H COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

MARCH 1971 — THE LAST MONTH IN VIETNAM

Compiled from the 2/5 Command Chronology for 1–22 March 1971

1st Marine Division · III Marine Amphibious Force · I Corps, Republic of Vietnam / Camp Pendleton, CA

1. Unit Overview

Unit Designation	Hotel Company (H Co), 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division
Reporting Period	1–31 March 1971 (company listed to 21 March)
Commander	Captain John W. Moffett, commanding Company H 1–21 March 1971 — the last entry for the company in the chronologies
Higher HQ	2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol T. M. Hamlin); 5th Marines; 1st Marine Division
Area of Operations	The Que Son Mountains; LZ Baldy; Hill 34; then aboard USS Denver
Combat Posture	Stand-down and redeployment — end of Imperial Lake on 3 March; embarkation 21 March
Base of Operations	LZ Baldy; Hill 34 from 3 March; USS Denver (LPD-9) from 21 March
Corps Area	I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam

2. Commander's Summary

March 1971 was Hotel Company's last month in Vietnam. On 1 March the battalion CP returned to Baldy Combat Base, completing “a period of extended operations in the Que Son Mountains.” Companies F and H were controlled from Baldy and kept patrolling until they withdrew from the field on 3 March, ending the battalion's part in Imperial Lake. Over slightly less than four months as its controlling headquarters, the battalion counted 89 enemy killed, 96 individual and 5 crew-served weapons captured, radios, sewing machines and several thousand pounds of food — “the virtual annihilation of enemy forces in the area.”

Companies F and H moved to Hill 34 on 3 March, followed by Companies E and G and the battalion CP on the 4th. The battalion's tactical commitment was over, and its effort turned to redeployment. The strength figures tell the story: 26 officers and 846 enlisted men at the start of the month, five officers and 171 enlisted on the 22nd. In the first eleven days alone the battalion transferred out 597 enlisted Marines.

Captain John W. Moffett is listed as commanding officer of Company H from 1 to 21 March 1971. On 21 March the battalion embarked in USS Denver (LPD-9), and on the 22nd it sailed for the United States.

3. Operations Overview

Operation / Activity	Dates	Description
Operation Imperial Lake (end of 2/5's part)	1–3 March 1971	H COMPANY PARTICIPATED. Companies F and H patrolled in the Que Sons until 3 March.
Stand-down at Hill 34	3–21 March 1971	Companies F and H to Hill 34 on 3 March; the rest of the battalion on 4 March.
Embarkation	21–22 March 1971	The battalion embarked in USS Denver (LPD-9) on 21 March and sailed on the 22nd.

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 1971. Only entries naming Company H, or bearing directly on it, are listed. Grid references and times are as recorded.

Date	Activity / Events
1 Mar	The battalion CP returned to Baldy Combat Base; Companies F and H, controlled from Baldy, continued patrolling in the Que Sons.
3 Mar	Companies F and H withdrew from the field, ending 2/5's part in Imperial Lake, and moved to Hill 34. At 1515 the battalion resumed operational control of Company G after its CUPP service.
4 Mar	Companies E and G and the battalion CP joined F and H on Hill 34.
1–11 Mar	The battalion transferred out 2 officers and 597 enlisted Marines.
21 Mar	Last day for which Captain Moffett is listed as commanding Company H. The battalion embarked in USS Denver.
22 Mar	USS Denver sailed for CONUS with the battalion at a strength of 5 officers and 171 enlisted.

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 1–22 March 1971 portion of the 2/5 command chronology filed as Texas Tech item 1201049006.

2. IMPERIAL LAKE HANDOVER. The 1st Marines took over Imperial Lake as the 5th Marines stood down; the operation ended on 12 May 1971. See Operation_Imperial_Lake.docx.

3. THE END OF HOTEL COMPANY IN VIETNAM. After 21 March the chronologies no longer list any rifle companies. Most Hotel Company Marines were transferred to other units in Vietnam or rotated home during the first three weeks of March; only a cadre sailed with the battalion.

4. AN HOA. The old file mentioned “An Hoa decommissioning” under March. An Hoa had been handed over to the ARVN in the autumn of 1970.

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 Chronologies for February–December 1971, filed together (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201049006): February 1971; 1–22 March 1971; 25 March – 13 April 1971 (at sea); 13 April – 30 June 1971 (Camp Pendleton).

SECONDARY SOURCES

— Cosmas, Graham A. and Terrence P. Murray. U.S. Marines in Vietnam: Vietnamization and Redeployment, 1970–1971. History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1986.

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

— Related files in this collection: Operation_Imperial_Lake.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 1971