



BOB DOLE

A gesture of respect between two veterans of the US Army's 10th Mountain Division: **BOB DOLE**, the legendary Senator, and Brunswick Partner **CRAIG MULLANEY**, a digital leadership advisor.

By Craig Mullaney

ON APRIL 26, I ENTERED THE WASHINGTON offices of law firm Alston & Bird to meet Robert Dole, the former long-time majority leader of the US Senate and 1996 Republican presidential nominee. At 96, Senator Dole serves as a Special Counsel to Alston & Bird.

In my hand, I carried a plaque commissioned for Senator Dole. It was not a commemoration of his accomplishments over 27 years in the Senate. Nothing about the plaque was partisan. While

Senator Dole is a lifelong Republican, I served as a policy advisor during the presidential campaign and administration of Democrat Barack Obama.

I designed the plaque to honor Mr. Dole's service to an institution that transcends politics—the US Army, and in particular its legendary 10th Mountain Division. We both served as 10th Mountain rifle platoon leaders 58 years apart, Lieutenant Dole during World War II and Lieutenant Mullaney in Afghanistan. Only days before Germany's surrender,

Lieutenant Dole was shot in the back and arm leading an assault against Italy's Gothic Line north of Florence. His wounds hospitalized him for more than 39 months and left Senator Dole partially disabled. Formerly a star athlete, he dropped from 193 to 122 pounds. While I was fortunate to escape physical injury during my tour, our unit saw significant combat action in the mountains of Afghanistan.

In Senator Dole's office, I found the Washington legend sitting behind a desk in a wheelchair that the

PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD MITCHELL

Senator says he's striving to render unnecessary. "In just the last six months my legs have really strengthened. I can almost get up alone," said Senator Dole. "So, I'm encouraged." At 96, his energy and optimism are tangible.

In presenting the plaque, I recounted to Senator Dole the place of honor his name and unit continue to hold in the 10th Mountain Division. Their stories were told widely in our unit before we deployed to Afghanistan in 2003. Riva Ridge. Mount Belvedere. The roads at Fort Drum in upstate New York carry the names of battles fought by Senator Dole and his generation of mountain infantry. Our weapons, adversaries and battlefields may have been different, but we both wore the 10th Mountain patch on our sleeve—two crossed swords emblazoned on a powder keg.

I handed to Senator Dole one of the combat patches I'd worn under fire. Notwithstanding our 56-year age gap, we began to talk about the shared experience of assuming leadership of older and more experienced soldiers.

"Like you, I took command of a platoon that had already seen quite a bit of action," I said. "I was a green lieutenant with a lot of book smarts."

"Me too," Senator Dole said. His aspirations to become a doctor were interrupted when he left the University of Kansas to volunteer for the Army.

"I didn't know the first thing about how to actually lead a group of men, many of whom were older than me, into harm's way," I confessed.

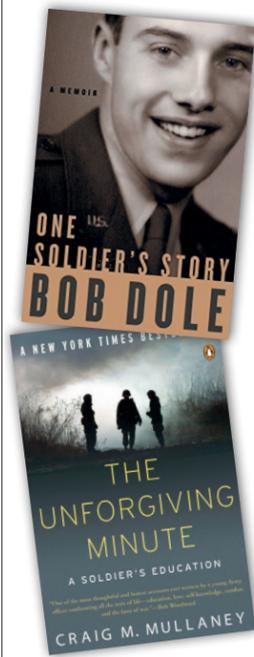
"These guys under me had been in combat and I hadn't," said Senator Dole. From reading his memoir, *One Soldier's Story*, I knew that he'd replaced another lieutenant killed in action. When he arrived at the platoon, the senior noncommissioned officer handed him the dead lieutenant's binoculars and map.

"It takes a while to get established, to show them you know what you're talking about, to gain some respect. Without respect, you don't get very far. My radio man was Corporal Sims. He got hit and I was creeping out to bring him back when I got hit. Unfortunately, he didn't survive."

In reading his memoir, I was struck by Senator Dole's statement that soldiers and former soldiers "never walk alone." I asked him whether he still felt like his soldiers were walking with him.

"Oh yeah," Senator Dole replied, before describing the extraordinary measures his soldiers took to save his life.

"Have you ever returned to 'Hill 913,'" I asked, using the military designation for the site in Italy where Senator Dole was shot.



