

of World War II a debt that can never be fully repaid. As I said, and had the honor to say in Normandy: When they were young, they saved the world.

This memorial also quite rightly remembers the heroics and hardships of those on the home-front. Many of the families who started the war with a star in the window ended it with sorrow in their hearts, their loved ones lost forever. But our Americans scrimped and saved, making do with 3 gallons of gas a week and two pairs of shoes a year. With the American Red Cross they worked to tend the wounded and send millions of care packages overseas. They ran the factories, manned in many cases by women, that churned out the planes, the tanks, the ships that enabled the allies to control the land, the air, and the sea.

In war, this generation of heroes summoned the collective resolve to defend our most cherished values, to defeat the most fearsome enemies. In peace, they came home and drew on that strength and unity to meet the challenges of a new era. Their leaders did not seek to withdraw from the world but to build alliances and institutions, to promote our prosperity, and to secure our victory in the long cold war. This memorial will stand as a lasting tribute to what Americans can achieve when they work together.

It is especially appropriate at this time that we also honor the remarkable service of one of our Nation's most distinguished World War II veterans who has spent the last 50 years of his life building America and a better world, Senator Bob Dole.

Fifty-one years ago, during a fierce fight in Italy's Po Valley, Second Lieutenant Bob Dole was going to the aid of a fallen comrade when a shell struck him down. He would bear the burden of that terrible injury from that day forward. His recuperation was long and uncertain. Yet Senator Dole turned adversity to advantage and pain to public service, embodying the motto of the State that he loved and went on to serve so well: *Ad astra per aspera*, to the stars through difficulties.

Son of the soil, citizen, soldier, and legislator, Bob Dole understands the American people, their struggles, their triumphs, and their dreams. Through five decades of public service that took him from county attorney to Senate majority

leader and the longest serving leader of his party in history, he never forgot his roots in Russell, Kansas. He has stood up for what he believed, championing the interests of his State's hard-working farmers, helping the disabled through leading the way to the Americans with Disabilities Act, extending the Voting Rights Act, playing a key role in the National Commission on Social Security Reform, and always, always supporting the leadership of our country: first, throughout that long twilight struggle of the cold war and, now in this new era, reasserting America's indispensable role for peace and freedom, security and prosperity.

In times of conflict and crisis, he has worked to keep America united and strong. In this city often known for taking itself too seriously, we are all better for his fine sense of humor. But our country is better for his courage, his determination, and his willingness to go the long course to lead America.

I am pleased to be able to recognize Bob Dole's record of achievement with the highest honor our Nation can bestow on a citizen, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Through it, we honor not just his individual achievement but his clear embodiment of the common values and beliefs that join us as a people, values and beliefs that he has spent his life advancing.

Senator Dole, a grateful nation presents this award with respect for the example you have set for Americans today and for Americans in generations yet to come.

I now ask the military aide to read the citation. Major, post the orders.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Fred F. Woerner, USA (ret.), Chairman, and Hugh Carey and F. Haydn Williams, Commissioners, American Battle Monuments Commission; Senator Dole's daughter, Robin; Pete Wheeler and Jess Hay, members, World War II Memorial Advisory Board; and architect Friedrich St. Florian, winner of the World War II Memorial design competition. Following the President's remarks, Maj. Charles Raderstorf, USMC, read the medal citation.