

viability of the Red Cross. The country was pretty worried about the safety of America's blood supply back then. And as the person newly responsible for half of it, so was I. Some of our Board members wanted us to get out of blood banking altogether, believing our duty to safeguard the rest of our historic organization demanded that we abandon this mission field. Between Congressional hearings, media exposés and enormous regulatory pressure, there were days when I wanted to get out, too.

Still, the question haunted us: if we left blood banking, who would fill our shoes? The Red Cross is not a public agency, but what we do—especially in blood—is a public trust. We weren't going to let America down. Not on our watch.

The blood supply was as safe as the current blood systems and contemporary scientists knew how to make it. But in the age of AIDS and other blood borne infectious diseases, wasn't there more we could do? We had to "think outside the box" with respect to existing science, blood supply management, and safety approaches.

We dreamed, in 1991, of where we wanted to go. But we did more than that. We mustered our courage and embraced Transformation as our ticket to ride. It was the most ambitious project the Red Cross had ever undertaken: the total redesign of how we collect, process, test, and deliver nearly half of America's blood supply. I dare say it is the most profound change any non-profit organization has made in recent memory!

At the time, it felt the way I imagine a Shuttle astronaut must feel on her first space walk letting go of the ship, taking her first step into the unknown. It felt as if our whole organization had let go. . . let go of the security of status-quo standards, let go of the financial certainty underpinning our entire operation, let go of what we knew, in search of what we hoped to find—but knowing that each step was backed up by a truly exceptional scientific team entirely committed to forging new frontiers. I feel so fortunate that Jim Ross with Brian McDonough and each member of his outstanding team answered my call to complete this challenge.

In 1993, the Food and Drug Administration imposed a consent decree on our blood services operations. But as David will tell you, we were already more than two years into Transformation. The consent decree was basically a codification or ratification of our far-reaching plan, with timelines and milestones for measuring our progress. And today, as we conclude Transformation, we also are wrapping up our last requirements under the decree.

With the completion of Transformation this year, we will have forced ourselves from the mind set of always doing things the way we had done them before. We already have left behind our days in the comfort of industry averages to become the undisputed leader in blood banking. Once we were weighed down with 53 non-standardized blood centers running 28 computer systems in a patchwork quilt of regions, each with its own operating procedures and business practices. Today we have one set of operational procedures, one set of business practices, and one state of the art computer system—which gives us the best national donor deferral system and the largest blood information data base in the world for transfusion medicine research.

We determined that today's demands were best met in high-volume, state-of-the-art, centralized labs, so we replaced our 53 testing facilities with 8 state of the art, high-tech laboratories that today are the leading centers of their kind in the world. This enables us to quickly incorporate medical technology as it evolves.

Perhaps most importantly, today we no longer fear finding our own faults. We ac-

tively seek them out, report them and then fix them, ourselves. We hired a leader in quality assurance who created an independent program, providing more than 200 experts to audit and consult with all of our fixed sites. We actively monitor for more than 150 possible deviations in manufacturing. And our folks, can and on occasion have shut down a process immediately, when they have found a serious deviation from standard operating procedure.

In short, we have a new, centralized management structure, a new information system, and the best quality assurance program in existence. We have consolidated and modernized testing and have strictly standardized procedures and training across our system. As a matter of fact, we now run the highly acclaimed Charles Drew Biomedical Institute—and provide leadership to the entire blood banking community.

We have moved to a position of leadership in an industry which has achieved phenomenal success in the face of frightening odds: In 1991, an American's risk of HIV transmission from a blood transfusion was one in 220,000. Today, it is nearly one in 700,000—more than a three-fold reduction in risk. I'd say that is worth cheering about, wouldn't you?

