

Army spreads steel net for escapers

Belfast Telegraph reporters

HUNDREDS OF TROOPS sealed off the Markets area of Belfast to-day as the search continued for the seven detainees who swam to freedom from the prison ship Maidstone last night.

Although security chiefs believe the men may still be hiding out in the area, Republican sources were claiming that the detainees managed to get clean away before the massive clamp-down was ordered.

Provos and the Officials shoot it out

Belfast Telegraph reporters

MEMBERS of both wings of the IRA were believed to have been locked in a gun battle among themselves just over the border in Eire to-day.

The gun battle is thought to have started after a meeting in the Donegal area between the Officials and Provos.

The meeting is believed to have been aimed at determining which wing of the IRA would control the area of the South Armagh border district.

Requests fitting over the border into Ulster claimed that there was a row at the meeting which ended in a shoot-up.

As the battle raged, members of the Scots Dragon Guards based at Farnborough moved up to the border in force in armoured cars.

A spokesman said some of the shots was fired at the troops and they were

Meanwhile, security men have been carrying out a searching investigation into the spectacular break-out from the former submarine-depot ship, which is moored in Belfast harbour.

At least one of the seven escapees are in their 20s and came from the Andersonstown area of the city. They were all detained under the Special Powers Act within the past month.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Faulstich, was expected to disclose the full facts about the escape — the first from the vessel — when he faced MPs in the Commons at Stormont this afternoon.

At least 16 men were detained when troops swooped on a number of houses during a big "comb-out" operation, but none of them was reported to be an escaper.

The district had been completely sealed off during the night as men of the Parachute Regiment and the Royal Horse Artillery searched until dawn to start their search.

The break-out from the 12,300-ton ship, which is also used to accommodate troops, was the most daring of the recent escapes by IRA.

The seven men waited for their chance and made their way to the life-boat on the port side of the ship's No. 3 deck.



Using a sledge hammer, paratroopers broke down a door of a pub in the Markets area. They were taking part in a house-to-house search for the escapers from the Maidstone.

Sergeant deserts and flees to Eire

A BRITISH Army sergeant has deserted his regiment in Ulster and fled to Eire, it was confirmed to-day.

Army headquarters at Lisburn said this afternoon that Sergeant T. E. Fenlon, of the 16th Lancos, based at Omagh, was missing.

They gave his age as 37 and said his home is at Welleshampton, Eire. They did not know of his present whereabouts.

Police headquarters in Dublin confirmed in Eire that the sergeant had fled to Eire about 100 yards away and covered with a net.

Dripping wet and shivering with shivers, they made their way through the harbour to the north end of Queen's Road, where a double-deck Corporation bus was waiting for 150 night shipyard workers.

The driver, according to the RUC, was in a nearby gatehouse.

of a man who had arrived in battle dress and carrying a rifle at Blacklion barracks in County Cavan.

One report to-day named the man as Sergeant Fenlon.

The report said the sergeant last night walked across the border near Knockliffen and went to the door of the police station in the tiny village of Blacklion.

He was wearing battle dress and carrying a rifle, and he is alleged to have told the startled

station orderly that he wanted to give himself up.

To-day journalists who gathered outside the station were told by the local sergeant that they could not speak to the soldier.

But through a window they could see a tall, clean-shaven man in his 30s, sitting nervously beside a fire.

Another report claimed that the sergeant was accompanied by his wife, but this could not be confirmed.

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Hacksaw

There, while other inmates watch, they began cutting through iron bars across the veritable with a hacksaw.

The implement is believed to have been smuggled aboard the ship.

When the veritable was clear, the men stripped down to their underpants and lowered themselves one by one down to the icy waters of the Mourne Channel.

No more than eight feet below.

All seven, who are known to be friends, started swimming across the channel and climbed out of the water about 100 yards away and covered with a net.

Dripping wet and shivering with shivers, they made their way through the harbour to the north end of Queen's Road, where a double-deck Corporation bus was waiting for 150 night shipyard workers.

The driver, according to the RUC, was in a nearby gatehouse.

Drove off

The detainees boarded the bus and it drove off. The bus was spotted by the first news of the hijacking was reported at 11.15 a.m. when the alarm was already being rung.

The bus was driven straight into the Markets. The bus was seen getting out.

At 6.30 pm a patrol of the Royal Ulster Constabulary found the bus at 23rd Street and troops began moving in to seal off the area.

But it was not until 7.30 pm — an hour later — that it was confirmed seven men were missing from the Maidstone.

Confined on Page 4 and 7.

Belfast and Newry hit by bombers

SEVERAL people to-day were slightly injured when a terrorist bomb exploded in a Belfast exit store. A car was also blasted.

The blast in Belfast completely wrecked the store which stands on the corner of Ventry Lane, a few doors away from the headquarters of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland.

Police and troops sealed off the Dublin Road as firemen tackled a blaze which broke out, but they got it quickly under control.

An RUC spokesman said two raiders held up staff, stole £37, and planted the bomb before escaping in a car.

A nationalist at a nearby hairdresser's said: "The first thing I heard was a

very loud bang. I not a terrible shock."

Journalist Colin McClelland was about 20 yards from the point store when it blast occurred.

"I had only walked a few paces when the blast nearly knocked me off my feet."

"I was hit in the back with flying glass and some pieces of burning debris and I lived for shelter in a shop doorway."

A double bomb ripped through the premises of Car-Care at John Mitchell Place, Newry.

It was planned by two men, one armed with a pistol who gave staff three minutes to get clear.

A nationalist at a nearby hairdresser's said: "The first thing I heard was a

SEARCH FOR SEA VICTIMS

ARDGLASS fishermen and local boat owners were out to-day searching for the bodies of the five men who were swept out to sea when their 38ft cabin cruiser went down during a gale on Saturday.

All shipping was told to keep a look-out for Mr. Martin Agnew (37), and his 23-year-old wife, Allison.

Earlier reports incorrectly gave Mr. Agnew's initial as J.

Six awkward questions to ask any central heating specialist

Before you put your money into central heating, you'll obviously want to investigate every type of central heating and central heating fuel. You'd be silly not to, wouldn't you, when so much is at stake? As a check list, Shell-Mex and B.P. central heating suggest you ask these questions when the different people from various types of central heating come to look at your house.

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