



Department of Defense
Office of the Inspector General

Information Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 27, 2006

Former Defense Commissary Agency Attorney Pleads Guilty

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Department of Defense (DoD), announced today that on February 23, 2006, Cherlyn J. Mitchell, previously employed as an attorney with the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA), General Counsel's Office, plead guilty in U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Virginia, Richmond, VA, to one count of False Statements in violation of Title 18 United States Code, Section 1001, and to one count of Bank Fraud in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1344.

Mitchell was previously indicted in a 26 count indictment charging her with False Statements, Bank Fraud, Fraudulent Use of a Social Security Number and Production of False Identification Documents. All other counts are dismissed. Mitchell faces a combined maximum penalty on both counts of 35 years imprisonment, \$1.25 million fine and 8 years of supervised release. Sentencing is scheduled for May 19, 2006.

An investigation determined Mitchell used a social security number not assigned to her on the application for her Government Travel Card and also on an application for residence in Petersburg, VA. Additionally, it was determined that Mitchell had made false representations on portions of her "Questionnaire for National Security," which was required to be completed for her appointment as an attorney for DeCA. A search warrant revealed multiple copies of her DeCA issued, United States Government Identification Card with the name, date of birth and social security sections reflecting false information.

The investigation was conducted by the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (the criminal investigative arm of the OIG, DoD). The initial information was provided by the DeCA General Counsel's office. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) Michael Wallace, Eastern District of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

For further information contact Joseph A. McMillan, Special Agent in Charge (SAC), Mid-Atlantic Field Office, at (703) 604-8411.

To report suspected fraud, waste, and abuse within DoD programs, contact the Defense Hotline toll-free at (800) 424-9098, e-mail: hotline@dodig.mil, or visit them on the World Wide Web at <http://www.dodig.mil/hotline/>.

-OIG-