

Update on the Camp Arifjan “Sixteen”

Written by Nick Sanders

Tuesday, 15 March 2011 00:00



We have devoted considerable word count to describing the nearly unbelievable levels of corruption at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. For example, back in February 2010, in [this article](#), we reported that Terry Hall had pleaded guilty to a conspiracy to pay more than \$3 million in bribes to various U.S. Army contracting officers stationed at Camp Arifjan, in order to secure more than \$21 million in contract awards. We reported that Hall had been indicted “along with U.S. Army Major Eddit Pressley ... and his wife Eurica Pressley....”

In [this story](#) we told you about Bill Collins, a U.S. Army contracting officer who pleaded guilty to soliciting “more than \$17,000 in bribes and other payments from an Egyptian businessman in Kuwait.” Mr. Collins was also employed at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

In another article recapping various legal outcomes, we [noted](#) that Dorthy Ellis had been sentenced to prison for her part in the schemes, including “providing Momon and Murray access to secret bank accounts established on their behalf in the Philippines to enable Hall and others to transfer bribe payments to them” and for obtaining “confidential Army contract pricing information from Momon that was designed to give Hall an unlawful advantage in the bidding process for an ice contract from the DoD.”

Finally, we [summed up](#) the situation at Camp Arifjan thusly:

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We griped about lax oversight and ineffective controls in the article on Bagram. When we wrote about [Captain Mike](#)—who did everything he could to get caught, but who would have gotten away with his crimes but for ... his neighbors who reported him to the IRS—we bemoaned the failed command environment and asked whether his commanding officer was disciplined for negligence. (Apparently, Captain Mike’s CO kept a safe with about a million dollars in it and never checked to see how much was still there, even after Captain Mike rotated back to the States.) But we never imagined a military base so corrupt that 14 individuals ‘who were regularly receiving unlawful payments’ could operate for so long without getting caught.

Camp Arifjan may just have set the bar—at a new low—for government contract-related corruption.

Which is emphatically *not* a good thing.

So when we tell you that folks from Camp Arifjan are back in the news, you’ll be as unsurprised as we were.

In this [announcement](#), the Department of Justice trumpeted the conviction of Eddie Pressley and his wife, Eurica, “on 22 counts in connection with a bribery and money laundering scheme related to defense contracts awarded in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.” (Remember Eddie and Eurica? We mentioned them in the first paragraph above.) According to the DOJ press release, they were found guilty “of one count of bribery, one count of conspiracy to commit bribery, eight counts of honest services fraud, one count of money laundering conspiracy and 11 counts of engaging in monetary transactions with criminal proceeds.”

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Remember how we were all upset about 14 corrupt individuals operating at one contracting activity at one U.S. Army base? Well, about that. We may have misunderstood the true situation. According to the DOJ, its investigative efforts have (to date) resulted in “16 individuals including the Pressleys, have pleaded guilty or been found guilty at trial for their roles in the scheme.” So now the count is sixteen (16) fraudsters not fourteen (14) as we previously reported.

The DOJ reminded readers that wrongdoing may lead to consequences. It reported that “Eddie and Eurica Pressley each face a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison for bribery, five years in prison for conspiracy, 20 years in prison for each of the eight counts of honest services fraud, 20 years in prison for money laundering conspiracy and 15 years in prison for each of the counts of engaging in monetary transactions with criminal proceeds. They also face maximum fines of \$250,000 per count. Following the guilty verdict, the defendants agreed to forfeit \$27,178,407. U.S. District Judge Virginia Emerson Hopkins scheduled sentencing for June 29, 2011.”

For those keeping score, the couple is looking at 215 years in prison. With time off for good behavior, of course.