H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

JUNE 1966 — OPERATION APACHE

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for 1–30 June 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 June 1966
Commander	1st Lieutenant J. J. Doherty, 1–25 June 1966; Captain R. D. Hughes, 26–30 June 1966
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol Walter Moore); 5th Marines; 1st Marine Division
Area of Operations	Chu Lai TAOR, Quang Tin Province — Hill 69 complex and the ground north and west of it; Hill 35 and Hill 76 sectors
Combat Posture	Offensive — Operation Apache, company and battalion operations in the TAOR, and continuous patrolling and ambushing
Base of Operations	Hill 69 complex (BT 466073); Hill 35 (BT 435078)
Corps Area	I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam

2. Commander's Summary

“The month of June was one of unprecedented activity in the Battalion's TAOR,” the commander wrote. The battalion mounted Operation Apache and spent many hours planning and rehearsing for Operations Kansas and Washington, “neither of which materialized for the Battalion's participation.” The one exception was Company E's heliborne insertion into the Kansas area after a B-52 strike — a Company E task, not a Hotel Company one.

Apache was the battalion's own operation, and notable on two counts: a 4.2-inch mortar battery and a 105mm battery were helilifted into the battalion combat base, giving 2/5 direct fire support “in a most intimate sense”; and it was “the first Battalion sized operation of this command in which Vietnamese Popular Forces troops have been integrated into our normal company structure.” Hotel Company held the Hill 69 complex during the operation and moved out from it on the battalion's frag orders.

Alongside the operations, the month's work was the same grinding pattern of patrols, ambushes and civic action. The Combined Action Squad — thirteen men under a first lieutenant — set up in the hamlet of Ly Tin to live with and train the Popular Forces recruited there, and the MEDCAP programme treated more civilians than in any previous month. Enemy contact, the battalion noted, “has been developed by

forcing the VC out of the hills to fight for rice.” On 26 June Captain R. D. Hughes relieved 1st Lieutenant J. J. Doherty in command of Hotel Company.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Operation Apache	June 1966	The battalion's own search-and-destroy operation in the TAOR, run under Frag Order 7-66 of 8 June. A 4.2-inch mortar battery and a 105mm battery were helilifted into the battalion combat base. Apache was the first battalion-size operation in which Vietnamese Popular Forces troops were integrated into the Marine company structure. It ended with Company E helilifted back to Hill 69 and another company to Hill 54.
Operations Kansas and Washington	June 1966	H COMPANY DID NOT PARTICIPATE, and neither did 2/5 as a battalion. Both were planned and rehearsed but “neither of which materialized for the Battalion's participation.” The only 2/5 involvement in Kansas was Company E's heliborne insertion to assess a B-52 strike, from which the company returned with one man wounded on punji stakes.
Battalion frag-order operations	22–30 June 1966	Frag Order 14-66 of 22 June sent Company H (-)(Rein) from the vicinity of Hill 69 to BT 459072, with the 3rd Platoon left on Hill 69 as battalion reserve and a platoon of Ontos from Hill 35 taking a supporting position with a reinforced Hotel Company squad on Ontos Ridge. Frag Order 15-66 followed on 27 June.
Combined Action Squad, Ly Tin	June 1966	A thirteen-man squad established its headquarters in the hamlet of Ly Tin to train and live with the Popular Forces recruited there — the outgrowth of the combined patrolling Hotel Company had been doing in the western villages since May.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

Compiled from the commander's narrative summary, the Operation Apache after action report and the chronological sequence of events in the 2/5 command chronology for 1–30 June 1966. Only entries naming Company H, or bearing directly on it, are listed.

Date	Activity / Events
1–7 Jun	TAOR patrolling and ambushing from the Hill 69 complex. Planning and rehearsal for Operations Kansas and Washington, in neither of which the battalion took part.

Date	Activity / Events
8 Jun	Frag Order 7-66 issued for Operation Apache.
Mid-Jun	Operation Apache. A 4.2-inch mortar battery and a 105mm battery were helilifted into the battalion combat base. Company H held the Hill 69 complex and manned the battalion defensive perimeter while the other companies worked the objective areas; Company F moved to Hill 76 and was helilifted back to Hill 69 on 15 June.
15 Jun	Company E was helilifted into the Kansas area to assess a B-52 strike; it returned after inflicting further damage with its own 81mm mortar fire, with one man wounded on punji stakes. Hotel Company was not committed.
22 Jun	Frag Order 14-66: Company H (-)(Rein) to move from the vicinity of Hill 69 to BT 459072 as part of a battalion search-and-destroy operation; the 3rd Platoon to remain on Hill 69 as battalion reserve; a platoon of Ontos from Hill 35 to take a supporting position with a reinforced Hotel Company squad on Ontos Ridge.
26 Jun	Captain R. D. Hughes relieved 1st Lieutenant J. J. Doherty as commanding officer of Company H. Captain Hughes had commanded H&S Company until 25 June.
27–30 Jun	Frag Order 15-66 issued on 27 June. Operation Apache terminated with Company E completing its helilift to Hill 69 and another company lifted to Hill 54; patrolling and ambushing continued in the TAOR to the end of the month.

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 1–30 June 1966 (Texas Tech item 1201048070), including the Combat After Action Report for Operation Apache and Frag Orders 7-66, 14-66 and 15-66 filed with it.

2. OPERATION KANSAS CORRECTED. The earlier version of this file had Hotel Company in the Que Son Valley on Operation Kansas from 13 June, in contact with NVA and VC units. The battalion states the opposite: Kansas and Washington were planned and rehearsed, “neither of which materialized for the Battalion's participation,” the single exception being Company E's insertion after the B-52 strike. The Battle of Hill 488 — SSgt Jimmie Howard's reconnaissance platoon, 15–16 June — was fought by 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, not by this company. See Operation_Kansas.docx in the Operations folder.

3. OPERATION APACHE ADDED. The old file did not mention Apache, which was the battalion's own operation and the major event of the month.

4. CHANGE OF COMMAND DATE CORRECTED. The June organisational data gives 1stLt J. J. Doherty as commanding officer of Company H for 1–25 June 1966 and Capt R. D. Hughes for 26–30 June 1966. The change therefore happened on 26 June, not on 16 August as the old August file said. Captain Hughes had been commanding H&S Company until 25 June; Lieutenant Doherty went on to be battalion Communications Officer, a billet he held into August, and returned to command Hotel Company in December 1966.

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 1–30 June 1966 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048070), including the Combat After Action Report for Operation Apache and Frag Orders 7-66, 14-66 and 15-66.

— Section I organisational data, 1–30 June 1966, which records the Company H change of command on 26 June 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: Operation_Kansas.docx, Hotel25claude\Operations.

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, June 1966