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## Navy Veterans Founder Fools IRS

After intensive tax audits and listening to founder Lt Cmdr Bobby Thompson and his lawyers' explanations two years ago, the IRS has given the US Navy Veterans Association the all clear.

Hence the Association was able to go on a nationwide telemarketing campaign that raised a sum of \$27.9 million in donations last year paid by an unsuspecting public led to believe that their contributions were meant to fund the veterans and American troops overseas.

Little did everyone know that Thompson was not who everyone thought he was. Unbeknown to everyone, Thompson had stolen the identity of a Bobby Thompson from a civilian in Washington state, impersonated a Navy commander and used his elaborately created but fraudulent Navy Veteran's charity to dupe the gift-giving American public.

Now 'Thompson' is on the run after being indicted in an Ohio court and a warrant for his arrest issued on charges of identity theft, racketeering, money laundering and stealing more than \$1 million just from the residents of Ohio.

For eight years, 'Thompson' fooled everybody, running his phony Navy Veteran's charity from a run-down duplex just behind a cigar factory in

Ybor City. He absconded last fall when he was about to be exposed, then escaped to New York City and disappeared. No one knows his real identity and whereabouts.

The IRS has declined to comment on this issue and gave no explanations as to how they could give a thumbs up to a fictitious charity and false tax returns to collect money from the public. In July, the IRS raided the home of one of 'Thompson's' assistants, Tampa resident Blanca Contreras, who is now in jail in Ohio on state charges of embezzling more than \$416,000 in cash from a Navy Veteran's bank account in Tampa.

In carrying out his elaborate scheme, 'Thompson' had help from certain key people, namely Helen MacMurray who was the former chief of Consumer Affairs for the Ohio attorney general, Samuel F. Wright, a Navy captain and former attorney with the US Department of Labor and Darryll K. Jones, a professor at Florida A&M University College of Law and an expert on nonprofits.

The Navy Veteran's Association paid nearly \$400,000 to these three individuals and their firms from 2007 until Thompson's disappearance. In their statements, all three lawyers said they thought Thompson and his charity were above board.

MacMurray, who said her firm has given its full cooperation to the Ohio attorney general's investigation, declined to answer questions from the press. Wright said he "participated in the preparation for the audit" but was not involved in the proceedings on the day of the tax examination in September 2008. As for Jones who was the tax counsel for the Association, he said Thompson handed over legitimate-looking documents like "lots of receipts, lots of records, even examples of the care package" items the Navy

Veterans said it was sending to thousands of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.