



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney  
District of Maine

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Margaret Chase Smith Federal Building (207) 945-0373  
202 Harlow Street, Room 111 Fax No. (207) 945-0319  
Bangor, ME 04401 TTY No. (207) 945-0307  
[www.usdoj.gov/usao/me](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/me)

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Contact: James M. Moore  
Asst. United States Attorney  
Tel: (207) 945-0373

**Bradford Man Pleads Guilty to VA Pension Benefits Fraud**

Bangor, Maine: United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby and Special Agent-in-Charge Jeffery G. Hughes of the Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that **Robert W. Hall**, age 59 years, of Bradford, Maine, pleaded guilty on May 29, 2008, in U.S. District Court in Bangor, to false statements to the VA, theft of government property and mail fraud. Hall faces a possible sentence of up to 20 years of imprisonment and up to a \$250,000.00 fine, or both.

Court records reveal that in May of 1986 Hall, a disabled veteran, began receiving non-service connected pension benefits on a monthly basis from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of approximately \$800. By August of 2007, Hall was receiving a maximum monthly pension benefit of \$910. In order for a disabled veteran to receive that maximum amount of monthly benefit, the veteran must have no or minimal income, and must also meet certain other requirements.

Although Hall was disabled, he nevertheless was earning income in the form of rental payments and from his purchase and sale of livestock. Court records show that in September of 2007, Hall lied on a VA Statement in Support of a Claim for Pension Benefits when he stated that his income was \$910 a month (the VA pension benefit) and that he had no other income. Video surveillance of Hall showed him at auction houses where he was earning income through the purchase and delivery of livestock.

The VA's investigation revealed that Hall was concealing large sums of cash from the VA by keeping it in a safety deposit box at a branch office of Camden National Bank. In October of 2007, a search warrant was obtained for a search of the box. The safety deposit box contained \$110,000.00 in cash which has been seized by the VA and will be used to reimburse the VA for Hall's fraudulent receipt of benefits. Hall admitted to VA investigators that the purpose that he had placed his earnings and other assets in the safe deposit box was to avoid detection by the VA.

United States Attorney Silsby praised the investigation conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General.

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