H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

DECEMBER 1968 — MEADE RIVER AND TAYLOR COMMON

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for December 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 December 1968
Commander	Captain R. J. Drez, commanding Company H for the whole period 1–31 December 1968
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol James W. Stemple); 5th Marines; 1st Marine Division; Company H under 3/26 control 6–9 December; Task Force Yankee for Taylor Common
Area of Operations	The Dodge City cordon south of Da Nang (Meade River, to 9 December); then the mountains west of An Hoa — Hill 214 and Fire Support Base Pike (Taylor Common)
Combat Posture	Offensive — the Meade River bunker fight, then Operation Taylor Common
Base of Operations	In the field; then Fire Support Base Pike on Hill 214
Corps Area	I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam

2. Commander's Summary

December 1968 gave Hotel Company its fiercest fight since Hue. On 6 December, as 2/5 waited to be lifted back to An Hoa after fifteen quiet days on the Meade River cordon, LtCol Stemple told Captain Drez at 1400 that Hotel Company would instead make a helicopter assault under 3/26, the lift starting in five minutes. The company was set down less than 1,000 metres away, on the western side of the Suoi Co Ca.

On 7 December 3/26 swung into the Northern Bunker Complex, pivoting on Hotel Company. Hotel and Company A, 1/7 attacked frontally; Hotel was hit from two pagodas in a flooded cemetery, ten Marines of the two companies were killed and 23 wounded, and volunteers brought in the dead after dark. On 8 December, attacking five companies abreast, the company was pinned in a paddy by fire from a treeline; a napalm bomb struck among the Marines but bounced away before exploding. Captain Drez and engineer PFC Michael A. Emmons threw a satchel charge of C-4, grenades and two 3.5-inch

rockets into the main bunker; 39 enemy dead and one prisoner were reported around it. 3/26 made the final assault on 9 December.

Four days later the battalion was in the mountains. On 13 December a Company E platoon and engineers rappelled onto Hill 214, and by evening 2/5 had landed and was building Fire Support Base Pike for Operation Taylor Common, without opposition.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Operation Meade River (end)	1–9 December 1968	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED — under 3/26 control 6–9 December. The Northern Bunker Complex, 7–8 December: 10 Marines of Company H and Company A, 1/7 killed on 7 December.
Operation Taylor Common	From 13 December 1968	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED. Task Force Yankee; 2/5 built FSB Pike on Hill 214 and patrolled the Ong Thu Slope.

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 1968. Only entries naming Company H, or bearing directly on it, are listed. Grid references and times are as recorded.

Date	Activity / Events
1–5 Dec	Meade River cordon; little contact for 2/5.
6 Dec	At 1400 Captain Drez was told Company H would make an immediate helicopter assault under 3/26; it was set down on the western side of the Suoi Co Ca, less than 1,000 metres away. 2/5 (-) left Meade River at 061700H.
7 Dec	3/26 pivoted into the Northern Bunker Complex on Company H. Hotel and A/1/7 attacked frontally and were hit from two pagodas in a flooded cemetery — 10 Marines of the two companies killed, 23 wounded; the dead were recovered after dark by volunteers.
8 Dec	Company H, attacking with five companies abreast, was pinned in a paddy; a napalm bomb landed among the Marines and bounced away before exploding. Captain Drez and PFC Michael A. Emmons destroyed the main bunker with an improvised satchel charge; 39 enemy dead and 1 prisoner reported.
9 Dec	3/26 made the final assault; Meade River terminated at 1800.
13 Dec	Taylor Common: a Company E platoon and engineers rappelled onto Hill 214; 2/5 landed and began building FSB Pike.

Date	Activity / Events
14–31 Dec	Patrols from FSB Pike; the chronology has no further dated Hotel Company entries for the month.

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 1968 (Texas Tech item 1201048110), with Shulimson's official history for the Northern Bunker Complex.

2. TAYLOR COMMON DATE. The old file had the company in Taylor Common from 6 December. The operation began on 7 December and 2/5 entered it on 13 December.

3. BASE AREA 112. The old file placed the company in Base Area 112; the 2/5 chronology places it at FSB Pike on Hill 214.

4. COMMANDER. Captain R. J. Drez is listed for 1–31 December 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 December 1968 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048110).

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_Meade_River.docx, Operation_Taylor_Common.docx.