

## Coalition Completes Massive Book Distribution

After months of planning and preparation, the small army of support organizations and individuals working under the direction of CSAH VP of Programs Mike Meyer has finally brought the mission to distribute 200,000 books donated to the U.S. Army earlier this year by best-selling author James Patterson to its successful conclusion.

The last truckloads of several thousand volumes were scheduled to arrive at their respective destinations earlier this month, bringing to 12 the number of Army bases around the country that received portions of the massive donation of new hardbound editions of Patterson titles.

“I called in a lot of favors on this one,” Meyer said. “But we got it done. And now our soldiers have some pretty good reading they can look forward to.”

Considered the world’s most prolific author, Patterson has sold over 260 million copies of books he’s either written or co-written around the world, and averages about 10 new titles published per year. In keeping with his annual tradition of recent years, Patterson announced last spring that he would donate a selection of his books to active duty military personnel stationed here and abroad, and to wounded veterans hospitalized with post 9/11 combat-related injury or illness.

But none of his prior donations approached the size and scale of what he and his publishers, Hachette and Little Brown & Company, decided to give to the military this year. The selection of titles included re *Tick Tock*, *Private*, *The Postcard Killers*, *I*, *Alex Cross*, *Swimsuit*, *The 9th Judgment*, *Run for Your Life*, *Cross Country*, *Sail*, and *The Quickie*, thrillers featuring the fictitious exploits of famed private investigators Alex Cross, Michael Bennett, Jack Morgan and Lindsay Boxer.

“I can’t think of a more deserving group to receive this gift, and I hope this gesture shows how big our gratitude truly is,” said Patterson at the time. “It’s my way of doing something for the “men and women of our Armed Forces (who) sacrifice themselves on our behalf.”

How 200,000 brand new hard cover copies get packaged and delivered to libraries and reading rooms at 12 army bases and installations makes a pretty good story too, added Meyer. “The hero is Patterson of course,” Meyer says. “In this case, his star line-up of supporting characters include the likes of Operation Gratitude, Books for Heroes, Feed the Children, Peerless Book Store (in Alpharetta, Georgia), a few cross-country freight companies named TranSource, Lapsada Enterprises and Prime Trucking, not to mention the two dozen JROTC volunteers who did the heavy lifting.”

The larger challenge, Meyer said, was at the receiving end – identifying the right individuals at the various forts and bases around the country, obtaining necessary approvals from them and from superiors at command level, and then coordinating deliveries with the truckers – all of which were made at no cost.

“You’d be surprised what needs to happen on a loading dock when dozens of pallets of books arrive,” said Meyer. “We all know the military handles a lot of big jobs, but the DOD manual doesn’t exist for this one.” It does now thanks to Patterson, the Coalition and its supporters, and members of the military community around the world are grateful.