Today, I can say what I could not seven years ago: the Red Cross is in the blood business to stay. We are sure of our mission and we know how to fulfill it. No longer an organization constrained by yesterday's technology, we operate today with the gleaming precision and efficiency of what is still, for most in the world, only tomorrow's possibilities. We offer Cadillac quality coupled with Volvo security. Don't get me wrong: every car on the lot meets the government standard for safety. But like Cadillac and Volvo, we have set standards of our own.

Unlike car companies, however, we don't do what we do for a profit. The pins on our lapels and the patches on our sleeves remind us daily that we are in this business to fulfill a national trust, to live up to our moral commitment to do the best we can to ensure the well-being of the American people. We are also reaching out to the rest of the world, sharing the lessons we have learned from Transformation to help improve the safety and reliability of the world's blood supply.

Of course, modernization and improvement is a process that must never end. As David Kearns, the former chairman of Xerox, once said, "In the race for quality, there is no finish line." This could never be more true than in the blood banking business. We're determined to remain not only the industry leader in quality and safety, but to place ourselves in the forefront of new product development.

At our world-class Holland Laboratory, Red Cross physicians and scientists are evaluating and monitoring possible threats to the blood supply and working on many other new, cutting-edge technologies—some of which we will share with you today.

But all this technology wouldn't be worth a thing without the Red Crossers who make it work for America. They are the reason and the inspiration for our service. We have 1.3 million volunteers, 32,000 paid staff, and 4.3 million blood donors—that's 20,000 donors every day—I'd like to stop just a minute to give those quiet heroes a loud round of applause.

Yes, after 50 years in Blood Services—and spending the last seven years transforming them, the American Red Cross has much to celebrate. In addition to enhancing blood safety, our investment has given us the knowledge and confidence to shape our own future.

Before Transformation, the Red Cross and other blood banks around the country waited

for signals from the FDA that change was required. Today, the Red Cross is a leader of change. While Transformation the program is nearly complete, Transformation the process will be never ending.

There is a story I love about Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. When Justice Holmes was in his 90s, he took a trip on the Pennsylvania Railroad. As he saw the conductor coming down the aisle, he began patting his pockets, looking for his ticket. The conductor, recognizing the famous jurist, said, "Don't worry, Mr. Justice. I'm sure you'll find your ticket when you leave the train, and certainly the Pennsylvania Railroad will trust you to mail it back later."

Justice Holmes looked up at the conductor with some irritation and said, "My dear man, the problem is not, where is my ticket. The problem is, where am I going?"

Ladies and gentlemen, the American Red Cross knows where it's going! As we have led the nation in blood transformation, so we will set a new credo of business for businesses of the heart. But more than that, we are dedicated to saving and improving every life we can. We at the Red Cross want to be the model for non-profits in the next century. The status quo is no longer our milieu. Well into the new millennium, the Red Cross will seek out the cutting edge; we will be the people who question the range of possibilities—in blood banking as well as in every other aspect of our mission.

But we know we cannot accomplish all of our dreams by ourselves. We need the time and money, the brainpower and the lifeblood of Americans like you. Together, we will continue to imagine the unimaginable and attain the unattainable. Together, we will be privileged to touch, and in so doing transform, the millions of individual lives we are dedicated to serve.

On behalf of our entire Red Cross family, thank you for all you've done, and for all you continue to do. And on this special day, thanks for coming to our party.

THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in congratulating the people of the Republic of Georgia on the 80th anniversary of their independence.

Eighty years ago on May 26, 1918, following the collapse of the Russian Empire, the people of Georgia gained their own independence and established their own government. Tragically, Georgia's independence was short-lived. In March 1921, the Soviet Army reoccupied Georgia, beginning decades of further occupation, domination and repression.

Despite this persecution by the Soviet leadership, the spirit of the Georgian people could not be defeated. Throughout almost seventy years of Soviet rule, the people of Georgia never lost sight of their goal to be free from outside domination and influence.

Finally, in 1991, following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the people of Georgia were again able to realize their dream of independence, and their nation now enjoys a bright future. The election of President Eduard Shevardnadze and the election of a Parliament committed to legal reform in 1995 have encouraged economic growth and reforms in human rights.

