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Commanding General
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REMARKS

Ladies and Gentlemen, Thank you for being here today. We're here to honor Sergeant Charles Schroeter (shro-ter), a Veteran of both the Civil War and Indian Wars. A Soldier, Marine, Immigrant, American Hero, and finally a distinguished Congressional Medal of Honor recipient.

While honoring Sergeant Schroeter, we are also laying him to rest. Yes, this is a funeral service for a Veteran of the Civil and Indian Wars, certainly the rarest of privileges I have ever been a part of, and something I am sure you never expected to attend in your lifetime.

It's hard to imagine a more difficult time to serve our country than when Sergeant Schroeter served. It was a time when troops rode for miles on horseback or marched on foot instead of traversing terrain by trucks, or forgoing it all together by planes - a world where disease and the environment were just as deadly, or more so, than the enemy due to the medical treatments of the day and harsh living conditions.

An era where sibling differences meant brothers wore opposing uniforms and saw the other as the enemy. Sergeant Schroeter served with distinction in these difficult conditions for over 30 years of selfless service.

Schroeter was a unique patriot. Born nearly 200 years ago, coincidentally on the day our Nation celebrates our Independence -- the 4th of July -- Charles Schroeter grew up as a German national. As a young man he immigrated to America, the land of opportunity, seeking a better life for himself.

But he didn't just make a better life in his new country, he made his new country a better place as well. You see, as a US Service Member, I can say we define Duty as "Fulfilling your obligations." And it's one of the tenets we live by while serving this great nation.

But for Charles Schroeter, born in Europe, he didn't have any obligations to his new country. He didn't have a debt owed. He didn't have any reasons other than his own -- to risk his life. Like other immigrants of his time, when America roiled in Civil War, he was simply pursuing his American Dream.

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Schroeter chose to sacrifice that dream -- as he stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the Soldiers of Company A of the First Missouri Volunteer Cavalry Regiment. His service, it would seem, was never ending, as he would enlist and serve again - and again - and again, even decades after the Civil War. This Soldier chose, without reservation, to adopt the values of both the United States Army and the United States Marine Corp, multiple times.

The actions of his regiment against the Confederate forces in Arkansas, their participation in the Battle of Little Rock and capture of the state capital, the Camden Expedition and victory over the Confederate stronghold at Camden, Arkansas earned these Soldiers a distinct place in our nation's history.

Their fortitude, fight, and fearlessness in the face of opposition was monumental in a time of union conflict and separation. They could not fail, they could not falter, and they could not flee - for the integrity of our country was desperately reliant on the capabilities of these brave Americans.

After the war had ended and the union was once again whole, Charles Schroeter wasn't yet satisfied, knowing there was more he could do for his country. He joined Troop G of the newly created 8th U.S. Cavalry and headed out west to defend American settlers. In response to one such attack on settlements in southeast Arizona, Schroeter was called to action. Pelted by hail, lashing rain and pinned down by heavy enemy fire, Troop G took on Chief Cochise and his Apache army, as they took position on a rocky cliff face. Private Schroeter played a crucial role in the battle, despite the difficult terrain and ceaseless volleys of Apache fire. Schroeter's courage earned him the Medal of Honor but it was his duty that drove him towards that fight.

The Medal of Honor reflects the gratitude of a whole nation - A whole nation which prospers today because of the loyalty and selfless service of heroes like Sergeant Schroeter.

Today, we bring Sergeant Schroeter to a distinguished place of rest. A place he properly deserves. And it goes without saying that here, in the United States, he fought for his American Dream and gave all of us here a piece of it. The gift of a dream so commonly wanted by ALL but not so universally enjoyed. By the time he passed, he had ventured across hostile country multiple times, as a Soldier, a Marine, a battle scarred veteran, a loyal friend, and as an adopted American. From birth to death he lived a life of duty in order to honor his country and so we gather here today to do our duty to honor this incredible man.

Sergeant Schroeter, from the millions of Americans who benefit from the freedom you helped secure, I thank you for the dedication, sacrifice, exemplary service and duty. You fulfilled your obligations many times over. On behalf of a grateful nation, may you find this new place of rest to be the home of honor you rightfully deserve.

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