

"THIS IS WAR"

PHOTOGRAPHED FOR LIFE BY DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN



From Tokyo two weeks ago LIFE Photographer Duncan (*left*), who has been covering the Korean war since its outbreak, cabled his plans for the one Korean story he wanted most to do.

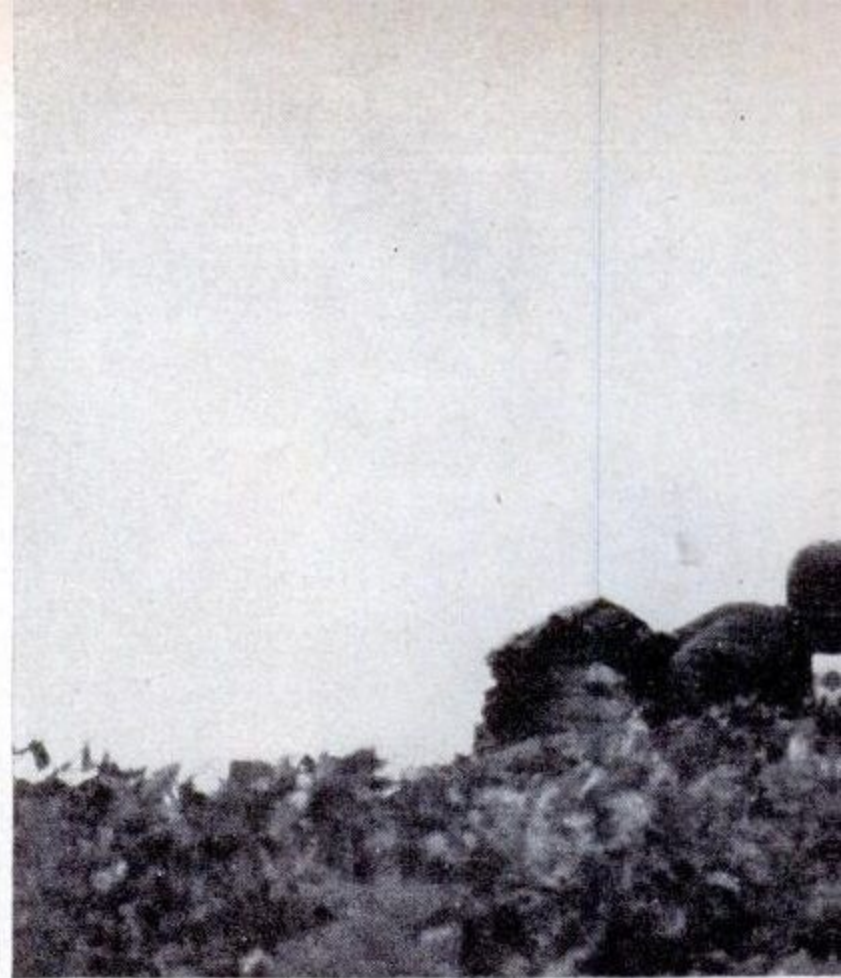
EYEM GOING BACK THIS TIME TRYING GIVE YOU STORY WHICH IS TIMELESS NAMELESS DATELESS WORDLESS STORY WHICH SAYS VERY SIMPLY QUIETLY "THIS IS WAR".

On Sept. 4 Duncan joined the 1st Marine Brigade which was about to jump off. For 36 hours he remained with the brigade's most forward unit, Company B, 5th

Regiment, as it fought over the bald, heartless ridges of the western front to drive the North Koreans back across the Naktong River.

Duncan's pictures, taken under fire with the attacking squads, arrived in New York on Sept. 8. They fulfill the requirements he had set for himself: they say, "This is war," without need for dates, names or other words. The captions for the pictures supply only supplemental information. Duncan's story starts below with a corporal, who is out of ammunition and has lost all but two of his squad, crying in anger and frustration.





IN LONG WINDING COLUMN THE MEN OF B COMPANY MOVE UP TO ATTACK ONE MORE NAMELESS RIDGE



PERSHING TANK SUPPORTING B COMPANY PASSES THROUGH THE SMOKE OF A BURNING T-34 WHICH IT HAD KNOCKED OUT ONLY A FEW MINUTES BEFORE



RIFLE SQUAD ATTACKS THE CREST OF THE RIDGE, FIRST PINNING DOWN THE ENEMY WITH HAND GRENADES (TOP) AND THEN ADVANCING IN SHORT RUSHES



AMMO CARRIER DIVING FOR COVER (LEFT) SHOWS REVULSION AT SUDDEN SIGHT OF FACELESS ENEMY CORPSE (CENTER) IGNORED BY FOLLOWING MARINES



