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## Suspects held after Mountrie dies in Thai probe

By CHRIS ROSE

At least nine suspects are in custody in Canada and Thailand in connection with a drug investigation that resulted in the death of a Vancouver RCMP drug officer, police said today.

Cpl. Derek John Flanagan, 35, was taken to a hospital in Chiang Mai, Thailand, after he fell from a moving vehicle while grappling with a suspect.

He died from massive head injuries at 1 a.m. Monday Vancouver time.

In Bangkok, Canadian ambassador Lawrence Smith, said today: "We have asked for a full inquiry from the Thai police."

In Vancouver, RCMP said police in Montreal have arrested four of the people and seized a quantity of heroin in connection with the drug investigation that resulted in Flanagan's death.

Insp. Ray Singley, in charge of RCMP drug intelligence here, also said police in Thailand have arrested two Thai females and three Thai males along with one Canadian male in connection with the same investigation.

Singley said about 2½ kilograms of heroin was seized in the investigation in Thailand, an amount he estimated to be worth about \$15 million in Canada, the country he said the drug was headed for.

Singley said the Canadian arrested in Bangkok is a man who resides in the greater Montreal area. He said four Vancouver RCMP drug section members were in Thailand in connection with the investigation on which Flanagan was working.

Singley said the preliminary investigation reveals Flanagan fell from a pickup truck Sunday.

A senior commissioned officer from Ottawa has been sent to Thailand to investigate the death in Canada, he said, and Thai police are also investigating.

In Bangkok, embassy counsellor Gardner Wilson said the incident occurred on the outskirts of Chiang Mai, a large city about 700 kilometres north of Bangkok — often called the gateway to the "Golden Triangle," a large area between Burma, Laos and Thailand that is infamous for its opium jockey production.

He was grappling with the bad guy and the vehicle was moving and they both tumbled out and he struck his head on the pavement," Wilson said in a telephone interview.

Flanagan is the first RCMP drug officer killed during an undercover operation, a Vancouver Mountrie said.

Wilson said Flanagan died of head injuries.

"The damage was far too extensive to be able to do anything," Wilson said.

"He was an officer of the force who was killed in the line of duty... It's really sad that something like this had to happen."

Cpl. Merv Korolek, Vancouver RCMP media liaison, said Flanagan was in Thailand to provide expertise to the Thai national police conducting international investigations.

Korolek added Flanagan was involved in an operation fully sanctioned by Thai authorities.

Described as a talented investigator, Flanagan had worked at both the Richmond and Pemberton detachments before being transferred to Vancouver, where he served with various units.

Pemberton Sgt. Harry McLaughlin said Flanagan was well respected.

"He had quite a few friends in the community," McLaughlin said, adding that Flanagan worked in general duty in Pemberton between June 1982 and July 1984. He was well thought of here.

Flanagan is survived by his wife, Fiona, a radio operator for Richmond RCMP, two sons, and a daughter by a previous marriage.

Arrangements are being made to have Flanagan's body returned to Canada for burial, Korolek said.



Flanagan: killed in drug probe

Continued from page one

**OFFICER**

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