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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 48

Offered February 21, 2013

Celebrating the life of Colonel Robert S. Cranston, USA (Ret.).

Patron—Stanley

WHEREAS, Colonel Robert S. Cranston, USA (Ret.), the legendary broadcaster who helped establish the American Forces Network Europe, died on February 17, 2013; and

WHEREAS, born in London, England, Robert "Bob" Cranston grew up in England, Canada, and the United States, and learned firsthand about broadcasting from his father, who ran radio station WBAP-AM in Texas; and

WHEREAS, Bob Cranston joined the other young men of his generation in the war effort when he enlisted in the 124th Cavalry Regiment of the Texas National Guard; he received a commission as a second lieutenant in the United States Army Signal Corps in 1943; and

WHEREAS, Bob Cranston waded onto Omaha Beach 48 hours after the initial invasion; he was wounded at the Battle of the Bulge and present when the United States Army and Russian forces met at the Elbe River; and

WHEREAS, after the liberation of France, Bob Cranston transferred from the United States Army Signal Corps to the American Forces Network; he served briefly in Germany before becoming the second commander of the Blue Danube Network; and

WHEREAS, Bob Cranston ably served as press secretary to Dwight D. Eisenhower during the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and directed a campaign to promote the organization to member nations; and

WHEREAS, Bob Cranston then returned to the United States, where he became the United States Army's first "television officer"; and

WHEREAS, Bob Cranston worked on a variety of television programs, including NBC's *Wide, Wide World* and CBS' *See It Now*; he also served as technical advisor on *The Phil Silvers Show*, which featured a United States Army sergeant character; and

WHEREAS, in 1960, Bob Cranston returned to Europe to command American Forces Network Europe, a 14-station AM and FM network in France, Germany, and Italy; and

WHEREAS, Bob Cranston then returned to the United States to assume control of the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS), which at the time reached two million United States military personnel in 35 countries and on dozens of United States Navy ships; he also played a key role in the establishment of the Armed Forces Vietnam Network; and

WHEREAS, as head of the AFRTS, Bob Cranston negotiated an agreement with the three major radio and television networks and their unions to provide programs free of charge through the AFRTS satellite network to troops stationed around the world, an accomplishment that saved the Pentagon millions of dollars and for which he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal; and

WHEREAS, Bob Cranston also received the Purple Heart, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Secretary of Defense Meritorious Civilian Service Award, and the Government of the Netherlands Medal of Merit and was inducted into the United States Army Public Affairs Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, Bob Cranston retired from the United States Army; he served for another decade in a civilian capacity as head of the Armed Forces Information Service before retiring to Huddleston in Bedford County, where he was an active member of the Republican Party of Bedford and Fifth District Republican Committee; and

WHEREAS, a visionary leader, Bob Cranston knew the power of radio and television broadcasts to share the American story with people in foreign countries and to give American servicemen and women around the world a way to stay connected to the country and people they served; and

WHEREAS, Bob Cranston will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Sandy; children, Jennifer, Marya, Elizabeth, and Elaine, and their families; numerous other family members and friends; and American servicemen and women around the world; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of a pioneering leader in broadcasting, Colonel Robert S. Cranston, USA (Ret.); and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Colonel Robert S. Cranston, USA (Ret.), as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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