H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

SEPTEMBER 1968 — TYPHOON BESS AND GO NOI

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for September 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 September 1968
Commander	Captain P. A. Vanderberg, commanding Company H for the whole period 1–30 September 1968
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol James W. Stemple); 5th Marines; 1st Marine Division; Company H under 1/5 operational control from 23 September
Area of Operations	2/5 An Hoa area of operations, Quang Nam Province — the An Hoa basin, Liberty Road, Phu Loc (6) and Go Noi Island
Combat Posture	Offensive — Operation Sussex Bay, then Mameluke Thrust; night ambushes on the rivers
Base of Operations	An Hoa Combat Base
Corps Area	I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam

2. Commander's Summary

September 1968 opened on Go Noi Island with Operation Sussex Bay. Hotel Company's positions near AT 901512 were hit by grenades and booby traps on 1 September, and at 0325 on 3 September a Hotel platoon ambush watched two enemy crossing a river at BT 035556 and opened up with 300 rounds of .30-calibre machine-gun fire.

Then the weather took over. Typhoon Bess struck on 5–6 September while 2/5 was at the far east end of the island. The battalion was lifted out by helicopter on the 6th, except Hotel Company, which was to stay under 5th Marines control and sweep back to Liberty Bridge. LtCol Stemple had the company lifted out after one of its Marines drowned. Tanks and LVTs had to be left on the island for later recovery.

Back under Mameluke Thrust, the company kept up its river ambushes: at 1930 on 8 September a Hotel squad ambush at AT 001533 caught six to eight enemy crossing the river at AT 001534. On 23 September Hotel Company came under the operational control of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, as Company F did two days later.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Operation Sussex Bay (end)	1–9 September 1968	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED. Go Noi Island; Typhoon Bess on 5–6 September; one Hotel Company Marine drowned.
Operation Mameluke Thrust	September 1968	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED. Night ambushes on the river crossings.
Under 1/5 control	From 23 September 1968	Company H came under the operational control of 1st Battalion, 5th Marines.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

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

Date	Activity / Events
1 Sep	Hotel Company positions near AT 901512 were hit by grenades and booby traps.
3 Sep	At 030325H a Hotel Company platoon ambush observed two enemy crossing a river at BT 035556 and fired 300 rounds of .30-calibre machine-gun fire.
5–6 Sep	Typhoon Bess struck Go Noi Island. The battalion was lifted out on 6 September; Company H was to stay and sweep back to Liberty Bridge, but was lifted out after one of its Marines drowned.
8 Sep	At 081930H a Hotel Company squad ambush at AT 001533 observed six to eight enemy crossing the river at AT 001534 and engaged them with small arms and automatic weapons.
9 Sep	Operation Sussex Bay ended.
23 Sep	Company H came under the operational control of 1st Battalion, 5th Marines.

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 September 1968 (Texas Tech item 1201048107), with Shulimson for Typhoon Bess.

2. HAPPY VALLEY REMOVED. The earlier version put the company in “Happy Valley” (the Song Chang valley) on Mameluke Thrust. The 2/5 chronology places the battalion in the An Hoa basin — Phu Nhuan, Cu Ban, La Thap, Liberty Road and Go Noi — for its part of Mameluke Thrust, not in Happy Valley.

3. COMMANDER NAMED. Captain P. A. Vanderberg commanded Hotel Company throughout September; the old file said the commander was not confirmed.

4. CASUALTIES. The one Marine drowned during Typhoon Bess is the only Hotel Company death recorded for the month.

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 September 1968 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048107).

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_Sussex_Bay.docx, Operation_Mameluke_Thrust.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, September 1968