H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

OCTOBER 1968 — HENDERSON HILL

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for October 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	1–31 October 1968
Commander	Captain P. A. Vanderberg, 1–29 October 1968; Captain R. J. Drez, 30–31 October 1968
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol James W. Stemple); 5th Marines; 1st Marine Division
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; the Arizona Territory (Operation Henderson Hill)
Combat Posture	Offensive — end of Mameluke Thrust; Operation Henderson Hill from 23 October
Base of Operations	An Hoa Combat Base
Corps Area	I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam

2. Commander's Summary

October 1968 closed Mameluke Thrust and opened Henderson Hill. While Companies E and G and a borrowed 1/5 company fought the hills of Operation Maui Peak under the 7th Marines, Hotel Company worked the An Hoa basin. In the days around 20–23 October a Hotel platoon securing amtracs near AT 918496 was hit by small-arms fire and grenades, and a Hotel Company Marine set off booby traps at AT 949499, the same spot that had claimed Marines in August.

Mameluke Thrust ended at 1200 on 23 October, and the same day Henderson Hill began. The 2/5 command group and two companies, patrolling east of Liberty Road, were ordered to disengage, trucked to An Hoa, met MajGen Youngdale, and made a helicopter assault into the Arizona Territory; small-arms fire closed the primary landing zone, but the battalion reached its objectives before nightfall. In the sweeps that followed it captured a 24-page enemy document laying out the “Winter-Spring 1968–69 Campaign.”

On 30 October Captain Ronald J. Drez took command of Hotel Company from Captain P. A. Vanderberg, who moved to H&S Company. Captain Drez would lead the company through Meade River and Taylor Common.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Operation Mameluke Thrust (end)	1–23 October 1968	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED. An Hoa basin operations; ended 231200H.
Operation Maui Peak	6–19 October 1968	H COMPANY DID NOT PARTICIPATE. 2/5 (-) with Companies E and G under the 7th Marines. See Operation_Maui_Peak.docx.
Operation Henderson Hill	From 23 October 1968	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED. 5th Marines; heliborne assault into the Arizona Territory by 2/5 on 23 October.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

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

Date	Activity / Events
1–19 Oct	Operation Maui Peak by Companies E and G; Hotel Company in the An Hoa basin on Mameluke Thrust.
20–21 Oct	Company H searching near AT 953505 found an enemy weapons and ordnance cache; near AT 952503 it found six freshly dug graves holding six NVA dead.
22 Oct	At 221400H a Hotel Company platoon acting as security for amtracs near AT 918496 received small-arms fire and a grenade.
23 Oct	A Hotel Company Marine detonated booby-trapped devices at AT 949499; several Marines wounded. Mameluke Thrust ended at 1200 and Henderson Hill began with 2/5's heliborne assault into the Arizona Territory.
24–29 Oct	Sweeps with 3/5 with little contact; the Winter-Spring campaign document was captured.
30 Oct	Captain R. J. Drez took command of Company H.

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 October 1968 (Texas Tech item 1201048108), with the Henderson Hill material filed in the November chronology.

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. DATING. The cache, graves, amtrac-security and booby-trap entries of 20–23 October appear in the chronologies without a month in some copies; they are placed here because they are filed with the Henderson Hill report and match its late-October account.

4. CHANGE OF COMMAND. Captain P. A. Vanderberg to 29 October; Captain R. J. Drez from 30 October 1968.

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 October 1968 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048108).

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_Henderson_Hill.docx, Operation_Maui_Peak.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, October 1968