



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Hosts Sixth Annual 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day

PATTY RITCHIE May 2, 2017



State Senator Patty Ritchie welcomed the brave men and women of the 10th Mountain Division, including its new Commanding General, Major General Walter Piatt to the State Capitol Tuesday for “10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day.”

This is the sixth year Senator Ritchie has hosted the event, which aims to highlight the contributions of the Division to our national security, as well as the ways in which the installation benefits our regional and state economies.

“When our nation faces a crisis, it turns to the Army, and the Army turns to the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum,” said Senator Ritchie. “I’m so humbled to be able to host these brave soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division and to show my colleagues how vital their work is. It’s so important to host Fort Drum Day so we never forget what these selfless heroes are all about.”

The highlight of the full day event was an address in the Senate Chamber by Major General Piatt, who just assumed command of the 10th Mountain Division—one of the most deployed units in the U.S—last week.

“Our Army saw the incredible training value in the foothills of the Adirondacks and the first Legislature to walk these halls understood their state’s value in supporting our nation’s defense,” said Major General Walter Piatt. “The synergy of this relationship, with its roots here more than a century ago, has ensured that Fort Drum is where our nation looks when she needs to hone the skills of its warfighters.”

As part of 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day, the Fort Drum Color Guard opened the day’s Senate session and Division Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Gary Fisher delivered the invocation. In addition, lawmakers adopted a Senate Resolution proclaiming May 2nd as 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day. They also approved legislation—sponsored by Senator Ritchie—that would establish a special license plate to recognize the 10th Mountain Division and their service to our country. The measure (S.860-A) now heads to the Assembly.

Earlier in the day, Senator Ritchie and 10th Mountain Division leadership met with Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, as well as Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan.

Displays throughout the Legislative Office Building were also featured and demonstrated various types of equipment used by troops to defend our nation. Community groups integral to the bond between the North Country and Fort Drum also manned displays and taught lawmakers and visitors about their missions.

In addition to Major General Piatt, Army leadership in attendance for the event included Division Command Sergeant Major Albertson, Garrison Commander Colonel Laske, Deputy Garrison Commander Eric Wagenaar, Commander of the NY National Guard General Ray Shields.

Among the several dozen troops in attendance were a number from New York State, including Captain Ryan Marquette from Rome; Staff Sergeant John Flynn of Schenectady; Sergeant David Speer of Hilton; Private First Class Michael Bathrick of Poughkeepsie; Private First Class Reginald Castillo of Queens; Specialist Holden Schoenig of Bellport; Specialist James Cox of Buffalo; Private First Class Alan Harris of Watertown; Private First Class Michael Bathrick of Poughkeepsie and Private First Class Reginald Castillo of Queens.

*Attn: photo editors:*

*Senator Ritchie is pictured in the above photo touring 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day displays with Major General Piatt*