



United States Department of Defense

News Release

On the web: [http://www.defenselink.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint.cgi?
http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/2004/nr20040408-0537.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint.cgi?http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/2004/nr20040408-0537.html)

Media contact: +1 (703) 697-5131

Public contact: <http://www.dod.mil/faq/comment.html> or +1 (703) 428-0711

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No. 275-04
April 8, 2004

BALLISTIC VEST SEARCH WARRANTS SERVED

The Department of Defense announced today that agents from the department's Inspector General's Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) and other military criminal investigative organizations executed search warrants in seven states as part of an ongoing investigation into the illegal sale of stolen military ballistic protective equipment on Internet auction sites.

DCIS agents, working with agents from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, launched a multi-state execution of search warrants in Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, New York, North Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin. There were 27 subject interviews conducted in various states and two arrests warrants were executed.

The investigative activities this week are the culmination of covert operation "High Bidder," conducted by the DCIS since July 2003. This operation has identified individuals who have attempted to sell military issued outer tactical vests (OTVs) and/or small arm protective Inserts (SAPIs) over the Internet. To date, the operation has executed 30 search warrants and prosecuted seven individuals. Subjects included current and former military members and civilians. This investigation is ongoing.

The OTV is a ballistic vest consisting of a Kevlar weave; SAPI are lightweight ceramic plates that can be placed in the pockets of the vests to provide additional protection to the chest and back area. When used in conjunction with the OTV, the SAPI is designed to protect the user from multiple impacts from high-velocity, high-impact ammunition. The OTV and SAPI are currently used by U.S. military personnel in military operations throughout the world and have proven in combat to save lives.

OTVs and SAPIs made exclusively for the U.S. government are not for sale to the general public. Once the items have lost their shelf life or have been returned by military personnel, they are demilitarized by total destruction through shredding and/or shearing, to prevent the item from being restored to usable condition. They are stolen government property if possessed or sold outside the military or law enforcement agencies.
