H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

MARCH 1969 — COMMAND CHANGES AND THE ARIZONA

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for March 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 March 1969
Commander	Captain Ronald J. Drez, 1–7 March 1969; 1st Lieutenant R. L. Wing, 8–20 March 1969; Captain G. E. Brown, 21–31 March 1969
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines — LtCol James W. Stemple 1–13 March, then LtCol James H. Higgins; 5th Marines; Company H under 5th Marines control 1–6 March
Area of Operations	2/5 area, Quang Nam Province — An Hoa, Liberty Bridge and Liberty Road, Phu Loc (6) and the Arizona Territory
Combat Posture	Offensive — end of Taylor Common; operations north of An Hoa into the Arizona
Base of Operations	An Hoa Combat Base
Corps Area	I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam

2. Commander's Summary

March 1969 brought new commanders at every level. Hotel Company was under the direct operational control of the 5th Marines from 1 to 6 March; on 7 March Captain Ronald J. Drez gave up the company he had led through Meade River and Taylor Common. 1st Lieutenant R. L. Wing commanded from 8 to 20 March and Captain G. E. Brown from 21 March. On 14 March LtCol James H. Higgins relieved LtCol James W. Stemple in command of the battalion.

“During the month of March there were 56 enemy contacts, 32 of which were initiated by the enemy,” the battalion recorded. Until 26 March they were sniper and harassing incidents; the enemy “relied heavily upon the use of surprise firing devices instead of contact by fire,” and three times rifle companies took mortar fire in their night positions. From 27 to 31 March the battalion ran into sizeable VC and NVA forces in the Arizona north of An Hoa.

On 20 March Hotel Company was issued the new PRC-88 short-range radio, “with favorable reactions noted from small unit leaders.”

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Under 5th Marines control	010001H – 061200H March 1969	Company H was detached to the operational control of the 5th Marines.
Operation Taylor Common (end)	To 8 March 1969	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED.
Operations north of An Hoa	27–31 March 1969	The battalion encountered sizeable VC/NVA forces in the Arizona north of An Hoa; intelligence placed elements of the 83rd NVA and the 1st VC in the area.

4. Chronology of Company H Activities

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

Date	Activity / Events
1–6 Mar	Company H under the operational control of the 5th Marines.
7 Mar	Captain Ronald J. Drez relinquished command of Company H.
8 Mar	1st Lieutenant R. L. Wing took command. Taylor Common ended.
14 Mar	LtCol James H. Higgins relieved LtCol James W. Stemple as commanding officer of 2/5.
20 Mar	PRC-88 radios were issued to Company H, with favourable reactions from small-unit leaders.
21 Mar	Captain G. E. Brown took command of Company H.
27–31 Mar	The battalion encountered sizeable VC/NVA forces in the Arizona north of An Hoa.

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 March 1969 (Texas Tech item 1201048113).

2. COMMANDERS CORRECTED. The old file had Captain Drez in command “through approximately spring 1969.” He left the company on 7 March 1969; 1stLt R. L. Wing and Capt G. E. Brown followed.

3. THE ARIZONA. In 1969 the battalion did operate in the Arizona Territory north of An Hoa; the old file's placing of the company there at the end of the month is broadly right, though its dated detail was not.

4. NO CASUALTY BREAKDOWN. The chronology gives battalion totals only.

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 March 1969 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048113).

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, March 1969