



# NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.-Kans.)

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## DOLE VISITS BATTLEFIELD SITE WHERE WOUNDED

CASTEL d'AIANO, Italy -- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) will arrive in the small town of Castel d' Aiano in northern Italy tomorrow, to revisit the Po Valley battlefield where he was wounded during World War II.

Dole will be in Castel d'Aiano tomorrow morning, taking a break in a five-day mission to Geneva and Rome.

Thirty-four years ago, on April 14, 1945, when the American Army was pushing across Italy's Po Valley, Dole was wounded twice during intense fighting. A grenade sliver penetrated his leg while on a night patrol, and received a Purple Heart for this wound. But it was his conduct under fire a few days later, and the second wound, that earned him the Bronze Star and another Purple Heart.

The 10th Mountain Division, in which Lt. Dole was a platoon leader, was readying for a major offensive across the valley on April 12, the day President Franklin Roosevelt died. Both a heavy cloud cover, which prevented air drops, and troop despondency caused by Roosevelt's death, delayed launch of the offensive for two days.

The push began finally on the morning of April 14. At 4 a.m. the 57th Fighter Group, out of Pisa, Florence and Grosseto, began littering the area with bombs in what proved to be some of the heaviest concentrated bombing of the entire war.

At 8 a.m., American ground troops began to move through the valley, trying to take advantage of the "softening" effect the bombing had on enemy positions. But there was nothing soft about the assignment, as Dole and his men soon found out.

Shortly before 11 a.m., Dole led his squad in an attempt to wipe out a deeply entrenched German machine gun nest. He saw two of his companions killed by mortar shells, and his radioman fell under a hail of machine gun fire. Crawling under heavy fire, Dole dragged the wounded radioman to cover.

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He then left a shell hole to get close enough to toss a hand grenade at the German nest. Hit by machine gun bullets and mortar fragments, he was blown back into the shellhole.

Dole waited on the battlefield for hours for medics to arrive, his arms and legs paralyzed.

The Army awarded him the Bronze Star with cluster, hailing his "persistence, fearless leadership and personal daring," and promoted him to Captain.

Later, X rays revealed that Dole's right shoulder and arm had been shattered, and neck vertebrae had been fractured. His spinal cord was damaged and both arms and legs were paralyzed. Thirty-nine months of hospitalization in Italy, Africa, Florida, Kansas and Michigan, enabled Dole to slowly regain partial use of his left hand and arm.

Tomorrow will be Senator Dole's second visit to the battlefield site since the war. He was last in Castel d'Aiano in 1969.