



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Celebrates Central NY Veterans at Ft. Drum Event

PATTY RITCHIE May 3, 2012

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**



### **Eight Oswego County Veterans Recognized**

State Senator Patty Ritchie honored 39 veterans from across Central and Northern New York, including 8 from Oswego County today at a special ceremony at Ft. Drum.

\*\*\* [CLICK HERE TO SEE VIDEO OF THE FORT DRUM CELEBRATION](#) \*\*\*

\*\*\* [CLICK HERE TO READ COMPLETE BIOS OF NOMINEES](#) \*\*\*

In addition to recognizing veterans from Oswego County, the Senator announced retired US Army Col. Michael Plummer (Jefferson County), founder of the “Adopt-a-Platoon” program, as the 2012 inductee to the State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame.

“I’m honored to have the opportunity to say ‘thanks’ to these brave men and women who have one of the toughest, most selfless jobs there is—the job of protecting our freedom,” Senator Ritchie said.

“Their service has taken them across the globe—from Korea to Afghanistan—and they continue to serve even after returning home. We will never be able to repay the debt we owe these men and women, but we should take every opportunity we get to recognize their sacrifice.”

The 39 veterans all were nominated by family, friends, co-workers and comrades-in-arms for their military service to our nation, and their continuing work and involvement in causes that benefit and improve our local communities.

Each nominee was presented with a plaque outlining highlights of their service at the ceremony, which was held at USO Ft. Drum’s Heritage Center. Representatives of the Army’s 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division were also on-hand to recognize the honorees.

Short biographies of the Oswego County nominees are available below. More complete biographies can be seen by [clicking this link](#).

### Oswego County

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**Richard Erb Sr. of Fulton** – After serving in the US Marine Corps, he returned home where he was named Fulton’s Veteran of the Year for his service to the American Legion and the VFW

**Rev. Moritz Fuchs of Fulton** – After fighting to defeat Germany, he served as a bodyguard to the presiding judge of the Nuremberg War trials before returning home where later joined the priesthood and continues serving his fellow veterans

**Francis Kehoe of Fulton** – A former US Marine who served in Korea and later as a guard for

President Eisenhower at Camp David before joining the Naval Reserves, he has spent his life serving veterans in the VFW and the American Legion

**Russell Marsden of Mexico** - Served as a helicopter crew chief in the Air Cavalry after joining the Army in 1969. He serves veterans as commander of the VFW Post in Mexico

**John McGraw of Fulton** – A survivor of the D-Day invasion where he helped clear the Germans and the landmines from Omaha Beach, he has continued serving his fellow veterans as Fulton’s American Legion Commander and Fulton’s Veteran of the Year

**John E. Rucynski of Parish** – As the seventh Command Sgt. Major of the Army Reserve, the former Vietnam Marine Corps veteran could best be described as the enlisted man’s top union representative

**Ronald Sakonyi of Constantia** – After earning 10 air medals in the Navy during the Vietnam War, serving in the Army at the National Military Intelligence Center, he has continued serving his community as a county legislator and veterans leader at the local, county and state level.

**Michael Vaughn of Cleveland** – After earning a silver star for heroism in Vietnam, he returned home where he has served as a children’s basketball coach and volunteer EMT.

[Click here for complete bios of all the nominees.](#)