

Fort Riley Community



Dole honored Institute dedicated to former senator

By **Christie Vanover**
Community Relations Officer

"A good friend. The voice of the Heartland. A true American hero." These were among the many compliments paid to former Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., at his 80th birthday celebration in Lawrence, July 22.

Dole was honored in his native Sunflower state by thousands of supporters at the dedication for the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics at the University of Kansas.

Rows of red carpet were draped through a crowd of salt and pepper-haired soldiers of yesteryear. Passing active duty generals and 14 WWII Medal of Honor recipients, including former President Jimmy Carter, Dr. Condoleezza Rice and Dole's fellow congressmen and women.

All were gathered to commemorate the opening of the 28,000 square foot institute, built to foster non-partisan debates and to cultivate future leaders interested in public service.

"Bob Dole, through his own personal heroism and his own

commitment to our nation's security and integrity, has been willing to implant a place for the open and free debates in a free society," said Carter.

Although the institute bears his name, Dole was insistent that the



facility and the dedication represent his generation—the Greatest Generation.

"For more than 30 years, the people of Kansas have entrusted me with their voice in Washington," said Dole.

"Yet no honor that has come my way has ever surpassed the pride I felt wearing my country's uni-

form," he added in a crackled voice, as if he held back tears.

"We were just ordinary Americans who were called on to meet the greatest challenges. Sixty years on, our ranks are dwindling but our memories endure and so do thoughts of those who have gone before us."

He addressed the crowd of his "wartime brothers and sisters," as American flags snapped in the Kansas breeze and as their stars and stripes sparkled in the reflecting pool beneath a 14-foot Kansas state seal.

Prior to allowing the public to tour the facility, Director Richard Norton Smith painted a picture of the interior.

"This is a civic cathedral. Instead of a high altar, visitors will find themselves standing before the world's largest stained glass American flag. Framing the flag are two columns of battered but unbroken steel, each more than 10 feet high.

"The columns once formed part of the World Trade Center in New York City . . . Like silent sentinels, they flank one GI's uniform fore-

See Dole Page 11



Post-Vanover

Dr. Condoleezza Rice, national security advisor, spoke to former U.S. Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., during the dedication of the Dole Institute of Politics on Tuesday. Rice said Dole is "The Voice of the Heartland."



Post-Vanover



Above, Sgt. 1st Class Joanne Cox, 24th Infantry Division (Mech), stands at a vigil at the Dole Institute of Politics beneath the largest stain glass flag in the world and a beam from the World Trade Center Towers.

Left, a Navy Veteran salutes as the 312th Army Band plays his service's song.

Post-Vanover

Dole continued from page 9

er bonding the America of Dec. 7 with that of Sept. 11, and reminding us for all time that every generation can be the greatest generation," he said.

The bond between the Greatest Generation and today's current servicemen and women was evident as active and reserve component forces from the military's five services volunteered to assist in the "Greatest Generation's Greatest Celebration."

Two Fort Riley soldiers, Sgt. 1st Class Joanne Cox and Staff Sgt. Thomas Ballinger, stood post at a vigil beneath the rusted, encased trade center beams on the eve of the ceremony.

"I'm thankful to have had the opportunity to be a part of this, to support and honor our veterans and our Medal of Honor recipients," said Cox, representing the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club and the 24th Infantry Div. (Mech).

"As leaders today, we have to hold fast to the values and standards that they set before us, and we also need to remember that while we look to them as heroes and historians, we have to remember that they're our mentors."

Rice, the National Security advisor, also emphasized the similarities between the generations of our nation's defenders, comparing WWII to the global war against terrorism.

"Once again, we are called to defend not just our people, but the universal values of freedom. Once

again, we are liberating others from totalitarian dictators and murderous ideologies."

"There are many differences between the battle for the Po Valley in Italy and the battles of Afghanistan and Iraq, but there is one overarching similarity. Those battles today, as those battles in the past, are being fought with

skill and bravery by people like Bob Dole who are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, so that future generations may live in liberty.

"Bob has given more of himself to America than most of us will ever do, and America is grateful," said Rice. "In war and in peace, in good times and in bad,

Bob Dole has rendered his service, his body and his soul to a cause larger than himself—the

cause of freedom."

The institute, which houses the world's largest Congressional

archive, is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week.