

# INFAMOUS SPIES

An  
Espionage  
Series



## PETER DEBBINS



### THE GREEN BERET WHO TURNED RED

Born in the US to a Soviet mother, Peter Debbins (b. 1975) grew up with a strong interest in the USSR, regarding himself as a “son of Russia.” In 1994 at age 19, he began visiting Russia frequently over the next decade and half.

Debbins first met with Russian intelligence officers in 1996 when he was a Reserve Officers’ Training Corps student. A year later, he signed a pledge to serve Russia. After graduating, Debbins became a Green Beret in the Army, rising to the rank of captain and receiving a TS/SCI clearance. But in 2004 while deployed Azerbaijan, a security violation left Debbins stripped of his command and clearance.

Embittered, Peter turned towards his Russian handlers and divulged sensitive information, including details about his former units and servicemen, whom the agents conspired to recruit.

In 2020, Debbins was finally arrested and charged under the Espionage Act. He subsequently pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 15 years and 8 months in prison.



**CDSE**

Center for Development  
of Security Excellence

[www.cdse.edu](http://www.cdse.edu)