

TWIN DOPE OPERATIONS

Cops' billion-dollar crackdown

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Staff Reporter

B.C. Mounties helped smash major heroin smuggling rings in different corners of the world.

Vancouver RCMP Insp. George Foulon yesterday said Mounties here assisted in cracking a \$1-billion drug ring.

Mounties carried out surveillance of some of the principals involved in the drug racket based in New York City.

There police seized a record 280 kilograms (840 lb.) of Asian heroin worth \$1 billion.

Foulon also said four Vancouver Mounties were helping to crack a \$15-million heroin shipment in Thailand while the huge New York bust was in progress.

Vancouver drug-squad Mountie Derek Flanagan was killed in the Thai action.

About 45 suspects were arrested day night and yesterday in New York; Toronto, Buffalo, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Detroit,

Hong Kong and Singapore.

They included the accused kingpin, 71-year-old Fok Leung Woo, who was taken into custody at his liquor store in Manhattan.

The raids capped a 1½-year investigation dubbed "White Mare" — white for the type of heroin, "mare" for horse, a street name for heroin.

U.S. federal prosecutors said the amount of heroin was enough to supply half of New York's 200,000 addicts for a year.

"It's the largest seizure ever in the U.S.," said assistant FBI director James Fox. "It's unheard of."

And yesterday more details came out about the undercover bust in Thailand that led to the death of Flanagan.

He was in Asia's notorious Golden Triangle on a risky drug operation code-named "Deception."

He died Sunday in the northern Thai city of Chiang Mai when he fell off a truck during a scuffle with a smuggler.

Flanagan had flown to Thailand with four other Mounties to track drug-trafficking suspect Alain Oliveer.

Oliveer had moved from Montreal to Vancouver last year, top sources with Montreal RCMP told The Province.

Police liaison officer Ken Kelly at the Canadian high commission in Bangkok said Oliveer was arrested Sunday.

He was one of six suspects — the others were Thais — whom Flanagan and Thai police were arresting.

In Montreal, Iranian refugee Amir Geraminedjad and landed immigrant Shamali Parviz were arrested in the Oliveer case. Four others, Michel Beaulieu, John Hoppe, Sharon Rodriguez and Marcel Ferrault, also face trafficking charges.

"The object was to stop the shipment of heroin from Thailand to Canada," said Insp. Ray Singbell of the Vancouver RCMP.



Where drugs flow — from Golden Triangle to Vancouver.

A MAN WHO STAYED COOL UNDER FIRE

Derek Flanagan was a tough Mountie who kept cool under fire.

His ability to stay calm resulted in his selection as one of four Mounties sent to Thailand to track heroin traffickers.

And that's where Flanagan, the RCMP's Emergency Response Team leader, died this week. He fell from a pickup truck while struggling with a suspect.

"The leaders of the ERT are selected because of their coolness and creativity and an ability to function under tremendous stress," Insp. Ray Singbell said yesterday of the 15-year Mountie.

"He was a qualified RCMP firearms instructor, a qualified diver and was the leader of our Emergency Response Team, which gives you some indication of his strengths."

Singbell said Flanagan was one of the key officers who planned security for the Commonwealth summit in Vancouver in 1987.

Another colleague, Insp. George Foulon, said: "He was physically and mentally strong.

"A man of considerable courage — and it was that, combined with commonsense and cool, that qualified him very well for his duties."



CPL. DEREK FLANAGAN killed in Thailand

Flanagan's widow, Fiona, a radio operator at Richmond RCMP, has requested a private funeral.

It is expected Flanagan's body will be flown to Vancouver in the next few days.



FBI official James Fox (right) and U.S. Attorney Andrew Maloney announce arrests.