



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Helping Bring a Piece of Home to our Deployed Soldiers

[PATTY RITCHIE](#) November 3, 2017

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Our military service members make tremendous sacrifices every day of the year protecting our freedoms. Not only are they putting their lives on the line, they have to do it thousands of miles away from family and friends. It is a sacrifice that is always hardest during the holiday season.

Many of our service members—including those serving on Fort Drum—will be spending the holidays on out-of-state installations, overseas or in a military or veteran's hospital. That is why it is critical we let our heroes know that their service and sacrifice will never be forgotten. It is also why I am asking you to join me in taking part in two special programs designed to help bring a small piece of home to our military members and their families, friends and communities for the holidays.

For the sixth year in a row, I am collaborating with the Albany Veterans Miracle Center and Ogdensburg native and radio personality Melody Burns for the 'Christmas Cards for Troops' program. Through this effort, I am asking people to donate personally signed cards and greetings to veterans and active duty troops. Since we started, we have sent 50,000 holiday cards to veterans and active duty military personnel throughout the world.

Being so close to Fort Drum, and serving so many of its families, I have seen just how meaningful it is for soldiers to know that we are thinking of them and how important they are to us. Last year, we helped collect more than 10,000 cards for the program. The cards were donated by local students, community groups, businesses, families and people like you. In all, 'Christmas Cards for our Troops' donated 300,000 greetings last year.

That is not all. I am also teaming up with a program called 'Cell Phones for Soldiers'. This program recycles gently used cell phones and provides free calling cards to soldiers and veterans. Since 2004, the group has provided more than 300,000,000 minutes of free talk time to our men and women in uniform to call home.

As we know, military families live unique lives. The challenges they face are sometimes things we do not even think about. Something as simple as a phone call could be the best gift our soldiers and their families receive this holiday season.

The holidays are fast approaching. I hope you will join me in bringing our military families a little closer together and to celebrate the 'most wonderful time of the year'. For more information on these programs and how you can help out, I invite you to visit my website at www.ritchie.nysenate.gov. Happy holidays to you and yours!