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Ex-sergeant admits peddling NATO information for \$20,000

By TOM BRENNAN
Tribune Staff Writer

TAMPA — A former U.S. Army sergeant pleaded guilty Tuesday to selling for \$20,000 military secrets authorities say could have led to the collapse of NATO.

Roderick James Ramsay, 29, admitted selling information to the Hungarian and Czechoslovak secret services between 1983 and 1985.

Among the items Ramsay said he bartered were plans for the defense of Central Europe; documents outlining the location and use of NATO's tactical nuclear weapons; and technical manuals and information about the ability of the alliance's military communications.

Ramsay faces up to life imprisonment. No sentencing date was scheduled after prosecutors sought a delay for unspecified reasons.

Ramsay, who followed his mother to Tampa after his discharge in 1985 and was working as a busboy,

has been held in solitary confinement without bail since his arrest in June 1990.

He agreed to cooperate with investigators. Prosecutors said they would tell the sentencing judge the extent of that cooperation, but would still recommend Ramsay serve a "substantial" prison term.

Ramsay also agreed to undergo periodic lie-detector tests. Under the plea agreement, he won't face any additional charges resulting from debriefing about his spying.

Ramsay was assigned to safeguard sensitive military plans while stationed with 8th Infantry Division headquarters at Bad Kreuznach, West Germany when he was recruited into espionage by his Army supervisor, Clyde Lee Conrad.

Conrad was sentenced in June to life imprisonment plus four years after being convicted in a West German court. He was arrested in August 1988 and convicted of passing

secrets to Hungary and Czechoslovakia from 1975 through 1985 in return for \$1.2 million.

Prosecutors said the investigation into the Conrad-Ramsay spy ring is continuing but refused to elaborate. At the time of Ramsay's arrest, authorities said at least five other retired soldiers were under suspicion.

The FBI investigation into Ramsay began days after Conrad's arrest. Ramsay immediately began cooperating and was arrested only after a network newscast revealed the existence of the investigation.

Local authorities called the spy ring "a hemorrhage of sensitive information" that shook the security of the United States and its allies. The judge who sentenced Conrad said the spy ring "endangered the entire defense capability of the West" and could have led to "capitulation and the use of nuclear weapons on German territory."