

Obituary

In the sad and untimely demise of Brigadier Rabindra Nath Thareja, both the Armed Forces Medical Services & The Association of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons of India have lost a respected senior member.

Born in Ferozepur in 1929, he had his early education in Dehra Dun & Meerut. He graduated from King George Medical College, Lucknow in 1951 with honours in Surgery & Medicine. He got his M.S. (General Surgery) from the same institution three years later.

Brig. Thareja was commissioned as a regular officer in the Army Medical Corps in 1955 and was appointed a Surgical Specialist. In his capacity as a Surgeon he served with distinction in several stations including Ladakh & other snow bound areas in Kashmir. He continued to excel in Medical & Non-Medical courses of instruction in the Armed Forces and was selected for Cardiothoracic Surgery in 1963.

In that year he joined Lt. Col. S.N. Chak (later Brig). & Maj. A.M. Ahuja (later Lt. Gen.) at Military Hospital AUNDH and thus became one of the pioneers of cardiac surgery in the Indian Armed Forces. It speaks for his involvement with and dedication to Cardiothoracic Surgery that for the next twenty years he was retained in the same Centre—a unique and rare occurrence in the career of a service officer.

Brig. Thareja went abroad on Colombo plan in 1967 and worked in Sydney with Mr. Rowan Nicks, a pioneer in his own right. He returned in 1969 with his Fellowship of the Australasian



College in Cardiothoracic Surgery and was one of those responsible for launching the Open Heart Programme in the Army under Col. A.M. Ahuja. When the Aundh Hospital shifted to the present location in Pune, Brig. Thareja was involved right from its inception. He took over as Professor and Head of the Department in 1975—a post he held till June '84. During this period he was instrumental in starting the MCh (Cardiothoracic) Programme at Military Hospital—Cardiothoracic Centre. He was a member of the National Board of Examinations & became a fellow of the Ameri-

can College of Surgeons. He was the President of the Association of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons of India in 1983. In June '84 he was posted to Army Hospital Delhi as Consultant in Cardiac Surgery.

A patient teacher, he was unassuming and endeared himself to his colleagues by his considerate and courteous behaviour at all times. He believed in unstinting encouragement to his juniors and gave the best years of his life to Cardiothoracic Surgery in the Armed Forces.

He took keen interest in the cultivation of roses and was an avid gardener. A good singer with a pleasant voice, he was much sought after in social gatherings for light Hindi music & ghazals.

He passed away in his sleep on 26, October '84 at Delhi of myocardial infarction at the age of 55, leaving behind his wife & daughter (both doctors) and a son.

Lt. Col. R.S. RAJAN