



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## '10th Mountain/ft. Drum Day' Celebrated at Capitol

PATTY RITCHIE May 23, 2012

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### **Historic Senate Chamber Speech by Commanding General Milley Caps Capitol Celebration**

Members of Ft. Drum's 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division were honored today at the State Capitol, at the first ever "10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and Ft. Drum Day."

**\*\*\* [CLICK HERE TO VIEW GENERAL MILLEY'S HISTORIC SPEECH IN THE SENATE CHAMBER](#) \*\*\***

The event, organized by Senator Ritchie, celebrated the commanders and soldiers of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division for their ongoing role in our nation's defense; as well as the post itself, for the key part it plays in the region's economy, as the North Country's leading employer.

\*\*\* SEE MORE PICTURES OF 'FORT DRUM DAY' BY CLICKING HERE \*\*\*

"Even though the Capitol is just a few hundred miles away, many people in Albany and other parts of New York State just don't realize the vital role Ft. Drum plays in our nation's defense," said Senator Ritchie.

"Ft. Drum is the largest U.S. Army post in the Northeastern United States, and the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division is among the Army's most deployed combat units. Today is my way of exposing the entire state to the installation's importance to the North Country economy, as well as the sacrifices of the men and women who call Ft. Drum home."

Major General Mark A. Milley visited the Capitol for the first time ever to attend the event, and addressed the Senate Chamber.

"With the important work you have to do here, we brought today, some of Ft. Drum to you. It's very important that you, the representatives of the people and the American people, maintain close contact," said Major Milley. "We will be forever grateful that 23 May, will be Ft. Drum Day."

As part of the day's events, a special Color Guard of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division troops presented the flag and led the Pledge to open the Senate's daily public session.

The Senate recognized members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division—represented by 15 troops from New York, who were on the floor of the Senate for the ceremonies—with an official resolution.

Also present in the Senate chamber were representatives from the Ft. Drum Regional Liaison Organization and Mrs. Dawn Esposito, a Gold Star Mother from Brentwood, New York, whose son, Michael Esposito was killed in action while serving in Afghanistan as a member of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division.

The Division also saluted New Yorkers with a Blackhawk helicopter fly-by of the Capitol and an exhibition of the post's military hardware and personnel, arranged by Senator Ritchie and staffed by nearly 60 Ft. Drum soldiers.

"I would like to extend my most sincere thanks to Major General Milley for joining me today in Albany, as well as the other representatives from Ft. Drum who helped organize and were on-hand for the day's events," said Senator Ritchie.

"I would also like to thank Governor Andrew Cuomo, and my fellow colleagues for supporting and promoting the achievements of Ft. Drum and its soldiers, who exhibit the highest ideals of honor, service and duty."

Senator Ritchie has been a strong advocate for Ft. Drum, securing budget funding to address a critical, regional housing shortage threatening continued growth of the post, and to help protect the facility in the event of new federal military budget cuts.