

## **BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY**

### **From German Immigrant to American Hero: Sergeant Charles Schroeter, U.S. Army Congressional Medal of Honor**

Charles Schroeter was born on the Fourth of July, 1837, a native of Lüneburg, Germany, but a man who would make his mark in United States history.

Schroeter entered the country at New Orleans in 1860, but relocated to St. Louis when the Civil War broke out. On 27 February 1863, he enlisted for three years as a private in the 1st Missouri Volunteer Cavalry Regiment.

During the War, Pvt. Schroeter saw action against Confederate forces in Arkansas. He participated in the expedition to capture Little Rock, the state capitol. His Regiment also took part in the Red River Campaign in a hard-fought action to capture a Confederate stronghold at Camden. Pvt. Schroeter was discharged from federal service on 1 September 1865, at Little Rock.

Schroeter returned to St. Louis, and on 9 August 1866, enlisted as a private in the 8th U.S. Cavalry Regiment. Posted to Camp Whipple, Ariz., the Regiment became embroiled in the Snake War fighting Paiute, Bannock and Shoshone warriors.

On 5 October 1869, an Apache band led by Chief Cochise ambushed a stagecoach, killing the driver, a passenger and four cavalymen. Schroeter was among troopers from the 1st and 8th Cavalry who tracked Cochise's band into the Chiricahua Mountains of southeast Arizona. Led by Capt. Reuben Bernard, the Cavalry cornered Cochise late on 20 October 1869.

The battle that followed is called the Campaign of the Rocky Mesa. It was a miserable day, cold with rain and hail, when the cavalymen attacked. A fierce firefight continued until near sunset with troopers exchanging shots with the well-hidden Apaches. Bernard later nominated 32 of his men for the Congressional Medal of Honor, Pvt. Charles Schroeter among them.

Schroeter was discharged from the Cavalry on 9 August 1871. Two months later, he enlisted in the 1st U.S. Infantry Regiment for a five-year period, and was posted to Fort Sully, S.D.

Discharged from the Army on 7 October 1876, Schroeter traveled to Washington, D.C., and in November was sworn into the United States Marine Corps.

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## **Pg. 2, Born on the Fourth of July**

In March 1877, Private Schroeter reported aboard USS Alliance as one of a 26-man contingent of Marines. The ship sailed for Europe, and for the next three years called at ports in the Mediterranean. Promoted to corporal, Schroeter was discharged from the Marine Corps on 2 November 1881.

Schroeter enlisted in the Army's 10th Infantry Regiment on 14 November 1881. For the next 13 years, he served as an infantryman in Arizona and, later, in Sackets Harbor, N.Y. Records indicate that during his years fighting in the West, Schroeter sustained saber cuts on both arms and his left side, two saber cuts above his left ear, a bullet wound, and another wound on the back of his neck.

On 23 November 1894, Sgt. Charles Schroeter retired from the Army after 30 years, seven months of military service.

The old soldier settled in Buffalo, N.Y., and opened a candy and tobacco store with a fellow Civil War veteran, Edwin L. Hoopes. Schroeter never married and had no immediate family, so he boarded with the Hoopes family. He also joined the Masonic Lodge and the Grand Army of the Republic.

When Edwin Hoopes died, Schroeter continued to live with his partner's son, Charles, and his family. In 1918, Charles relocated to San Diego. Schroeter followed, and the family moved into a house on Jackdaw Street in Mission Hills.

Charles Schroeter died on 27 January 1921. San Diego Masonic Lodge 35 conducted a memorial service. Cremation was at Greenwood Cemetery. There was no funeral, and the remains were never claimed.

"Charles Schroeter fought in fierce battles to preserve the Union, and to free an enslaved people," said Dennis A. Schoville, President & CEO, Miramar National Cemetery Support Foundation. "He fought to protect Americans as they moved west across a vast and hostile continent. He was among the bravest of men and, during 30 years of military service, remained devoted to his adopted country. Charles Schroeter was a true American hero, and patriot, who deserves to finally rest with honor."

*To read the full narrative, visit [www.miramarcemetery.org/medalhonors/hero](http://www.miramarcemetery.org/medalhonors/hero).*

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Contact:  
Bill Heard, Public Information Officer  
[whheard@aol.com](mailto:whheard@aol.com)  
619-757-7788