

[REDACTED]

Restricted – Staff

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE (MDP)

NEWS BRIEF

DATE: 27 September 2013 [Updated 22 Jan 2014]

SOURCE: [REDACTED] (MDP CID)

MDP PRESS OFFICER: [REDACTED]

ISSUE: Conviction of ex-Royal Engineers officer - offences of Theft and Money Laundering.

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BACKGROUND [REDACTED]

101 Engineers were a TA bomb disposal squadron within the Royal Engineers Regiment. In 2010 they merged with 33 Engineers Regular Squadron. The combined Squadron has served in theatres of war including Iraq and (currently) Afghanistan.

Prior to that, 101 TA Squadron had created a charitable trust fund to which serving and part time soldiers made their own financial contributions, where money raised from charity events was deposited, and which took receipt of donations. The fund was to give immediate financial support to soldiers of the Squadron and their families should they be seriously injured or killed whilst in theatre. (The fund is not public money).

On 1st May 2009, a serving regular soldier took up post under the rank of Captain as the Regimental Administration Officer (RAO) for the both 101 TA and 33 Engineer Regular Squadron. He remained the RAO after 101 and 33 Squadrons merged.

Within his role he had overall management of all TA administration within the unit including the unit's non public accounts, such as the 101 trust fund (of which he was sole signatory). Following the merger in 2010, he remained as the sole RAO, in which role he was tasked to close the 101 regiment trust fund bank account as all the separate trust funds from the Squadrons were to be merged into one account.

In March 2013, a Major to whom the RAO reported, found documentation which revealed that the 101 trust fund account was still open some three years after it was supposed to have been closed. It was further apparent that between September 2011 and April 2013, large sums of money had been going through it and cheques payable to cash had been drawn upon this account under the sole signatory control. The RAO admitted to his chain of command that he had misused the account and stolen money from it. He then resigned from the Army, though MDP enquiries revealed that he was due to be dismissed for other professional failings.

Further police financial investigations established that in excess of £29,500 was removed via a swarm of cheque payments to cash from the trust fund account under the signatory of the RAO. Further investigations followed into irregularities with the RAO's military expense claims.

██████████

MDP detectives arrested the RAO on 17 September 2013 and also carried out a search of his residential accommodation on Merseyside. During interview, the suspect admitted the offences in full. The Crown Prosecution Service authorised charges on nine counts - four of Fraud by abuse of position, four of Theft by employee and one count of Money Laundering.

The suspect was charged on 21 November 2013 when he answered police bail. First court appearance was 6 December 2013 when he was committed to Crown Court. On 20 December 2013, former Royal Engineers officer ██████████ pled guilty to theft of £21,350 at Southwark Crown Court. Sentencing was deferred until 22 January when he received 16 months imprisonment and agreed to repay the theft in full (though there was no court order to that effect).

Note: There were media in court and coverage is expected. The court was told that ██████████ used the stolen funds to finance the repeated use of female “escorts”.

Lines To Take (to be used only if asked)

- Can confirm that on 17 September 2013 at a residential address in ██████████, MOD Police detectives arrested a 49 year old former officer in the Armed Forces on suspicion of theft of regimental funds. A Search warrant was also executed at his address.
- The arrested man was bailed pending further police enquiries.
- On 21 November 2013, the suspect answered bail and was charged with theft, fraud and money laundering.
- He appeared at Southwark Magistrates Court on 6 December 2013 and was committed to Southwark Crown Court.
- On 20 December 2013, he pled guilty to theft of £21,350.
- He was sentenced on 22 January 2014 to 16 months imprisonment and agreed to repay his theft from the regimental trust fund.

Q&A

Q. Why is the MOD Police carrying out this investigation?

A. The MDP has a responsibility for the policing of Defence assets and this investigation falls within its remit.

Q. Who is the man convicted?

A. ██████████ a former officer in the Royal Engineers.

Q. What is the nature of the offences?

A. ██████████ stole from a regimental trust fund which he was entrusted with managing. His dishonesty was uncovered by his superior officer.

Q. What is the value of the offences?

A. The investigation related to theft of over £21,000.

Police post-conviction statement (if asked):

“██████████ stole from his regimental trust fund whilst he was an Army officer and entrusted with the management of the fund.

That is a serious breach of trust.



He admitted his dishonesty and pled guilty, but only after good detective work on the part of the police.

No-one should be surprised that he has received a custodial sentence”.