



United States Department of Justice
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News Release

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St. Cloud man indicted for stealing veteran benefits

MINNEAPOLIS—A federal indictment unsealed earlier today charges a 51-year-old man from St. Cloud with stealing veterans' benefits, specifically, those benefits paid to the surviving spouses of veterans who died in military action. The indictment, which was filed on August 17, 2011, charges Mitchell George Pederson with one count of theft of government funds. The indictment was unsealed following Pederson's initial appearance in federal court this afternoon.

The indictment alleges that from June 1, 2006, through June 1, 2010, Pederson stole Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits. Those benefits are paid to surviving spouses who have not remarried and surviving spouses who have remarried but are at least 57 years of age. The benefits were being paid to Pederson's mother, who died in 2004. The benefits should have been terminated upon her death, but Pederson allegedly continued to deposit them into his account.

If convicted, Pederson faces a potential maximum penalty of ten years in prison. All sentences will be determined by a federal district court judge. This case is the result of an investigation by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs-Office of Inspector General and Minnesota Financial Crimes Task Force. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin S. Ueland.

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An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by a defendant. A defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.