. We may never know the positive influence we have on others unless we develop relationships that enable us to share our values and how to keep them. I enjoy especially being invited by children to go with them as their guest at school Veteran's Day functions. That is always an opportunity to let young people know about the role of duty and honor in protecting our country. We may be at the grandparent age, but our country still needs us to develop these and other relationships with others that are meaningful, uplifting, unselfish, honest, and moral. Christmas is a good time to start.

MERRY CHRISTMAS from Jimmy Segars and the Segars Bunch!

## CHAPLAIN'S

**O** Hello to all the 1/50th members and your families. I pray that everything is well with each of you. As I write this newsletter article I am celebrating my sixty-fifth birthday, December 5th! This past week was exciting, busy and a blessing, because our daughter and her four children spent the week with us. Our son-in-law went to Pennsylvania on a hunting trip. I told my daughter this week that sixty-five sounded old, is old, and sometimes I feel old, but God has really blessed me through the years and I'm grateful! The year 2010 has flown by, just as every year has done in the past! I know that all of us can relate to the fact the years go by faster and faster as we get older and that is amazing! We are in that time of the year again to celebrate the birth of the Savior Jesus Christ. The Christmas season is an exciting time for all of us, as we celebrate in our own ways and family traditions. So, I want to wish everyone in the 1/50th organization the most blessed and Merry Christmas ever. As we continue to pray for each other, our military troops, our Nation, and our President, I will pray God's continued blessings for each you and your family members. Because of Him, Parker

**Parker Pierce**

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## HISTORIAN'S REPORT

**Jim Sheppard**

As another year draws to a close, I am at work "Full Time" on our memorial efforts on the Website. I anticipate finishing the final 40 or so men within the next month or so. I will then immediately go back to the beginning (working alphabetically) and enter new information I have collected recently...such as documentation on awards for nearly all our men killed in action. Only one brief period between late 1968 and the time we moved to Phan Thiet is not covered...as I photographed, edited and scanned to .pdf more than 2400 new pages of documents. I have placed them all in numerical order (Which also corresponds to date order) and fashion three loose leaf notebooks which will be on display in our Archives Room at this coming and all future reunions.

You may have heard that the National Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Fund, which hosts one of the prevalent web sites on memorializing Vietnam men killed in action, has a drive on to obtain photos of all men killed in action. The task is daunting...and likely never to be complete without massive support. I have found obtaining our own men's photos to be extremely difficult at times...and we have our extensive Association Network and Barbara Daniels helping us. One new tact I have taken recently with some promising success is to research where our men went to school...either high school or college...and contact that institution. The few I have dealt with have bent over backwards to send me great yearbook photos. I will continue the effort as I go through the process of completing and then updating our memorial pages.

I plan on an extensive mailing to all family and friends of our KIAs this coming January or February. Realizing that our reunion is now only a little over 4 months away...it's time to get these invitations out. We are hoping to have an even larger group at the Wreath laying ceremony this time. You may recall we had 14 show up in 2009. I will make a special effort to find family and friends for the 6 new names we will add to our memorial. Men who we found to be ours within the last three years will be added on a small plaque at the base of our memorial.

My plans to visit personnel records center in St. Louis were put "on hold" when I learned there will be a massive transition to a brand new facility "ongoing" beginning this Spring. I will need to wait for the dust to settle (literally!) before I arrange for research trips to Saint Louis. Being Retire, and having recently been awarded 100% disability by the VA, I will not have as many "issues" barring my path to some of these needed documents...such as Company Rosters and some verification of KIA details.

Reunion Information will be added to the website as soon as the "cost" numbers are all confirmed and a registration fee is ascertained. As usual, you will be able to download a registration form from the website...and all the contact information for making your hotel reservations will be there as well. We will be staying in a very nice property with all the amenities we are accustomed to. Michelle Spivey will once again be our host.

I am looking forward to seeing so many of you in the spring...old friends and new. These gatherings are always extremely uplifting for me...even if I am terribly busy the entire time. See you in April!

## WARNING TO VETERANS

Forwarded by Kevin Secor, VSO Liaison, Office of the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

An organization called Veterans Affairs Services (VAS) is providing benefit and general information on VA and gathering personal information on veterans. This organization is not affiliated with VA in any way. <http://www.vaservices.org/us/index.html>

VAS may be gaining access to military personnel through their close resemblance to the VA name and seal. Our Legal Counsel has requested that we coordinate with DoD to inform military installations, particularly mobilization sites, of this group and their lack of affiliation or endorsement by VA to provide any services.

In addition, GC requests that if you have any examples of VAS acts that violate chapter 59 of Title 38 United States Code, such as VAS employees assisting veterans in the preparation and presentation of claims for benefits, please pass any additional information to Mr. Daugherty at the address below.

Michael G. Daugherty, Staff Attorney  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of General Counsel (022G2)  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

## FROM THE EDITOR

**John Topper**

Planning for the reunion next April (26-29) is proceeding with only one hitch at this time. Our attempt at obtaining military buses to move us around the various sites has proven unsuccessful. As a result I have arranged transportation from Patriot Tours – the same folks we've had the past two reunions. That's the bad news. The good news is that Jay Copley's award was finally approved last week and we have tentatively scheduled a ceremony for that event on Wednesday afternoon, the 27<sup>th</sup>. It will be held at the Infantry Museum - pertinent details are being worked out.

Other events currently scheduled are: Tuesday evening reception at the hotel. Registration information and hotel reservation details are contained in this newsletter on page 5. We will have the requisite business meeting on Wednesday morning at the hotel, followed by lunch at the Infantry Museum, then the awards ceremony and unguided tour of the museum. Wednesday evening will feature the BBQ at Uchee Creek. Thursday will be spent with the battalion at Sand Hill, with the memorial service in the morning and training observation/participation in the afternoon. Thursday evening we will have the banquet at a place to be determined, since the host hotel does not have a suitable dining room. Friday morning we travel to the Ranger Training Brigade for the presentation of Rangers in Action.

Further details will be provided through the website and other means of communication as available. Please feel free to email me with questions: jt1@psci.net.

See you in April – until then "Play the Game".

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Editors Note: OpEd on an issue of interest to many of our members with follow on of latest news

## Stolen Valor Act Has Purpose

John M. House, Colonel US Army Retired (Reprinted from Columbus Ledger-Enquirer)

The recent decision by U.S. District Judge Robert E. Blackburn to declare the Stolen Valor Act unconstitutional bothers me. I read on the Small Wars Journal website (<http://smallwarsjournal.com>) that the judge said that the Act was a violation of free speech and that the Act implied that servicemen and women who receive such awards have done so only in order to be awarded the medal in question. Both of those conclusions are a stretch for my imagination. Wearing medals or claiming to have been awarded medals in order to gain undeserved recognition is fraud as far as I'm concerned. The harm or loss may be difficult to quantify but there is no reason other than to gain recognition to wear something or claim to have been awarded something that wasn't earned.

It just makes no sense to me to think that fraud is not inherent in portraying oneself as a more decorated soldier or member of another military service than the person actually is. Sure, ribbons and medals are colorful but they aren't that pretty. They are not worn to make a fashion statement or match an outfit. I also think the judge jumped to an odd conclusion by deciding that the Act implies that service members who are awarded decorations for bravery do so for the recognition. Awarding medals is an attempt from a grateful nation to honor heroism. I see the Act as an attempt to punish those who claim heroism when they do not deserve it. The leap to this Act besmirching the valor of servicemen and women is not logical. I think most veterans and active duty servicemen and women are not happy when people claim to have served when they did not or claim to have been awarded medals for valor when they never received such recognition.

The Stolen Valor Act does not motivate anyone to do something that could warrant a medal for valor. People who take action when others do not are not doing that because Congress passed a law. Anyone who has ever talked to such a hero knows this, so the judge's linkage of the Act's implications to such an idea is a flight of fantasy. I don't like judges who seem to think their mission is to legislate. Their job is to judge compliance with laws passed by the legislature of that level of government. Hopefully a higher level court will overturn this decision before medals become nothing more than fashion statements. I know. I'm getting as crazy as Judge Blackburn now, but this was a dumb decision.

