

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION



Robert Geard Schmitt

GERARD

Wells, North Dakota


Born 1923

First Lieutenant, U.S. Army

Service Number O-57429

Killed in Action

Died December 1, 1950 in Korea

 No photo available

First Lieutenant Schmitt was a member of Company M, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. He was Killed in Action while fighting the enemy in North Korea on December 1, 1950. His remains were not recovered. For his leadership and valor, First Lieutenant Schmitt was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Presidential Unit Citation and the Republic of Korea War Service Medal.

Fargo, N.D.

NDAC ALUMNI REVIEW

March 1957

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NDAC Grad Died "A Very Brave Man"

The story of how two American army officers joked about bullet holes in their new field coats during the retreat from Changjin reservoir in Korea is told in a letter to the mother of one—a North Dakotan and a NDAC graduate who didn't get back.

Lt. Henry E. Trawick, the other officer, has written Mrs. E. C. Schmidt of Dover, N. D., that her son, Lt. Robert Schmitt, was "a very brave man."

Lt. Schmitt, a 1948 graduate of NDAC, was reported killed in action in Korea Dec. 2, 1950, and Lt. Trawick, a close friend, wrote of events leading to Robert Schmitt's last day.

He told of the long ride to the reservoir and of digging in 12 miles north of marine corps positions.

The letter, in part, continues:

"The following morning, Nov. 28, about 3:30 we awoke to hear lots of shooting, whistle blowing and bugles. From that moment on we fought without letup. Bob had been sleeping about 30 yards from where I was, but I didn't see him all that day as the Chinese were all over our area.

"We learned we were completely cut off . . . Bob was brought to our area wounded. He was shot through both legs, but he would never lie down for long.

"He had some very close calls as he and I compared the number of bullet holes in our new field coats. I had been hit with a mortar shell and had eight fragments in me. Bob had 16 holes in his new coat and I had 35, but I had been



H. Robert Schmitt

hit with a mortar and his were all bullet holes. We were joking about that and that we had million dollar wounds (wounds you can go back to the hospital with and rest).

"Bob and I fought side by side (without food and sleep) for three days and nights and Dec. 1 it was decided we would try to fight our way back to the marines.

"We loaded the wounded on trucks . . . Bob refused to ride. He stayed with the fighting group even though he could hardly walk.

"We got to a bad road block and a group of men had to take a hill. My legs were too weak to make it, but I tried as I was still walking. They took the hill and I went around it.

"Bob never did come down from the hill."

Lt. Schmitt, who served with the Seventh division in Korea, was a veteran of 38 months in Africa and the European Theater of Operation in World War II. *31st Infantry*

He participated in eight beach landings and was awarded the Purple Heart and a Bronze Star.

While at NDAC Lt. Schmitt served as vice-president and treasurer of the Independent Students Association, treasurer of Scabbard Blade, honorary military fraternity and he was very active in intramural sports.

Lt. Schmitt was a distinguished military student and was the first NDAC graduate to receive a regular army commission following World War II.

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918, has awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, posthumously, to

FIRST LIEUTENANT ROBERT G. SCHMITT, USA

for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an armed enemy:

First Lieutenant Robert G. Schmitt, Infantry, United States Army, a member of Company M, 31st Infantry Regiment, distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy of the United Nations near the Chosin Reservoir, Korea, on 1 December 1950. The regiment was assigned the mission of effecting a withdrawal and attempting a juncture with the 1st Marine Division at Hagaru-ri. Following assembly of a motor convoy with Company M committed to provide security for the right flank, Lieutenant Schmitt, having sustained a severe leg injury in a previous encounter, was ordered to ride in a vehicle with other wounded. After proceeding several miles the column was halted by a road block, and devastating fire rained down from strongly-fortified positions emplaced on three surrounding hills. With mounting casualties and fast dwindling ammunition, the morale of the men was badly shaken, and Lieutenant Schmitt, suffering greatly from his wound, voluntarily left his transportation to rally, organize and lead an assault against the enemy positions. Giving his carbine to an unarmed man, improvising a stick for a crutch, he struggled forward, and the men, rising to the challenge of their valiant leader, followed him in a determined attack against the fanatical foe. Progressing with extreme difficulty on his makeshift crutch, he continued to lead the attack through withering fire until he was struck by a machine gun bullet and fell mortally wounded. Refusing medical treatment, he urged the men to press the assault and, inspired by his incredible display of valor, his resolute soldiers charged with such ferocity that hostile positions were overrun and the enemy routed from the hill. Lieutenant Schmitt's intrepid actions resulted in the elimination of the road block, enabling the convoy to resume its advance, and his unflinching courage and consummate devotion to duty reflect lasting glory on himself and are in keeping with the noble traditions of the military service.

