



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Help Senator Ritchie Send Christmas Cards to Our Troops

Brian Dwyer

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The holidays are a time to get the family together and celebrate the 'most wonderful time of the year'. Unfortunately, for many families here in the New York and across

the country, that is just not possible. Many of our Armed Forces members—including Fort Drum soldiers—will be spending the holidays on out-of-state military installations, overseas, or in a military or veteran's hospital.

In an effort to bring a little piece of home to them, State Senator Patty Ritchie is again this year collecting holiday greetings through the 'Christmas Cards for Our Troops' program, which sends warm wishes to our military members no matter where they'll be this holiday season.

This is the sixth year Senator Ritchie is collaborating with the Albany Veterans Miracle Center and Ogdensburg native and radio personality Melody Burns in asking people to send personally signed cards and greetings to veterans and active duty troops.

"Our servicemen and women make tremendous sacrifices every day of the year protecting our freedoms, often spending long periods of time away from their families and loved ones," said Senator Ritchie, who represents Fort Drum and its surrounding communities. "I hope you will join me again this holiday season in letting them know that their service and sacrifice has not been forgotten."

Last year, Senator Ritchie collected more than 10,000 cards for the program. The holiday greetings—which were donated by local students, community groups, businesses, individuals and families—were part of the more than 300,000 greetings distributed through the 'Christmas Cards for Our Troops' program.

Since 2012, with the help of Central and Northern New Yorkers, Senator Ritchie has collected more than 50,000 holiday cards that were sent to veterans and active duty military personnel throughout the world.

Those interested in participating are asked to follow the guidelines below:

- *Sign each card with your first name, city, state and a personal message if desired;
- *Do not include envelopes;
- *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.

Once signed, cards must be sent or dropped off to Senator Ritchie's offices by December 1st:

*Watertown: 317 Washington Street, Room 418, Watertown, NY 13601

*Oswego: 46 East Bridge Street, 1st Floor, Oswego, NY 13126

*Ogdensburg: 330 Ford St., Basement, Ogdensburg, NY 13669