OPERATION APACHE

2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

1st Marine Division | Republic of Vietnam | 9–12 June 1966

FIELD	DETAIL
Operation Name	Operation Apache (search and destroy)
Dates of Operation	090600H – 122000H June 1966. 2/5 Operation Order 305-66 was issued on 1 June 1966; the initial briefing was held on 5 June and a second on 7 June.
Mission Purpose / Objective	Heliborne assault into a landing zone in the Quan Ly Tin area, seizure of Objective Cobra, establishment of a battalion combat base, and extensive search and destroy operations throughout the TAOR. Reconnaissance units were inserted first by helicopter into landing zones Canary, Sparrow and Robin to set up observation posts. Enemy expected: the 1st VC Regiment (32nd) and the Ly Tin and Ky Chanh guerrilla companies, estimated at 120 men in the local company and 250 in the battalion.
Locations / Cities	Quan Ly Tin (Ly Tin District), Quang Tin Province; Phu Duc (4); Ngoc Nha (4); Ky Chanh; the Hill 68 complex; Hill 130; Tam Ky. Launched from and returned to the Hill 69 combat base; Company B, 1/5 was lifted out to Hill 54.
TAOR	2/5 TAOR, Chu Lai, Quang Tin Province (Ly Tin District)
UTM Coordinates	Battalion landing zone, Hill 69: BT 468073. Main landing zone and combat base: BT 312135, with the battalion CP at BT 305146 (Company E BT 300144, Company F BT 307145, Company B BT 305142). Ngoc Nha (4): BT 269124. Artillery targets: BT 267129, BT 275123, BT 273114, BT 336135. Southern phase, 12 June: landing zone BT 317088; command group at the ARVN outpost BT 319089; Company E landing zone BT 340099; tunnels and rice at BT 348084 and BT 348085; sniper position BT 289095; VC ambush site BT 289127 – BT 291128. Mine casualty at BT 318124.
USMC Units Involved	Controlling headquarters: 2nd Battalion (-)(Rein), 5th Marines (LtCol Walter Moore) with Company E (Rein) (Capt J. L. Cooper) and Company F (Rein) (1stLt G. S. Burgett). Attached: a detachment of H&S Company; a helicopter support team of the 1st Shore Party Battalion; a platoon of Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion; engineer squads of the 1st Engineer Battalion; Battery E and the 4.2-inch mortar battery of 2/11; Battery L, 4/11; Company A (-), 1st Tank Battalion; Tam Ky Popular Forces squads; S-2 scouts, interpreters, tank liaison, 81mm mortar sections and sniper teams of the 5th Marines (two teams with Company E and three with Company F). Battalion reserve: Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines.
2/5 Companies Participated	Company E; Company F; H&S Company. Companies E and F (Rein) with a detachment of H&S Company.
Mission Results	9 Jun: the battalion lifted from Hill 69 (BT 468073) into LZ Cobra. Company E landed about 1,000 metres east of the scheduled zone at 0645, Command Group Bravo at 0715, Company F at 0740; all units were in by 0745 with no enemy contact. At 1020 the battalion assaulted toward Phu Duc (4) from the Hill 68 complex against long-range sniper fire; the sweep of the village produced 4 VC killed, 4 wounded and 4 captured. Company B, 1/5 was lifted in as reserve at 1230 and a Popular Forces platoon flew in from Tam Ky at 1400 and was split among the companies. A 4.2-inch

