H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

MAY 1966 — HILL 76 AND THE WESTERN TAOR

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for 1–31 May 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	1–31 May 1966
Commander	1st Lieutenant J. J. Doherty, commanding Company H
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines — LtCol R. H. Uskurait to 23 May 1966, then LtCol Walter Moore; 5th Marines; 1st Marine Division
Area of Operations	Chu Lai TAOR, Quang Tin Province — Hotel Company in the south-western sector from Hill 76, patrolling the extreme western flank; from 19 May the An Tan bridge sector
Combat Posture	Offensive — saturation patrolling, night ambushing, cave and tunnel destruction, and combined patrols with the Popular Forces
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

May was Hotel Company's first full month of operations in Vietnam, and the battalion singled the company out in its narrative summary: “In the southwest part of our TAOR, Company ‘H’, which was located on Hill 76, conducted extensive patrolling to the extreme western (left flank) portion of our TAOR. It was here that the greatest success was made in working with the local Popular Forces.”

The result was measured in villages rather than body counts. “The combined ambushes and patrols, coupled with a friendly attitude toward the people, has resulted in making all but two of the eleven villages amenable toward our civic action program,” the commander wrote. The Popular Forces commander at Ky Khu (2) told the Marines that the patrolling had forced the VC into the hills and that they were going hungry because they had been denied access to rice.

Day after day Hotel Company patrols found and destroyed the infrastructure of that western flank — tunnel networks, interlocking caves, a base camp with a bunker built for thirty men, a 250-pound bomb rigged for use against the Marines, machine gun positions and a 155mm round. The cost was steady and small: men wounded by punji stakes and booby traps, a sniper round from a tree line, an ambush sprung in the dark. On 15 May the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines took over the ground north of the Song

Trau, and the battalion's TAOR shrank; on 19 May new company sectors were issued and Hotel Company took on the An Tan bridge. On 23 May Lieutenant Colonel Walter Moore relieved Lieutenant Colonel Robert H. Uskurait in command of the battalion.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Hill 76 patrolling and ambushing	1–31 May 1966	Company and platoon patrols, night ambushes and search-and-destroy sweeps west and south-west of Hill 76, with systematic destruction of caves, tunnels and bunkers by C-4 and 3.5-inch rocket.
Combined action with the Popular Forces	Throughout May 1966	Combined ambushes and patrols with local Popular Forces in the western villages — the battalion's “greatest success” in that work, and the origin of the Combined Action Squad formed at Ly Tin in June.
TAOR boundary change	15–19 May 1966	The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines assumed responsibility for the TAOR north of the Song Trau River; 2/5's reduced TAOR took effect at 151200H May. Company sectors were reassigned by 2/5 Operation Order 301-66, issued at 190800H May, which also required the battalion to occupy, defend and maintain a roadblock and checkpoint at the An Tan bridge (BT 498067).
Change of command, 2/5	23 May 1966	Lieutenant Colonel Walter Moore relieved Lieutenant Colonel Robert H. Uskurait as commanding officer of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

Compiled from the chronological sequence of events and the daily situation reports in the 2/5 command chronology for 1–31 May 1966. Only entries naming Company H, or bearing directly on it, are listed. Grid references and times are as recorded.

Date	Activity / Events
3 May	At 030910H a Hotel Company patrol at BT 444026 found a network of tunnels and destroyed them with 14 pounds of C-4 and 15 M-26 grenades. At 031430H a patrol at BT 436024 took ten rounds of small-arms fire, returned 125 rounds and wounded one VC. At 031530H a patrol located a sizeable VC base camp at BT 435020, fired on four VC and destroyed a bunker built to hold thirty men.
4–5 May	At 041430H a patrol tripped an unknown explosive device — 2 USMC WIA, one requiring helicopter evacuation. At 051000H a patrol at BT 443010 found a large cave holding clothing, rations, shotgun shells, PRC-10 batteries and written documents, with

Date	Activity / Events
	a second cave close by. At 052300H an ambush in position at BT 469045 watched four VC walk into the site.
6–8 May	At 061225H a patrol at BT 441020 found five interlocking caves and tunnels and destroyed them with 15 pounds of C-4. At 061310H a patrol destroying a barricade across a trail at BT 431032 took two rounds of small-arms fire. At 071000H a platoon sweep at BT 435043 received 100 rounds and returned the same. At 081000H a patrol destroyed a cave at BT 435053, and at 081245H another found a bear trap and a 250-pound bomb at BT 420051; the bomb was destroyed in place.
11–13 May	At 110900H the 3rd Platoon at BT 426046 found two machine gun positions, a small cave and a 155mm round, all destroyed with ten pounds of C-4. At 131650H a patrol at BT 435025 encountered two VC at BT 430021 and pursued them into the underbrush.
15 May	The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines assumed the TAOR north of the Song Trau; 2/5's reduced TAOR took effect at 151200H. At 150945H a Hotel Company patrol on search and destroy at BT 435090 took three rounds from BT 426089 and more fire further on. At 151140H two Marines on a patrol at BT 445044 were injured by a booby trap of unknown type and were evacuated to 1st Medical Battalion.
16–17 May	At 161445H the artillery forward observer with the 1st Platoon at BT 431064 watched three VC enter a cave at BT 434082, called artillery, and after the first adjusting rounds saw ten VC run from the area. At 171415H a patrol at BT 432042 took 20 rounds from BT 433043 and answered with 60 rounds and four M-79, wounding one VC.
19 May	2/5 Operation Order 301-66 issued at 190800H set new company sectors and made the battalion responsible for the roadblock and checkpoint at the An Tan bridge (BT 498067).
20 May	At 201120H a Hotel Company squad escorting a Division communications wire team received about 200 rounds of small-arms fire from BT 445086 and returned 1,100 rounds. A reinforced squad and two Ontos were sent from Hill 69 to reinforce it; the patrol assaulted the position through continued fire and found one VC wounded, who later died.
23 May	Lieutenant Colonel Walter Moore relieved Lieutenant Colonel Robert H. Uskurait as commanding officer of 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines.

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 1–31 May 1966 (Texas Tech item 1201048069), a 199-page file that includes the commander's narrative summary, the chronological sequence of events, 2/5 Operation Order 301-66 and the daily situation reports sent to the 1st Marines.

2. OPERATION LIBERTY REMOVED. The earlier version of this file had Hotel Company taking part in “Operation Liberty” in May and June 1966. No operation of that name appears in the 2/5 chronologies for either month. The battalion's May operations were TAOR patrolling and ambushing; its named operation in June was Apache. The invented weekly entries in the old file — patrol contacts, VC casualties, ambush tallies — have been replaced by the dated entries actually in the record.

3. HILL 76 IS DOCUMENTED. The May narrative places Hotel Company on Hill 76 in the south-west of the TAOR in so many words, and the grid BT 433037 appears in the daily reports. Hotel Company contact grids that month cluster tightly around it — BT 435020, BT 435043, BT 441020, BT 443010, BT 444026.

4. CASUALTIES. The Hotel Company casualties recorded in the May chronology are wounded: two on 4 May from an explosive device and two on 15 May from a booby trap, along with men hurt on punji stakes. The battalion casualty table for the month is partly illegible in the scan.

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 1–31 May 1966 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048069), including 2/5 Operation Order 301-66 and the daily situation reports filed with it.

— Section I organisational data, 1–31 May 1966, which lists 1stLt J. J. Doherty as commanding officer of Company H and records the change of battalion command on 23 May 1966.

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: H_Co_2-5_Marines_1966-06_June.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, May 1966