



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Help Send Christmas Cheer To Our Troops

SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE October 18, 2019

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Because Fort Drum is part of the North Country, every day we see the sacrifices made by our troops and the positive impact they have on our community. One of the greatest sacrifices made by military families is spending long periods apart from those they love the most.

As the home of the 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum's soldiers often deploy to states and countries far away. Unfortunately, the mission does not pause for the holidays. These deployments mean soldiers can be working far away from home—and their loved

ones—during the holiday season. In addition, a number of service members and veterans currently in hospitals will be away from home as well. It is critical that we make the extra effort to show these men and women just how much we appreciate all they do to protect our freedom.

That's why, for the eighth year in a row, I am teaming up with the Albany Veterans Miracle Center and Ogdensburg native and radio personality Melody Burns for the "Christmas Cards for Our Troops" program. This special initiative spreads cheer to our service members by sending them personal greeting cards during the holiday season.

This year, we are asking people deliver personally signed Christmas cards to my offices in Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties. In the last seven years, we have collected more than 70,000 cards thanks to people just like you. These greetings came from local libraries, businesses, schools and other organizations. Local families and individuals across our region have also joined in. Just last year, my offices were able to collect 10,000 holiday cards locally. These cards were part of 300,000 that were sent on to active duty troops and veterans through the program.

If you would like to join in this year's effort to recognize those who serve, please follow the below guidelines:

- Sign each card with your first name, city, state and a personal message if desired;
- Do not include envelopes;
- Include your name/organization's name and address with each bundle of cards;
- Use generic salutations such as "Dear Service Member," as cards addressed to specific individuals cannot be delivered through this program; and

- Avoid cards with glitter or using loose glitter, as it can aggravate health issues of ill and injured warriors.

By November 6th, send or drop off signed cards at my offices:

- Watertown: 317 Washington Street, Room 418, Watertown, NY 13601
- Oswego: 46 East Bridge Street, 1st Floor, Oswego, NY 13126
- Ogdensburg: 330 Ford St., Basement, Ogdensburg, NY 13669

Any cards collected after November 6th will be distributed locally.

Our service members make tremendous sacrifices in the name of protecting our freedom—and for many, that means being away from family and friends during the holiday season. I hope you will join me in this effort to let them know how much they are appreciated not just during the holidays, but also all year long.