**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sheet Metal Mechanic Blows Whistle on Defense Contractor,**

**Recoups $4.63 Million for Taxpayers**

*Defense contracting giant L-3 has agreed to pay $4.63 million to resolve a former employee’s allegations that L-3 overbilled the Government during military-sponsored training.*

Atlanta, Georgia

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Defense contracting giant L-3 has agreed to pay the U.S. Government $4,630,000 to settle a lawsuit brought by whistleblower Robert Martin, according to Martin’s attorney Lee Wallace. Martin filed suit in Georgia under the False Claims Act, claiming that L-3 overbilled the Government for training the military gave L-3 employees before they deployed overseas. The former L-3 sheet metal mechanic will receive $798,675 for his role in getting L-3 to reimburse the U.S., and L-3 will pay an additional $186,400.56 in attorneys’ fees.

L-3, the 6th largest defense contractor in the United States, had a contract to service and maintain helicopters and rotary aircraft being used by the military in Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt and Kuwait. Before the contractor’s employees shipped out, the military provided a week-long training course at CONUS Replacement Centers (CRCs) at Fort Bliss, Texas and Fort Benning, Georgia.

In a settlement agreement that was made public today, the Department of Justice says that during the pre-deployment training, L-3 told its employees to bill the time it took “for the entire group to process through the CRC [training] each day, rather than the actual hours spent by each individual.”

**“What was the latest time any of you was in training today?”**

According to Martin’s complaint, before the training started L-3 told its employees that they should expect to spend “14 to 18 hours per day,” and “[e]verything over 40 hours will be time and a half.”

At training, however, Martin said he found the hours were light. The Complaint says that to beef up the hours, the L-3 supervisor at Fort Bliss gathered all of the employees together in a classroom at the end of the day, and asked, “What was the latest time any of you was in training today?” The Complaint says every employee was instructed to write that same time down on his timesheet.

“They were there to get trained about working in a combat zone and how to avoid IEDs,” says Wallace. “They weren’t there to learn how to fraudulently inflate their hours.”

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Martin alleged the procedure had “refined somewhat” by the time he trained at Fort Benning, Georgia in February 2009. Instead of having every L-3 employee bill the same time, the company divided the trainees into groups. A group leader was assigned to figure out the “latest time that any employee in his group had been in training for a particular day,” and then each member of the group used that time when they filled out their timesheets.

**The “Perfect Whistleblower”**

Wallace says that Martin was “basically the perfect whistleblower” because he went through CRC training three times as an L-3 employee. Martin did his initial training at Fort Bliss, but after he deployed to Afghanistan, his child became very ill and he returned to the U.S. By the time his child recovered, Martin had been out of the war zone for more than 30 days, so he had to re-train at Fort Bliss. Martin finished his first contract and settled back in the U.S. A year and a half later, he took a second overseas contract with L-3, and this time he trained at Fort Benning, Georgia.

“He saw an obvious pattern of abuse because he went through three training sessions. That’s when he brought it to me and we filed suit. A whistleblower has to come forward or the Government will never know what happened,” Wallace said.

L-3 denies the allegations.

Lee Wallace represents whistleblowers in False Claims Act cases. Repeatedly named one of Georgia’s Top 100 Trial Lawyers, Lee is a Harvard Law grad with more than 20 years’ experience fighting for whistleblowers and people with personal injuries.

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