

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, MAY 31, 1984

CONTACT: WALT RIKER,
SCOTT RICHARDSON 202/224-6521

DOLE HEADS WAR MEMORIAL DELEGATION TO ITALY --
LIBERATION OF ROME TO BE COMMEMORATED

WASHINGTON -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole, a twice-decorated veteran of WWII, has been selected by President Reagan to head a special American delegation to Italy to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Rome.

The Kansas Republican and the rest of the 16-member Presidential delegation left for Italy early this morning from Andrews Air Force Base. The special group includes other WWII veterans and Medal of Honor winners.

Dole, a member of the 10th Mountain Division, was severely wounded in April, 1945 during the Italian campaign. As a 23-year-old platoon leader, he was involved in fierce fighting in the mountains of northern Italy when he was struck in the neck and shoulder by German machine gun fire. Three years of hospitalization followed the battlefield trauma. For his combat heroism, Senator Dole was awarded the purple heart with oak leaf clusters and a bronze star for heroic achievement.

In Rome on Saturday, June 2, Senator Dole will be the keynote speaker at the official ceremony honoring the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Rome. Before delivering his own remarks, Dole will first read a proclamation from President Reagan in tribute to the allied victory.

Later that day, Dole will unveil a plaque commemorating the achievements of the First Special Service Force, a U.S.-Canadian battle group whose entrance into Rome on June 4, 1944 signified the beginning of the end of the axis powers in that city. Next, the Kansas Senator will unveil another plaque, this one commemorating the U.S. military headquarters.

"I am truly honored to lead this American delegation to Italy," said Dole. "For me, the memories are many. But beyond my own personal history on an Italian battlefield, there is a much greater story. This delegation comes to honor the thousands of brave men and women who gave their lives for freedom in the rugged Italian campaign. This year the free world will celebrate the historic invasion of the beaches of Normandy. We should also pause to remember those dedicated soldiers who by D-Day had already spent many months pushing axis forces up the rugged Italian peninsula."

On Friday, June 1, Dole will visit the Florence Battlefield Cemetery where 4,402 American soldiers are buried. Senator Dole will lay a wreath at the 70 acre military burial site.

The delegation is scheduled to return to Andrews Air Force Base on Sunday afternoon.

Ceremony Schedule

Friday, June 1 Florence Battlefield Cemetery Wreath Laying
Italian Time: 1 p.m.
D.C. Time: 7 a.m.

Saturday, June 2 Plaque Unveiling - First Special Service Force
Italian Time: 9:30 a.m.
D.C. Time: 3:30 a.m.

 Ceremony Honoring Liberation of Rome
 Dole Speech and Presidential Proclamation
Italian Time: 10:30 a.m.
D.C. Time: 4:30 a.m.

PRESIDENTIAL DELEGATION TO COMMEMORATE THE LIBERATION OF ROM

Chairman: Senator Robert Dole

Delegates: Senator Patrick J. Leahy

Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr.
Secretary of the Army

General John W. Vessey, Jr.
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Honorable Vernon Walters
Ambassador at Large

Maurice L. Britt
Medal of Honor Recipient
Mignano, Italy, 10 Nov 1943

Colonel Van T. Barfoot
Medal of Honor Recipient
Carano, Italy, 23 May 1944

Peter J. Dalessandro
Medal of Honor Recipient
Kalterherberg, Germany, 22 Dec 1944

Frank Stella, President,
Nat'l Italian American Foundation

Louis J. Esposito
Businessman - D-Day Veteran
(Landed on Green Beach in Salerno)

Philip Pistilli
Businessman

PRESIDENTIAL GUESTS/STAFF

Mrs. Patrick V. Leahy Senator Leahy's wife

Frank Donatelli Deputy Assistant to the President
for Public Liaison

Barbara Bodine Legislative Asst. to Senator Dole

Paul Russo Former Asst. Secretary of Labor

Bob Cabel White House Legislative Affairs

Mike Usery State Department

Jim Manning State Department (Protocol)

Mary Mazarini State Department (Protocol)

Celeste Andruzzi Republican State Committeewoman
New York City Board of Elections