

CUBAN GUN RUNNERS CAUGHT

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Two Jump As Cruiser Leaves Port

By JOHN HOPKINS
[Daily News Staff Reporter]

Thirty-two Cubans were thwarted by U. S. agents last night as they tried to take a large cache of arms and ammunition to Fidel Castro's rebel forces on a 60-foot cabin cruiser through Port Everglades.

Dressed in combat gear, the Cubans from Miami, Tampa and New York were arrested by seven agents of the U. S. Border Patrol and Customs office about 10 p.m.

The agents boarded the cruiser as she prepared to leave the port channel for the run to join the anti-Batista forces.

As the agents boarded the Harpoon, loaded with the Rebels, the pilot, William Wright, 60, and a Cuban jumped overboard.

The Cuban was apprehended later by a towboat captain but the pilot still is missing. He presumably swam to the mangrove swamps south of the port.

The Cubans and the agents narrowly missed possible death shortly after the boarding when one of the Cubans attempted to explode a can of gunpowder by crimping a dynamite cap with a pair of pliers.

Frank Bestard, 27-year-old Cuban from Miami, failed to reach the black powder as the cap exploded in his hand, with chunks of metal from the cap and pliers tearing into his right hand and side.

Bestard was reported in "fairly good" condition at Broward General Hospital this morning.

TAKEN TO JAIL

After the blast incident, the agents towed the Harpoon into the port without additional trouble and shuttled the 31 in groups of five or six to the Broward County jail. All were booked about 4 a. m.

Directing the operation were W. B. Lankford, a Customs agent, Raymond Bond and Wallace D. Shanley, both of the Border Patrol.

(See Photos, Story on Page 1-B)

Agents first learned of the rebel plot last Friday when Dania Police Chief George Williams advised them he had received a "tip from an anonymous" source that a boat was being loaded with arms and ammunition at the Dania Marina.

Agents put a 24-hour surveillance on the boat, and it was moved to the Dania Beach Docks yesterday morning. About 8 p.m. yesterday a group of men boarded the cruiser and it sailed north on the Intracoastal Waterway.

Lankford, Bond and Shanley along Border Patrol Inspectors Clyde Gurley, Tyler Winton, Anthony Provenzo and Charles Williams followed the Harpoon in a 43-foot Border Patrol craft, the Douglas C. Shute, armed with 30 caliber machine guns.

Just south of the port channel, the Shute pulled alongside the Harpoon and the seven agents jumped aboard her.

Bond rushed to the pilot, who left the wheel and jumped overboard.

9 IN CABIN

Nine rebels were crowded into the pilot's cabin and the rest were jammed in the forward hold.

Bond attempted to steer the boat with the Shute towing her but an unidentified Cuban suddenly whipped the wheel out of his hand and spun it as others in the hold jammed

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(Daily News photo by P. Whitehouse)

ARMS CONSIGNED TO CUBAN REBELS INTERCEPTED

... government agents check part of seized shipment at Port Everglades

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Cubans Clam Up On Arms Source

Cuban rebels seized as they started to leave the Port Everglades channel to join Fidel Castro forces refused to reveal from where they obtained their arms, ammunition and supplies.

However, the ammunition was crated in boxes bearing the stamp "Interameo," Alexandria, Va. It apparently was brought into Miami by Acme Fast Freight whose labels partially were torn off.

Three doctors were among those arrested last night and early this morning by agents working under direction of Charles E. Wyatt, supervisor of the Customs Agency Service, and Richard E. Batchelor, chief of the U. S. Border Patrol, Miami.

The doctors were Rafael T. Gonzalez, 29, Miami, and Francisco Garcia, 37, and Rodolfo Vasquez, 33, both of Tampa.

Those who gave their addresses as Miami were Jesus Otero, 27; Enrique Pazos, 21; Omor Oyola, 17; Hector Delfin, 24; Rafael A. Cuebar, 24; Miquel Roche, 19; Frank Puyol, 32; Dionisio A. Esteban, 24; Alberto Cuero Lara, 30; Pascosio L. Lopez, 38.

OTHERS NAMED

Carlos Fonseca, 23; Carlos L. Hernandez, 22; Ramero R. Raskl, 55; Abelardo Suero, 32; Hector C. Llano, 19; Carlo Saptana, 21; Placido Gonzalez, 49; Julio C. Lleros, 23; Humberto Sanchez, 22; Glacide M. Ramos, and a "John Doe," 31.

Gector M. Cornillot, 49, said he came from Miami Beach while Anibal Velaz, 23, gave Tampa as his home. Julio L. Hernandez, 18, listed his home as "Cuba."

Three stated they were from New York City. They are Gino Pastrano, 24; Jose Garcia, 18; and Pedro Gonzalez, 33.

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the mechanism.

The tow rope snapped and a Cuban who had taken over the wheel deliberately rammed the Harpoon into the west bank.

During this flareup and after Bestard, blasted the dynamite cap, the rebels threw overboard packages of rifles and ammunition and other paraphernalia which Provenzo later recovered in several dives into 20 feet of water.

After the tow ropes were replaced and the Cubans settled down, the agents eased the boat into a berth from which the rebels were taken to jail and the unloading operation started.

The number of men and the amount of arms were the same as seized last November 18 in the Keys. These were the largest seizures in men and arms agents that have been made.

However, agents said the arms last November were of smaller caliber while the Harpoon carried 81 millimeter mortars and 57 millimeter anti-tank weapons in addition to 30 caliber rifles, carbines, small arms and ammunition for all of the guns.

Grenade casings, cans of explosive powder, walkie talkies and knives were piled up on the dock beside the boat along with personal clothing, rolls of cotton, band aids and even heat lotions.

They wore armbands and carried flags and pennants denoting Prios' Organizacion Autenica [known as O/A and interpreted as the authentic organization or the last government] and Castro's 26 de Julio, liberation day as proclaimed by the rebel chief.

Agents said the Cubans will be charged with conspiracy to violate the U.S. neutrality act and illegal export of arms.

Dania Chief's 'Tip' Credited

DANIA — A tip from Police Chief George Williams to customs officials today was credited for the dramatic raid on the Cuban-filled cruiser captained by Bill Wright.

Williams said he told customs men he suspected Wright's boat was carrying arms, but federal authorities needed more

definite information before the raid.

On Saturday night, Dania Patrolman John Roderick arrested Wright on a speeding charge.

While the captain was in custody, Williams and the customs man amassed the information they needed to swoop down on the craft this morning.