



## U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

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For Immediate Release

October 3, 2011

### **UNITED STATES SETTLES WITH HOWMET ALUMINUM CASTINGS, INC. OVER IMPROPER MANUFACTURING PRACTICES AND BILLING**

PHILADELPHIA - Howmet Aluminum Castings, Inc. ("Howmet") has agreed to pay the United States \$536,492.57 in order to resolve claims raised by Howmet's voluntary disclosure that it improperly billed for Department of Defense missile and aircraft parts that did not conform to the manufacturing requirements for those parts from January 1, 2004 through July 1, 2005, United States Attorney Zane David Memeger announced today.

The False Claims Act makes it illegal for any person or entity to present a false or fraudulent claim to the United States for payment and/or to retain overpayments that were improperly received. The United States military contracts with manufacturers to provide military weapons and aircraft that meet precise specifications, including specifications determined through special forms of radiography. The radiographers using this equipment on Department of Defense projects are required to meet particular personal standards for skill level, experience, and visual acuity, and the equipment used to perform the radiography must be carefully calibrated and set.

"Combating defense contracting fraud and ensuring that our fighting men and women are provided with the best and safest equipment is an important issue, especially in a time where our troops are in harm's way," said Memeger. "The Department of Justice and United States Attorney's Offices across the country have made protecting our troops a key priority as part of the Department's overall mission to protect our national security."

Howmet brought this case to the government's attention by voluntarily disclosing that it had billed for certain parts that its employees had not inspected or had inspected using improper techniques and that certain of its radiographers inspected parts even when their visual acuity testing was out of date. Despite these issues, Howmet initially certified the parts as compliant with defense contracts. United States Attorney Memeger complimented Howmet on its approach in this matter. "When defense contractors come forward, forthrightly acknowledge improper conduct, take steps to immediately advise the armed services of potential problems with the parts, and take steps to prevent that conduct from recurring in the future, everyone benefits," Memeger said. "Howmet's decision to disclose the misconduct, to reveal the results of its

October 3, 2011  
Page 2

internal investigation, and to cooperate with our investigation into both individual and corporate conduct demonstrated that it was serious about providing the Department of Defense with top quality parts and about following the law. Acceptance of responsibility and prompt efforts at reform are critical factors in our decision whether to pursue defense contractors in litigation or whether to reach an amicable resolution, and I am pleased to note that there is no evidence that any of the parts in question failed during military operations or impeded military efforts in any way.”

The case was investigated by Brian Hunt of the Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General, Carl Russ of the United States Army Criminal Investigation Command, auditors Brandy Saul of the Defense Contract Auditing Agency and Dawn Wiggins of the United States Attorney’s Office, and Assistant United States Attorney Paul Kaufman.

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