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Army Sergeant Sentenced to Prison for Conspiracy in Afghanistan Bribery Scheme

An Army sergeant was sentenced to 24 months in prison today for his role in a conspiracy to commit bribery in connection with supply contracts while serving in Afghanistan.

Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney John E. Kuhn Jr. of the Western District of Kentucky, Assistant Director in Charge Paul M. Abbate of the FBI's Washington Field Office, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) John F. Sopko, Director Frank Robey of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command's (CID) Major Procurement Fraud Unit, Acting Special Agent in Charge Paul Sternal of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) Mid-Atlantic Field Office and Brigadier General Keith M. Givens, Commander of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI), made the announcement.

Ramiro Pena Jr., 43, of Fort Campbell, Kentucky, previously pleaded guilty to a one-count information charging him with conspiracy to commit bribery. In imposing sentence today, Senior U.S. District Judge Thomas B. Russell of the Western District of Kentucky also ordered Pena to forfeit \$100,000, a Harley Davidson motorcycle and a Rolex watch.

From January 2008 through September 2009, Pena worked as a U.S. Army sergeant first class at the Humanitarian Assistance (HA) Yard at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. In connection with his guilty plea, Pena admitted that he and his supervisor, Army Master Sergeant Jimmy W. Dennis, were responsible for contracting with local vendors to purchase supplies to support humanitarian relief in Afghanistan, and they awarded approximately 217 such contracts totaling roughly \$30,760,255. In return, Pena and Dennis received money and jewelry from some of the vendors. Specifically, Pena admitted that he received from the vendors, through Dennis, a Rolex watch and \$100,000 in total bribe payments.

Pena admitted that he sent approximately \$22,000 of the cash to his family in Kentucky, spread among numerous greeting cards to avoid drawing attention to the thickness of any particular

envelope. Pena also used the bribe money to pay his family's personal expenses both in Afghanistan and in the United States to purchase a Harley Davidson motorcycle.

Dennis also previously pleaded guilty in the Western District of Tennessee to conspiracy to launder bribe payments and was sentenced to 41 months in prison and ordered to forfeit \$115,000.

This case was investigated by the SIGAR, FBI's Washington Field Office, CID, DCIS and OSI. The case was prosecuted by Trial Attorney Daniel P. Butler of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nute A. Bonner and Amy Sullivan of the Western District of Kentucky.

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