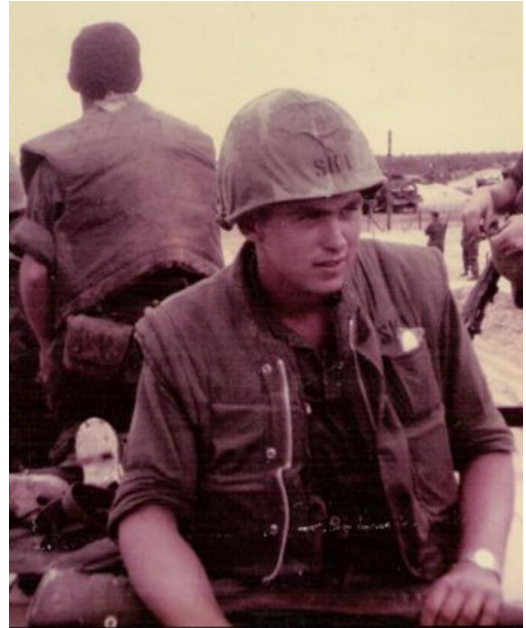


The Fight in Graveyard West
Cpl Ed Krayniewski, 11th Motor Transport

After driving thru the first ambush site, PFC Decker and I were following two six-by trucks in our Tractor Trailer, with L/Cpl Huss following behind in his Tractor Trailer. The driver in the lead truck came to a split in the road, he went left when we should of went right (the turn near the Nam Giao Esplanade, where the convoy route turns to the right from QL 547). The rest of the convoy was out of site because we were stopped briefly during the 1st ambush site when the 3rd truck in front of us got shot up and it was abandoned. After making the wrong turn we went down the road a short distance and came to a road block. The road was blocked with tree limbs and trash. We stopped and PFC Decker jumped out and got with the other Marines to find out who



knows the right road out of here. I stayed with the truck and watched the Vietnamese family that was setting in front of their hooch, just staring at us saying nothing. There was an old man and woman with three kids just sitting there like someone was guarding them, and they looked very scared. The driver of the second six-by said that he knew the way and took the lead. The original lead six-by shut down and could not be re-started and was abandoned there at the road block, it too was shot up. At the road block we could hear the battle raging over at the Graveyard, the second ambush site. We got turned around, went up the road, made a left turn, drove a short distance (about 600 meters) and stopped in the trees at the western edge of the Graveyard.

Upon entering the second ambush site the lead truck stopped about 100 feet from the truck in front of him, we stopped about 10 feet from the truck in front of us. We immediately all bailed out and took cover on each side of the road. The firing was heavy up ahead, and then within minutes mortars started exploding about 50 yards in front of us where the trucks were setting on the road, Decker and I crawled under the cab of our truck, under the engine and between the tires. We remained there until the mortars stopped coming in. The engine was still running and we couldn't hear anything. After the mortars stopped we crawled out from under the truck shut off the engine and took up positions between the lead six-by and Decker's semi. With the two Marines from the truck in front of us and L/Cpl Huss from behind us we organized our position. I started reloading my magazines with a couple of stripper clips that I had in my magazine pouches, and then realized just how much ammo I had fired in the first ambush. To start with I had 18 twenty round M-16 magazines and two hand grenades on me, and at that time I had only about seven loaded magazines plus the two grenades left. While reloading my M-16 magazines I discovered that the round that came thru the driver's door during the first ambush and blasted

Decker and I with shrapnel. The bullet had hit me somewhere in my left side ricocheting off one of the two M-16 magazines bandoliers I was wearing. This is what threw me up into the roof canvas, while at the time, I had thought we hit a hole in the road.

The position we were in had heavy vegetation on both sides of the road with a small bank on each side that offered some cover.

We were in that position for about three hours, and during that time two choppers came in fired a couple of machinegun bursts and left and never returned (I learned later that both took hits and left smoking). I also heard a propeller driven plane come in but never saw it. While we were pinned down there a Marine came from the rear and was looking for a serviceable M-16 rifle, his had the stock broken off with the buffer group hanging out, his rifle was in two pieces held together by the sling. I looked at his rifle and the stock was filled with white styrofoam. I couldn't help him and he moved up toward the front looking for a rifle, I don't know if he found one or not. About an hour later a Staff NCO came by looked at Decker's and my wounds. A short while later a Corpsman showed up to patch us up and put wounded tags on us.

The Battle was raging on, heavy firing then it would trickle down to a few rifle rounds fired and then start up again. This went on for about an hour and as time went on the firing kept getting less and less until there was hardly any firing at all. A Marine came from up front and said that gooks were up in the middle of the trucks on the road. That same Staff NCO that looked at me and Decker, came by and went up ahead to find out what the situation was, about 10 minutes later he came back and went to the rear where the dump trucks were. Shortly after he came back and said that everyone is dead up front and that all the dead and wounded from our location were loaded and we are getting on the dump trucks to get out of here. This Staff NCO was either 1stSgt Gosse or Gunny Moore. We mounted up on the two 5 ton Dump trucks, backed down the road got turned around and headed back to the Rock Crusher.

On the way back we met the reaction force from the Rock Crusher with a twin 40 US Army Duster. While we were stopped, a gook came by on a bicycle smiling and waving as he went by, he got down the road about 50 feet when someone started yelling shoot, shoot, shoot and everyone opened up including the Marine in the bed of the truck with the M-60 Machine gun. When I aimed in and pulled the trigger, that's when I discovered my rifle was jammed with a spent cartridge stuck in the chamber. I put my cleaning rod together and punched out the stuck cartridge and had to give my cleaning rod to another Marine who had the same problem. On the way back to the Rock Crusher everyone was firing from both sides of the truck because we had to go thru the first ambush site again. When we got back to the Rock Crusher PFC Decker and I were Med-Evaced to Phu Bia and then on to DaNang the following day. I don't know where L/Cpl Huss went, I didn't see him again until just before I rotated out on 15 March 1968.

Semper Fi , Cpl Edward Krayniewski 11th Motor Transport