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PRESS RELEASE

December 13, 2018

**LANCASTER MAN SENTENCED ON
AMERICAN LEGION ROBBERY**

LANCASTER, OHIO – A Lancaster man will spend nearly eight years in prison following his conviction for the armed robbery of the Lancaster American Legion in June 2017. Jeffery L. Mason, 35, appeared before Judge Richard Berens of the Fairfield County Common Pleas Court on December 11th and entered a plea to one count of Aggravated Robbery, including a firearm specification, and was sentenced to a six-year prison term. He also entered pleas of guilty to drug possession, tampering with evidence, improperly handling firearms in a motor vehicle, driving under the influence, and escape charges arising out of a July 2017 traffic stop. He was sentenced to an additional one-year and eleven-month prison term on those charges, bringing his total prison term to seven years and eleven months.

“It is always of grave concern when someone resorts to violence for personal gain,” said Fairfield County Prosecutor Kyle Witt. “But the fact that it was a veteran who was threatened, and theft from a veterans association, is particularly reprehensible.”

It was a member of the Lancaster American Legion who was cleaning the building on the morning of June 5, 2017 when a masked intruder confronted him with a firearm and ordered him into the walk-in cooler. The suspect then fled with cash from the prior night’s sales. Mason is already serving a prison term for crimes committed in Hocking and Perry Counties, the latter being the burglary of the American Legion in Junction City. Lancaster Police detectives used forensic evidence and investigative tools to connect Mason to not only the Lancaster robbery, but the crimes in adjoining counties. They also discovered that he had performed work on the surveillance equipment at all three locations. Two days later, on June 7, 2017, Mason was stopped and ultimately arrested following a traffic stop in Lancaster where he was found with methamphetamine and firearms in his vehicle. He had been in custody since that time, resolving his criminal cases in all three counties.

“This is yet another tragic example of the devastating effects of illegal drugs in our community,” said County Prosecutor Kyle Witt. “This was a man with no significant criminal history, gainfully employed as an electrician, who turned to violence to support his drug addiction – and will spend nearly eight years in prison as a result.”

Mason will begin serving his prison sentence after completing his sentence in the Perry and Hocking County cases.

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