H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

APRIL 1968 — OPERATION BAXTER GARDEN

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for April 1968

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 April 1968
Commander	Captain G. D. Hendrickson (1stLt T. A. Keene commanded Company H 22–26 April during Baxter Garden)
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol Ernest C. Cheatham Jr.); 5th Marines; Task Force X-Ray, 1st Marine Division
Area of Operations	Thua Thien Province south of Hue — Phu Bai, the Truoi River bridge, Cao Doi, the Rock Crusher, Phu Gia and Route 1; Phu Vang District (Operation Baxter Garden)
Combat Posture	Offensive — Operation Houston, and the battalion's Baxter Garden / Lam Son sweep
Base of Operations	Cao Doi / Rock Crusher area
Corps Area	I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam

2. Commander's Summary

April 1968 was Operation Houston in Thua Thien Province, with one sharp interruption: Operation Baxter Garden (Lam Son), 19–26 April, a battalion sweep with two ARVN battalions in support through the booby-trapped hamlets of Phu Vang District. Captain G. D. Hendrickson led Hotel Company into it; from 2000 on 22 April 1st Lieutenant T. A. Keene commanded the company until the operation ended.

At 1200 on 19 April Hotel Company attacked Objective 5 and set its night positions on Objective 6. On the 20th a Hotel platoon patrol at YD 858204 took about 1,000 rounds from 10 to 15 enemy at YD 863204, and the company's platoons began hitting booby traps on gates, bridges and paddy dikes. On the 21st it moved to Objectives 4 and 12 and crossed Phase Line Green, a platoon hitting two mines.

At 0435 on 22 April a Hotel Company Marine set off a booby-trapped grenade at YD 901233 — seven wounded evacuated and one not — and more booby traps followed during the attack toward Phase Line Apple. Most Marine casualties on Baxter Garden came from mines and booby traps; about 2,500 pounds of rice was captured.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Operation Houston	April 1968	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED. Security and search and destroy operations south of Hue.
Operation Baxter Garden / Lam Son	190800H – 261200H April 1968	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED. 2/5 (-)(Rein) with Company E, Company H (Capt G. D. Hendrickson, then 1stLt T. A. Keene from 222000H), H&S Company, Company B 1/5 and Companies C and D 1/27, with two ARVN battalions in support. Whole operation 13 Marines killed; most casualties from mines and booby traps.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

Compiled from the narrative summary and the chronological sequence of events in the 2/5 command chronology for April 1968. Only entries naming Company H, or bearing directly on it, are listed. Grid references and times are as recorded.

Date	Activity / Events
1–18 Apr	Operation Houston south of Hue; the battalion's Bach Ma platoon outpost was held until 17 April.
19 Apr	Operation Baxter Garden began at 0800. At 191200H Company H attacked Objective 5 and set up blocking and night positions on Objective 6.
20 Apr	At 201025H a platoon patrol from Company H at YD 858204 took about 1,000 rounds from 10–15 enemy at YD 863204 and returned 1,500. At 201355H a Hotel platoon at YD 867199 detonated two explosive devices, one on a gate and one on a bridge.
21 Apr	At 210730H Company H left Objective 6 for Objective 4 and at 210950H moved into Objective 12; at 211326H it crossed Phase Line Green. At 211425H a platoon at YD 883247 had a Marine hit a mine.
22 Apr	The company reached its objective at 220430H. At 220435H a Hotel Company Marine detonated a booby-trapped grenade at YD 901233 — 7 USMC WIA evacuated, 1 not evacuated. At 221000H another booby trap wounded three more near YD 914218. 1stLt T. A. Keene took the company from 2000.
23 Apr	At 230850H a Hotel Company Marine detonated a booby-trapped grenade with trip wire at YD 960180 — 1 USMC WIA evacuated, 1 not evacuated.
26 Apr	Operation Baxter Garden ended at 1200.

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 April 1968 (Texas Tech item 1201048102), including the Baxter Garden after action report.

2. The earlier version placed the company on “Arizona Territory patrol operations.” From 13 January to 25 July 1968 the battalion was in Thua Thien Province, around Phu Bai, Hue and Route 1, more than 80 kilometres north of the Arizona Territory. The dated entries here replace the invented ones.

3. MINI-TET ALERT REMOVED. The old file described a “mini-Tet heightened alert” in mid-April. No such entry appears in the April chronology; the battalion was on Baxter Garden.

4. COMMANDER. The Baxter Garden task organisation lists Capt Hendrickson for Company H from 190800H to 222000H and 1stLt Keene from 222000H to 261200H. The May list shows Captain Hendrickson in command again.

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 April 1968 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048102).

SECONDARY SOURCES

— Shulimson, Jack, et al. U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year, 1968. History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1997.

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

— Related files in this collection: Operation_Baxter_Garden_Lam_Son.docx, Operation_Houston.docx.