H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

APRIL 1966 — ARRIVAL IN VIETNAM

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for 13–30 April 1966

1st Marine Division · III Marine Amphibious Force · I Corps, Republic of Vietnam

1. Unit Overview

Unit Designation	Hotel Company (H Co), 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division
Reporting Period	1–30 April 1966 (the battalion's chronology covers 13–30 April)
Commander	1st Lieutenant J. J. Doherty, commanding Company H
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol R. H. Uskurait). Administrative control passed to 1st Marine Division at 130800H and to the 1st Marine Regiment at 140600H April 1966.
Area of Operations	Chu Lai TAOR, Quang Tin Province — the former 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines area centred on Hill 69; Hotel Company in the south-western sector around Hill 76
Combat Posture	First operations in Vietnam — TAOR patrolling, ambushing and hill security
Base of Operations	Hill 76 (BT 433037); battalion CP on Hill 69 (BT 466073)
Corps Area	I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam

2. Commander's Summary

Battalion Landing Team 2/5 sailed from Okinawa on 8 April 1966 and arrived at Chu Lai on 13 April. The BLT was dissolved on debarkation and its supporting units returned to their parent commands. A small command group moved the same day to the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines command post on Hill 69. At 1200 on 14 April the Alpha Command Group with Companies G and H assumed responsibility for the former 2/4 TAOR, relieving that battalion; the Bravo Command Group and Company F took over the 1/7 TAOR, and Company E was chopped to the Chu Lai Airfield Defense Command.

Hotel Company's war began in the south-west of the TAOR, patrolling and ambushing from Hill 76 (BT 433037) toward the extreme western flank. Contact came within days: fire teams and platoons in night ambush positions, patrols into the hamlets around Ky Long and Ly, spider traps, punji stakes and snipers. On 23 April a Hotel Company squad ambush at BT 443033 was hit by an estimated ten VC with 200 to 300 rounds while Hill 76 itself was probed, and on 25 April a patrol leaving a hamlet at BT 441026 took carbine and automatic weapons fire from four to six VC, with two Marines wounded on punji stakes.

The battalion's first named operation, Wyoming, ran from 26 April to 1 May 1966 — but Hotel Company was not part of it. The chronology is specific: “A detachment from H&S Co, Co ‘E’, and Co ‘F’ participated.” Hotel Company stayed in the TAOR. Of the month as a whole the commander wrote that the battalion “has gone from a ‘green’ untried fighting unit to an efficient fighting machine”; aggressive patrolling and ambushing inside the TAOR “have constituted the bulk of battalion operations.”

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Arrival at Chu Lai	8–13 April 1966	BLT 2/5 departed Okinawa on 8 April and arrived at Chu Lai on 13 April 1966. The BLT was dissolved after debarkation; combat support and combat service support units returned to their parent commands. The battalion's equipment was still being off-loaded for days afterwards — “the logistical tail did not catch up with the Battalion for a period of ten days.”
Assumption of the Chu Lai TAOR	14 April 1966	At 1200 on 14 April the Alpha Command Group with Companies G and H assumed responsibility for the former 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines TAOR on Hill 69. The Bravo Command Group and Company F took the 1/7 TAOR; Company E was chopped to the Airfield Defense Command. The Bravo Command Group returned from the airfield on 16 April.
Hill 76 patrolling and ambushing	15–30 April 1966	Hotel Company operated in the south-western sector from Hill 76 (BT 433037), patrolling toward the western flank of the TAOR, running night ambushes and searching the hamlets around Ky Long and Ly.
Operation Wyoming	26 April – 1 May 1966	H COMPANY DID NOT PARTICIPATE. A detachment from H&S Company and Companies E and F took part; an after action report was submitted separately. The initial briefing was on 18 April, 1st Marines Operation Order 327-66 was received on 23 April and the battalion issued its own Operation Order 327-66 on 24 April. Artillery support came from 1/11; no offensive preparation fires were used.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

Compiled from the chronological sequence of events in the 2/5 command chronology for 13–30 April 1966, which begins when the battalion assumed control of the TAOR. Only entries naming Company H, or bearing directly on it, are listed. Grid references are as recorded.

