

The Liaison



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Northeast Staffers and State TAGS Visit Drum

On November 7th, John Deans, chair of FDRLO, and Peter Clough, Director of Operations, participated in a Congressional staff visit to Fort Drum hosted by the installation and Congressman John McHugh's office. The purpose of the visit was to provide Congressional staff who work for Members of Congress from the Northeast or who serve on the House Army Caucus with an opportunity to visit one of the most modern military installations in the world and the home of the most deployed division in the Army, the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry).

Congressman McHugh's office also invited the National Guard Adjutant General's (TAGs) from states with troops that train and/or mobilize at Fort Drum. Over 30 Congressional staffers made the trip from Washington, DC. General Maguire, New York's Adjutant General, was joined by fellow TAGs or their representatives from Maine, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Maryland, Connecticut, Vermont and Pennsylvania for the visit.

Attendees received an overview of Fort Drum's state of the art facilities and hands on

experience at the installation's modern indoor firing range, Staff also toured the training



area and ranges via helicopter with a special demonstration taking place at the Military Operations in Urban Training (MOUT) site where soldiers demonstrated entering and securing a building.

The day culminated in a series of briefings by the 10th Mountain Division Chief of Staff (rear) Col. Creighton, garrison commander, Col. Ray Helton, FDRLO, and New York National Guard. It was clear to all who attended that Fort Drum is critical to Northern New York, the Northeast and the Nation, and that the community's support for the Army in Northern New York is second to none!

Feedback from participants has been excellent and our hats are off to Anne LeMay in Congressman John McHugh's office and Fort Drum for a job well done.



North Country community members and Fort Drum leaders have officially kicked-off **Operation Yellow Ribbon** to encourage communities to show support by decorating holiday trees, buildings, homes, or other area landmarks with yellow ribbons, flags, signs, or other patriotic themes. By mid-December, the City of Watertown, the Villages of Sackets Harbor and Clayton had agreed to decorate their holiday trees with yellow ribbons.

With thousands of Fort Drum soldiers and other local service members serving overseas in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Africa and elsewhere, this campaign will show that their home community appreciates what they are doing for this country and for our freedom.

On Nov 28th, the Salmon Run Mall began displaying a yellow ribbon tree near the center court. Yellow ribbons are on sale for display on that tree, and others throughout the mall. As part of the joint fundraising effort, volunteers also have yellow ribbon lapel pins available for sale. All proceeds will benefit the *Climb to Glory Fund*, which supports family-centered programs and events offered at Fort Drum. The need for these events understandably increases during times of increased deployments

As part of **Operation Yellow Ribbon**, several other events and activities are being planned to show support for the military and their family members. One of the major events being planned is the "Yellow Ribbon Rally" scheduled for Saturday, January 31st at the Salmon Run Mall. The event will include entertainment, speakers, and displays. Additional information will be provided on all events as the dates draw nearer.



Congratulations

to our own

Elizabeth C. Fipps,
FDRLO's Secretary.

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of the
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Comments from the Chair

John W. Deans

This is the time of year when life often seems its busiest. That is especially true for Fort Drum's soldiers and family members who are answering our nation's call at home and around the globe. Yet, for all of us, the holiday season remains very special and each of us will no doubt find that precious moment or two when we can pause, reflect and celebrate some of life's blessings.

For those of us busily engaged with the FDRLO, how fortunate we are to have a mission and agenda of work so worthy of our labors. And, how fortunate we are to have so many partners in our endeavors to help ensure that a strong Fort Drum is an integral part of the North Country's future.

During this most special time of year, I want to take this opportunity on behalf of FDRLO to extend both best wishes for the holidays and special thanks to some of those with whom we work so closely and whose contributions are so important to our success.

First, I want to thank Fort Drum's leadership for its long-standing and on-going support and partnership as we work on issues and initiatives so important to both Fort Drum and our greater community's future. How

fortunate we are that North Country residents, both military and civilian, take such pride in the special relationship we have built and work so hard to ensure our region fulfills the needs and dreams of all who call the North Country home.

A special thanks is in order as well to the elected officials at all levels, their staff members and governmental agencies who consistently open their doors to us as we seek support to further enhance Fort Drum's value to this nation, our state and northern New York. This strong and consistent support of FDRLO allows us to make the case for Fort Drum's future as well as to be an effective partner in initiatives expanding its military training capabilities and the quality of life of soldiers and family members

And of course, we can be thankful as well for a great team of FDRLO members, Directors, volunteers and staff whose dedication and expertise is producing progress on several fronts. Our Drum 2020 team is actively leading the charge in advance of the BRAC 2005 round and the RCI Housing Task Force continues its important work. Meanwhile, staff and other FDRLO workgroups are examining additional ways we can fulfill our commitment to help make Fort Drum and the North Country, "the Army's, Soldier's and Family's first choice."

This truly is a busy time but it is also one when we are reminded how blessed we are. It is a time to say thank you to so many. And with Operation Yellow Ribbon underway, what an appropriate time to show our appreciation of the soldiers and families to whom we all owe the biggest thank you of all.

