



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, February 5, 2019

Former Army colonel, wife sentenced to prison for roles in Fort Gordon fraud, kickback scheme

Co-conspirators awarded Army contracts to phony disadvantaged business in return for bribes

AUGUSTA, Ga: A former active-duty U.S. Army colonel and his wife have been sentenced to federal prison and fined more than \$200,000 for their roles in steering government contracts to co-conspirators in return for cash.

Anthony Roper, 57, of Augusta, pled guilty to Procurement Integrity Fraud and was sentenced to 60 months in prison and fined \$200,000 by Senior U.S. District Court Judge Dudley H. Bowen. He also will be subject to three years of supervised release after his sentence is completed, said Bobby L. Christine, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia. There is no parole in the federal prison system. Roper's wife, Audra Roper, 51, pled guilty to Accessory After the Fact and was sentenced to 28 days in prison, fined \$10,000 and placed on five years of probation.

According to evidence presented during guilty pleas and sentencing hearings, Anthony Roper, then in active-duty status at Fort Gordon, accepted bribes from Calvin Devear Lawyer, 60, a retired U.S. Army colonel, to steer Army contracts worth more than \$20 million to Lawyer's company, the CREC group. Based on false representations from Lawyer and Dwayne Oswald Fulton, 58, then an employee of a defense contractor, CREC group had been awarded Small Business Administration (SBA) status as a small, disadvantaged business, and the company used that status to gain competitive advantage in contracting.

The conspiracy also included the creation of fraudulent documents in an attempt to cover up bribes to Anthony Roper after law enforcement agencies discovered the scheme. Lawyer previously pled guilty in the case and was sentenced to 60 months in prison. As part of his sentence, Lawyer also paid a \$3 million personal money judgment and a \$2 million civil penalty.

The cases were investigated by the United States Army Criminal Investigations Division (CID), the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), the Small Business Administration's Office of Inspector General, and the United States Attorney's Office.

"Taxpayers deserve above-board behavior from those who do business with the federal government, especially with the military," said Southern District of Georgia U.S. Attorney Bobby L. Christine. "It is particularly disappointing when members of the armed forces violate their oaths of office to steal from the public, and our office will prosecute those crimes vigorously."

"These sentencings are the result of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service's commitment to ensuring that Department of Defense programs and missions are protected from fraud throughout the procurement process," said Special Agent in Charge John F. Khin, DCIS Southeast Field Office. "Through joint investigations with our law enforcement partners, DCIS aggressively pursues criminal prosecutions and all available remedies to hold violators accountable for their fraudulent schemes."

"These sentencings are proof of the great work our agents, and our law enforcement partners, do on a daily basis," said Frank Robey, director of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command's Major Procurement Fraud Unit. "These defendants used their business to line their pockets, ripping off taxpayer dollars. The MPFU, along with our law enforcement partners, will continue to identify, investigate those who choose to exploit federal contracts and the people these programs serve."

SBA's General Counsel Chris Pilkerton said, "The resolution of this matter clearly demonstrates the commitment of federal agencies to discover and prosecute procurement fraud undertaken by those seeking to obtain illicit financial benefit through abuse of small business contracting programs. SBA will continue to work closely with federal law enforcement agencies to ensure that the contracting opportunities offered by SBA programs are available solely to businesses entitled to participate in those programs."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian T. Rafferty prosecuted the case on behalf of the United States.

Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

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Contact:

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