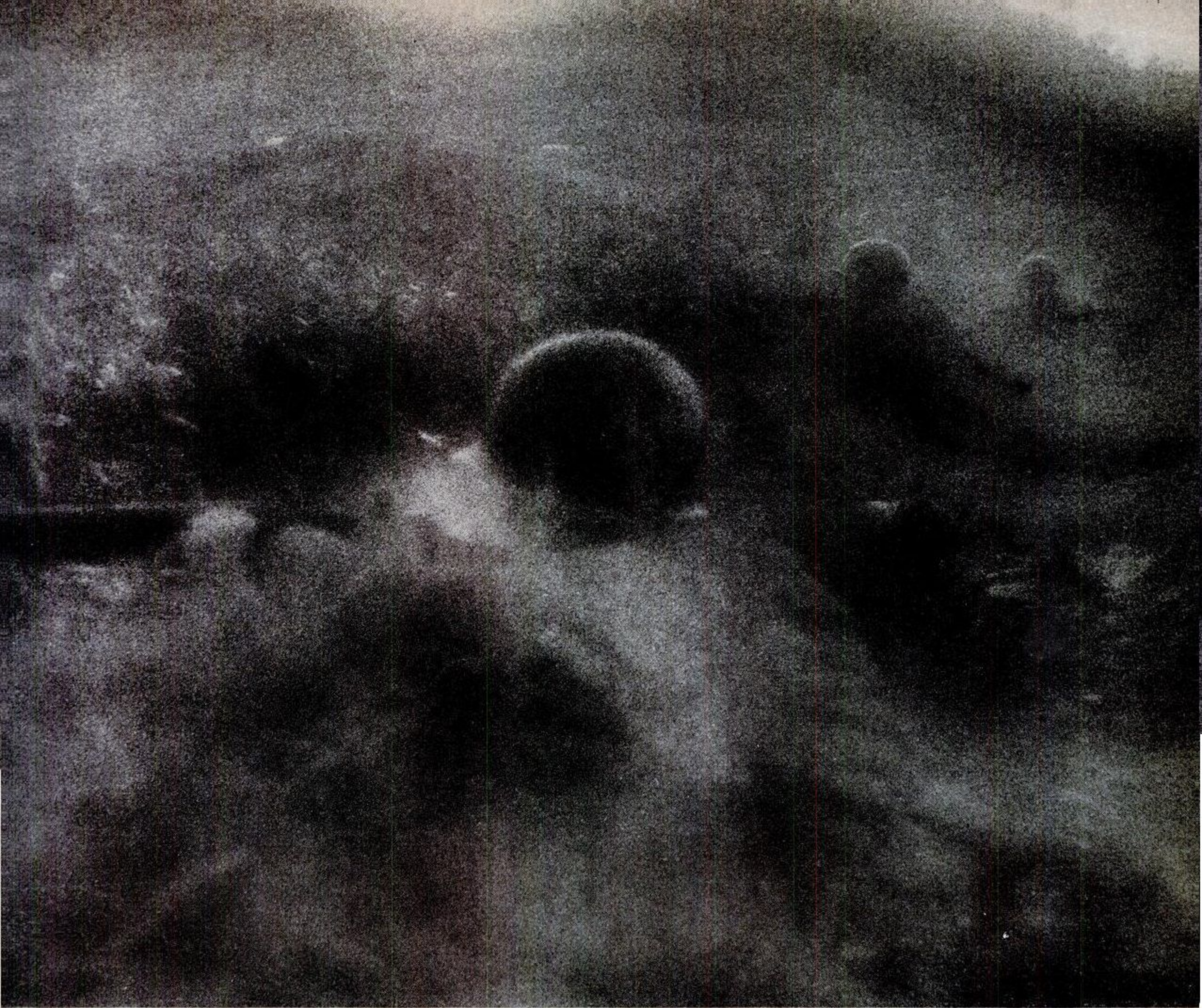
WAITING FOR COUNTERATTACK, MARINES SIT IN TRENCH ON RIDGE OVERLOOKING A BURNING TOWN



MARINE RISES TO HURL A GRENADE AT REDS COUNTERATTACKING UP THE OTHER SIDE OF RIDGE



WORRIED PRISONER LOOKS RELIEVED AS MARINE



TORRENTS OF RAIN, WHICH SMEARED THE LENS OF DUNCAN'S CAMERA, REDUCED BATTLE RANGES TO A FEW YARDS AS COMMUNIST ATTACKS KEPT COMING



ONLY CUTS AWAY HIS GRENADE-FILLED TROUSERS



LIGHT MACHINE GUNNER FIRES A SHORT BURST WHILE SQUAD LEADER (RIGHT) SPOTS HIS TARGETS



FENTON SHOUTS ORDERS TO HIS MEN AS RADIO OPERATOR TRIES TO MAKE CONTACT WITH BATTALION



CAPTAIN FENTON LEARNS HE IS OUT OF AMMO

"GOD, CAPTAIN, DON'T LET THEM FALL BACK"

During the Red counterattack in the rain, a wounded sergeant of Company B murmured the words above to his captain, Francis ("Ike") Fenton. Captain Fenton, whose father is a retired Marine brigadier general, did not let his troops fall back, but there were moments when it seemed as though all his men would die fixed in their positions on the precious ridge. Far ahead of the other advancing Marine units, Company B had its flanks exposed. The Reds pummeled it from the sides with heavy mortar barrages, then counterattacked time and again.

As in so many battles, the modern accouterments of war went wrong. Rain denied Captain Fenton air support, and communications failed. Supply of ammunition became dangerously low—it was replenished in the nick of time—and all around him Fenton saw his men stumbling from the firing line, bleeding with their wounds, to huddle under the defilade of the hill. For a night and a day the thinning line held. Suddenly the Red attack ceased, and the action had been won by that eternally fundamental principle of war—man against man. The Marines had proved themselves better fighters than the North Koreans who outnumbered them.

Later, as ammunition came forward, Captain Fenton and what was left of Company B ground away at other ridges that rose like fishbacks between them and the Naktong River.



WOUNDED HUDDLE UNDER PONCHO (LEFT), STRETCH OUT UNDER PROTECTION OF HILL UNTIL HELP COMES (CENTER), ARE CARRIED BACK BY SOUTH KOREANS