Senator Bob Dole and Craig Mullaney both belonged to the US Army's 10th Mountain Division, both saw combat and both wrote about it in memoirs honoring fellow soldiers who died in battle.

"Yes. I've been there about five times. Where I was wounded there was a tree. So on the tree somebody nailed a little piece of wood. It says something like, 'Bob Dole, wounded here.' I guess it's a little attraction if you're up in that area."

"What did it feel like to be back there?"

"Well, of course I couldn't remember the terrain. But it was mountainous. I don't think I had any feelings of regret. No sense of 'Why is it my name on this tree?' Let's just say that my life was interrupted. And I guess it continues to be. I mean there are things I can't do. Like walk," Senator Dole chuckled.

I came around Senator Dole's desk to show him a faded photo I'd brought with me of a battlefield in Afghanistan. "This is the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan," I told him as I fingered an indistinct shadow between mountain ridges.

"What side were you on?" asked Senator Dole, examining the photograph.

"We were on the Afghanistan side but it was always a debate. We took a lot of fire from Pakistan. On this particular day it came from the hill behind me in the photograph, which we called Lozano Ridge. My radio man, Private Howe, and I had a mortar round come in and land about 10 feet away from us. For whatever reason the shrapnel didn't come in our direction."

"Oh, boy."

I took out of my pocket a jagged chunk of black metal. "We went back later and I got a piece of the shrapnel."

Examining it, Senator Dole says, "You were lucky."

"We ended up killing we think about 60 Al Qaeda that day."

"Oh good," said Senator Dole.

"But we lost one of our own as well."

"Yeah, that's terrible. War is hell. Wars are not a good thing. But I guess sometimes they're necessary." In his book, Senator Dole described the reticence of veterans to recount their combat experiences. "They simply don't want to go back there to the killing and the death, the sights, sounds and smells of war, the bombed-out towns, doorways that open into nothing but rubble, images of shredded bodies, the vestiges of which will live forever in their hearts and minds." Even with each other, we veterans tend to leave these impressions unspoken.

"Senator, I brought you a copy of the book I wrote," I said, producing a hardback copy of my memoir of my time in the Army, *The Unforgiving Minute: A Soldier's Education*.

"Did you sign it?" he asked.

"Of course, sir."

I explained that the title was from, "If," a favorite Rudyard Kipling poem. Kipling wrote, "If you can fill the unforgiving minute with 60 seconds' worth of distance run, yours is the Earth and everything that's in it. And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!" Kipling wrote the poem for his son who later went missing in action in World War I.

In signing his copy of my book, I wrote, "You have more than filled the Unforgiving Minute in your distinguished career. Climb to Glory," the 10th Mountain Division motto.

"Thank you," said Senator Dole, accepting the gift.

"I didn't come back with physical wounds," I said. "But I came back with other wounds. And I wanted to write this book for Evan O'Neill, a soldier in my platoon who didn't make it home. And to be able to tell his parents about his heroism. And how much that private inspired this lieutenant."

AS A SOCIETY WE BEAR A MORAL OBLIGATION TO PRACTICALLY HONOR THE SACRIFICES OF VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS.

An unexpected benefit of writing my book was a public platform to connect ordinary people with the stories and experiences of soldiers like Evan. After 18 years of conflict since 9/11, less than 1 percent of Americans have served in the military. As a society, we bear a moral obligation to practically honor the sacrifices of our veterans and family members.

Few people have done more for veterans' causes than has Senator Dole and his wife, Senator Elizabeth Dole, who leads a group that assists wounded veterans. For his part, after retiring from the Senate, Senator Dole led the committee that raised \$197 million for the construction of the World War II Memorial, which opened in 2004. Now, despite his age, his mobility challenges and the ongoing pain and limitations imposed by 75-year-old wounds, Senator Dole visits the WWII Memorial nearly every Saturday to greet other veterans.

SENATOR DOLE ON POLITICS

SENATOR DOLE may be physically slower than he once was, but intellectually he remains a force. At Alston & Bird, the law firm's website says, "Senator Dole is respected for his views on issues ranging from healthcare to foreign affairs. Holding numerous distinguished appointments, he is one of the most requested advisors in the public policy arena." At the meeting between Mr. Mullaney and Senator Dole, the Brunswick Review took the opportunity to ask the retired Republican leader some political questions.

Looking back over your long and illustrious career, is there one decision you would make differently?

