

**Dennis A. Schoville, President & CEO
Miramar National Cemetery Support Foundation
Burial and Honors Ceremony for
Sgt. Charles Schroeter, Medal of Honor
9 July 2015**

Remarks

We're gathered here today to recognize the sacrifices, the devotion to duty, and the gallantry of one of America's heroes – Army Sergeant Charles Schroeter. Like many of those who have served in the Armed Forces – and are serving today – Sergeant Schroeter was an immigrant. He left his home and family in Germany, and came alone to this country as a young man in 1860.

In February 1863, at the height of the Civil War, Charles Schroeter enlisted as a private in the First Volunteer Missouri Cavalry. He spent the remainder of the War fighting in bloody battles against Confederate forces in Arkansas.

After the War, he went on to serve as a cavalryman and infantryman with the United States Army during the Indian Campaigns throughout the West. It was during this time that Sergeant – then Private – Schroeter was nominated for the Congressional Medal of Honor.

A more complete account of Sergeant Schroeter's life can be found in your program, which includes a reference to his five-year enlistment in the Marine Corps, his 30 years of military service, his retirement life in Buffalo, New York, and his final years here in San Diego – in a little house in Mission Hills.

After Sergeant Schroeter died in 1921, his cremated remains went unclaimed. Masonic Lodge 35 of San Diego conducted a memorial service for him. Representatives of the Masonic Lodge are with us here, today. Gentlemen, please stand and be recognized.

Sergeant Schroeter never married, and had no immediate family. After he died, the family with whom he had lived for 27 years – since retiring from the Army in November 1894 – never retrieved his remains.

They were held, along with the unclaimed remains of other deceased persons, in a series of unmarked crypts at San Diego's Greenwood Memorial Park. For 94 years!

Sergeant Schroeter's remains might have been lost to history – and to us – had it not been for the Congressional Medal of Honor Historical Society. Based on research conducted by their sister organization -- the Medal of Honor Society – the Historical Society commissioned a brass plaque commemorating Sergeant Schroeter and sent it to Greenwood Cemetery for display on his grave. Of course, there was no grave.

As it happens, the secretary of our Foundation – Cathy Fiorelli – is a staff member at Greenwood Cemetery, and she brought the plaque to us.

We immediately realized that the Foundation had an obligation to ensure that Sergeant Schroeter was accorded a proper, and honorable burial, among his comrades-in-arms here at Miramar National Cemetery. In fact, he will be the first Medal of Honor recipient to be buried here at Miramar.

There is one other Civil War-era cavalryman buried here. His name is Edwin Ware, and he served with the Second California Cavalry. After his death, his burial place in Northern California was lost, and was discovered only through the extraordinary efforts of his great Granddaughter, Sandra Ellis. Sandra is here with us, today. Sandra, would you please stand?

It's fitting then, that Sergeant Schroeter's remains will be buried in the same section with those of his fellow Civil War veteran, Edwin Ware.

Once Sergeant Schroeter's remains had been located, we had to gain approval from the Department of Veterans Affairs to re-inter them in this cemetery.

To accomplish that, we had to establish that the historical Charles Schroeter – the Schroeter who was awarded the Medal of Honor for gallantry in 1869 – was indeed the Charles Schroeter of today – whose remains had been entombed since 1921 at Greenwood Cemetery.

A number of people and organizations contributed long hours of study, and months of effort, to help us complete this long overdue mission to properly honor Sergeant Schroeter. You'll find on a page in your program a list of those to whom we owe a great debt.

Among those who have earned our appreciation are members of the staff of Miramar National Cemetery. They cooperated closely with the Foundation in planning today's event, and they work with us on many other activities throughout the year. The director of Miramar National Cemetery is Douglas Ledbetter, and it is my pleasure to introduce him at this time.

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