

Cuban Invasion Force, Arms Seized On Keys

31 Men, 7 Autos And Yacht Taken

By HAINES COLBERT

Reporter of The Miami News

Federal agents in the Florida Keys today seized 31 heavily armed men who were described as members of an expeditionary force preparing to embark for Cuba.

The agents, with a Coast Guard cutter standing by, confiscated a yacht and seven automobiles loaded with arms, medical supplies and uniforms.

Customs Agent W. B. Lankford, who led a raiding party drawn from three federal agencies, said the arrested men were revolutionaries who were to have sailed at daylight.

Strike At 3 A.M.

"This is considered the largest expeditionary force apprehended or prevented since the revolutionary activity began in Cuba after Fulgencio Batista deposed Carlos Prio," said Lankford.

The federal agents struck at 3 a.m., seizing the yacht Philomar III while the supplies were being carried aboard from a dock at Piney Point on the southern tip of Big Pine Key.

Lankford said three automobiles and their occupants were seized in the first rush. Four more cars filled with armed men drew up after the raid, and their occupants were arrested.

Drive From Miami

The Cubans had been in the process of loading the yacht since Friday, Lankford said. The Philomar III was brought around from Tampa, and the members of the expeditionary force drove the 118 miles to the jumpoff point from Miami.

Many of the men in the cars wore .45 caliber pistols, Lankford said, and they carried crates of sub machineguns, army rifles, knives and machetes.

The yacht, automobiles and prisoners were taken to Key West. Lankford said the men would be given a preliminary hearing later in the day before U. S. Commissioner William V. Albury on charges of conspiracy to violate the neutrality act and the federal firearms act.

Plans Known To Agents

Charles E. Wyatt, supervising customs agent in Miami, said the plans for the descent on Cuba—presumably to reinforce the revolutionary force of Fidel Castro—had been known for some time.

The 165-foot Coast Guard Cutter Ariadne was moved up from Key West to block a possible attempt to escape aboard the yacht. The cutter lay off Ramrod Key, and its men did not take an active part in the raid.

The raiding party was made up of agents of the customs service.

Continued on Page 2-A, Col. 5

31 Cubans Seized By U.S. Agents

Continued from Page 1-A

border patrol and alcoholic and tobacco tax unit.

Former Seizure Recalled

Wyatt said the expeditionary force was involved with revolutionary activity in Miami. He said agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation were working on leads in the Miami area.

Only last month, federal agents seized a large supply of weapons in the possession of three Cuban nationals who make their homes in Miami.

The agents said the military equipment was purchased from surplus dealers in the New York-Philadelphia area and brought here in a house trailer.

Agents in Key West said 13 of the men arrested in the keys raid gave a non-existent address, 2315 Pine Terrace Dr., Miami Beach.

Unknown At Address

The operator of an apartment at 2315 Pine Tree Dr., said he did not know any of them.

Arrested were Julio Oropesa, 47; Israel Crespo, 28; Flavio Sanchez, 27; Domingo Esteban, 24; Armando Sanchez, 25; Jesus Frandino, 27; Guillermo Gonzalez, 48; Ricardo Costa, 25; Nelson Sanchez, 19; Julio Beroff, 33; Alfredo G. Guerra, 30; Ariel Ajo, 37, and Carlos C. Pando, 44, all of the "Pine Terrace" address, and

Juan Calil, 29, of 940 SW 72nd Ave.; Humberto Nunez, 23, of 1360 SW 3rd St.; Julio Garcia, 25, of the Bronx, N.Y.; Oswaldo Martinez, 18, of New York City; Cesar Vega, 32, of 740 SW 72nd Ave.; Jaime Diaz, 20, of 1918 SW 3rd Ave.; Bernardo Paradello, 37, of 1260 SW 44th St.;

Fernando Garcia, 30, of New York City; Rolando de la Torre, 23, of New York City; Juan A. Milen, 33, of 54 NE 17th St.; Hector B. Hernandez, 25, Miami address unknown; Indalesio A. Esteban, 25, of 448 NE 37th St.; Francisco J. Martinez, 19, of New York City; Francisco Robaines, 6, Francisco Varono, 35, Fernando C. Moreno, 32, and Gilbert I. Visual and Ambrosia Diez, who gave no addresses.