



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

## Senator Flanagan Hosts Fifth Annual Fort Drum Day

JOHN J. FLANAGAN March 23, 2016

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Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan (2<sup>nd</sup> Senate District) recently joined with his Senate colleagues to host the fifth annual 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day recognition event in the Senate Chamber. The post is located in Jefferson County and is represented by Senator Patricia Ritchie (48<sup>th</sup> Senate District).

Senate Majority Leader Flanagan said, “Fort Drum Day gives the Senate a special opportunity to show our gratitude to New York’s 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division as their brave men and women continue to lead in the fight against global terrorism. I thank Senator Patty

Ritchie for her advocacy, and especially for her invite to tour the base last year so that I was able to see first-hand how important this facility, the soldiers, and their families are to the region and to the ongoing protection of our country.”

Senator Ritchie said, “Fort Drum Day grew out of the recognition that for many of my colleagues -- and for many New Yorkers -- Fort Drum is just a little too far to travel and visit, so we bring a little bit of Fort Drum to Albany. I’m proud to represent Fort Drum and the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and proud of the many accomplishments of the young men and women who volunteer to serve as members of our Armed Forces. You don’t have the easiest job in the world, but it may be the most important.”

**Fort Drum** is the largest Army post north of North Carolina and east of the Mississippi River. It is home to more than 35,000 soldiers, family members and civilian employees, and is the state’s largest single-site employer. In addition, it supports tens of thousands of jobs off base that contribute to the North Country’s economy. The facility has a significant economic impact on the region, with Fort Drum generating more than \$1.2 billion for the local economy in 2015 alone.

Brigadier General Paul Bontrager, Acting Senior Commander of Fort Drum, delivered formal remarks at the start of the Senate’s session. The invocation was delivered by Colonel Gary Fisher. They were accompanied by a 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division color guard; Colonel Bryan J. Laske, Garrison Commander; and soldiers and officers that included several from New York: Captain John Goodwill of Black River, Jefferson County; 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Donald Lindley of Guilderland, Albany County; Sergeant Jesse Deel of Geneseo, Livingston County; Private Matthew Fauci of Millbrook, Dutchess County; Specialist Michael Gross of Knox, Albany County; and Specialist Robert Piwowar of Elma, Erie County.

Fort Drum Day also features informative displays by 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain troops that are designed to educate lawmakers and visitors to the Capitol about the post's mission and responsibilities to national defense.