

CIA
20 Years for
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Adventurer
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Keesee

SEE 8
San Diego

A federal judge sentenced "soldier of misfortune" Bobby Joe Keesee to 20 years in prison yesterday for conspiracy in the unsolved kidnap-murder of U.S. vice consul John S. Patterson in Mexico.

U.S. District Judge Leland C. Nielsen said he imposed the sentence to insure that the one-time Korean war hero spends at least seven years in federal prison.

Keesee had pleaded guilty to the conspiracy charge.

Before the sentencing, Keesee, who has been in jail since his arrest, was asked if he had anything to tell the court.

"There's nothing more I could say," he replied. "I got involved in something I realize was wrong."

A shadowy figure of international intrigue for the past 13 years, Keesee, 40, is the only person ever charged in connection with the disappearance and murder in 1974 of the American diplomat in Hermosillo, Mexico.

Patterson, 31, was last seen alive leaving the consulate in the northern Mexican state capital of Sonora on March 22 with another man.

The consulate received a ransom note in Patterson's handwriting three hours later demanding \$500,000. It was signed by the People's Liberation Army of Mexico, a group unknown to Mexican authorities.

Negotiations between Patterson's wife, Anne, and the kidnapers broke down. Four months later Patterson's body was found in a shallow grave 35 miles north of Hermosillo.

Keesee picked up the tag "soldier of misfortune" for a series of international troubles that began in 1962 when he deserted from the Army, stole a plane and flew to Cuba. Keesee served a two-year prison term in the theft, but claimed he acted as a CIA agent. The CIA denied any connection.

Keesee also once turned up among a group of hostages held by Palestinian guerrillas in Amman, Jordan, in mid-1970, and surprised the U.S. State Department by being among a group of POWs released by North Vietnam in 1973.