

# OPERATION NOMAD

Summer had officially ended, but the blanching heat of early October still swept across the ridgelines. "Operation Nomad" began on 13 October, at the height of an unseasonal hot spell. The division jumped off from the security of its strongly fortified main line of resistance, *below*, into the teeth of a Chinese defense line that had been continually undergoing strengthening construction since July.

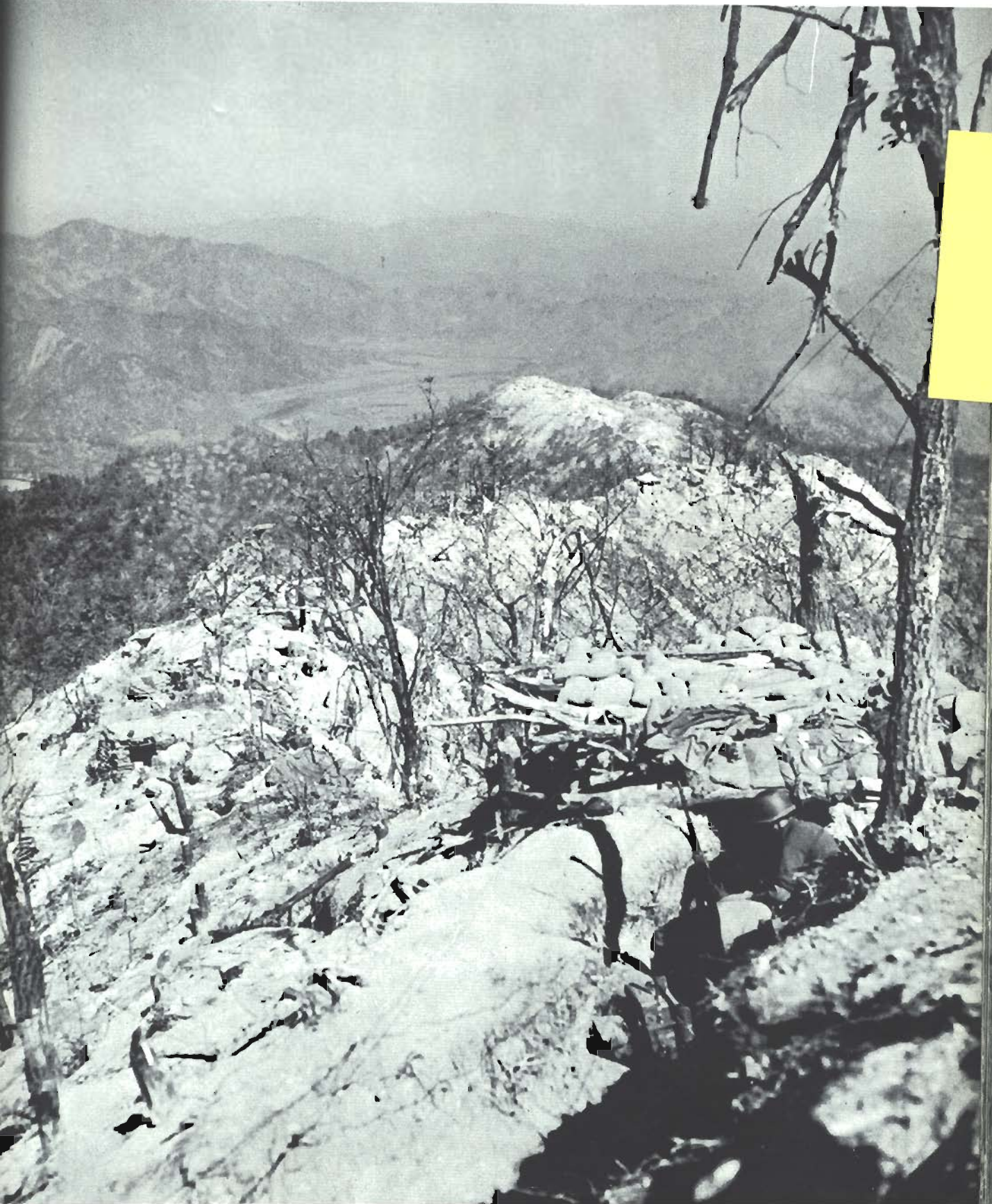
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An intensive artillery bombardment introduced the offensive operation, a limited drive designed to root the CCF from its proposed winter line, to gain high ground overlooking the Kumsong Valley, and to demonstrate the considerable fighting potential that was still at the command of the allied powers. Two ROK divisions on either side of the 24th protected its flanks from an enveloping countermove, and prepared to

