



U. S. Department of Justice

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ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL SENTENCED TO 188 MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR POSSESSION OF A FIREARM BY A CONVICTED FELON

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA – Eddie D. Starks, 41, of Tallahassee, Florida, was sentenced to 188 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to possessing a firearm and ammunition as a convicted felon. Jason R. Coody, United States Attorney, for the Northern District of Florida announced the sentence.

“Our law enforcement partnerships play such a vital role in fighting violent crime and protecting the public,” said U.S. Attorney Coody. “This sentencing is another example that working jointly with our partners is making our communities safer.”

Law enforcement responded to Starks’ apartment because of a 911 call alleging that he had a firearm and was threatening to kill his wife. When Tallahassee Police Department officers arrived, they heard screaming and yelling coming from inside the apartment. Starks’ wife answered the door and told officers that he was armed inside and had threatened to kill her with the gun. Officers arrested Starks and located where he had hidden a firearm in a backpack inside the apartment. As officers removed the backpack containing the firearm from the residence, Starks admitted that they would find a quarter pound of marijuana and a firearm in the backpack.

“We are pleased to see another violent felon brought to justice and taken off our community’s streets,” said Deputy Chief Jason Laursen. “Our officers and detectives work tirelessly every day to enhance the safety of citizens. Ensuring felons do not have access to a firearm is crucial in this continued effort to protect the community we serve.”

Starks was prohibited from possessing firearms or ammunition because he was a convicted felon. Starks had 12 prior felony convictions and qualified for enhanced sentencing as an Armed Career Criminal because he had three or more convictions for violent felonies and/or serious drug offenses committed on separate occasions. He had been released from federal prison approximately three months before this arrest and remained on supervised release out of the Middle District of Georgia.

“ATF prioritizes investigations of armed and violent felons to disrupt the cycle of violence and make our communities safer,” said ATF Special Agent in Charge, Craig W. Saier.

“Collaboration with our law enforcement partners in this investigation and prosecution demonstrates armed felons, recently released from prison, and committing alleged acts of domestic violence, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

Following his 188-month prison sentence, Starks will be on federal supervised release for five years. This sentencing resulted from the collaborative work of the Tallahassee Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James A. McCain.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), the centerpiece of the Department of Justice’s violent crime reduction efforts. PSN is an evidence-based program proven to be effective at reducing violent crime. Through PSN, a broad spectrum of stakeholders works together to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in the community and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. As part of this strategy, PSN focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs for lasting reductions in crime.

As part of its PSN strategy, the United States Attorney’s Office is encouraging everyone to lock their car doors, particularly at night. Burglaries from unlocked automobiles are a significant source of guns for criminals in the Northern District of Florida. Please do your part and protect yourself by locking your car doors.

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