BATTLE OF HUE – TET OFFENSIVE

2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

1st Marine Division | Republic of Vietnam | 31 January – 2 March 1968

FIELD	DETAIL
Operation Name	Battle of Hue – Tet Offensive (Operation Hue City)
Dates of Operation	31 January – 2 March 1968 (Operation Hue City formally ended 2 March). 2/5 was in Hue from 2 February to 10 March 1968.
Mission Purpose / Objective	Retake Hue from North Vietnamese and VC forces that seized it at Tet. Marine battalions of Task Force X-Ray cleared the modern city south of the Perfume River while ARVN forces fought for the Citadel. Relieve the MACV compound and protect the civilian population.
Locations / Cities	Hue City (south of the Perfume River): MACV compound, Hue University, Treasury, public health building, Le Loi street, provincial headquarters and hospital; An Cuu Bridge over the Phu Cam Canal; Truoi River Bridge and CAP H-8 (31 Jan); Phu Bai; Thua Thien Province
TAOR	Hue City south of the Perfume River; Thua Thien Province
UTM Coordinates	Company H attack on a building near YD 768219 (4 Feb); a platoon secured the objective at YD 767218; Company H at YD 767218 (evening 4 Feb). (Grids from the 2/5 February 1968 journal.).
USMC Units Involved	Task Force X-Ray (BGen Foster C. LaHue). 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol Ernest C. Cheatham Jr.): Company H (Capt G. Ronald Christmas), Company F (Capt Michael P. Downs, initially with 1/1), Company G and Company E. 1st Battalion, 1st Marines (LtCol Marcus J. Gravel); 1/5 (Citadel); ARVN 1st Division.
2/5 Companies Participated	Company E; Company F; Company G; Company H; H&S Company. 2/5 (LtCol Ernest C. Cheatham Jr.) with Companies E, F, G and H; the battalion command group fought with them through the city.
Mission Results	31 Jan: at the Truoi River Bridge, south of Hue, Cheatham sent Capt Christmas's Company H to relieve Combined Action Platoon H-8, reinforced by the command group and Company F. 2/5 killed 18 enemy and took 1 prisoner, losing 3 killed and 13 wounded. 2 Feb, about 1100: Company H crossed the An Cuu Bridge into Hue in a "Rough Rider" armed convoy with Army quad-.50 trucks and Ontos, fought through fire near the MACV compound, and joined 1/1 by mid-day. 4 Feb, from 0700: Company H blasted through walls and courtyards with 3.5-inch rockets and 106mm recoilless rifles, captured the public health building, and covered Company F's assault on the Treasury; one Company H platoon freed about 175 civilians, including 2 Americans. 5 Feb: Company H advanced along Le Loi street on the river flank toward the hospital and provincial headquarters. House-to-house fighting continued through February; 2/5 left Hue on 10 March for Operation Houston.
USMC KIA	Whole battle: 147 USMC KIA (previously recorded figure). 2/5 at Truoi River, 31 Jan: 3 KIA. Breakdown by 2/5 company: not recorded.
USMC Wounded	Whole battle: 857 USMC WIA (previously recorded figure). 2/5 for February 1968: 421 WIA (chronology). Breakdown by 2/5 company: not recorded.

Enemy KIA	2/5 for February 1968: 717 NVA/VC KIA confirmed (chronology statistics). Whole battle: approximately 5,000 in the Hue area (previously recorded figure).
Enemy Wounded	Unknown

NOTES & SOURCE REFERENCES

UPDATED 16 SEPTEMBER 2026 FROM PRIMARY SOURCES. CONFIRMED MAJOR H COMPANY ENGAGEMENT. Shulimson's official history and the 2/5 Command Chronology for February 1968 confirm that Capt G. Ronald Christmas's Company H was among the first 2/5 units into Hue. It crossed the An Cuu Bridge on 2 February 1968 and led the attacks on the public buildings on 4–5 February. CORRECTION: Company F was not inserted into Hue by helicopter. On 31 January it was trucked to Phu Bai and went into the city with 1/1. CORRECTED DATES: Operation Hue City formally ended on 2 March 1968. The 2/5 March 1968 chronology places the battalion in Hue until 10 March.

Primary sources: 2/5 Command Chronologies, February and March 1968 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive items 1201048100 and 1201048101); Jack Shulimson et al., U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year, 1968 (HQMC, 1997), Part II (The Tet Offensive), pp. 170–178 and following. Originals: National Archives, RG 127 (National Archives II, College Park MD 20740; Marine Corps History Division, Quantico VA 22134).