

**Department of Justice****Office of Public Affairs****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****February 11, 2015****Two U.S. Army Sergeants Plead Guilty to Taking Bribes While Deployed in Afghanistan**

Two sergeants with the U.S. Army have pleaded guilty for accepting bribes from Afghan truck drivers at Forward Operating Base Gardez, Afghanistan (FOB Gardez), in exchange for allowing the drivers to take thousands of gallons of fuel from the base for resale on the black market, announced Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Michael J. Moore of the Middle District of Georgia.

James Edward Norris, 41, of Fort Irwin, California, and Seneca Darnell Hampton, 31, of Fort Benning, Georgia, each pleaded guilty before Chief U.S. District Judge Clay D. Land in the Middle District of Georgia to one count of conspiracy to commit bribery of a public official and one count of money laundering.

During their guilty pleas, Hampton and Norris admitted to conspiring with other soldiers stationed at FOB Gardez to solicit and accept approximately \$2,000 per day from local Afghan truck drivers in exchange for permitting the truck drivers to take thousands of gallons of fuel from the base. Hampton admitted that he concealed the scheme by attributing the increase in fuel usage to colder winter temperatures.

Hampton and Norris admitted that they shipped the bribe money back to the United States in tough boxes. Norris further admitted that on June 7, 2013, after returning from deployment, he purchased a 2008 Cadillac Escalade with \$31,000 cash derived from the bribery scheme. Hampton further admitted that on May 20, 2013, after returning from deployment, he purchased a 2013 GMC Sierra with \$29,000 cash derived from the bribery scheme.

As part of their plea agreements, Hampton and Norris agreed to forfeit the proceeds they received from the bribery scheme and the vehicles they purchased with those proceeds, as well as to pay full restitution. Sentencing has been scheduled for May 21, 2015.

The case is being investigated by the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service and the Defense Contract Audit Agency, Investigative Support Division. The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney John Keller of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section.