Atlanta, Georgia

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**Defense Contractor MPRI Settles $3.2 Million Lawsuit**

**Brought by Whistleblower**

According to whistleblower attorney Lee Wallace, Military Professional Resources, Inc., known as MPRI, has agreed to pay the U.S. $ 3,200,000 to settle allegations that the defense contractor billed the U.S. for employees who were on vacation. The suit, brought under the United States False Claims Act by whistleblower and former MPRI employee Scott Lankford, alleged that MPRI fraudulently billed the Government when its employees took passes of up to eight days in neighboring countries such as Dubai.

According to a press release issued by the Department of Justice last night, the Department of Defense had contracted with MPRI (now known as Engility Corporation) to provide training and support for the Army in Afghanistan. Under the contract, MPRI only was entitled to bill the Army for hours that its employees spent actually working on the contract.

            Lankford’s attorney, Lee Wallace of Atlanta’s Wallace Law Firm LLC, said that MPRI provided its employees with detailed instructions showing how to fill out time sheets indicating that they were working on the company’s government contract while they were actually on vacation out of the country.  “As a taxpayer, I was outraged," Wallace said.  "You can’t bill the government an hourly rate for people who aren’t even in the same country where the work is being done.”

            Mr. Lankford also was represented by Frederick Morgan, an attorney with the Cincinnati law firm Morgan Verkamp LLC.  Morgan said that as a whistleblower, Lankford will receive a portion of the government’s recovery.  MPRI also is liable for Mr. Lankford’s attorney fees.

            The United States was represented by Andrew Malek, Assistant United States Attorney in Columbus, Ohio, and Gordon Jones of the Justice Department’s Civil Frauds Section.  William Jay Strauch of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, Office of Inspector General, led the government’s investigation, which included agents from DCIS and the Defense Contract Audit Agency.

            The False Claims Act, also known as “Lincoln’s Law,” allows private persons with knowledge of misconduct by government contractors to bring a case on behalf of the government.  Wallace noted that it is especially important for employees of contractors working in war zones to come forward, because evidence is hard to obtain: “Mr. Lankford easily could have come home and gone about his business, and the Government never would have known about the fraud.  But he didn’t.”  Added Morgan, “He stepped up, and his courage in carrying his case through to fruition should serve as an inspiration to others with knowledge of contractor misconduct.”

            MPRI denied wrongdoing in the case.  The Justice Department’s press release, [MPRI Inc. Agrees to Pay $3.2 Million for False Labor Charges on Contract to Support Army in Afghanistan](http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2014/February/14-civ-155.html), was issued on 2/12/14. The case is *United States ex rel. Lankford v. MPRI,* Civil Action No. 2:10-cv-193 (U.S. District Court, S.D. Ohio).

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