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\*\*\*\*\* PRESIDENTIAL DELEGATION IN ITALY \*\*\*\*\*

DOLE LAYS WREATH AT FLORENCE MILITARY CEMETERY--  
WWII VETERAN RENEWS 40-YEAR ITALIAN FRIENDSHIP

FLORENCE, ITALY -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole, as head of the President's 16-member American Delegation to Italy commemorating the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Rome, today participated in special ceremonies at the Florence Military Cemetery.

Dole, a wounded veteran of the Italian campaign, laid a wreath at the American Memorial, where more than 4,400 Americans who died in World War II are buried, including 43 Kansans.

Other members of the Presidential Delegation with Senator Dole at the wreath-laying ceremony were Louis Esposito of Philadelphia, Philip Pistilli of Kansas City, and Celeste Andruzzi of New York City. Also attending were members of the Tondi family of Castel D'Aiano, Italy, who Senator Dole befriended after the war. The tiny northern Italian mountain town was near the site where Dole was severely wounded by German machine gun fire. The Tondi family became close friends with the young American, a friendship that has lasted now for decades.

"Obviously, this was an extremely emotional day for me. Some of my fallen comrades are buried here in Florence and seeing my good friends the Tondis again brought back a stream of memories. Although the war seems like a long time ago, the moving spectre of thousands of American graves at this wooded cemetery makes very real and immediate the sacrifices these brave men made in the name of freedom. We can never forget their noble effort. I am deeply honored to lay a wreath at this memorial," Dole said.

Tomorrow, Senator Dole will be the keynote speaker in Rome at the official ceremony honoring the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Rome. He will also read a proclamation on the liberation by President Reagan.