H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

SEPTEMBER 1966 — CHU LAI AND TAM KY

Compiled from the 5th Marines September 1966 chronology and the 2/5 October 1966 chronology

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 September 1966
Commander	Not documented. Capt R. D. Hughes commanded the company through August 1966; by 1 October 1966 1stLt J. J. Kirschke was in command. The September chronology, which would record the change, does not survive.
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol Walter Moore to 30 September; Maj Leonard E. Wood, 1–2 October); 5th Marines (Col C. F. Widdecke); 1st Marine Division
Area of Operations	Chu Lai TAOR, Quang Tin Province (Hill 69 and the company sectors); one platoon at Tam Ky and west of it on Operation Napa / El Paso, 4–15 September
Combat Posture	Offensive — TAOR patrolling and ambushing, with one platoon detached as part of the regimental reserve; from 29 September, movement to the DMZ
Base of Operations	Hill 69 complex (BT 466073), Chu Lai TAOR
Corps Area	I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam

2. Commander's Summary

September 1966 is the one month of Hotel Company's Vietnam service for which the battalion's own record is lost. The 2/5 command chronology for September survives in the digitised archive as two pages, both illegible. What can be established about the company comes from the 5th Marines chronology for the same month and from the October chronology, which looks back on the move north.

The regiment's operation that month was Napa, originally designated El Paso — a coordinated search and destroy operation with the ARVN 2d Division around Tam Ky, 4 to 15 September. Company G (-)(Rein) under Captain J. M. Gruner went to it as regimental reserve and security for the 5th Marines command post and the 2/11 artillery position at Tam Ky, and one platoon of Hotel Company went with it. The company's own after action report gives its mission as “Co G (-)(Rein) w/1 Plt Co H, OPCON 5th

Marines, as Regimental Reserve and security for Regimental Command Post and 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines Artillery position." The rest of Hotel Company stayed in the Chu Lai TAOR.

The platoon left Hill 69 at 1400 on 4 September and reached Tam Ky at 1520. On 14 September Company G, with the Hotel platoon still attached, was chopped to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines and swept a hamlet at BT 259199, taking two wounded; it was in contact again at BT 258194 on the 15th, when the operation ended at 1200 and the units returned to their Chu Lai TAORs. The month closed with the battalion's orders north: on 29 September 2/5 was alerted for Dong Ha, and at 0530 on 30 September Hotel Company led the battalion off Hill 69 as the advance party for Operation Prairie.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Operation Napa / Lien Ket 56 (El Paso)	4–15 September 1966	ONE PLATOON OF H COMPANY PARTICIPATED. A 5th Marines search-and-destroy operation with the ARVN 2d Division around Tam Ky, Quang Tin Province. Company G (-)(Rein) with one platoon of Company H attached served as regimental reserve and security for the regimental CP and the 2/11 artillery at Tam Ky, and was attached to 3/5 on 14 September. Regimental results: 20 VC killed confirmed and 46 probable, 61 captured and 56 detained, against 7 Marines killed and 51 wounded; the Company G group lost 1 killed and 3 wounded.
Chu Lai TAOR operations	1–29 September 1966	The remainder of Hotel Company continued patrolling, ambushing and security in the 2/5 TAOR from the Hill 69 complex. The battalion's own record of this work is lost with the September chronology.
Alert and movement to Dong Ha	29–30 September 1966	2/5 was alerted on 29 September for movement to Dong Ha. At 300530H an advance party consisting of Company H and the Bravo Command Group departed Hill 69, was airlifted from Chu Lai and reached Dong Ha at 0900H to set up the battalion support base. The rest of the battalion followed that night, arriving at 2330.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

The 2/5 command chronology for September 1966 does not survive in readable form. The entries below are drawn from the 5th Marines chronology for September 1966, the Company G after action report filed with it, and the 2/5 chronology for October 1966.

Date	Activity / Events
3–4 Sep	The 5th Marines received the initiating directive for the Tam Ky operation at 031850H and issued Frag Order 12-66 the same day. On 4 September units moved to Tam Ky (BT 292229); the Company G group with the attached Hotel Company platoon left Hill 69 at 1400 and arrived at 1520.
5–13 Sep	D-Day was 5 September. The 1st Battalion worked the northern area and 3/5 searched the areas west of Tam Ky against local-force VC. Company G with the Hotel Company platoon remained regimental reserve and security for the regimental command post and the 2/11 artillery position.
14 Sep	Company G, 2/5, with the Hotel Company platoon and a heavy section of Ontos, was attached to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines; the company swept a hamlet at BT 259199 and had two men wounded.
15 Sep	Company G was in contact at BT 258194. Operation Napa terminated at 1200 and all units returned to their Chu Lai TAORs. The Company G group's casualties for the operation were 1 killed and 3 wounded.
16–28 Sep	Hotel Company back at full strength in the Chu Lai TAOR: patrolling, ambushing and security from the Hill 69 complex. No detailed record survives for these days.
29 Sep	2/5 was alerted for movement to Dong Ha to reinforce the 3d Marine Division in northern I Corps. The alert cut short the 5th Marines' Operation Monterey, which the regiment had begun that morning without 2/5.
30 Sep	“At 300530H Sept 1966 an advanced party consisting of Co. ‘H’ and Bravo Command Group departed Hill 69.” The party was airlifted from Chu Lai and reached Dong Ha at 0900H to establish the battalion support base; the rest of 2/5 (-) with Companies F and G flew up that night and arrived at 2330. Company E remained at Hill 69.

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. THE MISSING CHRONOLOGY. The 2/5 command chronology for September 1966 (Texas Tech item 1201048073) exists in the digitised series as two pages, and neither carries readable text. September is therefore the thinnest month in this collection. Everything stated here is sourced to the 5th Marines chronology for September 1966 or to the 2/5 chronology for October 1966; nothing has been filled in by inference.

2. OPERATION MACON REMOVED. The earlier version of this file placed Hotel Company on Operation Macon in the An Hoa area throughout September, with patrol sweeps south of the Thu Bon River and a sweep near Cu Ban after the 3 September action there. That action was fought by Company I, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines; Macon was a 1/9 operation in Quang Nam Province. 2/5 was in the Chu Lai TAOR in Quang Tin Province, and one Hotel Company platoon was at Tam Ky. Hotel Company did not serve at An Hoa until 23 November 1966.

3. EL PASO AND NAPA ARE THE SAME OPERATION. The 5th Marines after action report states that “Operation Napa originally designated El Paso, was conceived approximately one week prior to instigation,” and the 1st Marine Division order was issued as “Operation El Paso.” Both names appear in reference works as separate operations. See Operation_El_Paso.docx and Operation_Napa_Lien_Ket_56.docx in the Operations folder.

4. COMMAND. The company commander for September is not documented. Captain R. D. Hughes commanded Hotel Company in July and August 1966; by 1 October 1966 1stLt J. J. Kirschke had the company. The change falls inside the missing September record.

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

— 5th Marines Command Chronology, September 1966, including the regimental Combat After Action Report for Operation Napa (El Paso) and the Company G, 2/5 Combat Operation After Action Report dated 21 September 1966 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201046139).

— 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines Command Chronology for the period 1–31 October 1966 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048074), forwarded by 1st Marine Division on 15 December 1966.

— 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines Command Chronology, September 1966 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048073). The digitised file is two pages and is illegible; no text survives.

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_El_Paso.docx and Operation_Napa_Lien_Ket_56.docx, Hotel25claude\Operations.