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For Immediate Release

Utah National Guard Colonel Receives Legion of Merit

DRAPER, Utah – Colonel Larry Schmidt of the Utah Army National Guard received the Legion of Merit, one of the highest peacetime U.S. military decorations, in a ceremony Sept. 4 at the Utah Guard's Draper headquarters.

Schmidt, of Draper, enlisted in the Utah National Guard in 1976, and he has served in various full-time capacities since 1995.

According to Army Regulation 600-8-22, the Legion of Merit "is awarded to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States or a friendly foreign nation who has distinguished himself or herself by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements."

The award is the second-highest peacetime decoration that may be bestowed on a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, and is traditionally given to senior leaders upon their retirement in recognition of their distinguished service. In Schmidt's case, however, he is not retiring, but rather transitioning from a five-year assignment as Utah National Guard chief of joint staff to serving as director of the U.S. Property and Fiscal Office at the Utah Guard's Draper headquarters.

"For Larry Schmidt, every day it was been about serving the needs of Soldiers," said Utah Guard adjutant general Maj. Gen. Brian Tarbet at the ceremony, referring to Schmidt's service as chief of staff, as well as his 12 years as full-time State Judge Advocate for the Utah National Guard.

"I was told early on in my career that without traditional Guardmembers the full-time staff would have no purpose," said Schmidt. "And I have tried to mentor young full-time officers and enlisted personnel along the same line of thinking."

"I had a lot of mentors who did it right, who not only said it, but also walked it," Schmidt added. "I'm very honored. I haven't had a day that I've wanted to quit. I've loved every minute of it."