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Contact MARCIA MURPHY
at (410) 209-4854

**CHRISTOPHER HASSON PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL CHARGES OF ILLEGAL
POSSESSION OF SILENCERS, POSSESSION OF FIREARMS BY AN ADDICT TO AND
UNLAWFUL USER OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE, AND POSSESSION OF A
CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE**

Greenbelt, Maryland –Christopher Paul Hasson, age 50, of Silver Spring, Maryland, pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in Maryland to four federal charges, including unlawful possession of unregistered silencers, unlawful possession of firearm silencers unidentified by serial number, possession of firearms by an addict to and unlawful user of a controlled substance, and possession of a controlled substance. Hasson was arrested on related charges on February 15, 2019, and has been detained since his arrest.

The guilty plea was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Robert K. Hur; Special Agent in Charge Jennifer C. Boone of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Baltimore Field Office; Special Agent in Charge Art Walker of the U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service; and Special Agent in Charge Rob Cekada of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Baltimore Field Division.

“I am grateful for the hard work of the agents and prosecutors to obtain this guilty plea. I look forward to the opportunity for the government to present additional evidence to the Court at sentencing,” said United States Attorney Robert K. Hur.

According to his plea agreement, Hasson was a Lieutenant in the United States Coast Guard. Prior to June 2016, Hasson owned a residence and lived in Currituck, North Carolina. In approximately June 2016, Hasson moved to a residence in Silver Spring, Maryland, and worked at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Hasson admitted that from at least March 2016 through early February 2019, he used various e-mail accounts, including an overseas encrypted e-mail account, to order Tramadol, which is an opioid, from various illegal Internet-based distributors. Hasson usually paid for the Tramadol by using MoneyGram or Western Union to send money to individuals in Mexico, at the direction of the Mexico-based distributor. The distributor then had the Tramadol shipped to Hasson, typically in 100mg pills, at addresses Hasson provided, including his North Carolina and Maryland residences. Hasson admitted that he then concealed the Tramadol in other packaging at his residence and work. Hasson ordered at least 4,650 Tramadol pills and personally took the pills, usually daily, including while he was at work. Hasson knew that he did not have a lawful prescription for Tramadol and that his possession of the drug was illegal. During the time of his use of Tramadol, Hasson also conducted Internet searches and visited websites that discussed addiction and Tramadol withdrawal.

As detailed in his plea agreement, at the time of Hasson’s arrest on February 15, 2019, agents recovered 196 Tramadol pills from Hasson’s backpack. Search warrants executed the same day recovered 106 Tramadol pills from Hasson’s desk at Coast Guard Headquarters and 122 Tramadol pills from Hasson’s residence. From Hasson’s residence, law enforcement also recovered the following firearms: seven rifles; two shotguns; four pistols; two revolvers; an assembled firearm silencer; and a disassembled firearm silencer. In close proximity to the guns, agents found multiple magazines that could accept more than 15 rounds of ammunition, as well as hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

According to the plea agreement, Hasson ordered the components of the firearm silencers from a company in California and used a drill to complete and assemble one firearm silencer. Hasson knew the firearm silencers were not registered in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record, and that they did not have serial numbers, as required by law.

Hasson faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison for each of the three charges related to firearms and the firearm silencers, and a maximum of one year in prison for possession of tramadol. U.S. District Judge George J. Hazel has scheduled sentencing for January 31, 2020, at 9:30 a.m.

United States Attorney Robert K. Hur commended the FBI, the U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service, and the ATF for their work in the investigation. Mr. Hur thanked his office's national security prosecutors, who are handling the case.

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