



**U.S. Army units in Vietnam  
back the Marines with**

# Action

Twenty-six men went up the hill on Con Thien—26 members of the 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery—in their Quad .50-caliber machine-gun weapons carrier and their twin 40mm "Duster" gun truck.

They were here to support the U.S. Marines who were being assaulted with everything the enemy had—small arms to mortars to artillery rounds. The Marines stood and the artilleryman stood. By the end of that particular day in May, the 26 men of the battalion counted 26 casualties—24 Purple Hearts and 2 dead.

Before that day, and since that day, the 44th Artillery's four battalions have been providing support for the Marines along the Demilitarized Zone. They have marked up more than 16 major operations in I Corps area in less than a year. They provide road sweep operations along Highways 9 and 1, escort security for Marine "Rough Rider" resupply convoys, security missions for mine clearing operations, and bridge security along the highways. At Con Thien the 1st Battalion has received more than 90 full-scale attacks.

The 1st Battalion was the first unit of twin-40mm Dusters to arrive in Vietnam. The Dusters put down 240 rounds a minute. Their effectiveness makes them one of the first targets for Viet Cong trying to push the Marines off Con Thien.

Last March the battalion deployed their automatic weapons alongside the spearhead Marine element that opened National Route 9 from Dong Ha west to the Laotian border. The road had been closed to military traffic for almost 13 years.

The 44th Artillery has elements spotted the length of the DMZ

and south to Phu Bai. Other U.S. Army artillery units also are providing support to the Marines. A newly arrived 175-mm artillery unit—the 8th Battalion, 4th Artillery located at Dong Ha—has fired more than 15,000 of its 147-pound projectiles. They call themselves the "Daring Deeds" and they say "Give us four hours sleep and three square meals a day and we'll shoot."

Another 175mm unit—the 2d Battalion, 94th Artillery—located at Camp J. J. Carroll, 15 miles west of Dong Ha, supports Marine operations from Laos to the South China Sea. The 1st Battalion 40th Artillery, was among the first U.S. Army field artillery units in the I

Corps area and their 105mm howitzers were first to fire into North Vietnam. Already, the unit has fired about a quarter of a million rounds in support of Marine operations, including support for the Marines when they withstood the week-long assaults on Hill 881, known as "The Rockpile."

The artillerymen of these units along the DMZ don't talk much about how they live in mud-filled bunkers, how they search for hidden mines and brave the incoming rocket and artillery rounds. They are too busy keeping the enemy busy ducking the shells and small arms fire they throw at him day after day.—*Information Office, US Army Vietnam.*

