

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1980

CONTACT: BILL KATS, BOB WAITE
(202) 224-8947, -8953

DOLE TO AMEND TOPEKA VA HOSPITAL LEGISLATION TO INCLUDE O'NEIL

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) has asked that the name of Topekan Ralph T. O'Neil be added to legislation changing the name of the Topeka Veterans' Administration Hospital.

On March 12, 1980, Dole and Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum-(R-Kan.) introduced legislation to rename the hospital the "Harry W. Colmery Veterans' Administration Hospital," in memory of the late national commander of the American Legion and chief architect of the G.I. Bill of Rights. Colmery, a prominent Topeka attorney, died on August 25, 1979.

"Since I introduced that legislation in March," Dole said, "many people throughout Kansas have brought to my attention the significant contributions that Ralph O'Neil made to the veterans' community in this country. Mr. O'Neil died in 1940, but he, like Harry Colmery, left behind a legacy of distinguished service to both Kansas and the nation which deserves our public recognition. That is why I will seek to amend my legislation to include his name," Dole said in a letter to Senate Veterans Committee Chairman Alan Cranston (D-Calif.).

"Both of these distinguished Kansans shared the distinction of having served as national commanders of the American Legion, commanders of Kansas American Legion, and as commanders of Topeka's Capitol Post No. 1. Both men were prominent attorneys, as well as leading members in their chosen political parties -- Ralph O'Neil, a Democrat, and Harry Colmery, a Republican.

"I am urging the Senate to take prompt action on this bipartisan tribute to these great Americans from Kansas."