

#3 KENNELS AT LAI KHE

#4 NONAME - VILLAGE INSIDE WIRE AT  
LAI KHE

41<sup>ST</sup> IPSD

February 19, 1996

Dear Mike,

Here is the letter I have been telling you about for about a month. No promises, this is the first letter I have attempted on word processing. I still don't have all the prints I want to send, those will come later. I mentioned to Tom that the CBS evening news on 2/5/96 or 2/6/96 had dog teams in Bosnia on and an interview with a handler. In answer to your question about a tag line on the logo, I think something like that is OK but I will bet it is going to be resisted by some of the vets. One associate has suggested to me that we need a special associates patch. We do need something for associates.

I have contacted Charles Fasanaro and he has agreed to speak at the reunion. Hope Jesse doesn't get too mad at me. I've sent Charles information on the association and hope he joins, he could help. Keep those names coming, have sent 36 newbys information this month. Mike, you are valuable to this organization in so many ways, keep up the good work.

Now to what I have enclosed. Your itinerary looks like the AO of the 25th infantry div. mostly. The first map has Lai Khe highlighted, this was where the 41 Scout Dog Platoon was located. (1st Inf. Div.) The best I remember, it is about 40 miles northwest of Saigon on Hwy 13 (we called it Thunder Road, lots of mines, etc.) Lai Khe was an old French rubber tree plantation. It had a Vietnamese village inside our wire, inside our perimeter!!! Map 2 just gives you a better view of the general area. Lai Khe is located on it some where between Ap Bau Bang and Ben Cat. The areas where you are going saw some very heavy fighting. I do have some pleasant memories of Lai Khe. Much better than the 42nd IPSD at Camp Eagle and the 101st Abn Div.

Next I have included something from a book I think I mentioned to you before. I will never forget my arrival and it is almost exactly like I have highlighted. Just included this to give you a little flavor. If you get a chance before you go, you really should try to read A LIFE IN A YEAR by James R. Ebert. The sub title is the American Infantryman in Vietnam, 1965-1972. It's the best book I have ever read that mirrors my experiences. In reading it, I have had tears in my eyes, shivers run down my spine and a smile come to my lips. If you want to get a feel for Nam before you go, you should read this book.

Now for the pictures. Unlike the state side Army, in Vietnam we had Vietnamese to do most of our dirty work, such as KP, polishing boots, making beds, cleaning hooches, etc. Every morning, the rear areas were swarming with civilian Viet workers. Lai Khe and the 41st IPSD was no different. We had two "hootch girls" for cleaning, boot polishing, etc. and one girl who did our sewing. No funny business with them. Picture no. 1 the Viet on the left is Mung (she did the sewing) she was better educated than most and was planning to go to the Univ. of Saigon. There was some talk that she was going to marry Miller ( he is behind and to her left with glasses) She was very pretty and a

very nice person. In 1969, she was about 19 or 20. The guy on Millers right is James Hill, a VDHA member. His dog Major left me with two souvenirs from Nam, two holes in my fight arm when he tried to take it off. Guess who the guy on Mung's left is, doesn't have much gray hair? The next girl is Lee, she was about Mung's age. Next is Re, she was older, hard for me to tell ages sometimes. Life in the villages was hard and the peopled aged before their time. She may have been in her early 30s. Notice the black rectangle on her shirt. She was in morning. Her husband was a South Viet Lt. and was killed while I was there. The guy with the hat is William Sawyer from Maine and a VDHA member. The other guy is Gus Fontanilla from Hawaii, I haven't tracked him down yet. Kennels are in the back ground. No. 2 is just a better picture of Mung and Lee. If you get to Lai Khe maybe you can find out what happened to all three. If you can't get there, don't worry about it. At the time I left the 41st to go to the 42nd, their fate wasn't important to me. I was just concerned about staying alive and really didn't give a shit about anything else. Funny how 25 years can mellow a person and make you a lot more thoughtful. Maybe experience has something to do with it.

No. 3, this print off my slide didn't come out as good as I would have liked. It was taken 10/69 at the dog detachment at Bien Hoa. All Army handlers came here first. No. 4, rubber trees in Lai Khe. No. 5, airfield at Lai Khe. No. 6, 10/69, new in country, trying to look combat ready and mean but in reality scared as hell. No. 7 all along the watch tower at Lai Khe by Jimmi Hendrix. No. 8 Lai Khe 10/69, My scout dog Prinz—best in the 41st and 42nd and one of the meanest.

I have also included some from the 42nd and Camp Eagle. No. 9, Camp Eagle home of the 42nd IPSD, 1st Brigade, 101st Abn Div.—looks a little forlorn, well it was. No. 10 foothills of the A Shau Valley. Just the name gives me goose bumps today. A very spooky and fearful place. I hate mountains even today, they give me the creeps. A lot of G. Is. died there. No.11—42nd kennels, what a poor excuse. No.12 —graves of two 42nd IPSD dogs who were KIA in the A Shau foothills. King KIA 5/19/70 and Gretchen KIA 5/29/70. I was in the 42nd for about four months and we had 10 dogs KIA, God only knows why no handlers were killed during that time in the 42nd. No. 13, a rocket attack during the day at Camp Eagle, May 1970. No. 14, 12/69 in the bush close to Lai Khe. On the back of the first map I have drawn a map (as best as I can remember) of Lai Khe and where the 41st kennels were. of course nothing is there now probably.

