

SAFESIDE JOIN TO FIGHT

© 2015 by John P. Webster, LM 886 Phù Cát, 1041st SPS(T), 1967
TACTICAL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (TAOR)
OPERATION SAFESIDE,
1041st SPS(T) Phu Cat AB, 13 JAN to 4 JUL 1967

3.15 - TACTICAL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (TAOR) - Phù Cát Air Base: 1967, JAN 13 - JUL 4.

During this period, the 1041st had a Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR) that covered 9.3 square miles [5418 acres] of jungle, rice paddies and heavily vegetated terrain that lends itself well to infiltration by guerrilla units. Of the total 10,000 acres [16.7 square miles] of land that composed Phù Cát Air Base, [of which] 6,000 acres [10 square miles] were the responsibility of the 1041st to *secure and defend* against enemy infiltration.*

* 82nd Combat Security Wing (TAC), Wing Training Center, Student Handbook, 1966

SEVENTH AIR FORCE NEWS June 7, 1967

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New Security Police Unit Training at Phu Cat AB

PHU CAT—In July the 1041st Air Police Security Squadron at Phu Cat AB will go home.

The 200 combat-oriented airmen and officers of the 1041st will have completed one of the most grueling tests ever afforded air policemen under actual combat conditions — Operation Safeside.

Safeside received Air Force chief of staff approval in April 1966. It was originally developed as a small test unit, composed of Air Force men who were trained and equipped to conduct an operational test, under combat conditions.

Each man in the 1041st is a volunteer. Four of the officers and 19 enlisted men are graduates of the Army Ranger School, Ft. Benning, Ga. These 23 men formed the cadre which provided training for other men at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, prior to the unit's arrival in South Vietnam.

Not only is the 1041st being evaluated on its merits as a combat security force, but at the same time is conducting field evaluations on various weapons and electronic detection devices, as directed by Headquarters, USAF. During the same time, communications equipment and various types of field uniforms were also tested.

The 1041st operates as an independent organization, completely removed from the main base at Phu Cat. The unit maintains its own dining facility, dispensary, and motor pool; however, they work in cooperation with the 37th Air Police Sq., prime security unit at the base.

Prime responsibility of the 1041st extends from the flight-line and main base cantonment outward to the main base perimeter. The area is sub-divided into three sections, into which patrols are dispatched daily. Also, observation posts are manned during daylight hours, and at night the posts became listening sites and their locations alerted.

Each combat patrol—reconnaissance, ambush, or search and destroy—normally consists of a seven-man fire team. The patrol contains a leader, assistant leader, machine gunner and

assistant gunner, a rifleman and a grenadier and a scout dog and handler.

To qualify for the special security force, the volunteers underwent a series of rigorous tests, followed by a strenuous physical training program. The tests included being able to swim 50 meters fully clothed, swim 15 meters with full combat gear, and run a mile in six minutes and 50 seconds, also fully clothed.

The men were given individual skill training from September to November 1966. The unit was then assembled for unit training through December.

A bulk of the instruction was in ground tactical training, including patrolling techniques, cover and concealment, fire-team tactics, fields, field sanitation, and basic proficiency in

small arms.

The squadron's prime weapons include the M-60 machine gun, 81mm mortar, .50 calibre machine gun, the M-16 rifle and the XM-148 grenade launcher.

The 1041st APSS is commanded by Air Force Lt. Col. William H. Wise. Maj. Joseph B. Evans of Yellow Springs, Ohio, is squadron operations analysis officer. The major receives all test evaluation and then provides statistical analysis for USAF evaluation.

Assisting the unit during the evaluation at Phu Cat is Royal Australian Air Force Squadron Leader Jim Downie, who serves as ground defense advisor to Colonel Wise. Squadron Leader Downie is a former commando of the Royal Australian Army and has also had previous experience in Southeast Asia.

June 7, 1967



COMMANDER—SSgt. James Kern, armored personnel carrier commander and a member of the 1041st Air Police Security Squadron, directs fire during tests of combat weapons in Operation Safeside.
(AIR FORCE PHOTO)

3.15_1. NEWS: Seventh Air Force, June 7, 1967.

DAILY BRIEFING (INTELLIGENCE) 9 May 1967

1. **SS Det 27, (C-2) Intelligence** Cadre of VC gathering information on Units and Installations, especially Phù Cát AB, 1 Plt at AN MY (CR000642) and CHANH HOI (BR975625).

2. **HQ TIGER ROK DIV, INSUM # 127:** Le Tiet, captured by 11th Co, CAV Regt on 5 May [1967], vic, BR865415. Tiet stated the [that] he saw three times, 5 VC at vic, BR981410 and time and days as follows:

1- 0800	3 May	vic: BR861410
2- 1600	3 May	vic: " "
3- 1600	4 May	vic: " "

CIS comments: These VC could possibly be from the same local main force, as the VC KIA by 1041st [SPS(T)]. Normally units leave KIA's in the vicinity of where they were killed in shallow graves, where bodies can be retrieved. Also, this the area where ROK's are having their present operation, estimated that there are at least 100 VC in this area.

