

Blackwater accused of deceit

by UPI

OTAY MESA, Calif. -- The controversial military contractor Blackwater denies it used deception to get permits to convert a California warehouse into a training center. Local officials did not realize Blackwater was the purchaser of the warehouse in Otay Mesa until they got an inside tip, the Los Angeles Times reported. The company dropped plans in March for a larger facility in the desert 45 miles from San Diego, which was opposed by a coalition of property owners and anti-war and environmental activists. The permits were obtained by Raven Development Group and Southwest Law Enforcement. "They were using these phony names to evade scrutiny by activist groups like ours that are watching their every move," said Raymond Lutz, coordinator of Citizens Oversight Projects. Anne Tyrell, a Blackwater spokeswoman, said the company had no intent to deceive. She said Raven has been Blackwater's real estate arm for some time.

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