

SUMMARY

**THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL SUPPRESSION UNIT:
A CASE STUDY OF THE SUPPRESSION AND INSPECTION OF
THE UNLAWFUL WOOD CUTTING OF THE RESERVED FOREST**

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The Special Suppression Unit is a governmental organization responsible for the suppression of illegal activities, especially in forestry production.

This article is a case study of an actual event which took place in the northern part of Thailand involving the work of this special unit. Persons and places are fictitious; the case details are similar to actual events.

A letter from "a good citizen" was sent to the Chairman of the Special Suppression Unit informing him about unlawful wood cutting in the reserved forest of Tambol Houy Pha, Amphur Mai Ngam, Changwad Wiengkeaw. The writer stated that there were about 10,000 trees of 10,000 cubic metres, of which 70% were teak. The price, as estimated by the petitioner, was approximately 20 million Bahts. This illegal wood cutting had been going on for a long time. Sometimes the trees were sawed into lumber and boards in the jungle before distribution to market. Sometimes the timbers were sold immediately to retailers or saw millers. Because of the influence of the law breakers, no one dared bring suit against them. The petitioner promised his cooperation if full protection was guaranteed by the government. After careful consideration, the Special Suppression Unit decided to make a confidential investigation into the matter. The work was assigned to Police Captain Soothi Thongniyom of the Special Suppression Unit, who was to cooperate with officials of the Regional Suppression Unit.

After 45 days, the total amount of lumber seized was 12,588 cubic metres with an estimated local price of 10,133,687.00 Bahts. The estimated Bangkok price Bts. 14,944,056.00. Of the total seized, 11,787.72 cubic metres were teak, 800.67 cubic metres were mixed timbers. Although the law violators were not arrested, the loss of a great amount of national income from timber was rescued.

Pol. Capt. Soothi, chief of group investigating the case concluded in his report:

... the Committee type of organization was used in this operation. The group consisted of authorities from several agencies. Since they had an obligation and loyalty to the agencies they represented, they took great care in protecting their agencies from any and all accusations. The different rules and regulations of each agency resulted in different agency judgements and standards which, in return, impaired group team-work.