Today, as we celebrate this 80th anniversary of Georgia's independence, we also honor and commend the Georgian people for their courage and commitment in achieving their dream of a nation free again at last and committed to the principles of democracy.

AWARD OF DOD'S DISTINGUISHED
PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to say a few words about our former colleague and Majority Leader, Senator Robert Dole.

There are few people who have given more to this Nation than Bob Dole. He has dedicated his life to public service. He was a young Army officer during World War II, helping to liberate Europe, where as we all know, he suffered his lifelong wounds. He served in the Kansas State House, in the United States House of Representatives, and ultimately in the United States Senate, as Majority Leader, where he left his greatest mark. Even though he no longer holds elected office, Bob still finds ways to contribute to the public good through a variety of efforts, not the least of which is his work on the World War II Memorial. He is truly a man who has distinguished himself through his selflessness, who has rendered the Nation a great service, and is worthy of the respect and admiration of all Americans.

A few weeks ago, another one of our former colleagues, Secretary of Defense William Cohen, made certain that Senator Dole knew the high regard in which he is held by the men and women of our armed services by holding a full dress parade in his honor and bestowing upon him the Department of Defense's Distinguished Public Service Award. This was an especially impressive ceremony that weaved together pageantry, heritage, and patriotism in a stirring tribute to both Senator Dole and his service to the United States. I was particularly moved by the remarks of my two friends and want to share them with my colleagues in the Senate, and with the Nation through the Congressional Record. I am certain that all who read these speeches will agree with me that they provide both insight into a modest and private man and a fitting tribute to a true American hero.

I ask unanimous consent that copies of Secretary Cohen's and Senator Dole's remarks be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SENATOR BOB DOLE—REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY, FORT MEYER, VIRGINIA, APRIL 29, 1998

If given the choice between receiving an award from a Secretary of Defense or appointing a Secretary of Defense, I would have picked the latter.

Seriously, I am humbled and honored by this award, and it means all the more to me because it was presented by a man I have

long been privileged to call my friend. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for this ceremony, for this award, and for reminding us that when it comes to our national defense, we should not define ourselves as Democrats or Republicans, but rather, simply as Americans.

I am also pleased to be joined today by the president of the American Red Cross. Throughout this century, wherever you have found American service men and women—whether on the battlefield, on the base, or in the hospital—you knew that close by you would also find the American Red Cross.

And on behalf of all the past and present members of the Armed Forces here, I thank Elizabeth for the difference the Red Cross has made in our lives. And while I may not be proof of the old saying that here in America, any boy can grow up to be President, I take heart in the fact that I am proof that any boy can grow up and be married to the President . . . of the American Red Cross, that is.

During my life I have been privileged to be called by many titles—including congressman, Senator, and majority leader. But the two titles of which I am most proud have nothing to do with elective office. The first is "Kansan." And the second is "veteran."

I have often wondered why the Army assigned a kid from the plains of Kansas to serve in the 10th Mountain Division, but I've never wondered about the courage and heroism of those who served with me, and those who have defended our country in the half century that has followed. And I can't help but recall today the words of General George Marshall, who was asked soon after America's entrance into World War II, whether we had a secret weapon that would ensure victory.

Marshall said, "Yes, our secret weapon is the best darned kids in the world."

Marshall was right. America ensured the survival of freedom in World War II precisely because we had the best darned kids in the world—kids who were willing to fight and die for their country and for the cause of freedom.

What was true in World War II, has continued to be true in the decades that have followed, as more of those best darned kids have fought and died in places with names like Inchon, Porkchop Hill, the Persian Gulf, and countless other locations around the globe.

I traveled to Bosnia just this past weekend, and can report to you, Mr. Secretary, that our Armed Services can still boast the best darned kids in the world.

