H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

JANUARY 1969 — FIRE SUPPORT BASE PIKE

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for January 1969

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 January 1969
Commander	Captain Ronald J. Drez, commanding Company H for the whole period 1–31 January 1969
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol James W. Stemple); 5th Marines; 1st Marine Division; under the 3d Marines and Task Force Yankee for Operation Taylor Common
Area of Operations	The mountains west of An Hoa — Fire Support Base Pike on Hill 214 and the Ong Thu Slope
Combat Posture	Offensive — Operation Taylor Common: patrols from FSB Pike, base-camp and cache searches
Base of Operations	Fire Support Base Pike (Hill 214)
Corps Area	I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam

2. Commander's Summary

January 1969 was spent in the mountains on Operation Taylor Common. Captain Ronald J. Drez commanded Hotel Company throughout, under LtCol James W. Stemple, with the battalion working for the 3d Marines inside Task Force Yankee.

The pattern was set by the ground: three companies patrolled the Ong Thu Slope while one secured and improved Fire Support Base Pike on Hill 214. Contact came mostly from chance meetings, but the battalion kept uncovering enemy base camps and supply points. On 23 January the battalion was ordered to close FSB Pike.

The month cost the battalion seven killed. The January chronology is written at battalion level and has no dated entries naming Hotel Company.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Operation Taylor Common	January 1969	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED. Task Force Yankee; 2/5 under the 3d Marines. Patrols on the Ong Thu Slope from FSB Pike; FSB Pike ordered closed on 23 January.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

Compiled from the narrative summary and the chronological sequence of events in the 2/5 command chronology for January 1969. Only entries naming Company H, or bearing directly on it, are listed. Grid references and times are as recorded.

Date	Activity / Events
1–22 Jan	Company patrols on the Ong Thu Slope and security of FSB Pike in rotation; enemy base camps and supply points found.
23 Jan	The battalion was ordered to close FSB Pike.
24–31 Jan	Closing of FSB Pike and continued Taylor Common operations. Battalion losses for January: 7 killed.

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 January 1969 (Texas Tech item 1201048111), with Smith's official history.

2. BASE AREA 112 AND LIBERTY BRIDGE. The old file placed the company in Base Area 112 and on Liberty Bridge and An Hoa security. The chronology places the battalion at FSB Pike and on the Ong Thu Slope for Taylor Common.

3. COMMANDER. The January data lists Captain R. J. Drez for 1–31 January 1969.

4. NO COMPANY DETAIL. Nothing has been invented to fill the gap left by the battalion-level record.

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 January 1969 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048111).

SECONDARY SOURCES

— Smith, Charles R. U.S. Marines in Vietnam: High Mobility and Standdown, 1969. History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1988.

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

— Related files in this collection: Operation_Taylor_Common.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, January 1969