

Pilot accused in stolen artifact case

by UPI

NEW YORK -- A U.S. Army helicopter pilot has been charged in New York with selling more than 80 stolen Egyptian artifacts. The pilot, Army Chief Warrant Officer Edward George Johnson, who was stationed briefly in Cairo, was accused of earning \$20,000 from the sale of the antiquities to a Texas art dealer, authorities told The New York Times. Some of the items were said to have been placed in New York, London, Zurich and Montreal galleries. Johnson, 44, of Fayetteville, N.C., was charged with one count of wire fraud and one count of transportation of stolen property, the Times said. If convicted, he could be sentenced to 15 years in prison. The artifacts Johnson was accused of selling, mostly pottery dating to 3000 B.C. or earlier, were reported stolen from the Ma'adi Museum near Cairo in September 2002. The items had been discovered at an archaeological site in the 1920s and '30s. Johnson was arrested on Tuesday in Enterprise, Ala., authorities said. He was to be arraigned in Alabama before being sent to New York.

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