Throughout my years in the Battlefields of Capitol Hill, I always tried to remember and stand up for those who were serving or who had served. And I always tried to remember that the only way to ensure that future generations or those kids would not be buried on foreign land was to continue to provide for a strong defense and American leadership whenever and wherever it was needed.

And any success I achieved in this regard was achieved because so many others stood with me. And although this old soldier has retired from elective office, I don't intend to fade away. Rather, I will continue to stand up and speak out on matters of importance to the United States, and I will always regard this day and this award not as recognition for any achievements of the past, but as a reminder of our responsibilities to future generations of Americans.

And so, Mr. Secretary, Lieutenant Robert J. Dole is reporting for duty today, ready for a mission that must be shared by all Americans; a mission perhaps best defined by the author Herman Wouk, who said:

"(Our duty is to) reassure (our men and women in uniform) that their hard, long training is needed, that love of country is

noble, that self-sacrifice is rewarding and that to be ready to fight for freedom fills one with a sense of worth like nothing else . . . for if America is still the great beacon in dense gloom, the promise to hundreds of millions of the oppressed that liberty exists, that it is the shining future, that they can throw off their tyrants, and learn freedom and cease learning war, then we still need heroes to stand guard in the night."

Thank you, Mr. Secretary for this day, and thanks to all those heroes here today and the countless thousands who serve with you who make the world a safer place by standing guard in the night.

REMARKS OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM S. COHEN—PRESENTATION OF DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD TO BOB DOLE, CONMY HALL, FORT MEYER, VIRGINIA, APRIL 29, 1998

General Ralston, thank you for your gracious words. Senator Dole, Elizabeth and Robin Dole; Members of Congress: Senator Thurmond, Specter, Campbell, Smith and Reed and Congressmen Ryan and Houghton; Deputy Secretary Hamre and Julie Hamre; Service secretaries, service chiefs and spouses; Distinguished guests, especially Jack Kemp, Warren Rudman, Paul Laxalt, Colin Powell, Ambassador Ellsworth. Welcome all, and thank you for joining Janet and me and the entire Department of Defense in paying tribute to a dear friend and a true American hero—Bob Dole.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who served his country both as a soldier and a public servant, once spoke to his fellow veterans in words that reflect the soldier and public servant we honor today. Holmes said: "As I look into your eyes, I feel that a great trial in your youth made you different. It made you a citizen of the world and not of a little town. Best of all, it made you believe in something else besides doing the best for yourself. You learned a lesson early which has given a different feeling to life, which put a kind of fire into your heart."

Today we express our gratitude to Bob Dole, a man from the little town of Russell, Kansas for whom the lessons of life came early. With the Dustbowl came the lesson of hard work. With the Depression came the lesson of hardship. With World War II came the lesson of service and sacrifice in a way most of us will never know.

Throughout his distinguished career, we have called Bob Dole by many titles—Congressman Dole, Senator Dole, Chairman Dole and Candidate Dole. Our ceremony today honors all those roles, but also honors a time when he was known as Second Lieutenant Robert Dole, who led the Second Battalion of the 85th Infantry Mountain Regiment of the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division.

As the war in Europe was winding down, a spring offensive was scheduled for April 12, 1945 to bring about the surrender of German forces in Italy. On the same day, as it happens, President Roosevelt died. But it was not the President's death but a heavy fog that delayed the offensive until April 14 at oh-six-hundred. After the intensive assault against fortified German positions by heavy bombers, fighter-bombers and artillery, the 10th Mountain Division began to move across a ravine to a clearing to take for the Allies what was known as Hill 913.

But even after the shelling and bombing, there was significant German resistance. The snipers were dug in. The 10th Mountain Division would take more casualties on April 14, 1945 than all the other Allied forces in Italy. Second Lieutenant Robert Dole was hit and gravely wounded by a mortar blast and waited in a shell hole for nine hours until the medics could reach him.