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OROVILLE MAN GUILTY OF STEALING \$170,000 OF DECEASED MOTHER'S BENEFITS OVER 16 YEARS

SACRAMENTO—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that WILLIAM EDWARD TURNER, 56, of Oroville, pleaded guilty today to theft of government funds, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641. The guilty plea was entered before United States District Judge Edward J. Garcia.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the Department of Veteran's Affairs, Office of Inspector General, Criminal Investigations Division.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Russell L. Carlberg, who prosecuted the case, TURNER's mother was entitled to Veteran's Benefits because her first husband was a veteran who died in 1942. From approximately 1942 until 1947, Wylda received Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits from the VA. She was eligible for benefits until she remarried in 1947 and her original DIC benefits checks terminated. TURNER was born in 1949 to this second marriage.

In 1986, TURNER placed his mother, Wylda, into a convalescent home and Social Security benefits paid for her stay. As soon as TURNER's father died in October 1987, TURNER obtained a power of attorney over Wylda and applied for veteran's benefits on her behalf.

TURNER directed the veteran's benefits to his own residence, signed them "Bill Turner POA for W. Turner," cashed them, and used the money himself. When Wylda died in 1996, he did not inform the Veteran's Administration of her death, but continued to cash the monthly checks. He went so far as to

forge Wylda's signature to request a replacement check in March 2000. TURNER admitted that the total theft from the Veteran's Administration amounted to at least \$170,000 from March 1988 through November 1, 2005.

United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott stated that "Mr. Turner's conduct is an affront to veterans and their dependants who are in serious need of medical care and support. Mr. Turner's intentional, monthly theft from our nation's veterans over a 16 year period is truly egregious. Prosecution of this case sends a message: we will not tolerate fraud that harms our nation's financial ability to provide for veterans and their families."

The defendant is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Garcia on May 2, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. The maximum statutory penalty for this violation is 10 years incarceration, a \$250,000 fine, a three-year term of supervised release, a special assessment of \$100, and restitution up to the full amount of the loss to the government. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

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