OPERATION NOBLE CANYON

2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

1st Marine Division | Republic of Vietnam | 23 October – 3 November 1970

FIELD	DETAIL
Operation Name	Operation Noble Canyon
Dates of Operation	23 October – 3 November 1970 (previously listed as 22 October – 3 November)
Mission Purpose / Objective	3/5's only named operation of the fall-winter campaign: clear enemy troops from the cave-riddled area around Hill 441, long used by the NVA and VC as an assembly area for attacks into the Que Son Valley and toward Hiep Duc.
Locations / Cities	Hill 441, about four miles south of Fire Support Base Ross; Que Son Valley; Quang Nam Province
TAOR	Hill 441 area south of FSB Ross; Quang Nam Province
UTM Coordinates	Not recorded.
USMC Units Involved	Company L, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines only.
2/5 Companies Participated	None – no 2/5 company took part in this operation.
Mission Results	Bad weather cancelled the planned helicopter lift, so Company L marched into the area on 23 October and searched it until 3 November despite the late-October storms. Contacts were light and scattered; no large enemy units or supply caches were found.
USMC KIA	0 (Company L, 3/5).
USMC Wounded	8 (Company L, 3/5).
Enemy KIA	4
Enemy Wounded	Unknown; 1 VC suspect detained

NOTES & SOURCE REFERENCES

UPDATED 16 SEPTEMBER 2026 FROM PRIMARY SOURCES. CORRECTION: H COMPANY AND 2/5 DID NOT PARTICIPATE. This file previously listed 2/5. Cosmas and Murray's official history identifies Noble Canyon as a 3/5 operation carried out by Company L alone. During those dates Company H, 2/5 was in the Que Son Mountains on Operation Imperial Lake. Its 2d Platoon found an abandoned battalion-size enemy base camp on 26 October 1970, and it was short of rations during Tropical Storm Kate. 2/5 COMPANIES THAT DID NOT TAKE PART: Company E, Company F, Company G, Company H, H&S Company.

Primary sources: 2/5 Command Chronologies, October and November 1970 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive items 1201049002 and 1201049003); Graham A. Cosmas and Terrence P. Murray, U.S. Marines in Vietnam: Vietnamization and Redeployment, 1970-1971 (HQMC, 1986), pp. 116–118. Originals: National Archives, RG 127 (National Archives II, College Park MD 20740; Marine Corps History Division, Quantico VA 22134).