

Post Perkins

Sergeant Sentenced In Spy Case

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla., Aug. 11 (UPI)—An Air Force master sergeant who contended his mind was crippled by alcoholism was convicted today of stealing U.N. defense secrets for the Soviets and sentenced to three years in prison and a dishonorable discharge.

Career military man Walter T. Perkins, who formerly served as the chief non-commissioned officer in the intelligence section at Tyndall Air Force Base, also was stripped of his rank and fined \$150 of the \$288 a month that he will receive during the 36 months he is in prison.

"Yes, I guess basically it is fair," Perkins commented to reporters as he was led to the stockade to begin his sentence.

The verdict and sentence came from military judge Joe E. Peck who, at the request of the defense, heard the eight-day long court-martial without a jury.

The fact that Perkins stole military secrets and intended to hand them over to Soviet agents in Mexico City was not seriously disputed. Instead, defense attorneys contended Perkins was an alcoholic and hence not responsible for his actions.

Henry Rothblatt, a constitutional lawyer from New York, said "the whole case was tried with the expectation of an appeal and carrying it through all the appellate processes. If we had won here, it would have been a pleasant surprise."

The next appeal step is the Air Force court of review, followed by the Court of Military Appeal, and possibly the federal district court of appeals.

Perkins, who faced a possible maximum sentence of 24 years in prison, was specifically charged with stealing national defense information, attempting to deliver that information to an unauthorized person, falsifying reports on the destruction of secret information, falsifying leave records and unmilitary conduct.

He was arrested last October as he was about to leave for Mexico City with secret documents in his brief case.



Associated Press

Before guilty verdict was rendered, Perkins is escorted to wait in base stockade.