



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

# This Holiday Season, Remember Our Troops

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## Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

When you think of the holiday season, what comes to mind? For most people, there's something much more important than the gifts and parties, and that's quality time spent with family and friends. In addition to putting their lives on the line to serve our country, members of the military make another big sacrifice—being away from their loved ones at this special time of year.

In an effort to show the men and women of our armed forces just how much we appreciate their service and the sacrifices they made, I'm once again participating in the "Holiday Mail for Heroes" program; an initiative sponsored by the American Red Cross that collects personally signed holiday cards to send to

soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines at military bases, veterans' hospitals and other locations to let them know they are remembered and appreciated back home.

Last year more than 8,000 cards were collected locally from residents, schools and other organizations to wish members of our military well during the holidays. This year, I'm looking to top that number, but I need your help. If you'd like to take part, please follow the below guidelines:

- Do not include envelopes;
- Do not include personal letters, photos or inserts of any kind;
- Include your name/organization's name and address with each bundle of cards;
- Use generic salutations such as "Dear Service Member," as cards addressed to specific individuals cannot be delivered through this program; and
- Avoid cards with glitter or using loose glitter as it can aggravate health issues of ill and injured warriors.

Cards must be sent or dropped off to any of my District Offices in Watertown (317 Washington St.), Oswego (46 E. Bridge St.), or Ogdensburg (330 Ford St., City Hall basement). All cards must be received by November 15, 2014.

Our soldiers and their families sacrifice so much to defend our freedom. This holiday season, I hope you'll join me in sending a "touch of home" to the men and women who tirelessly serve our country.