



GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Close relations between the AFP and the Royal Thai Police have been strengthened even further with a recent visit to the Golden Triangle area of Thailand by the Commissioner, Mr Peter McAulay.

Mr McAulay took the opportunity of studying the situation in the opium growing region on the borders of Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia at the

Commissioner visits the front line

invitation of the Thai Police Director-General, General Sawaeng Theerasawat.

He was returning from an Interpol

conference in Lyon, France, which he attended as Interpol Representative in Australia.

Mr McAulay was met in Bangkok by Detective Superintendent Steve Polden, Liaison Co-ordinating Officer, who accompanied him on the visit to the mountain regions north of the capital.

In Bangkok, the Commissioner was briefed by Senior Officers from the Royal Thai Police, including the Border Patrol Police. He also had talks with members of the Foreign Anti-Narcotics Community (FANC), including the head of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration office at Chiang Mai.

The Commissioner then travelled to Chiang Mai, accompanied by Police Major General Uthai Asavavilai, Commander of the Special Branch and Police Lieutenant Colonel Kerkphong Pukprayura from Police Foreign Affairs who were assigned as escorts in the northern parts of Thailand by General Sawaeng.

At the regional headquarters of the Border Police he reviewed a parade of police members stationed there.

From Chiang Mai, the Commissioner was taken to the tri-border area by Thai Police helicopter where he saw at first hand the complex situation in the area.

While in Thailand, Mr McAulay was able to confer with all AFP officers stationed in Bangkok, including Superintendent Barry Carpenter, who is based at Aranyaprathet, on the Cambodian border.



On arrival at Chiang Mai to begin his 'Golden Triangle' tour, Commissioner Peter McAulay is met by Police Major General Prasan Wongyai, Deputy Commissioner of the Provincial Police.



The Commissioner reviews the Border Patrol Police Rapid Deployment Force.

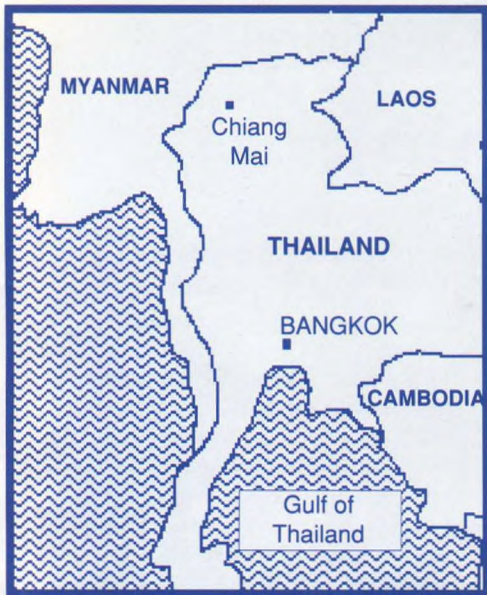
Trek to the

Superintendent Polden also recently visited, at the invitation of the Commander of the Police Narcotics Suppression Centre, the town of Mae Hong Song, close to the Myanmar border in Thailand.

He found the small border town, which is situated some five to six hours drive from Chiang Mai, to be an important centre for supplying minority groups in the region with essential supplies and foodstuffs. It also is a main transit town for all types of smuggled goods from Myanmar, including heroin, opium, gem stones and teak.

Although foreigners do visit the town, they are mainly European backpackers.

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ABOVE: Commissioner McAulay standing on Thai soil at the apex of the Golden Triangle, with Myanmar (Burma) on the left and Laos on the right. With him is AFP Liaison Coordinator Bangkok, Superintendent Steve Polden, left, Major General Uthai Asavavilai and Major General Prasan, right.



LEFT: The wife of the Commissioner, Mrs Avril McAulay, receives a presentation from a senior Border Patrol Police officer as a memento of her Bangkok visit.

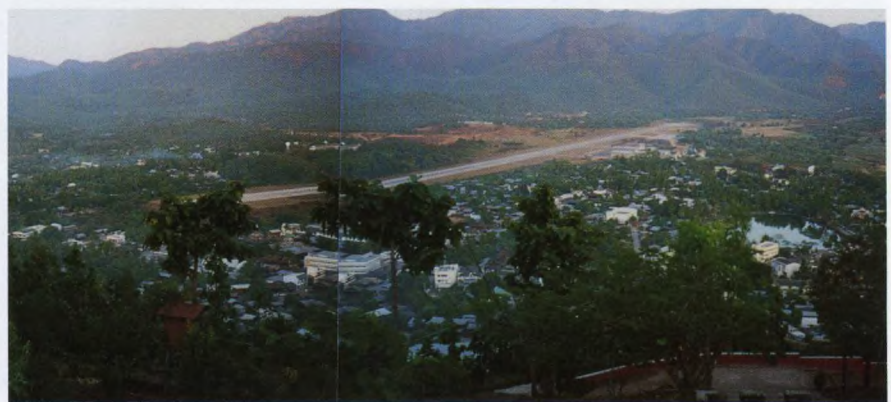
mountain drug fields

The town's small inns and hotels provide cheap and affordable accommodation for this type of traveller.

The town also has an airstrip which allows flights from Chiang Mai, however the type of aircraft used is limited by the high mountain range surrounding the township.

The shortest land route to the town takes travellers past a number of unmade access roads to the Myanmar border which are used by hilltribes, villagers, smugglers and timber loggers.

Its proximity to the border makes the town vulnerable to drug activities.



The hill town of Mae Hong Song, situated only a few kilometres from the border with Myanmar, a transit town for smuggling.