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And this from the Associated Press Posted: Tuesday Dec 7, 2010 10:54:13 EST

DENVER — Prosecutors trying to preserve a federal law aimed at military impostors say the act won't discourage legitimate free speech because it targets only deliberate falsehoods. The U.S. attorney in Denver is asking the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to uphold the Stolen Valor Act, which makes it a crime to falsely claim to have won a military medal. A lower court ruled in July the law violates the First Amendment. Prosecutors appealed and filed their opening arguments late Monday. The case involves a Colorado man who was charged with violating the law by claiming to be a former Marine who was wounded in Iraq and received two medals. The military had no record he served. The law is also being challenged in a separate case in California.

## ***U.S. Army Unveils 'Revolutionary' XM25 Rifle in Afghanistan***

By Joshua Rhett Miller

Published November 28, 2010



The XM25, designed by Minnesota's Alliant Techsystems, has been in development for about seven years and the first prototypes have been doled out to combat units in Afghanistan earlier this month. The 12-pound, 29-inch system, which costs up to \$35,000 per unit, is so sophisticated that soldiers are proficient users literally within minutes. (U.S. Army)

Since the dawn of modern warfare, the best way to stay alive in the face of incoming fire has been to take cover behind a wall. But thanks to a game-changing "revolutionary" rifle, the U.S. Army has made that tactic dead on arrival. Now the enemy can run, but he can't hide.

After years of development, the U.S. Army has unleashed a new weapon in Afghanistan -- the XM25 Counter Defilade Target Engagement System, a high-tech rifle that can be programmed so that its 25-mm. ammunition does not necessarily explode on impact.

Instead, it can be set to detonate either in front of or behind a target, meaning it literally will go through a wall before it explodes and kills the enemy.

It also has a range of roughly 2,300 feet -- nearly the length of eight football fields -- making it possible to fire at targets well past the range of the rifles and carbines that most soldiers carry today.

Lt. Col. Christopher Lehner, project manager for the semi-automatic, shoulder-fired weapon system for the U.S. Army's Program Executive Office Soldier, said that the XM25's capability alone is such a "game-changer" that it'll lead to new ways of fighting on the battlefield, beginning this month in [Afghanistan](#). "With this weapon system, we take away cover from [enemy targets] forever," Lehner told [FoxNews.com](#) on Wednesday. "Tactics are going to have to be rewritten. The only thing we can see [enemies] being able to do is run away." And that would make it much easier for U.S. troops to put them in their sights, either with that same XM25 or another direct-fire weapon.

With this new weapon in the Army's arsenal, Lehner said, "We're much more effective, by many magnitudes, than current weapons at the squad level. We're able to shoot farther and more accurately, and our soldiers can stay behind sandbags, walls or rocks, which provides them protection from fire."

Lehner said the first XM25s were distributed to combat units in Afghanistan this month. The 12-pound, 29-inch system, which was designed by Minnesota's Alliant Techsystems, costs up to \$35,000 per unit and, while highly sophisticated, is so easy to use that soldiers become proficient within minutes.

"That's how intuitively easy it is, even though it's high-tech," Lehner said. "All a soldier needs to know how to do is laze the target. It decimates anything within its lethal radius."

Once the trigger is pulled and the round leaves the barrel, a computer chip inside the projectile communicates exactly how far it has traveled, allowing for precise detonation behind or ahead of any target. "We have found that this has really made our soldiers so much more accurate and being able to deliver this high-explosive round in about five seconds," said Lehner, taking into account the time it takes a soldier to laze, aim and fire the weapon. Once fired, Lehner said, the round will reach its target in a "second or two," meaning the entire process from aiming to direct hit lasts less than 10 seconds, compared to 10 minutes or longer for traditional mortar fire.

