



PATRIOTIC RECOLLECTIONS



THE DRUMMER BOY OF MISSION RIDGE

John S. Kountz was born in Richfield Center, Lucas County, Ohio March 25, 1846. At fifteen and a half years of age he enlisted as a drummer boy in the 37th Regiment of the Ohio Volunteer Infantry. In the army he showed great courage; in one instance, at the imminent risk of his own life, he rescued from drowning a soldier who had broken through the ice of the Kanawha River. He took part in a number of battles. In the charge of Mission Ridge he was hit in the thigh by an English explosive ball, rendering necessary amputation of the limb.

When at Mission Ridge the order came to charge the enemy's works the boy, Kountz threw away his drum, and seizing a musket from one of the slain, charged with the men and fell under the enemy's works. This incident furnished the subject of a descriptive poem from Mrs. Kate B. Sherwood, entitled *The Drummer-boy of Mission Ridge*, of which we annex two verses:

*He pressed to the front our lad so leal and the works were almost won;
A moment more and our flags had swung o'er muzzle of murderous;
But a raking fire swept the van. And he fell 'mid the wounded and the slain,
With his wee wan face turned up to Him who feelth His children's pain.*

*O glory of Mission Ridge! Stream on like the roseate light of morn,
On the sons that now are living, on the sons that are yet unborn!
And cheers for our comrades living and tears as they pass way,-----
And three times three for the Drummer-boy, who fought that day!*

At the age of twenty-five he was elected county treasurer, and later recorder. Retiring from political life in 1887, he entered the fire insurance and real estate business.

He has ardently devoted himself to the interests of the Grand Army of the Republic, occupying various positions with such marked efficiency that in July, 1884, he was chosen its Commander-in-Chief, being the only private soldier who has been called to that eminent position.

He was one of the originators of the Soldiers' Memorial Building in Toledo, and has occupied positions of trust.

Of General Kountz it has been justly said: *He is a man of fine natural abilities, energetic and*

industrious, and most faithful in the discharge of any duty assigned to him. In his Grand Army work he has few equals and no superiors. It was his work as Commander of the Department of Ohio that gave the organization its great impetus in this State, and started it on its upward march to become the banner department of the order. As Commander-in-Chief his work was equally as great.

Source: Howe, Henry. 1896. Howes Historical Collections of Ohio. Laning Publishing Co., Norwalk, Ohio.

Submitted by:

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Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War