

# Thai opium poppies destroyed

By Detective Sergeant Ken Davis

ON 22 January 1992, the Royal Thai Border Patrol Police in conjunction with the Office of the Narcotics Control Board carried out the eradication of five opium poppy fields in the presence of Bangkok based Foreign Anti-Narcotics Community members (FANC) and representatives of the international media.

The opium poppy fields were located near the Mong village of Nong Hoy, Sameung District, within the province of Chiang Mai. The village of Nong Hoy is approximately 50 km north of Chiang Mai city and the village is accessible (in the dry season) only by four-wheel-drive vehicle. The opium poppy fields were about 3 km north of the village with the surrounding terrain dictating that the last kilometre to the fields be walked.

The five fields, consisting of 5 *rai* (approximately 3 acres), were in full bloom with several hundred of the poppy pods having already been scored. The opium poppy fields were interspersed with other consumable crops cultivated by the Mong Hill-tribe villagers from the Nong Hoy village.

The Commander of the Border



*Opium poppy fields in Thailand's north.*

Patrol Police Eradication Program said that the fields had been recently discovered by the Border Patrol Police (BPP) and he believed that the poppies were grown for the consumption of the Nong Hoy villagers. It is estimated that 1 *rai* of opium poppies will yield 1 kg of raw opium. The Nong Hoy village has a total population of 527 villagers, 20 of whom are Chinese

Haw, the remainder Mong.

After allowing FANC members and the media to closely inspect the opium poppies, the Border Patrol Police systematically destroyed the plants.

Witnesses of the eradication of the opium poppy fields represented the media of Sweden, France, the European Community, Japan and the BBC.



*A Thai Border Patrol officer slashing opium poppies in the hills surrounding Nong Hoy in northern Thailand.*

