United States Department of Justice

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Former Green Beret Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy and Receiving Stolen Federal Funds

GREENVILLE – United States Attorney Robert J. Higdon, Jr. announced that today in federal court, **WILLIAM TODD CHAMBERLAIN** , 46, of Raleigh pled guilty to Conspiracy and Receiving Stolen Government Property before United States Magistrate Judge Kimberly A. Swank. At sentencing before Senior United States District Court Judge Malcolm J. Howard, **CHAMBERLAIN** faces a combined maximum sentence of 15 years imprisonment, followed by three years of supervised release, a $500,000 fine, mandatory restitution and forfeiture of $40,000.

Chamberlain was initially charged in an Indictment filed on June 25, 2014. **CHAMBERLAIN** along with four other members from the 3rd Special Forces Group based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina were indicted. According to the charging documents, **CHAMBERLAIN**, Cleo Autry, Jeffrey Cook, Deric Harper, and Barry Walls stole approximately $200,000 between July 2009 and January 2010 while deployed together in Afghanistan. The five soldiers' split-team had access to various government funds. Operational funds were provided to purchase mission critical items that could not be obtained through military supply systems. Commander's Emergency Response Funds were earmarked for humanitarian projects intended to benefit the local Afghan populace, such as public roads, schools and medical clinics. In addition, there were classified funds for Special Forces to support counterterrorism operations.

The Indictment alleged that these soldiers stole a portion of the funds and falsified receipts to conceal the amount of monies stolen. According to the investigation, all five soldiers converted stolen funds into postal money orders, which were purchased from military post offices in Afghanistan. They also sent cash to family members in the mail or carried cash back into the United States at the end of the deployment. When first approached by law enforcement, **CHAMBERLAIN** and the others lied. They either claimed falsely winning the cash gambling or bringing the cash with them from the United States when deployed.

The other four soldiers, Cleo Autry, Jeffrey Cook, Deric Harper, and Barry Walls, entered guilty pleas in 2014. **CHAMBERLAIN,** however, filed numerous pre-trial motions, claiming, among other things, that he needed access to classified information to defend himself. Judge Howard ultimately ruled against **CHAMBERLAIN**, concluding the classified information was not helpful to his defense.

According to the Government's proffer, **CHAMBERLAIN** was the non-commissioned officer-in-charge and the team's engineer. Since a large portion of these funds were used on building and maintaining the infrastructure of the forward operating base, **CHAMBERLAIN** had to know the amounts reflected on the receipts were inflated. In addition, three of his teammates would have testified that they handed him large sums of U.S. currency and saw him at the post office purchasing postal money orders.

United States Attorney Higdon commented, "Our Office stands committed to routing out public corruption. Chamberlain and his teammates abused the unique trust bestowed upon them by the military as members of the Special Forces."

John F. Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), stated, "Theft of U.S. government funds in a war zone is a serious crime that weakens our national objectives in Afghanistan. The message of this case is loud and clear: SIGAR and our law enforcement partners will pursue justice — no matter how long it takes."

Robert E. Craig, Jr., Special-Agent-in-Charge of the Mid-Atlantic Field Office for the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) stated, "DCIS also stands committed to aggressively investigating corruption and theft that undermines the integrity of the Department of Defense. We hope this case demonstrates the resolve of DCIS and our law enforcement partners to protect valuable Department of Defense resources and ensure the combat readiness of our Warfighters."

SIGAR, DCIS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the U.S. Army's Major Procurement Fraud Unit conducted this multi-year investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Susan B. Menzer and Department of Justice National Security Division Trial Attorney Matthew J. McKenzie represented the government.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years .

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