

# News from Senator BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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## TOPEKA VA HOSPITAL RENAMED TO HONOR TWO KANSAS VETERANS

WASHINGTON -- The United States Congress today authorized a change in the name of the Topeka Veterans Administration Hospital to honor Harry Colmery and Ralph O'Neil, two outstanding Kansans who have devoted their lives to improving the lot of veterans across the United States. The House and Senate approved legislation introduced by Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) which changes the name of the building to the "Colmery-O'Neil Veterans Administration Hospital."

"The task of choosing only two men to immortalize at our Kansas veterans' hospital was extremely difficult," Dole said. "But in a state that has such a strong tradition of veterans continuing in service to their fellow men, Harry Colmery and Ralph O'Neil stand especially tall.

### Harry W. Colmery

"Harry Colmery devoted his entire life to championing the cause of the veteran. During his military duty he served as instructor of officers in infantry drill regulations, squadron commander, assistant adjutant and acting adjutant of Carrothers Field, and as judge advocate and defense counsel before general and special courts martial. He also served in the Officers Reserve Corps, Air Service.

"As past national commander of the American Legion, Harry provided the inspiration and leadership which have become the cornerstone of this veterans' organization. Harry Colmery is also regarded as one of the principal drafters of the G.I. Bill of Rights and one who also spent much of his life orchestrating veterans' benefit programs.

"The insight and compassion evident in this important document are typical of the forces that guided his life. No matter what the undertaking, Harry pursued it with a spirit of reaching out to help his fellow man.

"He further displayed his commitment to the principles which made this country great through his active participation in numerous civic and professional groups. Harry was also an active member and leader in the Republican Party. He was a member of the National Republican Policy Committee, a delegate to the 1936 National Republican Convention -- at which Alf Landon was nominated -- and a Republican primary candidate to the U.S. Senate in 1950.

### Ralph T. O'Neil

"Ralph O'Neil was also a man who devoted a great deal of his life to the interest and involvement in veterans' affairs. His sterling career in the military was only the beginning of a lifelong participation in public service activities and organizations. His services as a soldier can be summarized by the statement that he served in six major engagements and led in person the first detachment of American troops which crossed the Meuse River near the historic city of Sedan and established the bridge head at Dun-sur-Meuse. Ralph was gassed, injured in action, cited for gallantry in action on the field of battle, recommended for the D.S.C., decorated with the Silver Star and with the Order of Commander of the Crown of Italy.

"As past national commander of the American Legion, Ralph's dedication and hard work led to the improvement of veterans' medical care. Ralph traveled throughout the country urging that we needed 'beds awaiting veterans, not veterans awaiting beds.' His concern and diligent efforts led to a provision by Congress that established some 8,000 additional hospital beds for veterans. A lifelong member of the Democratic Party, Ralph actively participated in the councils which formulated the policies of the party. His influence in national affairs was also recognized and utilized by his party in many presidential campaigns; particularly in 1932, when he was the national head of the Ex-Service Men's Organization and assistant to National Chairman Farley.

"I'm proud to have offered the amendment honoring these two outstanding men. But I am even prouder that we can claim them as Kansans."