

CUSTOMS SEIZES ASSAULT RIFLES AND SUB-MACHINE GUN PARTS

Customs and Queensland Police officers have seized a large quantity of firearms and ammunition, including two high-powered assault rifles and parts of a Sten sub-machine gun, during an operation on Queensland's Gold Coast in February.

A 36-year-old man was arrested after search and seizure warrants were executed by Customs and Queensland Police officers at a property in Nerang.

Officers seized two SKS assault rifles and nine SKS magazines, parts of a Sten gun, several handguns, rifles and shotguns, a silencer, gas masks and other firearms parts.

The operation stemmed from a Customs investigation, which began in December 2003, after firearms parts were intercepted at the International Mail Centre in Sydney.

The man was arrested by Queensland Police officers and charged with state firearms offences. Further charges will be made under the Customs Act for possessing and importing prohibited imports.

Customs also used one of its newly trained firearms and explosives detector dog teams during the operation to assist with the location of several of the weapons.



HEFTY JAIL TERMS FOR CIGARETTE SMUGGLERS

Three men have received jail terms and fines for attempting to smuggle three million cigarettes into Australia.

In May 2002 Customs officers in Melbourne, using intelligence profiling, identified a shipping container said to contain 'cookware' from Korea. An examination of the container revealed the cigarettes, all bearing Australian Government health warnings.

The three men were charged with obtaining a financial advantage by deception.

Sang Gun Lee was sentenced to three years jail with a minimum term of 18 months. A second man, Dae Yen Kim, was sentenced to six months jail, with a minimum of three months to serve. A third man was fined \$10,000.

All three men are Korean nationals who, at the time of the offence, were living in Sydney.

The men were attempting to evade \$625,525 in duty by smuggling the cigarettes into Australia.

Customs Regional Manager Victoria Jaclyne Fisher said the smuggling operation had been "extremely sophisticated".

"Any attempt to defraud the Commonwealth of legitimate revenue is viewed very seriously by Customs," Ms Fisher said.

She said Customs had also received invaluable assistance from Korean Government agencies in compiling the case.