

Hutchinson News Thursday, June 2, 1994

Dole to visit site of WWII wounding

By Curt Anderson
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Ten months after D-Day, in the chilly spring air of Italy, a lieutenant from Kansas named Bob Dole fought in a little-known battle that would leave him permanently scarred — but hardened his will to succeed.

While the headlines were filled with Allied victories in France, Dole and others in the 10th Mountain Division were fighting



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— Kansas Sen. Bob Dole, in his book 'Unlimited Partners'

desperately for yards of rugged terrain around the village of Castel d'Aiano. On April 14, 1945 — two days

after Franklin Roosevelt's death and with Nazi surrender just weeks away — Dole's right shoulder was shattered by German machine-gun fire near a small, flat-topped rise called Hill 913.

"Whatever it was, it crushed my collarbone, punctured a lung and damaged vertebrae, leaving me paralyzed from the neck down," Dole recalled in the book "Unlimited Partners," co-written with his wife, Red Cross chief Elizabeth Dole.

World War II is a daily fact of life for Dole, who can barely use his right arm and has little feeling in his left hand. Perhaps his most famous attribute is the pen or rolled paper he invariably clasps in his right hand.

Forty-nine years later, Dole returns Friday to the same Italian village and hill as the Senate minority leader, the nation's highest-ranking Republican and a potential presidential candidate in 1996.

Dole, now 70, will take part in the series of commemorations marking the 50th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy. But for him, the visit to Italy is much more personal.

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Dole's return a sobering experience

Kansas senator tours site of injury

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — This weekend's remembrances of D-Day and the liberation of Rome 50 years ago demonstrate anew the need for U.S. world leadership, Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole said Friday.

Dole, R-Kan., took part in several events Friday in Italy, including a visit to the town of Castel d'Aiano, where he was severely wounded by German machine-gun fire in 1945.

In a telephone interview from Rome, Dole said his talks with Italians who lived through the war show what an activist superpower can accomplish.

"It makes you think about what a difference American leadership makes in the world," he said.

But it's also a sobering experience for any veteran, Dole added.

"It's almost a renewal exercise," he said. "You think about a lot of the sacrifices people make. A lot of people made the supreme sacrifice."

Dole was treated to a luncheon at a Castel d'Aiano restaurant run by a family he's known since his first return visit as a senator. He then laid a wreath at the town's memorial to the Army 10th Mountain Division, of which Dole was a member.

A few hours earlier, Dole took part in an event at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery at Nettuno, where 7,862 Americans are buried. President Clinton delivered an address, and among the other veterans of the Italian cam-



Sen. Bob Dole points at the spot where he was wounded about 50 years ago on the Appenine Mountains.

paign on hand were Sens. Ernest Hollings, D-S.C.; Claiborne Pell, R-R.I.; and Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii.

Some veterans have questioned Clinton's role because of his opposition to the Vietnam War, but Dole said he heard no such grumbling among those he spoke with.

"It never came up," he said. "We were too busy saying nice

things to everybody."

Dole will visit Croatia today and then fly with some relief supplies to battle-weary Sarajevo Sunday. Also on that trip are Sens. John Warner, R-Va., and Joseph Biden, D-Del.

The group is scheduled to meet with Bosnian leaders about achieving peace with the Serbs.

"We'll see what they think of

how the peace process is working," Dole said. "You can't tell. One day, it's working, the next day the Serbs are at it again."

Dole has sponsored bills in Congress to force an end to the arms embargo against Bosnia.

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Dole says World War II set example for U.S. leadership

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Sen. Bob Dole points at a spot where he was wounded 50 years ago on the Appenine Mountains, south of Bologna in central Italy. Dole's right arm is paralyzed as a result of the wounds he suffered.

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Dole to support North for Senate

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Four days after snubbing Oliver North's candidacy, Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole bestowed an endorsement and a \$5,000 campaign contribution on his party's nominee for a Senate seat from Virginia.

"I told Ollie that I will do everything possible to assist in his election to the U.S. Senate," Dole said Thursday. "Including, of course, campaigning for him in Virginia."

Dole's comments marked a change from Sunday, the day after North won his party's convention to challenge Democratic Sen. Charles Robb in November. Asked in a televised interview whether Republicans should unite behind North, Dole replied, "I think it's going to take a while to sort that out."

He noted that two independents — one Republican and one Democrat — might enter the race — and said, "It makes it very difficult for some in the Republican Party."

Dole's weekend comments drew criticism from some Republicans, who said a principal political objec-



Dole North

tive for the party this fall is to gain a Senate majority.

