



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Getting to Know Your Hometown Heroes

PATTY RITCHIE July 18, 2016



New York State is home to more than 892,000 veterans who have proudly served their country, and many of those veterans live right here in Central and Northern New York. Recently, I had the honor of recognizing many of our “hometown heroes” at my **Veterans Hall of Fame** ceremony, an annual event that pays tribute to the sacrifices of men and women who have served as members of the United States Armed Forces, and have gone on to make a difference in their communities in their post-military lives.

This year's Veterans Hall of Fame honorees represented a diverse range of service—including Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, as well as nearly every significant theater from WWII Europe and the Pacific to Iraq and Afghanistan. In an effort to share their stories with people throughout our region, I've designed an exhibit that features biographies of each person recognized. The entire display—which includes all 36 of this year's honorees—is currently available for viewing during regular business hours at the Dulles State Office building, located at 317 Washington Street in Watertown. From there, libraries throughout our region will feature smaller displays that include the stories of their local veterans. I invite you to visit my website—[ritchie.nysenate.gov](http://ritchie.nysenate.gov)—in early August for a full list of locations featuring Veterans Hall of Fame displays.

As the state senator who represents the troops and families of the 10th Mountain Division, as well as more than 20,000 veterans throughout our region, I'm proud to stand up for those who have made such a tremendous commitment to our country. My Veterans Hall of Fame program is just one way I'm saluting those who served. Recently, I was proud to advocate for a law (S.7160) I cosponsored that provides up to three years of additional pension credit for public employees who are veterans. Under the old law, the credit was only available to veterans who served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam. This new law corrects that oversight, and recognizes the experience and training—as well as the sacrifice—of those who were members of the United States Armed Forces.

There is perhaps no more difficult job than answering the call to serve one's country. As citizens of this great nation, we should take every opportunity to express our sincere thanks to those who have served, and learn about their sacrifices. In the weeks to come, I invite you to check out my Veterans Hall of Fame exhibit, and learn about the “hometown heroes” who have given so much to make our country—and our communities—better places.