OPERATION NAPA (LIEN KET 56)

2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

1st Marine Division | Republic of Vietnam | 4–15 September 1966

FIELD	DETAIL
Operation Name	Operation Napa / Lien Ket 56 (originally designated Operation El Paso)
Dates of Operation	D-Day 5 September 1966; units moved to Tam Ky 4 September; terminated 151200H September 1966 (5th Marines after action report)
Mission Purpose / Objective	Regimental search and destroy operation in Tam Ky District with ARVN forces, following Operation Colorado.
Locations / Cities	Quang Tin Province, Tam Ky District; regimental forward CP at Tam Ky; Cam Khe (1)
TAOR	Quang Tin Province, Tam Ky District
UTM Coordinates	Company G, 2/5 sweep, 14 Sep: BT 259199. Company G, 2/5 contact, 15 Sep: BT 258194. 3/5 battalion CP, 13 Sep: BT 247155.
USMC Units Involved	5th Marines (Col C.F. Widdecke), controlling, with ARVN 2d Division elements. Units: 1st Battalion, 5th Marines (area one, north); 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines (LtCol E.J. Bronars; Companies I, K and L; areas two, three and four); Company G (-)(Rein), 2/5 (Capt J.M. Gruner) with one platoon of Company H attached, under 5th Marines control as regimental reserve and security for the regimental CP and the 2/11 artillery at Tam Ky; 2/11 (-) and 4/11 artillery; a platoon of Ontos from Company B, 1st Anti-Tank Battalion; 1st Reconnaissance Battalion platoons; engineers and scout dogs.
2/5 Companies Participated	Company G; Company H (part of the company only). Company G (-)(Rein) with one platoon of Company H attached, as regimental reserve at Tam Ky.
Mission Results	5th Marines received the initiating directive at 1850 on 3 September and issued Frag Order 12-66 (El Paso) the same day; 1st Marine Division ordered "Execute El Paso, D-Day 5 Sept." 4 Sep: all units moved to Tam Ky (BT 292229). The Company G / H platoon reserve left Hill 69 at 1400 and reached Tam Ky at 1520. 5 Sep (D-Day): 1st Battalion moved into area one; its companies were probed that night by two main-force squads. 6 Sep: a reconnaissance platoon was inserted on Hill 253 (BT 183205). 7 Sep: 1st Battalion and the regimental HQ (-) returned to Chu Lai. 8–13 Sep: 3rd Battalion searched areas two, three and four against local-force VC firing from tree lines at long range. 14 Sep: Company G, 2/5 (with the Company H platoon) and a heavy Ontos section were attached to 3/5; Company G swept a hamlet at BT 259199 (2 WIA). 15 Sep: Company G was in contact at BT 258194; the operation ended at 1200 and all units returned to their Chu Lai TAORs. 122 villagers were evacuated voluntarily to Tam Ky, and 7 tons of rice were evacuated.
USMC KIA	7 KIA (5th Marines, whole operation). Company G, 2/5 with the attached Company H platoon: 1 KIA.
USMC Wounded	51 WIA and 52 non-battle casualties (whole operation). Company G, 2/5 with the Company H platoon: 3 WIA.
Enemy KIA	20 VC KIA confirmed, 46 VC KIA probable

Enemy Wounded	8 VC WIA confirmed, 18 probable; 61 VC captured and 56 VC suspects detained

NOTES & SOURCE REFERENCES

UPDATED 16 SEPTEMBER 2026 FROM PRIMARY SOURCES. PARTIALLY CONFIRMED: ONE H COMPANY PLATOON. This file previously said 2/5 was not listed. The 5th Marines Command Chronology for September 1966 settles it: "OPERATION NAPA was conducted with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Regiment in conjunction with ARVN forces from 5 September to 15 September 1966." The attached after action report assigns "Co G (-)(Rein) w/1 Plt Co H" as regimental reserve and security at Tam Ky. The 2/5 Command Chronology for September 1966 survives only as two unreadable pages, so the regimental record is the source. NAMING: the 5th Marines after action report states that "Operation Napa originally designated El Paso," and the 1st Marine Division order was issued as "Operation El Paso." Wikipedia's separate "El Paso" entry (4–15 September 1966) is the same operation. See Operation_El_Paso.docx. The record does not say whether Company E, Company F, H&S Company took part.

Primary sources: 5th Marines Command Chronology, September 1966, including the Napa after action report (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201046139). Originals: National Archives, RG 127 (National Archives II, College Park MD 20740; Marine Corps History Division, Quantico VA 22134).