Date	Activity / Events
8–13 Apr	Passage from Okinawa to Chu Lai; the battalion arrived on 13 April 1966. A small command group moved to the 2/4 command post on Hill 69 the same day.
14 Apr	At 1200 the Alpha Command Group with Companies G and H assumed responsibility for the former 2/4 TAOR. Administrative control of the battalion shifted to the 1st Marine Regiment at 140600H.
17 Apr	At 172115H a Hotel Company fire team observed an estimated 8 to 12 VC moving to an ambush at BT 495073, fired 13 rounds and saw one VC fall; a further five VC tried to encircle the fire team.
18 Apr	At 182005H a Hotel Company platoon establishing an ambush at BT 398152 heard coughing, deployed and threw two M-26 grenades; an estimated ten enemy withdrew west across the rice paddies. At 182105H a Hotel Company platoon received small-arms fire near the An Tan bridge (BT 491067).
19–20 Apr	At 191400H a patrol leaving a hamlet at BT 436046 took .50 calibre and automatic weapons fire from two VC and answered with small arms and two rounds of 81mm. At 200200H a Hotel Company ambush at BT 450029 saw three VC and held its fire; at 200415H five VC moved into the killing zone and the ambush was sprung, with an estimated five VC wounded. At 201235H the 1st Platoon at BT 440043 took fire from about ten VC in three positions, returned fire and called 81mm mortars — three VC were seen hit.
22 Apr	At 221015H a Hotel Company squad patrol at BT 435047 received 20 rounds of small-arms fire and called artillery, and the VC broke contact. At 221100H the 3rd Platoon observed that the people of Ky Long (1) at BT 435053 had left the village and were returning only by day to work the fields; extensive spider traps were found.
23 Apr	At 232110H a squad ambush from the 2nd Platoon at BT 443033 was fired on by an estimated ten VC — 200 to 300 rounds of small arms and automatic weapons and several grenades. The patrol returned fire and silenced the automatic weapon; the VC broke contact at 2150 moving north-west toward BT 435045. Hill 76 was probed at the same time.
25 Apr	At 250008H the 2nd Platoon at BT 442034 received six grenades and five rounds of small-arms fire and did not return fire, to avoid compromising its position. At 251010H a Hotel Company patrol leaving a hamlet at BT 441026 took about 25 rounds of automatic weapons and carbine fire from four to six VC; the VC fled into a banana grove and two Marines were wounded on punji stakes.
26–30 Apr	Operation Wyoming ran from 26 April, without Hotel Company. At 272000H an ambush leaving Hill 76 (BT 433037) received two rounds from two VC; the search afterwards found spider traps, carbine ammunition and part of a VC uniform, and the ammunition was destroyed in place.

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. The 2/5 command chronology for 13–30 April 1966 (Texas Tech item 1201048068), including the commander's narrative summary, Section I organisational data, the S-3 narrative and the chronological sequence of events with the daily INTSUM messages.

2. OPERATION WYOMING CORRECTED. The earlier version of this file had Hotel Company taking part in Operation Wyoming from 26 to 30 April. The battalion's S-3 narrative states that “a detachment from H&S Co, Co ‘E’, and Co ‘F’ participated.” Hotel Company is not among them; it remained in the TAOR. See Operation_Wyoming.docx in the Operations folder.

3. HILL 76 CONFIRMED, DATE ADJUSTED. The old file had Hotel Company “assigned to Hill 76” on 14 April. What the chronology records for 14 April is that the Alpha Command Group with Companies G and H assumed the TAOR at 1200. Hotel Company's position on Hill 76 (BT 433037) is documented from the following week, and the May chronology states plainly that the company “was located on Hill 76.”

4. ARRIVAL. 2/5 arrived at Chu Lai on 13 April 1966 after sailing from Okinawa on 8 April. The claim in the old file that this was “the first 5th Marine Regiment element to permanently deploy” is not in the chronology and is not repeated here.

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 for the period 13–30 April 1966 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048068).

— 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines Operation Order 327-66 (Wyoming), 24 April 1966, filed with the same chronology.

SECONDARY SOURCES

— Shulimson, Jack and Charles M. Johnson. U.S. Marines in Vietnam: An Expanding War, 1966. History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1982.

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

— Related files in this collection: Operation_Wyoming.docx, Hotel25claude\Operations.