



News Releases

October 30, 2008

ICE arrests 6 U.S. servicemen for stealing sensitive military equipment *Defendants attempted to sell stolen goods on eBay*

HONOLULU - Six United States Marines appeared in federal court yesterday to face charges stemming from a scheme to steal sensitive military equipment from the Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay to sell on the open market for personal profit.

The six active duty Marines - all United States citizens -- were arrested Tuesday by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, following the execution of search warrants at two of the defendants' residences. Charged with conspiracy to smuggle goods out of the United States are:

Ryan Mathers, 20, Charles Carper, 22, Ronald Abram, 20, Mark Vaught, 23, Brendon Schultz, 24, and Jason Flegm, 22, all residing on the island of Oahu.



The investigation began in July when ICE agents received information that Lance Corporal Carper was selling PVS-14 Generation 3 night vision devices on the eBay Internet auction website, possibly overseas, in violation of International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR). The highly sophisticated Generation 3 scopes, which are used by all branches of the military, allow soldiers to see at long distances in low light conditions.

In September, ICE agents purchased the PVS-14s from Carper through e-Bay, and discovered that additional scopes were being sold on e-Bay by Mathers. When contacted by ICE agents, Mathers agreed to sell the agents 8 PVS-14s for \$20,000. Agents estimate the value of the Generation 3 scopes at more than \$3,000 each.

The Defense Investigative Service, Navy Criminal Investigative Service and United States Marshals Service assisted with the investigation and in Tuesday's searches, where agents seized eight PVS Generation 3 night vision devices allegedly stolen from the Navy, as well as seven earlier models of the device. The searches were conducted at Carver's residence in Honolulu, and at Mathers' apartment in Waipahu.

"Stealing, selling, and exporting sensitive military technology are serious violations of federal law," said Wayne Wills, special agent in charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Honolulu. "ICE continues to work closely with its law enforcement partners to investigate this type of activity to ensure that our nation's security is not jeopardized by sensitive technology falling into the wrong hands."

United States Attorney Edward Kubo said "I am shocked that members of our American Armed Forces would even consider of selling such sensitive military equipment to others outside our country. If they were successful, this hi-tech equipment might be used by our enemies against fellow U.S. Marines, or any other American military service member defending our country abroad. These are serious allegations which demand swift, immediate and a strong reaction from the Justice Department, and there also needs to be a strong review of inventory accountability for such sensitive equipment by our military."

This case is being prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Hawaii. If convicted, the defendants face a statutory maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment, in addition to being subject to discipline from the military.

-- ICE --

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

Last Modified: Friday, October 31, 2008