



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie's 'Voices of America' Project Is Making History

PATTY RITCHIE July 3, 2012

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### **Local Veterans Memories to be Made Part of State Archives**

State Senator Patty Ritchie today announced she's submitted 16 taped interviews with area veterans—from a Fulton soldier who deactivated landmines with his bayonet on D-Day, to an Air Force officer who interviewed Russian defectors during the Cold War—to the state's archives as part of her "Voices of America" Project to record the memories of those who served.

The interviews are being sent to the New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center, in Saratoga Springs, NY, to be included as part of the museum's Veterans Oral History Program. The program was created in 2000 to capture the stories of World War II veterans, and recently expanded to include all conflicts and peacetime veterans, but budget cuts have made it more difficult for the museum to add to its collection.

"Veterans of Central and Northern New York played an important role in every conflict in America's history," said Senator Ritchie. "Since America declared its independence and celebrated its first 4th of July, New Yorkers have always been willing to put their lives on the line in the service to their nation, and this project will help future generations better understand the sacrifice and service of our men and women

in uniform.

The interviews include the memories of the bodyguard to the chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg war trials, veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, and veterans of the Korean, Vietnam and Cold Wars.

“Many people only read or hear about veterans’ experiences that are written by someone else,” said Senator Ritchie. “But these are the firsthand memories of soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen who were there on the beaches, in the jungles, and traversing oceans and skies to defend freedom, and they will be a permanent part of New York’s military history.”

Senator Ritchie arranged the interviews with each of the veterans in her offices in Watertown, Oswego and Ogdensburg.

“The Oral History Program was created as a way of preserving the individual stories and recollections of the Greatest Generation of veterans who served in a war that ended 67 years ago, but was expanded to capture the thoughts of all of America’s heroes,” said Senator Ritchie.

“I am very pleased to be able to help with this effort, and to help give these soldiers and service men and women a rightful place in our state’s history.”

Senator Ritchie will announce future dates for interested veterans to record their own remembrances for submission to the Museum.

Excerpts from some of the veterans’ interviews [can be viewed here](#).

Veterans’ interviews submitted to the Museum include the following:

### **Oswego County**

John Canale, Oswego, Army, WW II

Harold Blake, Fulton, U.S. Army, WW II

Rev. Moritz Fuchs, Fulton, Army, WWII

Francis Kehoe, Fulton, Marines, Navy Reserve

John McGraw, Fulton, Army, WWII

Jack Rucynski, Parish, Marines, Army, Vietnam

Ronald Sakonyi, Constantia, Navy, Army, Vietnam

Miles Becker, Oswego, U.S. Army, Vietnam

Leonard Manniccia, Oswego, U.S. Army, WW II

### **Jefferson County**

Timothy Ambrose, Black River, Air Force, Vietnam War

Gerald “Jerry” Tighe, Watertown, Navy, Cold War

Edward Wallace, Carthage, Army, Iraq

Judy Gonzalez-Wallace, Carthage, Army Cold War,

James Williams Jr., Felts Mills, Army, Cold War

### **St. Lawrence County**

Thomas Morrison, Potsdam, Army, Cold War

Ronald “Joe” Fields, Lisbon, Air Force, Vietnam