OPERATION TUSCALOOSA

2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

1st Marine Division | Republic of Vietnam | 24–28 January 1967

FIELD	DETAIL
Operation Name	Operation Tuscaloosa
Dates of Operation	240730H – 281700H January 1967
Mission Purpose / Objective	Search and destroy operation in the northeastern sector of the 2/5 TAOR to locate and destroy or capture enemy forces, supplies, equipment and documents. The main enemy force was the R-20th Main Force Battalion.
Locations / Cities	Duy Xuyen District, Quang Nam Province. The operating area was bounded north and west by the Song Thu Bon, east by the railroad, and south by the east-west main road. Command group at My Loc (2) and Phu Loc (6).
TAOR	Northeastern sector of the 2/5 An Hoa TAOR; Duy Xuyen District; Quang Nam Province
UTM Coordinates	Company H line of departure: AT 955546. My Loc (2): AT 915515. Phu Loc (6) CP: AT 928527. Main enemy positions along the road: grid squares AT 9552 / AT 9652. Enemy mortar: AT 978502. Company F contact: AT 965517. (Sheet 6640 IV.).
USMC Units Involved	2nd Battalion (-)(Rein), 5th Marines (LtCol W.C. Airheart): Company F (Rein) (Capt G.S. Burgett Jr.), Company H (Rein) (Capt J.J. Doherty Jr.). Sparrow Hawk #1 was the 3d Platoon, Company G; Sparrow Hawk #2 was the 2d Platoon, Company E. Company D, 1/26 was under operational control 27–28 January. Supported by E/2/11, a tank detachment, LVTs, air and artillery.
2/5 Companies Participated	Company E (part of the company only); Company F; Company G (part of the company only); Company H. Companies F and H (Rein); Sparrow Hawk #1 was 3d Platoon Company G and Sparrow Hawk #2 was 2d Platoon Company E.
Mission Results	24–25 Jan: Company H swept south and east from its line of departure; contact was light and the hamlets were deserted. 26 Jan, about 0900: as F and H began their return sweep and crossed the river, heavy contact developed with the R-20th Main Force Battalion, dug in along the east-west road. Company H followed F Company across the river under heavy fire and advanced west along the road. The fight lasted about nine hours and covered several thousand meters, with continuous air, artillery and 81mm support. Both Sparrow Hawk platoons were inserted as blocking forces. Several Navy corpsmen were killed in action. 27–28 Jan: Company H and D/1/26 searched the battle area with little further contact.
USMC KIA	17 KIA (battalion total for the operation, nearly all on 26 January; company breakdown not given). Breakdown by 2/5 company: not recorded.
USMC Wounded	38 WIA evacuated and 14 WIA not evacuated (52 total; battalion total). Breakdown by 2/5 company: not recorded.
Enemy KIA	79 KIA confirmed, 64 KIA probable
Enemy Wounded	28 WIA confirmed, 50 WIA probable; 2 detainees; 75 refugees evacuated

NOTES & SOURCE REFERENCES

UPDATED 16 SEPTEMBER 2026 FROM PRIMARY SOURCES. CONFIRMED H COMPANY ENGAGEMENT. The Combat After Action Report for Tuscaloosa (2/5 Command Chronology, January 1967) confirms that Company H, under Capt Jerome J. Doherty Jr., was one of the two assault companies. It fought through the river crossing on 26 January 1967 against the R-20th Main Force Battalion. CORRECTION: the 17 Marines killed were the total for the whole battalion, not Company H alone. The report gives no company breakdown. The "sandbar island" detail comes from John Culbertson's account of Hotel Company, not from the after action report. The record does not say whether H&S Company took part.

Primary sources: 2/5 Command Chronology, January 1967, including the Combat After Action Report for Tuscaloosa dated 30 January 1967 (Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive item 1201048076); John Culbertson, Operation Tuscaloosa; hotel25vv.com. Originals: National Archives, RG 127 (National Archives II, College Park MD 20740; Marine Corps History Division, Quantico VA 22134).