

Mystery Man

An Arrest in Mexico Kidnap

Santa Ana,
Orange county

Bobby Joe Keesee, a man of mystery who was released with a group of American war prisoners in North Vietnam, was arrested yesterday by the FBI for extortion.

Keesee, 40, who gave his occupation as a cabinet maker, was accused of trying to extort \$250,000 in the case of an American diplomat missing in Mexico.

He was repatriated from North Vietnam after his release with the POWs in March of 1973. U.S. authorities were surprised to find Keesee, a civilian, among the military men freed by the North Vietnamese.

The FBI said that investigation to date has failed to disclose any evidence that Keesee was actually involved in the disappearance of U.S. Vice Consul John S.

Patterson. Patterson dropped out of sight while at his post in Hermosillo March 22 and his present whereabouts are unknown, the FBI said.

William A. Sullivan, assistant director in charge of the Los Angeles FBI office, said Keesee was arrested on a federal complaint accusing him of causing to be delivered at the U.S. consulate in Hermosillo a letter demanding \$250,000 as ransom for release of Patterson.

Keesee caused a stir when he mysteriously appeared in the group of POWs. U.S. officials claimed they had no knowledge of his being in North Vietnam although officials of a charter flying service in Bangkok claimed he had pulled a gun and forced two Thai pilots to fly him to North Vietnam Sept. 18, 1970.

Keesee, a paratrooper in



BOBBY JOE KEESSEE
Shown in 1962 photo

the Korean war, first came to national attention in January, 1962, when he flew a rented plane to Cuba seeking political asylum. He was returned to the United States to stand trial on 153 federal charges. He was convicted of interstate transportation of a stolen car and sentenced to five years in prison. The other charges were dropped. Keesee told an intricate story about working for the Central Intelligence Agency during the trial, but the CIA denied any connection.

He was paroled from prison in June, 1965, and next made news when he was among 57 hostages held by guerrillas at an Amman, Jordan, hotel in June, 1970.

United Press

For this and other stories on Keesee, see CIA - 13, 14, 15, 19 Mar 73.

Other clippings on kidnapping of Patterson are filed
CIA, beginning 28 Mar 74.

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