



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CROWDER SENTENCED FOR UNAUTHORIZED WEARING OF CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that an Independence, Mo., man was sentenced today for the unauthorized wearing of the Congressional Medal of Honor and to the possession and production of false identification documents and an identification document-making implement.

Ralph Ervin Crowder, 46, was sentenced this afternoon by U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner to eight months in federal prison without parole. Following his sentence, Crowder also will have three years of supervised release, the first two months of which will include home detention.

“**Ralph Crowder’s** many lies, that he was a war hero, that he was an undercover government agent and all the rest, were not only in poor taste they violated the law and for that he has been held accountable,” Graves said. “**Ralph Crowder** paraded around in a U.S. Navy Admiral’s uniform complete with a Congressional Medal of Honor and 21 other military medals and awards. He claimed to be a Navy SEAL, a retired U.S. Navy Admiral, an undercover government agent and an operative for the National Security Agency. He even claimed that he had visited the White House to advise the President of the United States. Today, **Ralph Crowder** was held accountable for his deception.”

Crowder pleaded guilty to the federal charges, which were included in a four-count information, on Sept. 3, 2002.

Count One of the information charged that on July 1, 2002, **Crowder** possessed, with the intent to use unlawfully, five or more false identification documents that appeared to have been issued under the authority of a government entity. Those documents included:

* A document containing **Crowder’s** picture and identifying him as Roy A. Toups, a United States Navy Rear Admiral and a member of the National Security Agency.

* A document containing **Crowder's** picture and identifying him as Roy A. Toups, a member of the National Security Agency.

* A document containing **Crowder's** picture and identifying him as Roy A. Toups, which purports to have been issued by "Seventh Army Headquarters" and is represented to be an "Intelligence Specialist Pass" granting him access to all sites located in the Seventh Army area.

* A document appearing to be issued by a state government entitled "State Identification" containing a picture of **Crowder**, which states his name is John Rhodelander and identifies him as a "Data Entry Clerk" working for Jackson County, Mo.

* A document appearing to be issued by the government of Jackson County entitled "Identification," containing **Crowder's** picture, which states his name is John Rhodelander and identifies him as a "Data Entry Clerk" working for Jackson County.

* A document entitled "Identification" that states his name is John Rhodelander.

* A document entitled "Identification" that states his name is John Rhodelander and identifies him as a "Security Officer" working for Vanguard Security, Inc.

* A blank document appearing to be issued by an international organization or government entitled "International Driving Permit."

Count Two of the information charged **Crowder** with producing or making false identification documents.

Count Three of the information charged **Crowder** with possession of an identification document-making implement, with the intent that it would be used to create a false identification document.

Count Four of the information charged **Crowder** with wearing the Congressional Medal of Honor without authority.

Graves said, **Crowder** was convicted of a fraudulent check charge in Cole County, Mo., on Aug. 28, 1978, and placed on probation for three years pursuant to a suspended imposition of sentence. **Crowder** admitted in his plea agreement that he absconded from supervision and moved to the Las Vegas area to avoid being arrested for violation of his probation. After moving to the Las Vegas area, **Crowder** admitted, he adopted the name Roy A. Toups as an alias in an effort to avoid being arrested.

Crowder, using the name of Toups, moved to the Kansas City area in the mid-80s, Graves said, and afterward married while using that alias. **Crowder** admitted in his plea agreement that he used false identification documents to support his claims to his wife that he had served in the United States military and was involved in undercover work on behalf of the United States government. In reality, Graves said, **Crowder** never served in the United States military and was never employed by any agency of the United States government for any purpose.

Beginning sometime between 1999 and 2000, while still using the false identity of Roy A. Toups, **Crowder** began residing sporadically at the Independence residence of another woman. **Crowder** did not disclose his true identity to her, Graves said, nor did he disclose the fact that he

was married. Instead, **Crowder** admitted that he made numerous false representations and produced false identification documents to support his false identity as well as his claims that he was a retired United States Navy admiral, that he had been a Navy SEAL and that he had been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Still using the false identity of Roy A. Toups, Graves said, **Crowder** began a relationship and became engaged to a third woman. He made the same false representations to her, according to the plea agreement, not disclosing his previous marriage and likewise producing false identification documents to support his false identity. **Crowder** admitted that he also gave her a picture of himself wearing a United States Navy admiral's summer dress uniform in which he was wearing numerous military decorations, including the Congressional Medal of Honor.

That photograph, Graves said, was observed on display at the woman's workplace by a Navy veteran visiting the office, who reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation that he noticed several discrepancies in the placement of the medals on **Crowder's** uniform that caused him to doubt the authenticity of the photograph.

When contacted and asked by FBI agents to produce documentation of his identity on July 1, 2002, **Crowder** presented the agents with a document containing his picture that not only stated his name was Roy A. Toups, but that further identified him as a member of the National Security Agency.

Graves said that **Crowder** later told FBI agents that he purchased the Navy uniform and medals at a surplus store in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

"As our nation prepares for the possibility of war, it becomes even more important for patriot Americans to honor those who risk their own lives in defense on our nation," Graves said. "One small way to honor our military heroes is to make it clear that we will not tolerate the kind of sham that Ralph Crowder foisted on his wife and everyone else."

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Gene Porter. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow