

U.S. Army Reserves Sergeant Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Defraud the United States Related to Contracting in Support of Iraq War

Defendant Accepted \$20,500 Related to the Processing of Bottled Water Invoices in Kuwait

WASHINGTON – A sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserves pleaded guilty today to one count of conspiracy to defraud the United States for receiving money from a local contractor in return for preferentially processing its invoices for payment outside of the proper procedures and protocols, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

Sergeant Amasha M. King, 33, of Forsyth, Ga., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Marc T. Treadwell in Macon, Ga., to criminal information charging her with one count of conspiracy to defraud the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

According to the court documents filed in the Middle District of Georgia, Sergeant King served at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, from November 2004 to February 2006, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of the 374th Finance Battalion. While in Kuwait, King was responsible for receiving and processing pay vouchers and invoices from military contractors for various contracts and blanket purchase agreements (BPAs), including BPAs for bottled potable water. A BPA is a type of contract by which the DoD agrees to pay a contractor a specified price for a particular good or service. With King's approval, the contractors were paid from the finance battalion, and in some instances, King was responsible for the issuance of U.S. government checks to those contractors.

According to the court documents, King agreed to receive money from a military contractor in return for defrauding the United States by preferentially processing the contractor's invoices outside of the proper procedures and protocols for payment. This allowed the contractor to be paid much faster than usual and ultimately to bid for more contracts than it otherwise could have financed.

Sergeant King admitted that she received four wire transfers totaling approximately \$20,500. King admitted that she instructed the contractor to wire the money to designees in the United States and to keep the amounts under \$10,000 in order to avoid bank reporting requirements.

King faces up to five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the amount of the criminally derived property she received. In addition, King has agreed to pay \$20,500 in restitution to the United States. A sentencing date has not yet been scheduled by the court.

This case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Mark W. Pletcher of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section. The case is being investigated by the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations.