OPERATION COLORADO (LIEN KET 52)

2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

1st Marine Division | Republic of Vietnam | 6–22 August 1966

FIELD	DETAIL
Operation Name	Operation Colorado (Lien Ket 52)
Dates of Operation	6–22 August 1966 (whole operation). 2/5 in the field: 060406H – 151100H August 1966, then on standby at Hill 69 until the operation ended on 22 August.
Mission Purpose / Objective	Coordinated ground reconnaissance and search and destroy operation with the ARVN in the Hiep Duc – Song Ly Ly valley against North Vietnamese 2d Division units (5th Marines Operation Order 322-66).
Locations / Cities	Quang Tin Province (Tien Phuoc, Tam Ky, Thang Binh and Ly Tin districts) and Quang Nam Province (Que Son District); battalion CP at Tam Ky; Song Ly Ly valley; Hill 150; Phu Long
TAOR	Que Son Valley and Hiep Duc – Song Ly Ly valley; Quang Tin and Quang Nam Provinces
UTM Coordinates	Not recorded (Map sheets 6639 I, 6640 II and III.).
USMC Units Involved	2nd Battalion (-)(Rein), 5th Marines (LtCol Walter Moore) with Company E (Rein) (Capt J.L. Cooper), Company G (Rein) (Capt J.M. Gruner) and Company H (Rein) (Capt R.D. Hughes, who took the company on 26 June 1966); 5th Marine Regiment; 1/5; ARVN 2d Division; 2/11 artillery; 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.
2/5 Companies Participated	Company E; Company G; Company H. Companies E, G and H (all Rein) under LtCol Walter Moore.
Mission Results	2/5 made twelve helicopter insertions and extractions. 6 Aug: Company H (Rein) was helilifted from Hill 69 to the first objective at 060915H, went into the landing zone at 061015H and swept north-east behind air strikes; it was extracted at 061430H with four heat casualties, having taken seven VC suspects. 7–8 Aug: the 1st Platoon with a section of tanks held a bridge until Regional and Popular Forces relieved it. 9 Aug: blocking positions across enemy withdrawal routes in the Song Ly Ly valley; Company H cleared a village near Hill 150. 12 Aug, 0215H: an 81mm mortar and 57mm recoilless rifle attack on the 2/5 perimeter at Tam Ky fell mainly on Company H; a reaction force of two platoons with tanks drove the enemy off, and the company swept north of Tam Ky at first light. 13 Aug: heliborne sweep toward Route 1; Company H's 2d Platoon found a cave holding 44 grenades. 14 Aug: Company H swept the Phu Long area. 15 Aug: Company H was extracted to Tam Ky and returned to Hill 69. About one ton of enemy rice was destroyed.
USMC KIA	Whole operation: 99 (all USMC forces; previously recorded figure). Company H: 3 KIA, all in the 12 August mortar and recoilless rifle attack on the Tam Ky perimeter. 2/5 after action report (partly illegible scan): 3 KIA, plus 2 Marines killed by lightning on 12 August.
USMC Wounded	Whole operation: 212 (previously recorded figure). Company H: 28 WIA in the 12 August attack per the consolidated casualty report (the immediate report gave 22), plus 3 WIA in Company G. 2/5 total about 39 WIA and 7

	lightning injuries; 15 heat casualties, four of them from Company H on 6 August.
Enemy KIA	2/5: 9 VC KIA confirmed by 9 August. Whole operation: 283 (previously recorded figure).
Enemy Wounded	Unknown

NOTES & SOURCE REFERENCES

UPDATED 19 SEPTEMBER 2026 FROM PRIMARY SOURCES. CONFIRMED H COMPANY ENGAGEMENT. The Combat After Action Report for Colorado, filed with the 2/5 Command Chronology for August 1966, lists Company H (Rein) in the task organization and records its actions day by day. COMMANDER — RESOLVED: Capt R. D. Hughes commanded Company H during Colorado. The June 1966 command chronology (TTU 1201048070), Section I, states the change of command outright: “CO Company H — 1stLt J. J. Doherty, 1–25 June 1966; Capt R. D. Hughes, 26–30 June 1966.” Captain Hughes had commanded H&S Company until 25 June. The July and August 1966 chronologies both list him as commanding officer of Company H, and the August list shows Lieutenant Doherty as battalion Communications Officer for 1–15 August. The Colorado after action report entry is therefore correct, and hotel25vv.com's “Doherty to 16 August 1966” is not: Doherty left the company on 25 June 1966 and returned to command it in December 1966. The February 1966 roster, which lists Hughes at H&S and Doherty at Company H, reflects the earlier arrangement. The record does not say whether Company F, H&S Company took part.

THE 12 AUGUST ATTACK. This was the heaviest loss Hotel Company suffered in 1966. At 120215H the battalion perimeter and the helicopter fuel area at coord 288232, Tam Ky, received 8 to 12 rounds of 81mm mortar, an unknown number of 57mm recoilless rifle rounds and about 200 rounds of small-arms fire, the fire judged to have come from the north. The immediate report gave “3 USMC KIA Co H — 22 USMC WIA Co H, 3 USMC WIA Co G”; the consolidated casualty report the next day gives 3 killed and 28 wounded in Company H. At 120220H a battalion reaction force of two platoons with tanks extended the perimeter and returned fire, and the enemy withdrew with no further contact. At 120600H patrols from Companies G and H swept north of Tam Ky with tanks; a Company E patrol found the mortar base plate positions, and Hotel Company patrols brought in six suspects, one of whom villagers said might have information on the attack. The date matches hotel25vv.com's record of a “significant mortar attack” on 12 August 1966.

Primary sources: 2/5 Command Chronology, August 1966, including the Combat After Action Report for Colorado dated 26 August 1966 and the daily message traffic (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048072); 2/5 Command Chronology, June 1966, Section I, for the Company H change of command (item 1201048070); 2/5 Command Chronology, July 1966 (item 1201048071); hotel25vv.com. Originals: National Archives, RG 127 (National Archives II, College Park MD 20740; Marine Corps History Division, Quantico VA 22134).