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Eastern District of Virginia

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Former Shipyard Worker Pleads Guilty to Making False Statements Involving Inspections of Navy Ships and Submarines

NORFOLK, Va. – Robert Raymond Ruks, 34, of Portsmouth, Va., pleaded guilty today to two counts of making false statements by falsely certifying that he had inspected the hulls of Navy ships and submarines, when in fact he had not. A subsequent inspection found certain welding to be defective.

Neil H. MacBride, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, and Mark D. Clookie, Director, Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), made the announcement after Ruks' plea was accepted by United States District Judge Mark S. Davis. Ruks faces a maximum term of five years in prison, a fine of \$250,000, and full restitution for each offense when he is sentenced on August 12, 2011.

"Lying on weld inspection reports is a dangerous crime that threatens the safety of our Navy personnel," said U.S. Attorney MacBride. "His lies caused the Navy and its shipbuilding partners to conduct a thorough technical review and re-inspection of the affected vessels to ensure the ships' safety. My office is committed to ensuring that government contractors are held responsible when they attempt to defraud the government and put our servicemen in danger."

In a statement of facts filed with his plea agreement, Ruks admitted that on or about May 14, 2009, he worked for Northrup Grumman Shipbuilding, Newport News (NGSB NN) as a Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) inspector. On that day, Ruks admitted to his supervisors that he had falsely certified that he had inspected three lift pad welds on a Navy submarine when in fact he had not.

On May 22, 2009, Ruks was questioned by NCIS agents and, although he admitted the false certifications of the lift pad welds, he lied to the agents regarding the number of other ship and submarine hulls that he had failed to inspect. During a re-inspection by NGSB NN of all the welds certified by Ruks, a pipe joint weld on a submarine was determined to be defective. This particular weld was a critical SUBSAFE weld. A total of 18,906 man-hours were expended to complete the re-inspection at a cost of approximately \$654,000.

This case was investigated by Naval Criminal Investigative Service. Special Assistant United States Attorney Karen M. Somers and Assistant United States Attorney Steve Haynie are prosecuting the case on behalf of the United States.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia at <http://www.justice.gov/usao/vae>. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia at <http://www.vaed.uscourts.gov> or on <http://pacer.uspci.uscourts.gov>.

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