

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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The "Marita Ann" Arms Seizure

A major Garda/Naval Service operation resulted in the seizure on 29 September of several tons of arms from a trawler, the Marita Ann, off the Kerry coast. Five people are at present facing charges arising out of this seizure and the matter is, therefore, sub judice. The arms, destined for the Provisional IRA, included large quantities of rifles and ammunition, grenades, rockets and a Browning sub-machine gun. The arms originated in the U.S.A. and the ship which is believed to have off-loaded them onto the Marita Ann was confiscated in Boston on 16 October. The Minister for Justice, Mr. Noonan, said after the seizure that "Noraid use money to buy arms which are used to murder Irish people North and South of the Border and I think this is the source of the money". (A press report of the comments by the Taoiseach and the Minister for Justice is included in section 4 of this brief.) Noraid spokesman, Martin Galvin claimed, however, that "Noraid is not involved in this arms shipment or any other arms shipment". Mr Michael Flannery, President of Noraid, was in Ireland on the weekend of the arms seizure but he claimed he was simply "on vacation".

With regard to the ship which was confiscated in Boston on 16 October, please see the attached telex report from the Vice-Consul in Boston.

C. O'Flann

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17 OCTOBER 1984
IMMEDIATE
TO HQ FROM BSM
FOR C. O'FLOINN, ANGLO IRISH FROM CONSUL GENERAL

SUBJECT: ARMS SHIP VALHALLA

1. IT APPEARS THAT THE 82 FOOT FISHING VESSEL OUT OF IPSWICH, MASS. (FISHING PORT NORTH OF BOSTON) WAS BOARDED BY U.S. CUSTOMS IN BOSTON HARBOUR SOMETIME YESTERDAY P.M.. CONSIDERABLE MEDIA INTEREST SINCE. THE MATTER IS STILL IN CUSTOMS HANDS AND NO ARRESTS MADE ALTHOUGH SOME EXPECTED ACCORDING TO MEDIA.
2. ONE REPORT INDICATED 9M.M. SHELL CASING FOUND ON BOAT AND CUSTOMS OFFICIAL QUOTED AS SAYING THAT DOCUMENTATION FOUND POINTED TO VALHALLA AS ARMS MOTHERSHIP. SHIP IS OWNED BY A LELAND SCHOEN OF IPSWICH AND SPEAKING THROUGH LAWYER SCHOEN EXPRESSED SHOCK AND SAID THAT HE THOUGHT VALHALLA WAS SWORDFISHING. THE CURRENT SKIPPER IS NAMED AS BOB ANDERSON AND HE IS SAID TO BE UNDER INVESTIGATION. TWO CREW WERE ON BOARD WHEN SHIP SEIZED. VALHALLA SAID TO HAVE BEEN MOORED IN BOSTON SINCE SAT.
3. A REPORT IN BOSTON GLOBE DESCRIBED SHIP AS BEING DAMAGED +THROUGH QUITE A SEVERE STORM+ AND THAT IT SHOWED LITTLE SIGN OF HAVING BEEN FISHED LATELY.
4. CUSTOMS OFFICIALS STRESSED THAT THEY WERE ACTING ON INFO. RECEIVED FROM IRISH AUTHORITIES.

MESSAGE ENDS

HIBERNIA BSM
17 OCTOBER 1984
HRS: 0935

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