OPERATION HOUSTON

2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

1st Marine Division | Republic of Vietnam | 26 February – 12 September 1968

FIELD	DETAIL
Operation Name	Operation Houston
Dates of Operation	26 February – 12 September 1968 (whole operation). 2/5 took part from about 10 March 1968 until it moved south to An Hoa in late July 1968.
Mission Purpose / Objective	Reopen and secure Route 1 (the main supply route) between the Hai Van Pass and Phu Bai, which had been cut at Tet (20 bridges and 26 culverts destroyed), and deny the enemy the hills and approaches in Phu Loc District.
Locations / Cities	Phu Loc District, Thua Thien Province; Route 1; Cao Doi; Truoi River Bridge; Rock Crusher area; Bach Ma mountain; Phu Gia Pass
TAOR	Phu Loc District, Thua Thien Province; Route 1 corridor from the Hai Van Pass to Phu Bai
UTM Coordinates	Company H to the Rock Crusher area: ZD 013025 (March). Company G at the Truoi River Bridge: YD 967067 area. Bach Ma: ZC 057925. Company F patrol, 22 Mar: ZC 093955. (Sheets 6541 I–IV, 6641 III–IV.).
USMC Units Involved	5th Marines (Col Robert D. Bohn), Task Force X-Ray; 1/5; 2/5 (LtCol Ernest C. Cheatham Jr.) with Companies E, F, G and H; 2/3 and Army battalions early in the operation; 2/11 artillery.
2/5 Companies Participated	Company E; Company F; Company G; Company H. 2/5 (LtCol Ernest C. Cheatham Jr.) with Companies E, F, G and H.
Mission Results	About 10 March, the 2/5 CP and Companies G and H moved from Hue to Cao Doi. G took over security of the Truoi River Bridge and H moved to the Rock Crusher area. On 12 March the command group and Companies E, H and G (-) began a 7-day search and destroy operation in the hills and jungle, the battalion's first field operation after a month of street fighting. From 18 March 2/5 pushed into the rugged Bach Ma area and kept a platoon outpost on Bach Ma until 17 April. Second phase (May–July, battalion at Cao Doi, then Phu Gia from 17 May): security of Route 1 in the southern half of the regimental area using squad and fire-team ambushes, patrols and outposts.
USMC KIA	Whole operation: 117 (previously recorded figure). 2/5 and. Breakdown by 2/5 company: not recorded.
USMC Wounded	Not recorded.
Enemy KIA	Whole operation: 702 VC/NVA (previously recorded figure)
Enemy Wounded	Unknown; 29 captured (previously recorded figure)

NOTES & SOURCE REFERENCES

UPDATED 16 SEPTEMBER 2026 FROM PRIMARY SOURCES. CONFIRMED H COMPANY PARTICIPATION. The 2/5 Command Chronology for March 1968 records that on 12 March "the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines Command Group, Companies E, H and G (-) began a 7 day search and destroy operation as part of Operation HOUSTON." The battalion's Houston after action reports are dated 6 May and 3 June 1968. CORRECTION: this

file previously said Houston concluded when the 26th Marines took over; that is not confirmed by these sources. 2/5 itself moved south and entered Operation Mameluke Thrust on 28 July 1968. The record does not say whether H&S Company took part.

Primary sources: 2/5 Command Chronologies, March, April and May 1968, including the Operation Houston after action reports dated 6 May and 3 June 1968 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive items 1201048101–1201048103); Jack Shulimson et al., U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year, 1968 (HQMC, 1997), pp. 248–249. Originals: National Archives, RG 127 (National Archives II, College Park MD 20740; Marine Corps History Division, Quantico VA 22134).