



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Senator Ritchie's Community Spotlight: The "Honor the Mountain" Monument

SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE November 1, 2018

| ISSUE: **MILITARY APPRECIATION**



Thanks to the men and women of Fort Drum and the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, both past and present, Veterans Day in our region is always extra special. This year, Veterans Day—which is November 11<sup>th</sup>—marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of World War I.

Our service men and women have deployed across the globe to defend our nation and help spread democracy to countries without freedom. The 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division has played a

major role in this effort. Originally organized in 1943, soldiers of the Division have been deployed for missions in Italy in World War II, Germany, Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan, Iraq and more.

Veterans Day is when we recognize the service and sacrifice of those who have put their lives on the line to protect our freedom—including the thousands who have served as members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division. To help our region do just that, the city of Watertown provided a piece of land, up high on its historic Thompson Park where it overlooks the city, for a special monument to honor the brave soldiers of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, their families and the civilian workforce on Fort Drum. In July of 2016, that monument—known as the “Honor the Mountain” Monument—was unveiled for the entire city and region to see. I was proud to support construction of the monument by delivering \$100,000 in special funding to assist with its completion.

The monument serves as symbol of appreciation from the communities surrounding Fort Drum. Its shape is a mountain rising from the ground, complete with rough-cut edges and jagged peaks. Bronze reliefs, designed and created by renowned artist Susan Grant Raymond of Boulder, Colorado, tell the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division’s story from its activation in 1943 to its reactivation on Fort Drum in 1985 and recent deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. Its fourth side was left blank, in hopes the next generation will commemorate the next chapter of the Division’s story.

Not only does the monument pay tribute to those who have served and continue to serve, it also is a reminder of the unique relationship that exists between the North Country civilian community, and soldiers and families stationed at Fort Drum. This Veterans Day, I hope you can take a trip to Thompson Park, visit the monument, honor those who have served our country and experience the wonderful connection our region has with our heroes in uniform.