H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

NOVEMBER 1967 — OPERATION ESSEX AND AP BON (2)

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for November 1967

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 November 1967
Commander	Captain G. W. Bowers, commanding Company H for the whole period 1–30 November 1967
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol George C. McNaughton); 5th Marines; 1st Marine Division
Area of Operations	2/5 An Hoa TAOR, Quang Nam Province — the An Hoa basin, Liberty Road, Phu Loc (6) and Nong Son; Antenna Valley (Operation Essex)
Combat Posture	Offensive — Operation Essex, then ambushes and patrols from Phu Loc (6)
Base of Operations	An Hoa Combat Base (battalion CP); company outposts at Phu Loc (6) and Nong Son; Phu Loc (6)
Corps Area	I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam

2. Commander's Summary

Operation Essex, 6–17 November 1967, was the heaviest fighting of Hotel Company's year. The battalion went into Antenna Valley by helicopter, and on 6 November Hotel Company advanced on the village of Ap Bon (2). At 1130 it engaged an estimated two companies of NVA well dug in in a heavily fortified village, under small arms, automatic weapons and 60mm mortar fire. The company pressed the assault to within seven to ten metres of the enemy positions before heavy casualties and camouflaged barbed wire stopped it.

Its 2nd Platoon, 2ndLt Duane V. Sherin, ran into more NVA in the brush to the west and lost two killed. After air and artillery strikes the 1st and 3rd Platoons assaulted again and were stopped by eight strands of wire hidden in bamboo, with .50-calibre machine guns firing along it from both flanks; 2ndLt Robert W. Miller Jr. was killed and both platoon sergeants badly wounded. Company F came up about 1600 and assaulted with Hotel as its base of fire, and was also repulsed. Aircraft sent to spray CS carried smoke instead; when gas did arrive it never settled. The NVA withdrew about 0430, leaving

collapsed bunkers and no bodies. Hotel and Foxtrot lost 16 killed at Ap Bon (2), with 53 serious casualties in all.

Back at Phu Loc (6) the company went on ambushing. A booby trap on 20 November wounded four Marines of a Hotel Company platoon patrol; on 26 November a squad ambush at AT 915508 caught VC moving into its killing zone; and on the night of 29 November a Hotel Company squad ambush engaged a sizeable enemy force crossing Liberty Road near AT 905505.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Operation Essex	6–17 November 1967	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED — assault company. 2/5 (LtCol George C. McNaughton) in Antenna Valley. 6 November: Company H's assault on the fortified village of Ap Bon (2); Hotel and Foxtrot lost 16 killed. Operation totals: 65 NVA KIA confirmed and 125 probable, 7 VC KIA confirmed and 40 probable.
Ambushes from Phu Loc (6)	20–30 November 1967	Squad ambushes on the approaches and on Liberty Road; the 29 November action near AT 905505.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

Compiled from the narrative summary and the chronological sequence of events in the 2/5 command chronology for November 1967. Only entries naming Company H, or bearing directly on it, are listed. Grid references and times are as recorded.

Date	Activity / Events
6 Nov	Company H landed by helicopter and advanced on Ap Bon (2). At 061130H it engaged an estimated two NVA companies dug in in a heavily fortified village near AT 913364 and closed to within 7–10 metres before casualties and hidden barbed wire stopped it. At 061145H the battalion commander ordered Companies G and M east to assist. At 061215H CS was requested; the aircraft arrived at 1345 carrying smoke. Company F assaulted about 1600 with Company H as its base of fire and was repulsed; the companies pulled back 70 metres under AC-130 cover.
7 Nov	The NVA withdrew about 0430. Company H completed the evacuation of its dead and wounded and then followed Company M to Objective A.
10 Nov	A captured NVA officer cadet said a division headquarters battalion had held Ap Bon (2).
17 Nov	Operation Essex ended.
20 Nov	A Marine in a Hotel Company platoon patrol tripped a booby trap of estimated 81mm size near AT 898486 — four Marines wounded.

Date	Activity / Events
26 Nov	A Hotel Company squad ambush near AT 915508 saw VC move into its killing zone and sprang it.
29 Nov	At 291900H Hotel Company ambushes moved out from the Phu Loc (6) combat outpost to AT 913505, AT 911505 and AT 917513. At 292050H one squad ambush engaged a sizeable enemy force moving across Liberty Road near AT 905505. A Hotel Company platoon then moved to AT 909522 to block for Company F's sweep.

5. Notes and Caveats

This file was rewritten on 21 September 2026 directly from the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines command chronology. The notes below record what changed and where the record is thin.

1. SOURCE. The 2/5 command chronology for November 1967 (Texas Tech item 1201048095), including the Essex after action report, with Telfer's official history for the fight at Ap Bon (2).

2. OPERATION HENDERSON HILL REMOVED. The earlier version had Hotel Company on Operation Henderson Hill from late October to early December 1967. Henderson Hill was a 1968 operation (23 October – 6 December 1968). It has been moved to where it belongs; see the October–November 1968 files and Operation_Henderson_Hill.docx.

3. OPERATION ESSEX ADDED. The old file did not mention Essex, the company's defining battle of 1967.

4. COMMANDER NAMED. Captain G. W. Bowers is listed for 1–30 November 1967.

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 November 1967 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048095).

SECONDARY SOURCES

— Telfer, Gary L., Lane Rogers and V. Keith Fleming, Jr. U.S. Marines in Vietnam: Fighting the North Vietnamese, 1967. History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1984.

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

— Related files in this collection: Operation_Essex.docx, Operation_Henderson_Hill.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, November 1967