

## Retiring Buyer heaped with praise

By Maureen Groppe 4/17/10

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WASHINGTON — Army Secretary John McHugh praised Indiana Rep. Steve Buyer for service to his country and to fellow servicemen at a ceremony Thursday honoring Buyer's 30 years in the Army Reserve.

"You have always been a hero of mine, and you always helped me realize I could do better," McHugh said. "So God bless you, and get your green suit up here."

Buyer, a colonel in the Reserve, announced in January that he would not seek re-election and would retire from the Army this year.

"I've had an extraordinary opportunity to serve the Army and the nation in uniform while at the same time balancing those responsibilities and being a member of Congress," Buyer said. "This is a moment in life that is pretty extraordinary."

Thursday's ceremony also honored the retirement of Buyer's brother, Col. John J. Buyer, who served in the Army for nearly 30 years.

The Buyer brothers graduated from The Citadel military academy, their father's alma mater. The brothers' grandfather served in World War I.

The retirement ceremony was held in the Capitol Hill rooms of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee; Buyer is the panel's top Republican.

"We have had no better champion for our soldiers and their families," said Indiana National Guard Adjutant Gen. Martin Umberger, who gave Buyer Indiana's Distinguished Service Medal.

McHugh pinned on Buyer's uniform the Legion of Merit, an award for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service and achievements.

Certificates from President Barack Obama thanking both Buyers for their service were read.

There also were plenty of lighter moments and good-natured ribbing mixed in with the military pomp and awards.

McHugh noted that with all the military brass packing the room, there were enough two- and three-stars to re-create the Milky Way.

"It just convinces me that you felt as I did when I heard that Steve Buyer was retiring: 'That's too good to be true,'" McHugh, who has known Buyer for nearly two decades, told the crowd. "You kind of had to show up just to make sure he did."

During the first gulf war, Buyer served as a legal adviser in prisoner-of-war camps. His military honors include the Bronze Star Medal.

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