move out to consolidate any friendly gains made near their positions. It was an uphill struggle every inch of the way. All three divisions wormed forward against the well-engineered fortress that was the Red's inner line of resistance. Enemy mortar and artillery was hidden and staggered, calculated to evade counter-battery fire; a steady fusillade of shells poured into the advancing ranks of infantrymen.



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**WELCOMED INQUIRY** On 24 October, Mrs. Ana Rosenberg, Assistant Secretary of Defense, discussed doughboy problems with a cross section of servicemen from the 24th Division. Questions relating to rotation, replacement and veteran's rights were aired and clarified.

## UPHILL BATTLE

Kumsong was a staging area for the Communist supply system on the east-central front. The Red's unreliable and primitive methods of moving equipment plus the telling effect of aerial strikes against their routes had hamstrung the enemy's efforts to keep a passage open for the systematic delivery of supplies. They were forced to mark off certain localities as depots in which to stockpile substantial quantities of materiel that dribbled in irregularly. A main purpose of "Nomad" was to mount troops close enough to Kumsong to render it useless to the Chinese forces operating in the area.

The limited-objective drive ran up against several regiments of vigorous, combat-ready veterans, a fanatical defending force that was ordered to resist until death. Despite this frantic attempt to hold firm, after two weeks the division drove seven miles inland and occupied every position it had set out to acquire.

Chinese tactics had changed drastically since their last offensive ventures petered out. They were cagey in their deployment and they avoided grouping up out of respect for the "deadeye" accuracy of UN artillery fire. Their own big guns struck back with unexpected savagery and with an effectiveness that indicated a great deal of training and practice; shrapnel took a bigger toll than did small arms fire.

The battleline was well defined. Months of inaction had permitted civilian elements to evacuate the war zone and to leave a clear field for unhindered military traffic. Bunker-building and emplacement-digging by both sides was kept up. Vast mining operations took place, barbed wire and booby traps converted the approaches to either OP into a nightmare of hazards. The "wait and see" policy adopted while the talks at Panmunjom still held a hope for peace, had dissuaded the allies from any aggressive course of action until now.



**BRIGHT FLAMES** bloomed out at night while nocturnal Long Toms fired harassing missions into Communist territory. Random shellings after dark disrupted the Red's feverish nighttime building activities

**HILL 747** near the Kumsong Valley was subjected to a drubbing by recoilless and medium artillery.

## AFTERSTAGE

The important allied holdings bordering the Kumsong Valley constituted a deep salient into the east central front. The regiments of the 24th Division were hemmed in on three sides by hostile forces; despite the Communist setback and the dislocation of his main line of resistance, Taromen did not breathe easy until the ROK units that were deployed at their flanks moved forward on "Operation Vulture" and plugged defensive gaps on either flank. For the first time loyal Korean troops demonstrated the lessons taught to them during the new basic training program instituted by the Eighth Army. ROK units had been removed from the line for reconditioning under US sponsorship, had been resupplied and streamlined, and were then returned to action, backed with identical artillery, armor and air that normally supported the American foot soldier. Self assurance, competent leadership, and added firepower were the three qualities that transformed the South Korean soldier from an unpredictable, mediocre fighting man into one that was a formidable adversary.

