

William Schmidt

Born

7 October 1845 – Tiffin, Seneca County, Ohio

Conflict and Branch

Civil War – U.S. Army - Private

Entered Service

12 September 1861, Maumee, Lucas Co., Ohio
Co. G, 37th Ohio Infantry Regiment

Death

3 June 1905, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota



Early Years

The background information on William Schmidt is very minimal. History pertaining to the Schmidt family via censuses records or county records are not certain since ability to identify family members has not been determined. A photo or an illustration of William Sherman has not been located.

The photo of the Ohio State Monument located at the site of the Missionary Ridge is shown where Williams photo would be displayed.

War Years

It can be stated that based on William's birth year, that this soon to be sixteen-year-old young man made the roughly fifty-mile trip from Tiffin, Ohio to the city of Maumee, Ohio to enter the service.

Infantry regiments formed in Ohio became known as regiments of Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Soldiers of Ohio infantry regiments served the Union for varying lengths of time, ranging from one hundred days to three years. One of the three-year regiments was the 37th Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The regiment consisted primarily of Germans from Cleveland, Toledo, and Chillicothe, Ohio. The organization mustered into service at Camp Dennison, near Cincinnati, Ohio, on October 2, 1861¹.

The history of the 37th Regiment Ohio Infantry is quite extensive. During the three years that William Schmidt served, this military group covered much territory. Various locations from Virginia (current day West Virginia), Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

On November 21, 1863, the 37th arrived in the vicinity of Chattanooga, Tennessee, where the Confederacy's Army of Tennessee had besieged the Union's Army of the Cumberland since late September 1863. On November 24, 1863, the regiment was in position in front of Missionary Ridge. On the next day, Union forces stormed the Confederate lines on the ridge, driving the enemy from the heights and bringing the Chattanooga Campaign to a successful conclusion for the North. In the Battle of Missionary Ridge, the 37th had five men killed and thirty-six more woundedⁱⁱ.



At the Battle of Missionary Ridge, November 25 1863, under heavy enemy fire, William Schmidt picked up fallen 37th Infantry drummer, John S. Kountz, and carried him to safety. "As the drummer had been ordered to the rear in preparatory of the charge, the little drummer-boy thru away his drum, and, falling in with his company, was wounded in the first assault, being shot in the left leg, and left on the field under enemy's guns, until rescued by a comrade of the company to which he belonged."ⁱⁱⁱ

When the brigade got back to its old position, Captain Hamm, of Company A, told the boys of Company G, that Kountz was lying in the front severely wounded, and asked: "Who will go and get him out?" Private William Schmidt shouted: "I will," and made for the front, advancing as far as he could under cover of the hill. When he came to the point where cover was no longer available, he made a dash for the spot where Kountz was lying, the enemy pouring a heavy fire upon him. Kountz shouted: "Save yourself. I am a goner anyhow," but Schmidt picked him up on his back and in spite of all protests, carried him back to the Union lines. Kountz' leg was so badly shattered that it had to be amputated the same night. When he was picked up, he was nearer the rebel works than any other man of his regiment.^{iv}

For his outstanding courage, William Schmidt received the Medal of Honor, with the citation stating: "Rescued a wounded comrade under terrific fire".^v

Post War Years

After service of three years, and William at the approximate age of twenty years, it is not known where he was living or what occupation he employed.

Presentation of the Medal of Honor did not come until November 9, 1895, at the age of forty-nine. At this time, he was living in Duluth, Minnesota.



It is not known when William moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota. There is no knowledge if he was ever married and no information on parents or siblings, as stated earlier.

At the time of his death, in 1905, he was at the Old Soldiers Home and within three days he was buried at Lakewood Cemetery in Section 8, Tier E, Grave 74^{vi}. Currently this grave site has no headstone that gives honor to this individual for his distinguished gallantry.



In addition to William Schmidt being recognized for the Medal of Honor, John S. Kountz, the drummer he saved, was also given the Medal of Honor for his heroic willingness to engage the oncoming forces. It is stated, “that was the first time one Medal of Honor recipient saved the life of another Medal of Honor recipient.”^{vii}

**Compiled by Dianne Lawson
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Photo of Ohio State Monument at Missionary Ridge

Photo of Lakewood Cemetery, Grand Army of the Republic Lot (G.A.R.), Section 8 from:

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=8562375> and courtesy of “JC”, “Find A Grave” contributor

Print of Missionary Ridge https://www.fold3.com/page/635033883_edward_siber/photos/318163372/

The print made with compliments of the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company/Cosack & Co. lith., Buffalo & Chicago

Newspaper Announcement: <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87060190/1895-11-07/ed-1/seq-1/>

The evening bulletin., November 07, 1895, Image 1 [The evening bulletin. \(Maysville, Ky.\) 1887-1905](#) Page 1, Column 4

References

ⁱ <http://www.ohiocivilwarcentral.com/entry.php?rec=1262>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.ohiocivilwarcentral.com/entry.php?rec=1262>

ⁱⁱⁱ Records of the Grand Army of the Republic, H.S. Crocker and Co. Publishers, San Francisco, 1886, page 466

^{iv} Deeds of Valor. How our Soldier-heroes won the Medal of Honor, Publisher Detroit, Mich., The Perrien-Keydel Company, 1905, Page 289

^v http://www.history.army.mil/moh/civilwar_sz.html

^{vi} Interment information obtained from office of Lakewood Cemetery, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co., MN

^{vii} <http://www.presspublications.com/14591-for-sale-memorabilia-to-pay-for-medal-of-honor-plaques>