A potential battlefield scenario, according to Army officials, might go something like this:

- A patrol encounters an enemy combatant in a walled Afghan village who fires an AK-47 intermittently from behind cover, exposing himself only for a brief second to fire.
- The patrol's leader calls for the XM25 gunman, who uses the weapon's laser range finder to calculate the distance to the target.
- He then uses an incremental button located near the trigger to add 1 meter to the round's distance, since the enemy is hiding behind a wall.
- The round is fired, and it explodes with a blast comparable to a hand grenade past the wall and above the enemy.

"This is revolutionary for many reasons," Lehner said, citing increased efficiency, safety and lethality. "This is the first time we're putting smart technology in an individual weapon system for our soldiers. We feel it's very important to field this because it keeps us ahead of the technological curve of our potential enemies. We have a feeling other people will try to copy us -- this is the future."

Lehner said the Army plans to purchase at least 12,500 XM25 systems beginning next year -- enough for one system in each infantry squad and Special Forces team. The military isn't overly concerned that the weapon might be captured by the enemy, because they would be unable to obtain its highly specialized ammunition, batteries and other components. Lehner said he expects other nations will try to copy its technology, but it will be very cost-prohibitive. "This is a game-changer," Lehner said. "The enemy has learned to get cover, for hundreds if not thousands of years. Well, they can't do that anymore. We're taking that cover from them and there's only two outcomes: We're going to get you behind that cover or force you to flee. So no matter what, we gotcha."

**1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association**  
 Reunion 26 - 29 April 2011  
 Fort Benning, Georgia  
**Registration Form**

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Badge Name \_\_\_\_\_ Shirt Size \_\_\_\_\_

Guest Name \_\_\_\_\_ Badge Name \_\_\_\_\_ Shirt Size \_\_\_\_\_

(Use separate sheet for additional guests)

Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_ Hotel Name \_\_\_\_\_

(Host Hotel is Wingate by Wyndham, Columbus)

***Host Hotel is the Wingate (Breakfast included) 800-228-1000 for reservations. YOU MUST make your hotel reservations DIRECT with either the Wingate or other hotel of your choice. Submitting this registration form does NOT cover your hotel reservations. (Hospitality and Archives will be at the host hotel.) Ask for 1/50 rate of \$84 (25 thru 30 Apr) – cutoff for this rate is 1 April.***

**Registration Procedure:**

**Registration Cutoff Dates:**

**Registration Costs:**

(Per Person)

Early Registration::(Before 10 April, 2011)      **\$200**

After 10 April: ..... **\$225**

**Mail this form along with check to:**

Gary Quint, Secretary  
 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association  
 438 Fairway Lane  
 Kirkwood MO 63122

**Please make check payable to: 1<sup>st</sup> Bn 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association**

**Registration Fee Includes:**

26 April: Evening Reception  
 27 April: Lunch, Dinner, Buses  
 28 April: Lunch, Dinner, Buses

29 April Buses  
 Gifts for Hosts  
 Event Shirt

Dinner for Guests  
 Auction Items  
 Door Prizes

## Command Sergeant Major Stephen W. Bower

Command Sergeant Major, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry



Command Sergeant Major Stephen W. Bower is a native of Bowie, Maryland. He enlisted in the United States Army in August of 1988 and completed Infantry One Station Unit Training at Fort Benning, Georgia where he graduated as an Infantryman.

