



Department of Justice

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OWNER OF MICHIGAN COMPANY PLEADS GUILTY TO FRAUD IN CONNECTION WITH SELLING PARTS TO U.S. MILITARY

COLUMBUS – Joseph L. Wilden, owner of the Harrison Township, Michigan-based company Solid Defense, Inc., pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to six counts of wire fraud for billing the government almost \$1 million for military vehicle parts that he knew did not meet the military's specifications.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Special Agent in Charge Richard Zott, Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), Central Field Office, announced the plea entered today before Senior United States District Judge George C. Smith.

According to a statement of facts presented during the plea hearing, Wilden sold the military critical application parts used on vehicles including tanks, trucks, and other armored and rescue vehicles. The parts were not manufactured in accordance with specifications drawn up by the military.

Some parts were the wrong size. Some were not zinc-plated, as required, or were made from the wrong raw materials. Some parts lacked a required phosphate coating, contained unapproved and improper welding, or showed overall poor workmanship.

Some parts were supposed to have a chemical agent resistance coating, or CARC, which is a special paint to protect surfaces from chemical agents. Wilden substituted regular commercially available paint instead of the coating that resisted chemical agents.

"Under the terms of the plea agreement, Wilden agrees to make restitution of \$995,449.60 to the United States," Lockhart said. "That amount represents what Wilden charged U.S. taxpayers for the deficient parts he provided."

Judge Smith will set a sentencing date for Wilden.

Each of the six counts of wire fraud is punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000. Judge Smith will weigh several factors before determining the actual sentence.

Lockhart commended DCIS Special Agent Michael Hampp who investigated the case, and Assistant U.S. Attorney J. Michael Marous, who is prosecuting the case.

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