OPERATION CHECKERS

2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

1st Marine Division | Republic of Vietnam | 9–15 January 1968 (2/5 move)

FIELD	DETAIL
Operation Name	Operation Checkers
Dates of Operation	III MAF began Checkers in late December 1967. 2/5's part: 9–13 January 1968 in the Part II narrative; the S-3 report has the move beginning at 0800 on 9 January and ending at 1530 on 15 January 1968, when the last flight of the main body reached Phu Bai.
Mission Purpose / Objective	Redeploy III MAF forces north: the 3d Marine Division to the DMZ and Khe Sanh, and a 1st Marine Division task force (Task Force X-Ray) to Phu Bai to take over Thua Thien Province and cover the western approaches to Hue.
Locations / Cities	From the An Hoa Combat Base, Quang Nam Province, to Phu Bai (Cantonment No. 5), Thua Thien Province.
TAOR	Phu Bai area, Thua Thien Province, I Corps (Task Force X-Ray).
UTM Coordinates	Not recorded for the move.
USMC Units Involved	III MAF; 1st Marine Division Task Force X-Ray (opened at Phu Bai 13 January, took over the Phu Bai TAOR 15 January); 5th Marines with its 1st and 2nd Battalions. 2/5 was commanded by LtCol E. C. Cheatham Jr.
2/5 Companies Participated	The whole battalion moved by USAF C-130, the advance party first. Shortly after arrival Company H was placed under the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines.
Mission Results	"The move was made smoothly and responsibilities of the Phu Bai area were efficiently assumed." No significant problems arose during the move. Within weeks the battalion was fighting at the Song Truoi Bridge (31 January) and in Hue.
USMC KIA	None recorded for the move.
USMC Wounded	None recorded for the move.
Enemy KIA	Not applicable (a redeployment).
Enemy Wounded	Not applicable (a redeployment).

NOTES & SOURCE REFERENCES

COMPILED 20 NOVEMBER 2026 FROM PRIMARY SOURCES. This file exists because the 2/5 history text names Operation Checkers and the operations list had no file for it. Checkers was a III MAF redeployment, not a combat operation; the name came from the units' "hop, skip, and jump" moves in which they displaced one another. DATE CONFLICT: the 2/5 Part II narrative gives 9–13 January; its S-3 report gives the last arrival at Phu Bai at 1530 on 15 January.

Primary sources: 2/5 Command Chronology, January 1968, Part II narrative and S-3 report (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048097, PDF pp. 3, 18); Jack Shulimson et al., U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year, 1968 (HQMC, 1997), pp. 16–17, 83–84. Originals: National Archives, RG 127 (National Archives II, College Park MD 20740; Marine Corps History Division, Quantico VA 22134).