I probably wouldn't run for President in '96. It's hard to beat an incumbent in a strong economy, but you know, it's hard to say no when your party asks you to run.

Of all your accomplishments is there one that means the most to you?

I think working with Senator Moynihan from New York to rescue Social Security.

Your closest friend in the Senate was Democrat Dan Inouye who was also wounded in Italy and convalesced together with you in Michigan. You were known for being tough



In 1996, Senator Bob Dole won the Republican nomination for the presidency, and lost to incumbent Democrat Bill Clinton.

and yet for working across the aisle. Is there too little of that nowadays?

There isn't any of it. Or very little. Now you've got the House run by Democrats and they're going to spend the next two years investigating the President. I think he'll survive.

You made headlines when you endorsed Donald Trump once he was the presumptive nominee—and at a time when

other Republican leaders were refusing to endorse him. Did you give a lot of thought to that?

I watched all the debates and all that. And concluded that Trump was the best candidate, even though he went over the top every day. But tax cuts and less regulation and foreign policy changes, I agreed with all of that. If he could gain peace with North Korea he'd be a shoo-in in 2020.

Some days I wonder, when Trump insults 25 people. But on

the other hand, I like his policies. I think he'll be re-elected.

When you look at the Democratic field, who looks like the best candidate to you?

I'm a good friend of Joe Biden but I don't think he can make it. He and Trump will both be, what, about 75 or 76? It ought to be somebody younger.

Biden is going to have a tough time. But so far in the Democratic field I think he stands out. He's ahead in the polls but that doesn't mean anything this far away from the election.

And he's tried twice before unsuccessfully. But he's a good man and a good friend. And I wish him the best. Which is not winning the White House but getting close.

Do you intend to endorse President Trump in 2020?

I'm not even sure I'll be here.

It depends on who his opponent is. I mean, I like Biden, my good friend.

It must be tough in politics to make endorsements that go either against your party or against a friend.

Right. That's the problem. I think Joe would be a pretty good president. He'd be pretty liberal. But I think he's an honest guy. Always was with me.

But if I endorsed him, they'd probably kick me out of the party.



More than an hour had passed in a conversation I could have continued all day. Senator Dole invited me to join him the following morning at the World War II Memorial. Before leaving, I asked Senator Dole if I could honor him with a salute. I snapped my right arm into a crisp salute and Senator Dole slowly returned the salute with his healthy arm.

WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

The next day, I brought two of my children with me to the World War II Memorial. Situated between the Lincoln and Washington memorials on the National Mall, Friedrich St. Florian's design features two wings of pillars honoring the Atlantic and Pacific campaigns. A docent approached my son Arjun and daughter Ambika as they gazed at a field of gold stars embedded in the marble. While they are aware their Dad was in the Army I have told them little of my combat experience or their great-grandfather's World War II service. The docent explained that each star represented 100 Americans who died in the war. Arjun, 9 years old, began counting the stars and soon turned to me, mouth agape, as he turned the calculations. There are 4,048 stars.

Buses by the half dozen began arriving near the memorial and we made our way to the curb. Honor Flights, a nonprofit with chapters across the United

A leader of the effort to create the World War II Memorial in Washington, Bob Dole at 96 visits it every Saturday to greet other veterans. Below, Senator Dole as a young Lieutenant.



States, organizes delegations of World War II veterans and their caregivers, to visit this memorial built in their honor. Of the 16 million Americans who served in the war, about half a million survive and a hero's welcome awaits those healthy enough to make the journey to Washington, DC. A cordon of visitors took shape between the parking lot and the memorial. As the veterans reunited, my children and I joined the crowd in a steady clapping. The "Greatest Generation" made their way past our lines, many wearing navy blue hats with the names of their unit, campaign ribbons or rank insignia. They seemed to stand a little taller as we recognized their service.

We spotted Senator Dole's wheelchair as he quietly approached the head of the cordon. I introduced him to my children who thanked him for his service, and we stood aside as he reunited with fellow veterans. He would spend the next several hours shaking hands, posing for photos, and making small talk with dozens of veterans and their families.

I was reminded of a gravestone inscription at my hometown cemetery in Rhode Island. Those two words would be an apt description of Senator Dole's distinguished career: *He served.* ♦

CRAIG MULLANEY, leadership advisor, bestselling author, and decorated US Army combat veteran, is a Partner in Brunswick's Washington, DC office.