H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

JANUARY 1966 — CAMP PENDLETON TO THE PACIFIC

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology Report, 17 December 1965 – 22 February 1966

2nd Battalion, 5th Marines · 1st Marine Division · Camp Pendleton, California

1. Unit Overview

Unit Designation	Hotel Company (H Co), 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division
Reporting Period	1–31 January 1966
Commander	1st Lieutenant J. J. Doherty, commanding Company H (battalion assignments list, 22 February 1966)
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol R. H. Uskurait). Battalion Landing Team 2/5 was activated on 1 January 1966 and came under the operational control of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific on 10 January.
Area of Operations	Camp Margarita, MCB Camp Pendleton, California (to 8 January); at sea in the Pacific (from 9 January)
Combat Posture	Pre-deployment — manning, embarkation at Long Beach and transit to Okinawa
Base of Operations	Camp Margarita, Camp Pendleton; then USS Bexar (APA-237), USS Mathews (AKA-96) and USS Belle Grove (LSD-2)
Corps Area	Not applicable — CONUS and Pacific transit

2. Commander's Summary

January 1966 was the month 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines left the United States. The battalion had been reactivated at Camp Pendleton on 9 August 1965 after a WestPac deployment as 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines, and was designated a Battalion Landing Team for planning purposes on 17 December 1965. Battalion Landing Team 2/5 was formally activated on 1 January 1966. Hotel Company was commanded by 1st Lieutenant J. J. Doherty.

Manning was the central problem. The battalion stood below fifty percent deployable strength on 17 December 1965; between 20 December and 8 January it joined 534 enlisted Marines, and embarked on 9 January with 1,134 men on board against a manning level of 1,119 — 1,446 including attachments. Training in the same weeks was limited to MOS instruction, marksmanship requalification and some field work, because materiel readiness and embarkation took priority.

The battalion loaded at Long Beach on 7–8 January, embarked on the 9th and sailed on 10 January in the USS Bexar, USS Mathews and USS Belle Grove, bound for Okinawa by way of Pearl Harbor.

Training at sea was confined to formal instruction and physical training — general military subjects, Vietnam orientation and landmine warfare. The ships reached Pearl Harbor on 18 January and sailed again on the 20th.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Battalion Landing Team 2/5 activated	1 January 1966	BLT 2/5 activated by CG 1st Marine Division (Rear) message of 30 December 1965. Attachments included Battery E, 2/11, and platoons of the 1st Anti-Tank, 1st Reconnaissance, 1st Engineer, 1st Shore Party, 7th Motor Transport and 1st Medical Battalions.
Embarkation at Long Beach	6–9 January 1966	Advance party flew to WestPac on 6 January. Cargo loading began at Long Beach on 7 January and finished on the 8th; troops embarked on 9 January.
Pacific transit	10 January – 2 February 1966	Ships sailed from Pier E, Long Beach, on 10 January, bound for Okinawa via Pearl Harbor. BLT 2/5 came under the operational control of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

Compiled from the command chronology report covering 17 December 1965 to 22 February 1966, which was submitted in place of separate monthly reports because of the deployment.

Date	Activity / Events
1 Jan	Battalion Landing Team 2/5 activated, as directed by CG 1st Marine Division (Rear) message of 30 December 1965.
6 Jan	The Regimental Landing Team 5 advance party departed CONUS by air for WestPac. The battalion members on it were Major R. A. Pape (S-3), 1stLt W. E. Smith, SSgt J. D. Wyszatyckski and Cpl H. K. Noe.
7–8 Jan	Cargo loading at Long Beach, California. Supplies back-ordered for the battalion were still arriving at Camp Pendleton as late as 7 January. Loading completed on the 8th.
9 Jan	Troops of Battalion Landing Team 2/5 embarked. The battalion left Camp Margarita, Camp Pendleton, where it had been located since 17 December 1965.
10 Jan	Ships sailed from Pier E, Long Beach, bound for Okinawa via Pearl Harbor. BLT 2/5 came under the operational control of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.
11–17 Jan	At sea. Training aboard ship was limited to formal instruction and physical training: general military subjects, Vietnam orientation and landmine warfare.

Date	Activity / Events
18 Jan	BLT 2/5 arrived at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
20 Jan	BLT 2/5 departed Pearl Harbor, bound for Okinawa.
21–31 Jan	At sea, continuing passage to Okinawa; the battalion arrived at Okinawa on 2 February 1966.

5. Notes and Caveats

This file was rewritten on 19 September 2026 directly from the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines command chronologies. The notes below record what changed and where the record is thin.

1. SOURCE. Everything here comes from the battalion's command chronology report for 17 December 1965 to 22 February 1966 (Texas Tech item 1201048066). Because of the deployment, the battalion submitted one report covering that whole span instead of monthly reports, so January is documented within it rather than in a January chronology of its own.

2. SAILING DATE CORRECTED. The earlier version of this file said Hotel Company “departs Long Beach” on 19 January aboard USS Bexar. The chronology is explicit: troops embarked on 9 January and the ships sailed on 10 January, arriving at Pearl Harbor on 18 January and leaving it on the 20th. The 19 January date matches nothing in the record.

3. THREE SHIPS, NOT ONE. The battalion sailed in the USS Bexar (APA-237), the USS Mathews (AKA-96) and the USS Belle Grove (LSD-2); the chronology notes which units and cargo travelled in each. Individual Hotel Company Marines were distributed among them.

4. NO COMPANY-LEVEL DETAIL. The report is written at battalion level. Apart from the commanders' list, which names 1stLt J. J. Doherty as commanding officer of Company H, it records no Hotel Company activity separately. Anything more specific about the company in January 1966 — daily routine, shipboard billeting, individual Marines — is not in this source and should not be inferred.

5. ORIGINALS. National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 127, Records of the United States Marine Corps. For full records contact National Archives II, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park MD 20740, or Marine Corps History Division, Quantico VA 22134.

6. Sources

This document was compiled from the following primary and secondary sources:

PRIMARY SOURCES

— 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines Command Chronology Report for the period 17 December 1965 to 22 February 1966, dated 24 February 1966 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048066).

— Battalion assignments and attachments as of 22 February 1966, in the same report, which names the company commanders including 1stLt J. J. Doherty, Company H.

SECONDARY SOURCES

— “Hotel Company.” Hotel 2/5 Combat Marines. https://hotel25vv.com/hotel-company

— Related files in this collection: H_Co_2-5_Marines_1966-02_February.docx.

Document prepared for historical research purposes. For authoritative casualty figures, unit rosters, and engagement details, consult original 2/5 Command Chronology records at NARA RG 127. | Hotel Company, 2/5 Marines, January 1966