Happy holidays and thank you everyone.

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John Deans and Assemblyman Aubertine thank members of the 10th Mountain Division Band who stopped by the 4th Floor of 200 Washington Street to do some caroling!



DRUM 2020 UPDATE

An edited version of the following letter recently appeared in the Watertown Daily Times. Mr. Goodfellow is a 19 year old Jefferson Community College student who was assigned to research and write a letter for a class project. We at Drum 2020 hope his professor marked this effort with an "A"; he has been invited to become a part of the FDRLO's task force to keep and expand Fort Drum. Keith Caughlin and Beth Fipps, Drum 2020 Chairs

The potential of Fort Drum being cut back or closed is a real possibility that could have devastating effects for the Upstate community. The Defense Authorization Act of 2002 endorsed a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round for 2005. The BRAC commission's goal is to deal with the issue of the nation's 20-25% excess in base capacity. According to government calculations the 2005 round of closures has the potential to save the Pentagon \$6.6 billion annually. The 2005 closure round of one- quarter of the nation's bases will mean that around 100 of the country's 425 based will be shut down.

The recent expansion of the Wheeler-Sack Airfield and the 10th Mountain division's vital role in Afghanistan may not be enough to save Fort Drum. The 20 year leases on military housing begin to expire in 2007. This may lead to 10th Mountain division being relocated and Fort Drum will be either closed or drastically reduced.

The loss of the Fort Drum population would be devastating to the local community. Businesses would close and area economic growth would be hampered. Chain stores like Dick's and the future Target in the mall, Wal-mart, K-mart, Staples, Lowe's and the new Home Depot may decide to leave. The potential for new businesses coming into the area, such as a Wal-mart in Lewis County would cease. Also many of the area's small businesses would suffer. The loss of the clientele from Fort Drum and having to compete with struggling big market stores like the ones mentioned earlier would be a dagger in the heart for many local businesses.

An important local organization that is striving to ensure the continuance of Fort Drum is the Drum 2020 initiative. Drum 2020 is working to expand the base and promote its usefulness as a mobilization point for the 10th Mountain Division and other Reserve and National Guard units. Another asset for Fort Drum is its versatility for training in all

types of seasonal conditions. Drum 2020 recognizes the uniqueness and value of Fort Drum to the Nation's military. The future success of this organization will depend on increased support from the local community to secure the base from the BRAC commission.

Our elected officials have also worked hard for Fort Drum, but need stronger public support. Representative McHugh secured \$18.3 million for base enhancement projects and Governor Pataki issued an executive order creating the Military Base Task Force that is working to preserve military bases and jobs in the state.

Fort Drum is not secure from the upcoming base cuts, despite playing an important role in current military operations. The loss of base would be demoralizing for the area's economic welfare. Our state officials are working hard for Fort Drum, but they need increased public support. It is up to all local businesses and concerned citizens to voice concern to Senators Schumer, Clinton, Representative McHugh and Governor Pataki.

Sincerely,
Thomas Goodfellow



Gary Derouin and Scott Gray. Chairs of Membership and Fundraising for Drum 2020, accept a check for \$2500 from former City Councilman James Brett, representing the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, Inc.



A Message from Congressman John M. McHugh

As many of you know, I had the privilege of attending Fort Drum's Operation Iraqi Freedom Recognition Ceremony on November 25 along with community leaders from our area, families of deployed soldiers and soldiers who had just returned from Iraq. While the American people are most familiar with the 10th Mountain Division as the first U.S. conventional unit to engage the enemy in Afghanistan after the events of September 11, 2001, they are less familiar with the significant role Fort Drum soldiers have also played in Operation Iraqi Freedom. As long-time supporters of Fort Drum and its soldiers, we know that the sun never sets on the 10th Mountain Division.

As a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee and the Chairman of its Total Force Subcommittee, I had the opportunity this past October to personally visit Iraq for a second time, following an initial visit



Rep. John M. McHugh meets with Lieutenant General Sanchez, commander of CJTF-7, in Baghdad.

in May. No matter where I traveled, I either met with 10th Mountain Division soldiers or encountered military personnel from other units who commented on the important contributions Fort Drum personnel made to their efforts. I am enormously proud of our soldiers and understand the hardships they and their families have had to endure during these challenging times. I was heartened to find troop morale to be higher in October than when I first visited in May. While deployments are long and difficult, military personnel understand and believe in the importance of their mission in Iraq.

The one resounding message our Congressional delegation repeatedly heard from leaders of neighboring countries in the region during our October trip was that the

United States must stay its course, particularly as we continue our fight in the war on terrorism. Failure to rebuild Iraq from a country devastated by years of Saddam Hussein's tyrannical rule, to a democratic nation able to stand on its own, would add further instability to an already volatile region and, thus, have far-reaching and disastrous consequences for America and the world.

