

## Mystery shrouds death of Canadian policeman

CHIANG MAI — Mystery shrouded the death of a Canadian anti-narcotic policeman who was killed during a drug raid in Muang district of this northern province on Sunday.

Tight-lipped police officials in charge of the case said only that Cpl Derek John Flanagan, 35, died after falling off a speeding pick-up truck during an anti-drug operation. However, hospital officials said a bullet wound was found at the nape of his neck.

Six suspects, including a foreigner and two women, were arrested and two kilogrammes of heroin confiscated in the operation in Tambon Suthep.

Pol Lt Gen Sawaeng Thirasa-wadi, deputy police director general, arrived here on Monday to join senior provincial police officials conducting the investigation.

The suspects were brought into the Muang district police station's conference room on Monday evening for interrogations ending at around 2 am yesterday. All investigators refused to comment after the marathon questioning.

The suspects were transported to the scene of the officer's death

yesterday morning for a re-enactment, during which a man representing the 35-year-old Canadian policeman was shown falling off the alleged drug dealers' pick-up truck in the midst of a scuffle.

Details of the drug transaction and the raid were sketchy. Several sources claimed that a shooting erupted at the scene on Soi Srimangkhacharn during several hectic moments in the afternoon.

Flanagan died at the Maharaj Nakhon Chiang Mai Hospital. Hospital officials, who requested anonymity, said a bullet was found

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in the back of his neck.

The six suspects were identified as Prapas Srichandorn, 29; Miss Pimpan Srichandorn, 23; Miss Nipa Srichandorn, 27; Santi Binta, 32; Chankaew Boonpeng, 34; and Alan Oliver, 29, whose nationality was not disclosed.

Sources said the foreign suspect is also a Canadian.

Police teams searched the suspects' houses here yesterday, but found only one .22 pistol.

The investigators said they would call a news conference to clarify the case soon.

George Manerd, a spokesman for the Canadian Embassy in Bangkok, said Flanagan was an anti-narcotics agent for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police force based in Vancouver.

"We received a report from the Thai police that he fell off the car while he was trying to arrest drug suspects," Manerd told *United Press International*.

The spokesman said Flanagan struck the cement pavement and suffered serious head injuries.

Some police sources said Flanagan had grabbed onto the suspects' vehicle, but fell after the truck accelerated from the drug transaction site behind a movie theatre.

UPI quoted sources as saying that Flanagan, a 15-year veteran, was in Thailand for many days trailing a foreign drug dealer, believed to be a fellow Canadian.

Flanagan is survived by a wife and two sons and a child by an earlier marriage, according to Manerd.

His body was to be flown to Bangkok yesterday for its return to Canada this weekend. — *Nation*/UPI