	mortar battery landed at 1415 and a 105mm battery at 1800 — “the first time a Battery has been helilifted in support of this Battalion in VIETNAM.” 10 Jun: a Sparrow Hawk platoon landed at BT 278117 to support Company E's assault on Ngoc Nha (4) (BT 269124), taken without resistance; an observed artillery mission on about 35 VC at BT 267129 was credited with 18 killed and 14 wounded probable, and a later mission set off two secondary explosions that threw flame 200 feet into the air. 11 Jun: light contact and long-range sniper fire; Company B took fire at BT 334119 and answered with small arms, LAWs and 3.5-inch rockets; a platoon patrol lost 2 Marines wounded to a mine at BT 318124. 12 Jun: the battalion (-) swept the south-eastern TAOR from an ARVN outpost at BT 319089; Company E landed at BT 340099 after artillery and air preparation, found tunnel networks at BT 348084 and 3 tons of rice under a false floor at BT 348085. Two hamlet chiefs warned of a VC ambush being laid between BT 289127 and BT 291128, which was broken up by unobserved artillery and mortar fire. Regiment ordered the operation terminated at 1250; the companies were lifted back to Hill 69 and Hill 54, and Apache ended at 122025H.
USMC KIA	Whole operation: 0 – the after action report records 0 killed and 0 died of wounds. Company E: 0; Company F: 0; H&S Company: 0.
USMC Wounded	3 WIA. Four medical evacuation requests were made, with an average helicopter reaction time of 30 minutes; casualties were mostly heat exhaustion treated in the field, with shrapnel wounds evacuated to 1st Medical Battalion. Four Marines were evacuated for illness on 11 June. Breakdown by 2/5 company: not recorded.
Enemy KIA	24 VC KIA confirmed and 41 possible
Enemy Wounded	24 VC WIA possible; 13 VC captured (VCC) and 13 VC suspects (VCS). Captured: 7 tons of rice, 25 pounds of documents, assorted uniforms, a hand grenade, 60 rounds of submachine gun ammunition and a training notebook with map symbols.

NOTES & SOURCE REFERENCES

CREATED 29 SEPTEMBER 2026 FROM PRIMARY SOURCES. CORRECTION: H COMPANY DID NOT TAKE PART, AND APACHE WAS NOT HOTEL COMPANY'S FIRST OPERATION. It was requested as Hotel Company's first operation of 1966; the Combat Operation After Action Report does not support that. Its task organization lists only Company E (Rein) under Capt Cooper and Company F (Rein) under 1stLt Burgett as the manoeuvre companies, with Company B, 1/5 as battalion reserve, and no entry in the four-day sequence of events names Company H. Hotel Company was in the Chu Lai TAOR: the battalion's base was the Hill 69 complex, from which Apache was launched and to which the companies returned, and the chronology's entry for 15 June — three days after Apache ended — records “CoH on Hill 69 mans the BLT defensive perimeter.” 2/5 COMPANIES THAT DID NOT TAKE PART: Company H. The record does not say whether Company G took part. Company H held Hill 69.

WHAT HOTEL COMPANY'S FIRST OPERATIONS WERE. The company reached Chu Lai on 13 April 1966 and took over part of the former 2/4 TAOR at 1200 on 14 April, and its war began at once with patrols and night ambushes from Hill 76 — a squad ambush was hit by an estimated ten VC at BT 443033 on 23 April while Hill 76 itself was probed. It was not in the battalion's first named operation: Wyoming (26 April – 1 May 1966) was fought by a detachment of H&S Company and Companies E and F. On the record now held, Hotel Company's first named operation was COLORADO (Lien Ket 52), when Company H (Rein) was helilifted from Hill 69 to the first objective at 060915H August 1966. See Operation_Colorado_Lien_Ket_52.docx, Operation_Wyoming.docx and the April–August 1966 monthly files.

WHY APACHE MATTERED TO THE BATTALION. The commander's analysis calls Apache a success “from the standpoint of coordination of supporting arms, long range logistical support and rapid Heliborne movement of troops.” Three things were new. It was “the first Battalion sized operation of this command in which Vietnamese Popular Forces troops have been integrated into our normal company structure,” about ten PFs going to each rifle company. For the first time the battalion put its combat base inside an occupied hamlet for the whole operation, which was judged to have prevented a night assault on the perimeter. And a battery each of 105mm howitzers

and 4.2-inch mortars was flown in by heavy-lift helicopter — “ready to deliver supporting fire anywhere in the TAOR only minutes after being landed.” MEDCAP patrols treated several hundred civilians in Phu Duc (4).

Primary sources: 2/5 Command Chronology, June 1966, including the Combat Operation After Action Report for Apache, 22 June 1966, 2/5 Operation Order 305-66 and Frag Orders 7-66, 14-66 and 15-66 (TTU Vietnam Archive item 1201048070). Originals: NARA RG 127 (College Park MD 20740) and Marine Corps History Division (Quantico VA 22134).