



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney's Office
Eastern District of Wisconsin
Green Bay Division*

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March 5, 2007

NEWS SUMMARY: Oconto County Resident Sentenced to Prison for False Claims of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Defrauding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of over \$350,000

United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic announced today that Keith A. Roberts (DOB: 4/13/48) of Gillett, Wisconsin, was sentenced on March 2, 2007, to 48 months in federal prison by United States District Judge William C. Griesbach. Roberts was convicted during a three-day jury trial in November 2006, on five counts of wire fraud, stemming from false claims that Robert made VA benefits from 1994 to 2004. Those false claims caused Roberts to fraudulently obtain over \$355,000 in VA benefits.

Roberts was an airman stationed at the Naval Air Facility in Naples, Italy, in 1969. The indictment alleged, and the government proved at trial, that Roberts fabricated his role in the attempted rescue of an airman who was killed at the Naval Air Facility on February 4, 1969. Roberts also fabricated his relationship with that airman. Roberts was discharged from active duty in 1971. Over 25 years later, in December 1994, Roberts falsely claimed to the VA that the airman's death in 1969 caused Roberts to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Based on that false claim, the VA granted Roberts' benefits claim retroactive to 1992. The VA began making monthly payments to Roberts' bank account; between direct payments to Roberts and education benefits for his children, Roberts was paid over \$355,000 in VA benefits to which he was not entitled based on his fraudulent claims.

Following the conviction, John W. Brooks, the Special Agent-in-Charge at the VA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in Chicago, commented: "We are always mindful of, and thankful for, the many great sacrifices by the men and women of the military, both past and present, especially whenever our nation celebrates Veterans Day. The VA Office of Inspector General is mindful that fraudulent claims which take money from deserving veterans cannot be tolerated. While unfortunate that this trial was necessary, the jury in this case correctly asserted that such fraudulent claims will not be tolerated."

The case was investigated by Special Agents Ray Vasil and Joe Cossairt of the VAOIG in Chicago. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Timothy Funnell, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, Green Bay Division.

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