

f-2002-01480



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August 23, 2002

Information and Privacy Coordinator
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505


2002 SEP -3 AM 8:58

Dear Coordinator:

Under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552, and Executive Order 12958, I am requesting any and all information regarding Project Jennifer/Hughes Glomar Explorer. Please see attachment.

If there are any fees for searching for, reviewing, or copying the records, please let me know before you task my request.

If you deny all or any part of this request, please cite each specific exemption you think justifies your refusal to release the information and notify me of appeal procedures available under the law.

If you have any questions about handling this request, you may telephone me at my home phone of  Thank you.

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Sincerely,



Kevin D. King



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The Hughes Glomar Explorer's Mission

From Andrew Toppan's sci.military.naval FAQ:

Project Jennifer was the codename applied to the CIA project that salvaged part of a sunken Soviet submarine in 1974. The Soviet Golf-class ballistic missile submarine (SSB) K-129 sank off Hawaii on 11 April 1968, probably due to a missile malfunction. The Golf class submarines were diesel-electric ballistic missile subs, a modified version of the Foxtrot class submarines. They carried 3 SS-N-5 SLBMs in an elongated sail structure.

The sunken submarine was located in 16,500 feet of water. Mizar (AGOR 11) took part in the search, as did the specialized "research" submarine USS Halibut (SSN 587). It is possible that the "research" sub Seawolf (SSN 575) also took part in the search (see section F.8 for information on US covert operations submarines).

The CIA ran an operation to recover the sunken submarine. The recovery effort centered on Hughes Glomar Explorer, a 63,000 ton deep-sea salvage vessel built for the project. The ship was built under the "cover story" that she was a deep-sea mining ship, intended to recover "manganese nodules" from the ocean floor. The ship was supposedly being built for the Summa Corporation at the direction of Howard Hughes for use by his Global Marine Development Inc. At the same time the "Hughes Mining Barge" was built. The barge, commonly known as HMB-1, was a submersible barge intended to carry the "claw" to be used in the recovery effort; it would also be used to hide the recovered submarine.

Hughes Glomar Explorer was equipped with a massive hoisting mechanism amidships and a "moon pool", a large internal underwater hangar to provide access to the ocean. The submarine was to be hoisted by a massive claw, which was stored in HMB-1. After Hughes Glomar Explorer and HMB-1 left port, the barge submerged, maneuvered under Glomar Explorer, and the claw was hoisted into the moon pool. Glomar Explorer arrived on the recovery site 4 July 1974 and conducted salvage operations for the next month. If the entire submarine had been recovered it would have been stored in HMB-1 after the salvage. In the event (according to the story released to the public), only the forward 38 feet of the submarine was recovered. The section included two nuclear-tipped torpedoes, various cipher/code equipment and 8 dead crewmen. The recovered section was small enough to be brought into the moon pool, where it was analysed and dissected. The dead Soviet sailors were buried at sea. It is possible that the entire submarine was recovered and the story about only the bow being recovered was further "cover".

After the recovery Hughes Glomar Explorer was transferred to the Navy on 3 Sept 1976 and designated AG 193. The vessel is not officially assigned a name, but is commonly referred to Glomar Explorer. She was transferred to the Maritime Administration on 17 Jan 1977 and laid up at Suisun Bay, CA. The Navy attempted to sell the ship, but failed. In June, 1978 she was leased to Global Marine Development Inc. for commercial use. That lease was terminated in 1980. In 1979 it was proposed that the ship be transferred to the National Science Foundation for use as a deep-sea drilling ship, but that effort was not funded. The ship was returned to Navy custody on 25 April 1980 and transferred to the Maritime Administration on the same day for layup at Suisun Bay. She remained in layup for the next 16 years. During August, 1996 it was announced that Global Marine had leased Glomar Explorer from the Navy for 30 years. The ship left the mothball fleet 5 November 1996 to be totally reconditioned and converted to a drill ship. She will be operated in the Gulf of Mexico, drilling test oil wells.

HMB-1 was laid up after the recovery, but was transferred to the Environmental Protection Agency at some point. She was returned by the EPA in 1982, officially to be laid up in reserve. It now seems likely

that it was then employed as the "mother ship" for the stealth ship Sea Shadow, a purpose for which it was employed during the 1990's. At some point HMB-1 was converted from an submersible barge with access from the top into a covered floating drydock with access from one end. It is currently in storage, with Sea Shadow inside. See E.18 for information on Sea Shadow and the test program.

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Kevin D. King

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