H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

DECEMBER 1967 — HOLE HUNTING IN PHU NHUAN

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for December 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	1–31 December 1967
Commander	Captain G. W. Bowers, 1–17 December 1967; Captain G. R. Christmas, 18–31 December 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; the Phu Nhuan hamlets and Liberty Road
Combat Posture	Offensive — cordon and search (“hole hunting”) operations, ambushes and road observation posts
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

December 1967 was a month of mines. “During the month, the VC started using 10–20 lb box mines for AP purposes,” the battalion recorded, and the first Hotel Company victim was a Marine on a platoon combat patrol who stepped on a box mine of about 20 pounds on 3 December.

The battalion launched two three-day “hole hunting” operations in the Phu Nhuan hamlets. The first, in Phu Nhuan (3) (AT 900505), used Companies F, G (-) and H (-); the cordon went in quickly and the objective was swept, then searched slowly. The second, in Phu Nhuan (2) (AT 903513), used Companies G and H. “Again booby traps and mines took a heavy toll of 2/5 Marines. Over the 3 day period, 5 Marines were killed.”

On 18 December Captain G. R. Christmas relieved Captain G. W. Bowers in command of Hotel Company; Captain Bowers moved to the battalion S-4. Captain Christmas would lead the company into Hue City two months later. The year ended with a Hotel Company observation post on Liberty Road

taking sniper fire on 24 December, and a booby trap on 28 December that wounded two more Marines. Operation Auburn, 28 December – 3 January, took Companies E and G; Hotel was not part of it.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Hole-hunting operation, Phu Nhuan (3)	December 1967	Three-day cordon and search at AT 900505 with Companies F, G (-) and H (-).
Hole-hunting operation, Phu Nhuan (2)	December 1967	Three-day cordon and search at AT 903513 with Companies G and H; booby traps and mines killed five Marines.
Ambushes and Liberty Road OPs	December 1967	Night ambushes near An Hoa and observation posts on Liberty Road.
Operation Auburn	28 December 1967 – 3 January 1968	H COMPANY DID NOT PARTICIPATE. Companies E and G of 2/5 were placed under 3/5. See Operation_Auburn.docx.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

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

Date	Activity / Events
2 Dec	At 021930H a Hotel Company outpost at AT 925527 fired 81mm and 105mm on enemy movement.
3 Dec	A Company H Marine on a platoon combat patrol stepped on a box mine of about 20 pounds; an LZ was secured and the wounded evacuated.
4 Dec	At 041045H a Company H search and destroy element had a Marine trip a booby trap of unknown type — 2 USMC WIA evacuated.
Early Dec	Three-day hole-hunting operation in Phu Nhuan (3) (AT 900505) with Companies F, G (-) and H (-).
9 Dec	At 090025H a Hotel Company ambush near AT 934527 saw two VC moving close to its position but outside the killing zone.
Mid-Dec	Second hole-hunting operation in Phu Nhuan (2) (AT 903513) with Companies G and H; five Marines killed by booby traps and mines over three days.
18 Dec	Captain G. R. Christmas relieved Captain G. W. Bowers as commanding officer of Company H. At 181030H a Hotel Company squad OP on Liberty Road at AT 910493 took five rounds from AT 918492 and called artillery.

Date	Activity / Events
24 Dec	A Company H OP on Liberty Road received several sniper rounds from VC in a tree line near AT 903504; an artillery mission was fired.
28 Dec	A booby trap tripped by a Company H Marine wounded two Marines; an LZ was secured for the evacuation.

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 December 1967 (Texas Tech item 1201048096).

2. OPERATION HENDERSON HILL REMOVED. As in the November file, Henderson Hill belongs to late 1968.

3. CHANGE OF COMMAND. The December organisational data lists Captain G. W. Bowers for 1–17 December and Captain G. R. Christmas for 18–31 December 1967.

4. CASUALTIES. The five killed in the Phu Nhuan (2) operation are battalion figures; the chronology does not say how many were Hotel Company Marines.

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 December 1967 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048096).

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_Auburn.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, December 1967