

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Mar. 12, 2010

Somerset Man Pleads Guilty To Making Material False Statements To The Army

(More)

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NEWARK - A Somerset man pleaded guilty today to making false statements in documents he submitted for employment as a civilian for the United States Army at Fort Dix and Picatinny Arsenal, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Donald S. Breese, 37, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge William J. Martini to a two-count Information that charges him with making materially false statements to the United States Army in separate applications for civilian employment at Fort Dix in 2004 and Picatinny Arsenal in 2007. Sentencing is scheduled for July 14, 2010.

At his plea hearing, Breese admitted that he misled the Army into hiring him by falsely representing his qualifications. Specifically, Breese admitted that he falsely stated that he had earned a Bachelor's Degree from Rutgers University when, in fact, he had not. Breese also admitted that he had falsely claimed he attended Navy Underwater Demolition School and Navy Advanced Surface Demolition School, and that he had served in Operation Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Desert Calm, and Restore Hope. Breese admitted that he misled the Army and others into believing that he had been a Navy SEAL and a Department of Defense Police Officer and Special Agent. Further, Breese acknowledged that he had falsely stated that he was a special warfare corpsman, that he had trained with foreign weapons and munitions, and that he had served as a bomb technician for the Department of Defense Police. Breese also admitted that he had altered a genuine Federal Bureau of Investigation Hazardous Device School certification to make it appear to be his own in order to mislead the Army into believing that he had received required training for the position of Safety Occupational Health Specialist, at Picatinny Arsenal.

The charges to which Breese pleaded guilty carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 on each count. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Martini will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Fishman credited Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward, Special Agents of the Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, under the direction of Resident Agent in Charge Christopher Fair, Criminal Investigators at the Department of Defense, Office of Criminal Investigations, under the direction of Criminal Investigator Donald K. Meyer and Director of Emergency Services Richard Karlsson, and the Fort Dix Police,

under the direction of Acting Chief of Police at the time, Jack Warlow, with the investigation leading to the guilty plea. The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney André M. Espinosa of the Government Fraud Unit of the Criminal Division in Newark.

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Defense Attorney: James L. Pfeiffer, Esq., Easton, PA