On Thursday, the GOP leader said: "We need 51 Republicans in the Senate so Republicans can help set the agenda for America and help change course from the Clinton administration's big tax, big spending, big government programs."

North's campaign office disclosed the \$5,000 contribution from Dole's political action committee.

North lags Robb in public opinion polls in a race that shapes up as one of the most volatile in the country. Former Democratic Gov. L. Douglas Wilder and former GOP Attorney General Marshall Coleman are considering independent candidacies.

For his part, North issued a statement saying he and Dole had a "very productive, cordial meeting this morning. I welcome his full support and look forward to having him join me on the campaign trail in the near future."

Dole's statement announcing that the meeting had taken place did not mention the donation, and there was no announcement in advance that the meeting would take place.

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Dole met privately with Coleman on Wednesday, and issued a statement later saying he could not "offer any encouragement and support" to a prospective candidacy.

The controversy surrounding North dates from his involvement in the Iran-Contra scandal of the Reagan administration. As a Marine lieutenant colonel serving on the National Security Council staff, North was a key player in the affair, and was later convicted of aiding and abetting the obstruction of Congress by helping prepare misleading statements for other officials.

Dole backs North with words and cash

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Dole to visit site where he was wounded

Kansas senator to return to Italian village and hill

By CURT ANDERSON
The Associated Press

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While the headlines were filled with Allied victories in France, Dole and others in the 10th Mountain Division were fighting desperately for yards of rugged terrain around the village of Castel d'Aiano.

On April 14, 1945 — two days after Franklin Roosevelt's death and with Nazi surrender just weeks away — Dole's right shoulder was shattered by German machine-gun fire near a small, flat-topped rise called Hill 913.

"Whatever it was, it crushed my collarbone, punctured a lung and damaged vertebrae, leaving me paralyzed from the neck down," Dole recalled in the book "Unlimited Partners," co-written with his wife Elizabeth, who is president of the American Red Cross.

World War II is a daily fact of life for Dole. He can barely use his right arm, and characteristically clutches a pen or rolled paper in his right hand to discourage people from shaking it.

Forty-nine years later, Dole returns today to the same Italian village and hill as the Senate minority leader, the nation's highest-ranking Republican and a potential presidential candidate in 1996.

Dole, now 70, will take part in the series of commemorations marking the 50th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy. But for him, the visit to Italy is much more personal.

"Getting dressed each morning is a time-consuming process, and I rarely loosen my tie in public, given the effort it requires to knot it back again," Dole wrote. "I still have trouble looking in the mirror."

After he was hit that April day, Dole nearly died from infections but slowly regained feeling in his arms and legs. Once a star athlete who dreamed of playing basketball at the University of Kansas, he arrived back in Topeka in a body cast. His weight dropped from 194 pounds to 122.

"In moments of self-pity, I saw myself going through life unmarried, selling pencils on street corners and living off a disability pension," Dole wrote.

He was transferred in November 1945 to Percy Jones Army Medical Center in Battle Creek, Mich., which specialized in orthopedics and neurosurgery. The hospital was to be his home for 2½ years.

Among the other patients was Daniel Inouye, who lost his right arm to a German grenade in Italy in April 1945 and who now is a senator from Hawaii. Another patient was the future Sen. Philip Hart, who now has a Senate office building named in his memory.

Seeing so many men who had lost arms and legs or who would spend the rest of their lives bedridden "had a way of putting my own condition into perspective," Dole wrote. "I began to look beyond external appearances in judging a person."

Slowly, he began learning to walk again, read incessantly and even got involved in a business selling cars to fellow patients for a 6 percent commission.

But it wasn't until 1947 that Dole underwent surgery by Dr. Hampar Kelikian of Chicago — then a pioneer in recovering the use of injured limbs — that Dole's arms were at least partially restored.

People in Dole's Kansas hometown

of Russell raised money for the procedure. On the senator's desk is the first cigar box used to collect money for the operation.

After that, Dole began his political career, first in 1951 as a Kansas House member, then Russell County attorney, then in the U.S. House. He was first elected to the Senate in 1968.

Dole likened his war story to showing slides of vacation saying: "You had to be there." But he said the determination it took to recover made him a better person.

"My years of hospitalization gave me more than they took away," Dole wrote. "Before the war, I'm not sure what kind of career I had in store. Being injured narrowed my options, but it broadened my outlook."

"Maybe I couldn't use my hand, I told myself, but I could develop my mind. If unable to greet voters with my right hand, I could always reach out with my left."