

OPERATION STATION ZEBRA

On 2 Dember 1986 Donna Geiger walked onboard a Soviet scientific research vessel, the Akademik Boris Petrov, which was in the harbor of St. John's, Newfoundland, for a three day R&R.

Geiger, a Navy lieutenant who was later promoted to lieutenant commander, was a double agent who had been recruited by the Naval Investigative Service.

She was the key figure in a highly successful double agent operation involving the NIS, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS).

Lt.Cmdr. Geiger had just been stationed at the U.S. Naval Facility (NAVFAC) in Argentina, Newfoundland. When she went onboard the Soviet ship, she portrayed herself as a "disgruntled female naval officer...working in a world dominated by men...assigned to an isolated duty station."

She brought classified material to prove her intentions. She met with the captain and chief mate of the Soviet ship and gave them the number of a post office box in St. John's where she could be contacted.

In February 1987, Lt.Cmdr. Geiger recieved the first letter indicating someone would meet with her. The letter was post-marked in Ottawa. The meeting was postponed in subsequent letters before a meeting was finally held.



"MICHAEL", WITH BACK TO CAMERA, MEETS WITH DOUBLE AGENT DONNA GEIGER

On 17 May 1987, acting on directions she received by mail, Lt.Cmdr. Geiger went to the entrance of the Hotel Newfoundland in St. John's where she met an individual identified as "Michael" at approximately 1600.

They went to her car in the parking lot of the hotel where she was given money and some tasking to collect information. No documents were passed at this time.

On 24 May 1987, another meeting was held. This time they met at a monument called the "War Memorial" about six blocks from the Hotel Newfoundland. After a brief meeting, they went to a restaurant where classified information was exchanged for money. During this meeting she was tasked to provide information on the highly classified

Sound Underwater Surveillance System (SOSUS) and NAVFAC Argentina's area of responsibility.

The two were scheduled to meet again in October but the meeting had to be postponed.

Lt.Cmdr. Geiger, who was married with one child, gave birth to her second child in October.

In December 1987 at about 1600 they met again at the entrance of the Hotel Newfoundland. The meeting lasted about one and a half hours. Lt.Cmdr. Geiger was given more money in exchange for eight documents, including classified material. During this meeting she was given additional tasking to find out what the U.S. knew about the acoustics of Soviet subs and any U.S. methods of tracking Soviet submarines. In addition, she was provided

with a modified camera designed for document photography, secret writing materials and an "accommodation address" in East Berlin where she could mail letters to signal for other meetings.

On 11 June 1988 Lt.Cmdr. Geiger and "Michael" met again. By this time "Michael" had been identified as Stephen Joseph Ratkai, a Canadian-born son of a Hungarian emigre. Ratkai held dual Canadian and Hungarian citizenship.

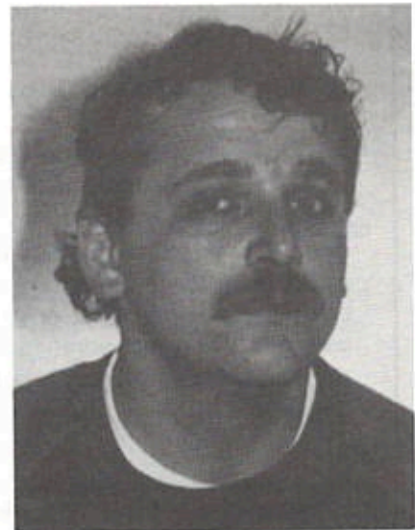
When they met at the Hotel Newfoundland, Lt.Cmdr. Geiger steered Ratkai to a room which had been outfitted with audio and video surveillance. The meeting lasted

about one hour and 25 minutes. Lt.Cmdr. Geiger was given more money in exchange for one classified document and portions of another.

But when Ratkai left the room he was arrested immediately in the hallway.

On 6 February 1989, Ratkai pleaded guilty to espionage in the Supreme Court of Newfoundland. It marked the first conviction under Section 3(1C) of the Canadian Official Secrets Act for espionage.

On 9 March 1989, Ratkai was sentenced to two concurrent nine year prison terms.



RATKAI

"CURIOSITY' LED OFFICER TO ACCEPT ASSIGNMENT

The following is from an interview with the NIS case agent on Operation Station Zebra:

Q: How was Lt.Cmdr. Geiger selected?

A: We use various selection processes, but in this case, she was recommended by her commanding officer. We work very closely with the command during the selection process and in this particular case, that relationship enabled us to find exactly the type of person we were looking for. We wanted someone with prior operational experience in anti-submarine warfare, particularly in SOSUS, and Donna was it.

Q: What type of person volunteers for this type of assignment?

A: First of all, for the most part we select candidates for this type of operation. Then we give them the opportunity to volunteer. Because of the different scenarios and goals of the operations we have to consider candidates from a variety of backgrounds, including officers, enlisted and civilian DoN (Department of the Navy) employees. They are carefully screened prior to selection and there are some commonalities. They have good performance records and are loyal, patriotic and dependable.

Q: What is the attraction?

A: I think initially it's curiosity. You are presenting them with an opportunity to become involved in something that they never in their wildest imagination envisioned themselves in. And I would think there is some initial thrill to it. But I think in most

cases, when you talk to people who have been involved in this the patriotism and the opportunity to serve their country comes through. That may sound corny, but it's true. Anyone who has been involved in this type of operations knows there is a lot more hard work involved than thrills. There is a lot of preparation and drudgery for those few hours of operational contact.

Q: What type of person is Donna Geiger?

A: She's bright...articulate...dedicated and patriotic...everything that you would envision the modern woman being. She was a wife, mother and naval officer, and at the same time did an outstanding double agent. She was a quick learner and had the ability to think on her feet in stressful situations. We had a lot of confidence in her ability and she never disappointed us.

Q: What was her response when you first contacted her?

A: When we first contacted her we only told her she was being considered for participation in a sensitive operation that had been approved by the Navy. We met with her several times and I think initially it was curiosity that kept her coming back. Once she had been briefed on exactly what it was that we wanted her to do, I think it was her competitiveness that kept her going. I think she viewed this thing as a challenge and looked at it from the standpoint of "Am I really capable of doing this and can I pull it off?" As a matter of fact, after the operation concluded, she told us that having been through this she was confident of her abilities to handle anything else that might come up.

Q: What were some of the benefits of Station Zebra?

A: It accomplished several things. It reaffirmed our belief that that Soviet shipping in the St. John's area was involved in intelligence collection. We learned more about Soviet methodology for ostensibly handling an "American spy" in Canada. And third and probably most important was the identification and prosecution of an illegal agent who as a Canadian citizen could have gone anywhere in Canada and the United States to collect information.

Q: What will happen to Donna Geiger now? Is there any possibility she may be used in the CI field again?

A: I think that would be highly unlikely. In cases such as these, particularly those which result in prosecution, the double agents resume their regular careers.



SURVEILLANCE PHOTOS OF RATKAI