

STORY OF ISAAC RENTZ

Risked His Life to Give Water to Wounded Yankees

“I see in your last issue an account of the death of my boyhood friend and war comrade,” says Veteran J.B. Hunter, anent of the death of Mr. Isaac W. Rentz. “Isaac Rentz was one of the best men I ever knew, and as a soldier he was a hero.

In one of the large battles – I have forgotten which; it may have been Gettysburg – the dead and wounded were lying thick just in front of our breastworks and the wounded Yankees were begging for water every breath. And if you raised your head above the breastworks you were shot by the pickets on the other side. One Sergeant, Kirkland, of Kershaw County, moved by their cry, went to his captain and asked permission to go over and give them water, His captain told him he could not do it, for he would be killed if he crossed the breastworks. He went to the colonel and asked him. The colonel told him it was impossible. “You would be killed instantly if you crossed the breastworks.” “Well,” he said, “Colonel, I cannot stand to hear them cry and I’m going if I am killed.

“He got water in a canteen and jumped over and put it to the mouth of a yankee, and as soon as the enemy saw what he was doing the firing ceased and he continued to water them amidst cheering from both sides.

“Just then, Isaac Rentz, seeing it, filled several canteens and carried water to Kirkland and they gave water to every crying man and was not hurt. The people of Kershaw county raised a water fountain to the memory of Sergeant Kirkland and it stands today as a monument to the sergeant’s heroic act in this case, Isaac Rentz’s name should be on the fountain, as he risked his life by going and coming so often until the men were given water.”

Reprint from the Bamberg Herald, January 30, 1919.