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**Anchors recovered from arms-smuggling vessel scuttled in plan to aid Easter Rising**

[[](http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/images/2012/0620/1224318257419_1.jpg?ts=1340183855)Anchors from German vessel the Aud are secured after a two-hour retrieval from 36m-deep waters outside Cork harbour. The vessel was scuttled in 1916 when its attempt to supply arms to the Irish Volunteers was foiled. Photograph: Domnick Walsh/Eye Focus](http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/images/2012/0620/1224318257419_1.jpg?ts=1340183855)

BARRY ROCHE

DIVERS YESTERDAY recovered two anchors from the wreck of German vessel the Aud used in a foiled attempt to smuggle some 20,000 rifles to the Irish Volunteers for the Easter Rising of 1916.  
The anchors were recovered yesterday morning in 36m of water in Cork harbour by divers led by Eoin McGarry from Dungarvan and archaeologist Laurence Dunne from Tralee. “This project to recover the anchors has been around two years in the planning. We wanted to recover something emblematic from the Aud given its important role in the history of the foundation our State,” said Mr Dunne.  
Connie Kelleher from the underwater section of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht explained that maritime archaeologist Juliana O’Donoghue made sure everything was in place for the lifting which took about two hours: “The anchors were lifted on to a boat, the Ron Carraig and brought ashore and put into special tanks and transported to Kerry for conservation which will take around three years. But they will be ready for display for the centenary of the Easter Rising.”  
The Aud’s was used by the German military authorities to ship 20,000 captured Russian rifles, 10 machine guns and five million rounds of ammunition to Ireland. The shipment was arranged by Sir Roger Casement. The Aud, posing as a Norwegian freighter, made its way from Lubeck in northern Germany to Tralee Bay where it moored off the Maharees to land arms at Fenit.  
However, Casement was captured by the RIC at Banna Strand and the Aud was taken by a British naval flotilla. However as they were about to enter Cork harbour, Capt Karl Spindler and his crew of 22 scuttled the vessel near Daunt’s Rock where it has remained.  
The anchors will be displayed in locations provided by Cobh Town Council and Tralee and Fenit Harbour Commissioners

By Sarah Stack

Irish Independent

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[Be the first to comment](http://www.independent.ie/national-news/anchor-from-1916-german-gunrunning-ship-aud-recovered-off-cork-coast-3144485.html#disqus_thread)

**Anchor from 1916 German gun-running ship Aud recovered off Cork coast**

AN anchor has been recovered from the wreck of the 1916 German gun-running ship scuttled off the south of Ireland.

The Aud, a former English merchant vessel captured by the Germans, was sunk after a failed attempt to deliver a shipment of arms to Irish Republicans during the Easter Rising.

It was carrying 20,000 rifles, machine guns, giant "clockwork" bombs and one million rounds of ammunition when it was deliberately destroyed by its captain while under Royal Navy escort.

Diver Eoin McGarry and archaeologist Lar Dunne led the recovery operation in Cobh Harbour, Co Cork, and have recovered the first of two anchors.

Mr McGarry said the anchors are in very good condition despite spending almost 100 years under water.

"The wreck itself is in a very poor condition and these are the biggest and most tangible assets that could be recovered successfully from the wreck," he told RTE.

"They will remind people up and down the country what they (the Germans) did for us.

"The Germans and everybody involved tried to help us out in our fight for freedom."

Originally an English merchant vessel, it was captured by the Germans in 1914, renamed Aud and disguised as a Norwegian freighter to carry weapons to republicans fighting for independence from British rule.

It arrived off the Kerry coast on April 20 1916 but, due to confused communications, it was unsuccessful in landing its cargo as planned in Fenit Harbour.

The ship was intercepted by the Royal Navy while attempting to escape into the deeper waters of the Atlantic and, while under escort to Queenstown Harbour - now Cobh - the captain of the Aud, Karl Spindler, scuttled the ship rather than have it fall into enemy hands.

In the meantime Sir Roger Casement, who had negotiated the arms shipment with Germany, had been put ashore off a German U-Boat on Banna Strand on April 21 in the hope of a rendezvous with the Aud. He was subsequently arrested, tried for treason and executed on August 3 1916.

The operation was licensed by Ireland's Heritage Minister Jimmy Deenihan under the National Monuments Acts.

He said it will take approximately two years to conserve the anchors, which will go on display in Cobh and Fenit in time for the centenary of the 1916 Rising.

"The recovery of the anchors is very timely in that it will provide a tangible link between the two places most closely associated with the story of the Aud and the commemoration of the related events in 1916 that shaped the modern history of our nation," said Mr Deenihan.

"The story surrounding the capture and sinking of the Aud also highlights the less talked about place of the 1916 Rising in the broader context of [World War I](http://searchtopics.independent.ie/topic/World_War_I) and the conflicting loyalties the war gave rise to here in Ireland."

The anchors will be conserved under the supervision of Ian Panter, Principal Conservator of York Archaeological Trust, in accordance with the requirements of the National Museum of Ireland.

The wreck of the Aud and its artefacts will belong to the Irish State.

**Jeffrey Dudgeon 2012 letter draft**

Dear Editor (News Letter),

The raising of the anchor of Roger Casement’s German arms ship 'The Aud' (News Letter 19 June – ‘Historic anchor is recovered’) brings into focus how events in Easter Week 1916 were subject to so much confusion and changed and changing plans, yet the Rising went ahead relatively successfully.

'The Aud' was a captured passenger ship fitted with guns to convert her to a Hilfskreuzer (auxiliary cruiser), named Libau, and then disguised as a Norwegian cargo ship with a further name. She arrived off Kerry on Easter Thursday (20 April) in the late afternoon, and hung around Tralee Bay for nearly twenty-four hours waiting for the agreed signal from the local pilot’s son, Mort O’Leary. He actually saw the ship but not expecting it until Sunday did not register its significance. There was total confusion as to the day the Rising was to start and the day the arms were to be landed due to misread cables (in Berlin, Dublin and London) and late changes not notified to all parties.

Under Captain Spindler, 'The Aud' departed the area but not before being boarded by a Royal Navy armed trawler, Setter II, which failed to notice the fake Norwegian crew and the cargo of arms under open hatches, and instead provided Spindler with up-to-date newspapers. Intent on staying for a while longer, the approach of a second British ship made Spindler take off. The Royal Navy version of the Setter incident was a “bare mention of some kind of encounter” which suggests embarrassment on the part of Sir Lewis Bayly, the Queenstown Admiral, who, almost alone in Ireland, knew exactly what he was looking for as he was privy to the deciphered German messages about the Rising.

Dublin Castle of course was not told by London - they weren’t trusted - which meant they were not prepared as they could have been. Nor indeed was Eoin MacNeill, the Antrim-born head of the Irish Volunteers, whom Casement was intending to inform with a view to getting the Rising called off. He had already sent an emissary, John McGoey, from Germany through Denmark with a message to that effect. McGoey an Irish American born in Scotland was long alleged to have been executed by the British. For some reason he did not make it to Ireland. Yet he survived the war, it has recently been discovered, ending up back in the US where he died in an accident in Chicago in 1925.

Casement's pointless journey on the separate submarine cost him his life while the Volunteer mobilisation for Sunday, postponed by MacNeill on hearing of ‘The Aud's’ scuttling, went ahead as a Rising on the Monday with all the consequences we know