

Civil lawsuit settled in death of Navy SEAL

By JON FRANK, The Virginian-Pilot

© January 31, 2007

Last updated: 10:22 PM

VIRGINIA BEACH - A confidential settlement has been reached between the family of a slain Navy commando and the Navy special forces operative who killed him.

Bradley A. Jondahl, 24, was shot to death by Ronald J. Gasper on July 31, 2004, at Gasper's Pembroke-area home. At the time, the men were members of different SEAL teams in Virginia Beach.

Gasper was charged with murder but claimed self-defense. A jury in April acquitted him in a trial that attracted national attention.

Before the criminal trial, Jondahl's parents - Leone Harriett Ash Jondahl and Rodney Allen Jondahl of Aberdeen, S.D. - filed a wrongful-death lawsuit against Gasper, seeking \$11 million.

A settlement was reached Monday evening and formally entered Tuesday in Circuit Court, but it is sealed in the court file.

Kevin Martingayle, a lawyer who represents the Jondahls, said the settlement brought "a measure of relief" to his clients.

He said the Jondahls are still devastated by the death of their son.

"No amount of money could ever replace what was lost," he said.

Gasper was a member of SEAL Team 6, based at Dam Neck. Jondahl was a member of another SEAL team based at Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base. Shortly before the shooting, Gasper had returned from a deployment in the Middle East.

On the night of the shooting, the two commandos had been drinking at several SEAL hangouts along Shore Drive. Gasper claimed that he asked Jondahl to accompany him to his home because Jondahl was drunk and SEALs always look out for each other.

During his trial, Gasper described a drunken fight for survival. Gasper said he shot Jondahl as the two men struggled in Gasper's garage. Prosecutors

maintained that Gasper should not have introduced a handgun into what was essentially "a wrestling match."

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