OPERATION DURHAM PEAK

2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

1st Marine Division | Republic of Vietnam | 20 July – 13 August 1969

FIELD	DETAIL
Operation Name	Operation Durham Peak
Dates of Operation	20 July – 13 August 1969 (whole operation). Company H, 2/5 was attached to 2/1 from 24 July; the rest of 2/5 was committed on 31 July and withdrew to An Hoa from 8 August.
Mission Purpose / Objective	5th Marines search of the Que Son Mountains for the Front 4 headquarters and North Vietnamese units that had been driven out of Dodge City and off Go Noi Island.
Locations / Cities	Que Son Mountains; Nui Mat Rang (Hill 845); Hill 848; Antenna Valley; Phu Loc Valley; Quang Nam Province
TAOR	Que Son Mountains; Quang Nam Province
UTM Coordinates	H/2/5 attached to 2/1: rice caches at BT 023483 and BT 033480 (26 Jul); enemy base-camp crevices at BT 023458 (27 Jul); enemy seen at AT 961450 (28 Jul) and AT 966466 (30 Jul); 15–20 enemy fired on at BT 033481 (30 Jul). H/2/5 sweep: AT 911503 (40-lb box mine found). 2/1's Company H at Nui Mat Rang (Hill 845): AT 982433 (25 Jul) and AT 980430 (26 Jul ambush).
USMC Units Involved	5th Marines (Col William J. Zaro): 3/5 (LtCol John M. Terry Jr.), 2/1 (LtCol Harold G. Glasgow), then 1/1; 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol James H. Higgins), regimental reserve until committed on 31 July; 37th Battalion, 1st ARVN Ranger Group; Americal Division 196th Brigade and 5th ARVN Regiment blocking; USS Boston (8-inch naval gunfire); 11th Marines.
2/5 Companies Participated	Company H (attached to another unit). Company H was attached to 2/1 from 24 July; 2/5 was regimental reserve until committed on 31 July.
Mission Results	20 Jul: the 11th Marines and USS Boston opened the operation; the ARVN Rangers and 3/5 blocked in Antenna Valley, and 2/1 landed in the Phu Loc Valley the next day. 2/5 was held at Phu Loc (6) as regimental reserve (its July chronology records the battalion turning over Liberty Bridge to 1/5 on 20 July and preparing for helicopter operations in the mountains). 25–26 Jul: the sniper and ambush fight on Nui Mat Rang (Hill 845) involved Company H, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines (not H/2/5). 31 Jul: Col Zaro committed 2/5, which set up blocking positions near Hill 848 in the center of the area; its 106mm recoilless rifle platoon fired from Hill 848. Supply by helicopter drop was difficult, and malaria rates were high. 8 Aug: the withdrawal began and 2/5 was lifted to An Hoa. 14 Aug: 2/5 relieved 3/7 on Hill 65.
USMC KIA	Whole operation: 20 (previously recorded figure). Breakdown by 2/5 company: not recorded.
USMC Wounded	Whole operation: 100 evacuated (previously recorded figure). Breakdown by 2/5 company: not recorded.
Enemy KIA	Whole operation: 255 (previously recorded figure)
Enemy Wounded	Unknown

NOTES & SOURCE REFERENCES

UPDATED 16 SEPTEMBER 2026 FROM PRIMARY SOURCES. CONFIRMED H COMPANY PARTICIPATION, FROM 24 JULY. The 2/5 Command Chronology for July 1969 records "Company H, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines OPCON to 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines from 241200H to 312400H" July 1969. 2/1's own July 1969 chronology records "Company H, 5th Marines" searching the Que Son foothills on 26–30 July: rice caches, base camps, and artillery called on 15–20 enemy. CORRECTIONS: (1) The 25 July sniper attack and 26 July ambush on Nui Mat Rang (Hill 845), with 5 USMC killed at AT 980430, were 2/1's own Company H, as Smith's official history states, not H/2/5. The two companies were working near each other under the same battalion. (2) Capt Ronald J. Drez was not Company H's commander; he left the company on 7 March 1969. The record does not say whether Company E, Company F, Company G, H&S Company took part.

Primary sources: 2/5 Command Chronologies, July and August 1969, including the Durham Peak S-3 journal (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive items 1201048117 and 1201048118); Charles R. Smith, U.S. Marines in Vietnam: High Mobility and Standdown, 1969 (HQMC, 1988), pp. 194–196. Originals: National Archives, RG 127 (National Archives II, College Park MD 20740; Marine Corps History Division, Quantico VA 22134).