



U. S. Department of Justice

# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**MONDAY - March 4, 2013**

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## **STAFF SERGEANT SENTENCED FOR BULK CASH SMUGGLING**

**Elizabeth City** - United States Attorney Thomas G. Walker announced that in federal court today **TONYA LONG, 30**, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, was sentenced to 60 months imprisonment, 3 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay one million dollars in restitution, by United States District Judge Terrence W. Boyle for bulk cash smuggling and aiding and abetting the same, in violation of Title 31, United States Code, Section 5332(a) and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2.

U.S. Attorney Walker stated, "Tonya Long betrayed her team and while other soldiers were fighting for our country, she was stealing money intended to support the mission. Her conduct undermined her fellow soldiers and our nation's reputation. This sentence demonstrates that conduct like this will not be tolerated."

According to the Criminal Information filed on September 21, 2012, and information presented in open court, **LONG** was a Staff Sergeant (E-6) in the United States Army assigned to the

189th Combat Sustainment Battalion (XVIII Airborne Corps) attached to the 7th Special Forces Group for a wartime deployment to Afghanistan. From January 12, 2008, through April 5, 2009, **LONG** was deployed to Afghanistan under the command of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force - Afghanistan, of which the 7th Special Forces Group was a part. During her deployment to Afghanistan, **LONG** performed duties as a Customs Inspector by inspecting personal property of military service members prior to such property being loaded into containers for shipment back to the United States.

Between January 2009 and February 7, 2009, **LONG** aided and abetted another military service member in concealing over \$1,000,000 by striping the components out of VCR players and then hiding the money inside. **LONG** cleared the containers through customs herself, and they were then shipped back to the United States in connex shipping containers. Neither **LONG** nor the other person declared the currency upon entry into the United States. **LONG** acted with the intent to evade the currency reporting requirements.

**LONG** spent nearly \$500,000 on herself and her family. Some of the items she purchased were a vacation, a car, personal surgeries, and an 18 wheeler truck and trailer.

The criminal investigation of this case was conducted by United States Defense Criminal Investigative Service; the United States Department of Army - Criminal Investigation Command, Major Procurement Fraud Unit; the Special Inspector General - Afghanistan Reconstruction; and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Banumathi Rangarajan prosecuted the case on behalf of the Eastern District of North Carolina.

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