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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. Schmitt 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. 31<sup>st</sup> 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.