

Donated medical books arrive at University of Kabul

KABUL – The Canadian military delivered about 1,700 much-needed modern reference textbooks to the Medical Science Faculty library at the University of Kabul on June 23. The donation is worth more than \$250,000 and includes selections from each of medicine's major sub fields. Medical student volunteers from the Manitoba Medical Student's Association (MMSA) at the University of Manitoba coordinated the project, which involved 13 medical schools across Canada. With the assistance of the Canadian Forces, the books were transported to Kabul, Afghanistan and distributed today to University of Kabul Medical Science Faculty representatives.

"This is a dream come true" said professor Ali Chiragh, Chancellor of the Medical Science Faculty at University of Kabul. "Good medical textbooks are a rare commodity in Afghanistan and our students will be the first to benefit from the scientific knowledge they bring to our curriculum. They are very grateful for this initiative." The six-year long medical science program at the University of Kabul currently has about 200 students registered, with 25% female.

Lieutenant-Colonel Carl Walker, the

Task Force Kabul Surgeon and commanding officer for the Canadian military hospital in Kabul as part of the Canadian contingent of 2,100 soldiers currently deployed in the region was on hand to officially present the books to Chiragh, on behalf of the MMSA. "It's a small but concrete step in the further development of this very important medical school. After more than 25 years of turmoil in this country, the Afghan population is in dire need of a professional cadre of medical personnel. We hope these books help prepare the next generation of Afghan doctors."

In 2000, U of M radiology professor Richard Gordon initiated the project, called The Kabul Medical Library Project. During the fall of 2003, Gordon approached the MMSA and asked for assistance in bringing to life his vision to provide a comprehensive and current medical library for the students of the Medical Science Faculty at the University of Kabul. In response, student volunteers at University of Manitoba initiated a nationwide campaign to collect monetary and textbook donations, from medical libraries, private organizations, physicians, teachers, professors, and community supporters.

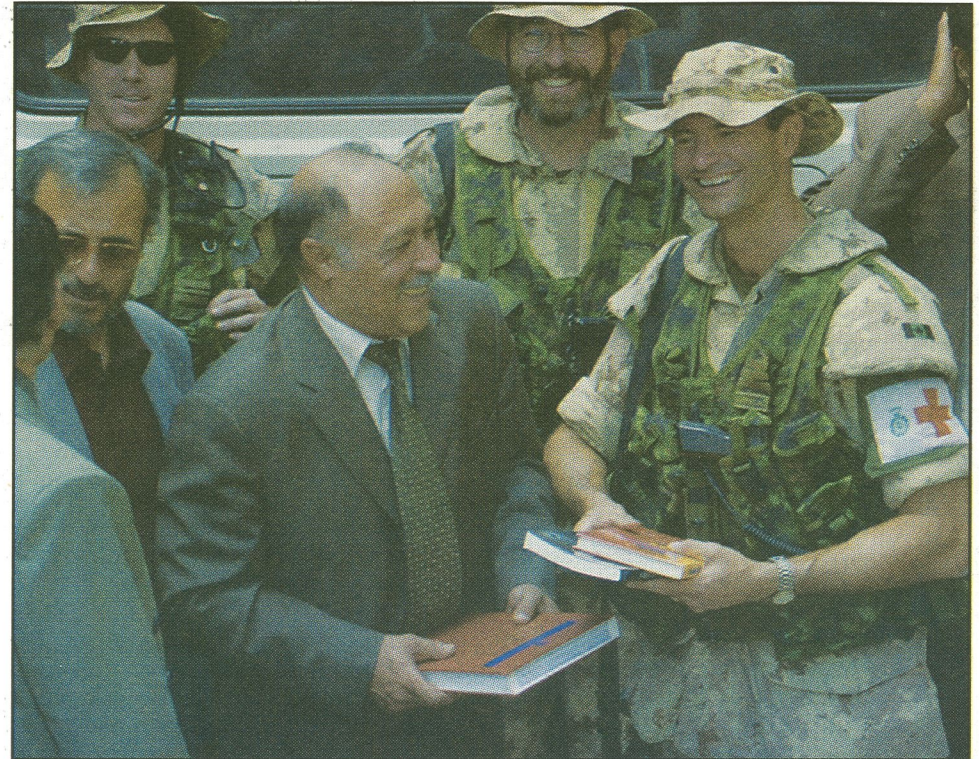


Photo by Corporal Chris Connolly

Lieutenant Colonel Carl Walker (Centre Right), commanding officer of health support services at Camp Julien in Kabul, Afghanistan, speaks with Professor Ali Shiragh (Centre Left), Chancellor of Medical Sciences at the Kabul Medical Institute. Walker presented the Institute with a donation of medical books donated from all over North America, through the efforts of the Manitoba Medical Students Association, the University of Manitoba and Login Canada, a Winnipeg-based company.