Command Sergeant Major Bower's career has taken him to assignments at Fort Rucker, Alabama; Vicenza, Italy; Fort Lewis, Washington; Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Bliss, Texas; Smith Barracks, Baumholder, Germany; and deployments to Uganda, Africa as part of Operation Support Hope; Bosnia as part of Operation Joint Endeavor; Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom; and three deployments to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Command Sergeant Major Bower has held positions of responsibility and leadership to include: Pathfinder and Pathfinder Team Leader, C Company, 509<sup>th</sup> IN (ABN/PFDR); Instructor and Phase Chief Instructor, D Company, 1-10<sup>th</sup> Aviation, Fort Rucker Air Assault School; Squad Leader, A Company, 3-325<sup>th</sup> Airborne Battalion Combat Team; Squad Leader, A Company, 1-508<sup>th</sup> Airborne Battalion Combat Team; Squad Leader, C Company, 1-5<sup>th</sup> Infantry; Squad Leader, A Company, 1-24<sup>th</sup> Infantry; Platoon Sergeant, A Company, 1-24<sup>th</sup> Infantry; Senior Drill Sergeant, D Company, 2-54<sup>th</sup> Infantry; Senior Drill Sergeant, C Company, 2-47<sup>th</sup> Infantry; War Plans NCOIC, G3 Plans, HHC, XVIII Airborne Corps; First Sergeant, C Company, 3-325<sup>th</sup> Airborne Infantry Regiment; First Sergeant, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3-325<sup>th</sup> Airborne Infantry Regiment; First Sergeant, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 325<sup>th</sup> Airborne Infantry Regiment; Command Sergeant Major with 2-6<sup>th</sup> Infantry; Command Sergeant Major with 3-4<sup>th</sup> Infantry; and is currently serving as the Command Sergeant Major with 1-50<sup>th</sup> Infantry

Command Sergeant Major Bower's military education includes Airborne School, Pathfinder School, Primary Leadership Development Course, Air Assault School, Instructor Training Course, Jumpmaster School, Rappel Master Course, Basic NonCommissioned Officer Course, Advanced NonCommissioned Officer Course, Drill Sergeant School, Master Fitness Course, Combat Lifesaver Course, Ranger School, Battle Staff NCO Course, Combatives Level 1, and the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy Class 57.

Command Sergeant Major Bower's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal (with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters), Meritorious Service Medal (with 4 OLC), the Army Commendation Medal (with 5 OLC), the Army Achievement Medal (with 8 OLC), Good Conduct Medal (6), National Defense Service Medal (with Bronze Star), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal (with 1 campaign star), Iraq Campaign Medal (with 6 campaign stars), Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon (with a four), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (4), NATO Medal, Army Presidential Unit Citation, Army Valorous Unit Award, Joint Meritorious Unit Award (with 1 OLC), Army Meritorious Unit Commendation Medal, Army Superior Unit Award (with 1 OLC), Ranger Tab, Expert Infantryman's Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Pathfinder Badge, Drill Sergeant Badge, German Parachutist Badge, Egyptian Parachutist Badge, Irish Parachutist Badge, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. Sergeant Major Bower is a member of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club and the Sergeant Morales Club and is a recipient of the Order of Saint Maurice.



Command Sergeant Major Bower is married to the former Jeanne Louise Conway of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They have three children, David, Alexandra, and Matthew.

## FROM THE VP

Ron Leraas

Here's hoping that everyone had joyous holidays and happy family gatherings. My wife and I took the Thanksgiving holidays as an opportunity to host an extended family gathering at our new farm. Since everyone had to drive at least three hours to get to the farm, we joked about them singing the old "over the river and through the woods" song from our childhood. I say "from our childhood", as I don't think the kids in Texas know that song anymore; or maybe it's just a Midwestern heritage thing. As usual, during the holidays, I think about the Thanksgiving I spent in the hospital at Camp Zama, Japan. It's hard to fathom that forty years have passed; some memories are as clear as if they happened yesterday.

I just read a Facebook posting from one of my shooting buddies, who is a CW4 currently serving a tour in Afghanistan. He was lamenting the fact that his unit was ordered to be in the audience for the latest "surprise" visit by President Obama – not so much that they had to go listen to the speech, but the fact that they were required to leave their weapons and knives in their quarters and then walk a mile to the hanger to hear the speech. Then, they had to walk the same mile back to their quarters, unarmed, in the dark. It's hard to hear that story without thinking back to the attack on LZ Betty of 3 May 1970. I guess this is a normal precaution; but, if you look at pictures from WWII, where you see Eisenhower, Montgomery, Churchill, etc, surrounded by armed soldiers, it gives you pause to wonder if our society has degenerated since then.

Here's wishing you all a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and hope to see you at the next reunion.