Based upon what I witnessed during my most recent visit to Iraq, I found that significant progress was being made toward the creation of a stable, civil society in that country. Throughout our travels, my colleagues and I witnessed the restoration of basic services and the sincere gratitude of the Iraqi people. In fact, when it comes to quelling violence and crime, our uniformed personnel are now playing a lesser role. One of the true indicators of the progress of reconstruction efforts can be found in the attacks that were mounted during our visit against the Baghdad hotel. Although a loss of life tragically occurred, the larger story was the fact that the terrorists were kept from their main target through the action of the newly trained Iraq Security Force. The story is less about the bombing and more about the Iraq Security Force's work to stop further violence related to it. This type of heroism by Iraqis on behalf of their country is a moving story of success.

Clearly, there is much that we have accomplished and much that must yet be achieved in our ongoing efforts to bring peace and stability to the Iraqi people. I am confident that Fort Drum soldiers will continue their important contributions to U.S. efforts in Iraq and around the world.

***May God bless our soldiers
and their families.***



Rep. John M. McHugh and members of a US special forces team in Baghdad, October 11, 2003.

Thanksgiving with the 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan

By Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton

Over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, I visited 10th Mountain Division troops in Afghanistan and Iraq on a delegation led by Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island. It was my first official trip as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. I brought with me to Iraq and Afghanistan over 3500 letters expressing support for the troops from New York schoolchildren. Throughout the trip, I was so proud and impressed with the men and women in uniform in both nations, especially those of the 10th Mountain Division.

Our Thanksgiving Day in Afghanistan included two Thanksgiving dinners with 10th Mountain Division soldiers, one in Bagram and one in Kandahar. After some morning meetings in Kabul, we traveled to the Kabul airport where we were met by General Lloyd Austin, the commanding general of the 10th Mountain Division. General Austin flew with Senator Reed and me in a Blackhawk helicopter from Kabul to Bagram Air Base, his headquarters in Afghanistan.

At Bagram Air Base, we heard first hand from General Austin and his team about some of the remarkable accomplishments of our troops. We then headed over to the Viper Dining Hall for the first of two Thanksgiving dinners with troops. Seated at my table were troops from the 10th Mountain Division as well as troops from other units who grew up in New York. It was truly an honor and a privilege to spend Thanksgiving dinner with these brave men and women. We also delivered our first package of letters from New York schoolchildren to soldiers.



Senator Clinton with two of the 10th Mountain Division troops that she had Thanksgiving dinner with

After our first dinner, General Austin joined us for our flight to the U.S. military base in Kandahar, Afghanistan, the home of the 2nd Brigade, 22nd Infantry of the 10th Mountain Division. When we arrived, I lined up for our second Thanksgiving dinner. Again, I sat at a table with 10th Mountain division soldiers and other soldiers who call New York home. Senator Reed and I expressed our deep appreciation to these troops, many of whom had recently been in combat operations.

At the end of the evening, General Austin and a soldier from the 10th Mountain presented me with several gifts including a history of Afghanistan and a commemorative coin. We delivered our second package of letters from New York schoolchildren to soldiers.

Our final meeting with 10th Mountain soldiers took place two days later in Kirkuk, Iraq. On a visit with the 4th Infantry Division, we had lunch with several soldiers from New York including 10th Mountain Division soldiers based in Kirkuk.

I am very proud of the work that our soldiers are doing in both Iraq and Afghanistan and take special pride in the role that soldiers from Fort Drum are playing in the War on Terrorism. I look forward to welcoming the troops from Afghanistan home this spring and congratulating them on a job well done.



Senator Clinton shares Thanksgiving Dinner with the 10th Mountain Division and NY troops at the Bagram Air Base

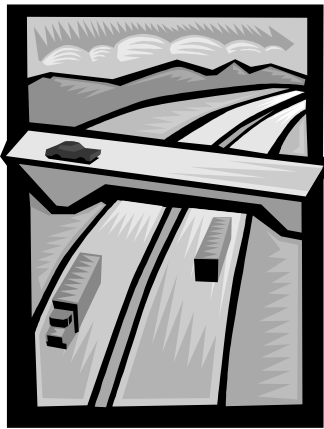


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Update of Fort Drum Connector Project

At the September 26th FDRLO meeting, State Senator James W. Wright and representatives from NYS DOT Region 7 announced the initiation of the Fort Drum Connector Project. The following is an update on the progress of this project.

The New York State Department of Transportation is continuing to gather information for the Fort Drum connector project. Meetings have been held with the Town Boards of Pamela and LeRay as well as the Jefferson County planning office and with economic development planners.

The Department is anticipating the first of several Public Informational Meetings to be held on January 15, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Calcium Primary School. During that meeting the DOT will be seeking public comments relative to the project.

The meeting will be unique in that the Department will not be presenting proposed design alternatives. Instead, detailed aerial photos will be presented and Department representatives will be asking those attending the informational meeting for their thoughts on where the highway would be best located, and why. The suggestions collected at the meeting will be considered as the Department develops alternatives to be studied as part of the project's environmental impact statement. Proposals from environmental consultants have been received and the final selection process is expected to be concluded in December.

FDRLO MISSION

To foster effective communication, understanding and mutual support by serving as the primary point of coordination for resolution of those issues which transcend the specific interests of the military and civilian communities of the Fort Drum region.