



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Saluting Our Soldiers, Past and Present

PATTY RITCHIE May 19, 2014

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### Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Living so close to Fort Drum, we see firsthand the tremendous sacrifices our soldiers make in the name of defending both our country and our freedom. Enduring everything from long periods away from their loved ones to courageously fighting on the front lines, there is no way we could ever repay our troops for their selflessness.

While we should show our appreciation to veterans and current service members year-round, May—which is Military Appreciation Month—presents special opportunities to recognize our troops. From Armed Forces Day to the upcoming Memorial Day Holiday, we are given the chance to salute the more than 90 million men and women who have served their country throughout the history of the United States.

Recently, I had the opportunity to honor 28 men and women from throughout Central and Northern New York who have served in various branches of the United States military at a special ceremony that took place at Fort Drum. The honorees were all nominated for the New York State Senate “Veterans Hall of Fame” by friends, family members and fellow soldiers not only for serving their country but also for their work to make a difference in our communities.

Throughout the past several years, I’ve not only been able to honor dozens of veterans, I’ve also been able to learn about their personal stories of struggle and triumph. From Army nurses who made it their mission to care for soldiers during WWII to those who have served our country during more recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan their courage and selflessness never fail to amaze me. To learn more about this year’s honorees, I encourage you to visit my website, [www.ritchie.nysenate.gov](http://www.ritchie.nysenate.gov).

As Memorial Day approaches and Military Appreciation Month draws to a close, it is my hope that you’ll make it a point not only to thank our troops both past and present at every opportunity you get. If you’re a current or former member of the United States military, I thank you for your service and dedication to our country.