



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Billy J. Williams  
District of Oregon

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## **DRUNKEN ASSAULT AT SEA NETS FEDERAL PRISON SENTENCE FOR WINCHESTER BAY RESIDENT**

EUGENE, Ore.—Brandon Michael Vanderploeg, 39, of Winchester Bay, Oregon, was sentenced today to 18 months in federal prison and two years' supervised release for assaulting his then-girlfriend aboard a fishing vessel in August 2018.

According to court documents, on August 16, 2018, members of the U.S. Coast Guard were dispatched to a situation at sea involving the report of a woman who had been assaulted by her boyfriend onboard a commercial fishing vessel. A coast guard helicopter located the vessel 17 nautical miles off the Oregon Coast. Two members of the coast guard boarded the vessel and made contact with Vanderploeg and the victim.

The victim reported that Vanderploeg had assaulted her on several occasions since leaving Winchester Bay. She specifically reported that Vanderploeg held her down, punched her repeated in the face, head-butted her in the nose, and slammed her head down on a tool box. The assault resulting in a three-inch laceration to her right cheek, a depressed nasal fracture, multiple contusions to her knees and arms, and a cervical strain.

During the investigation, the coast guard crew who boarded and conducted a sweep of the vessel, immediately noted a strong smell of alcohol coming from Mr. Venderploeg, who admitted to drinking. Mr. Vanderploeg tested positive for alcohol, registering a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .183. An individual operating a commercial vessel is considered intoxicated at a BAC of .04 or more.

On September 30, 2019, Vanderploeg pleaded guilty to assault within the maritime jurisdiction of the U.S. and operating a commercial vessel under the influence of alcohol.

As part of his plea agreement, Vanderploeg agreed to pay restitution in full to his victim as ordered by the court. A restitution hearing will be held at a later date.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) and prosecuted by Gavin W. Bruce, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

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