



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Honoring Our Nation's Heroes

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ISSUE:

- [Military Affairs](#)
- [Military](#)
- [Troops](#)
- [Veterans](#)

### Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

To say Fort Drum is a significant part of Central and Northern New York is an understatement. Home to the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division—the Army's most deployed infantry group—Fort Drum is our state's biggest single-site employer with 18,000 soldiers and 4,000 civilian workers. Last year, the post had a \$1.4 billion impact on our state's economy. And perhaps most importantly, the post is home to 38,000 soldiers and family members—our friends, co-workers and defenders of our freedom.

Recently, I hosted "10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day" at the State Capitol. This was the third year for the special event, held to honor our troops and their contributions to our region and our country. The day included Fort Drum's Color Guard opening up the Senate Session, which also featured an address by Brigadier General Michael Howard, who spoke on behalf of Major General Stephen Townsend, who is

currently serving in Afghanistan. In addition, my colleagues and visitors to the Capitol were also given the opportunity to learn about our troops through displays hosted by the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization and Fort Drum soldiers.

The troops and Fort Drum supporters who were able to attend the event reminded my colleagues and I of the hundreds of thousands men and women who volunteer to serve and defend our nation. They also served to remind us of how critical Fort Drum is not only to our region but also to the entire state and country.

10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day represents just one way I'm working to make sure the men and women of our Armed Forces get the recognition they deserve. Recently, I announced that I am once again accepting nominations for the New York State Senate "Veterans Hall of Fame" program. The Hall of Fame pays tribute to New Yorkers who have served their country in the US Armed Forces and made significant contributions to their communities. Each State Senator can induct one veteran annually, who will be honored at a special ceremony in Albany on May 20th . All nominees from Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties will be recognized locally at an event to be held at Ft. Drum on May 15th.

If you would like to nominate a veteran from Jefferson, Oswego or St. Lawrence County for the program, you can [click here](#) to download a nomination form or call (315) 782-3418 to have one mailed to you. Nominations must be received by April 30th.

Our troops make so many sacrifices and I'm proud, as well as humbled to be given the opportunity to recognize them. If you know a veteran who has gone above and beyond to serve his or her country and community, I encourage you to nominate them for this special program.