Well Mike, this letter is much too long now so I must close. For some reason I find it easier sometimes to write about my experiences than to talk about them. Most all the scout dog handlers I knew were drop outs from OCS (including me) or NCO school and they were a very different bunch from many in the Army. They had a kind of irreverent attitude. I think you would have been right at home with us. Keep up the good work, VDHA needs you. Please email me if I have made a mess and not much sense. Good luck on your trip. Thanks.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Randy".

37TH  
JIM  
B

18TH.

{ 567-6300  
890-1400  
755-1849 }

BRIGADE HISTOCT

{ Rawen 787M } KIA 3/16/69

BODO. WIA. KIA.

[ KIA. 81MS ] Kuermer

EGOR.

3 (1/70) →

EGOR - Peter 1/4/70  
- PULSKI 59. QAN. 70

} EGOR

RICHARD E. 1/10/74  
FORD

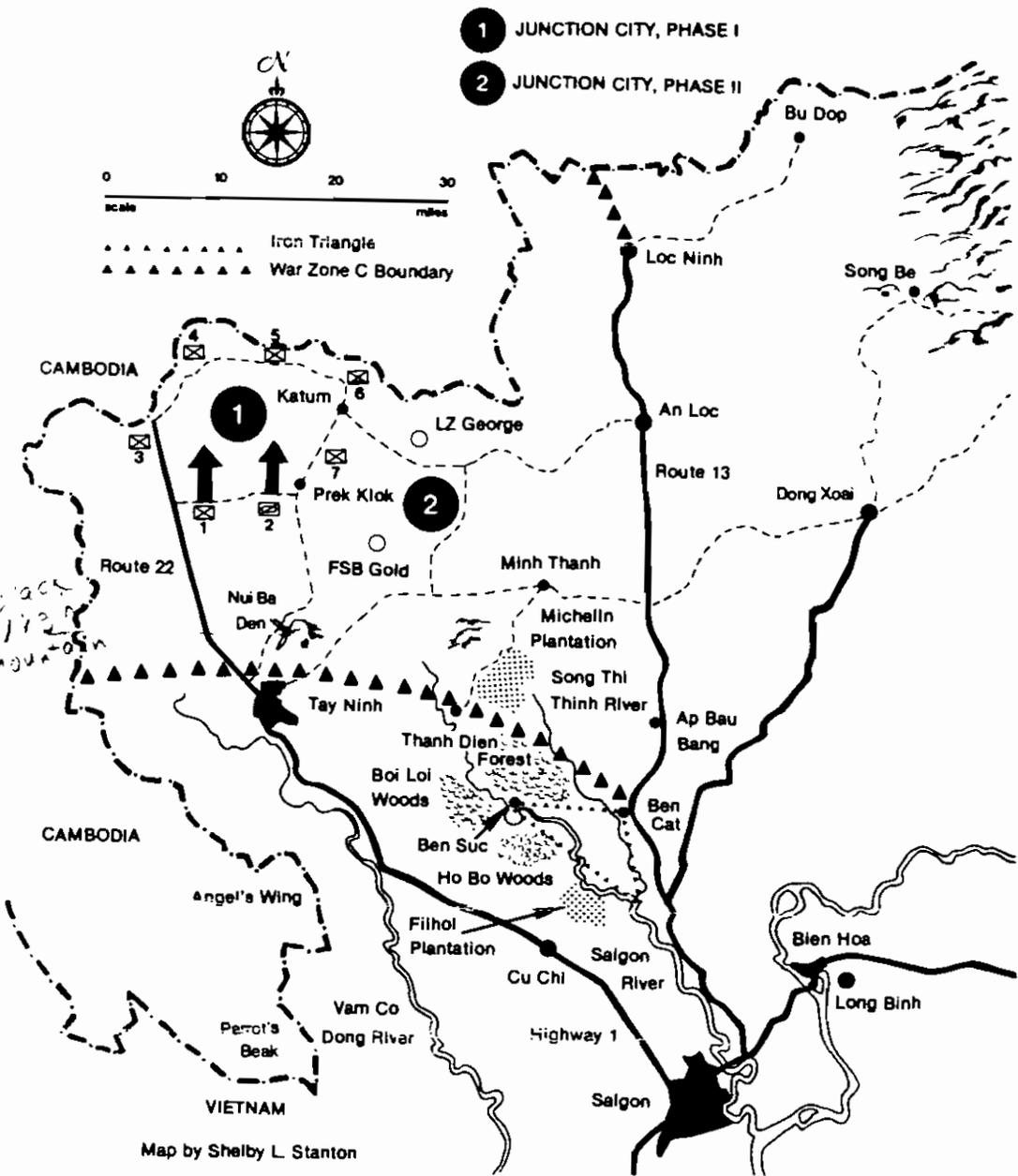
DIEREKU 37TH SP4 6/23/69.

{ Charlie Company @ LAI KAE.  
THOSE CALLANT MEN. }

- 1 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division
- 2 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment
- 3 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division
- 4 196th Infantry Brigade

- 5 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division
- 6 173d Airborne Brigade
- 7 3d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division

(2)



Map by Shelby L. Stanton

## JUNCTION CITY and CEDAR FALLS (War Zone C and the Iron Triangle)