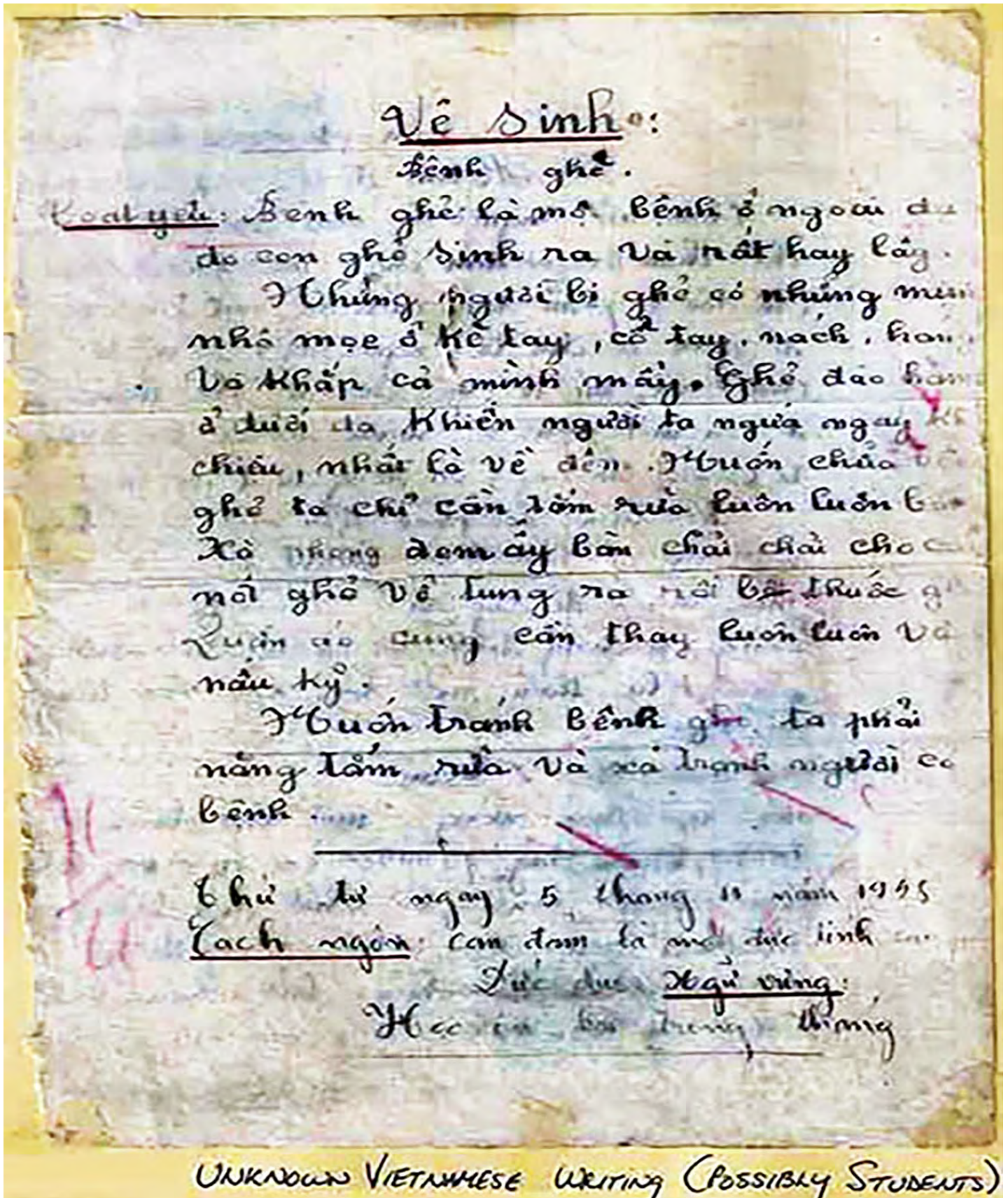
3. **1041st [SPS(T)] INSUM # 4, dated 25 Mar [19]67: On 23 Mar [1967]** there was reported that an 18-man VC sapper team had their HQ in TRA SON 2, BR848445. This 18-man team was divided into 6 three-man teams and were operating in the Phù Cát area gathering information concerning the activities at Phù Cát AB;(Phù Cát SS). A **report dated 2 May [19]67**, has been received from the QUI NHON Field office 135th MI GP, that the sapper cell working in the area Phù Cát AB has been reinforced, although their exact number is unk, it is believed they have increased at least twice their original number. Their mission is to plant explosives against the officer's club in the future. Several VC are working at the AB and are collecting info for the sappers. The sappers are utilizing the tunnels that are believed to be in the general area 500m south of the AB near the boundary of BINH KHE.

CIS COMMENT: These two reports could concern the same sapper units. Their location is in the area where the current ROK, ARVN, & US operation is taking place.

TO: ALL PERSONNEL IN CLOSE COMBAT

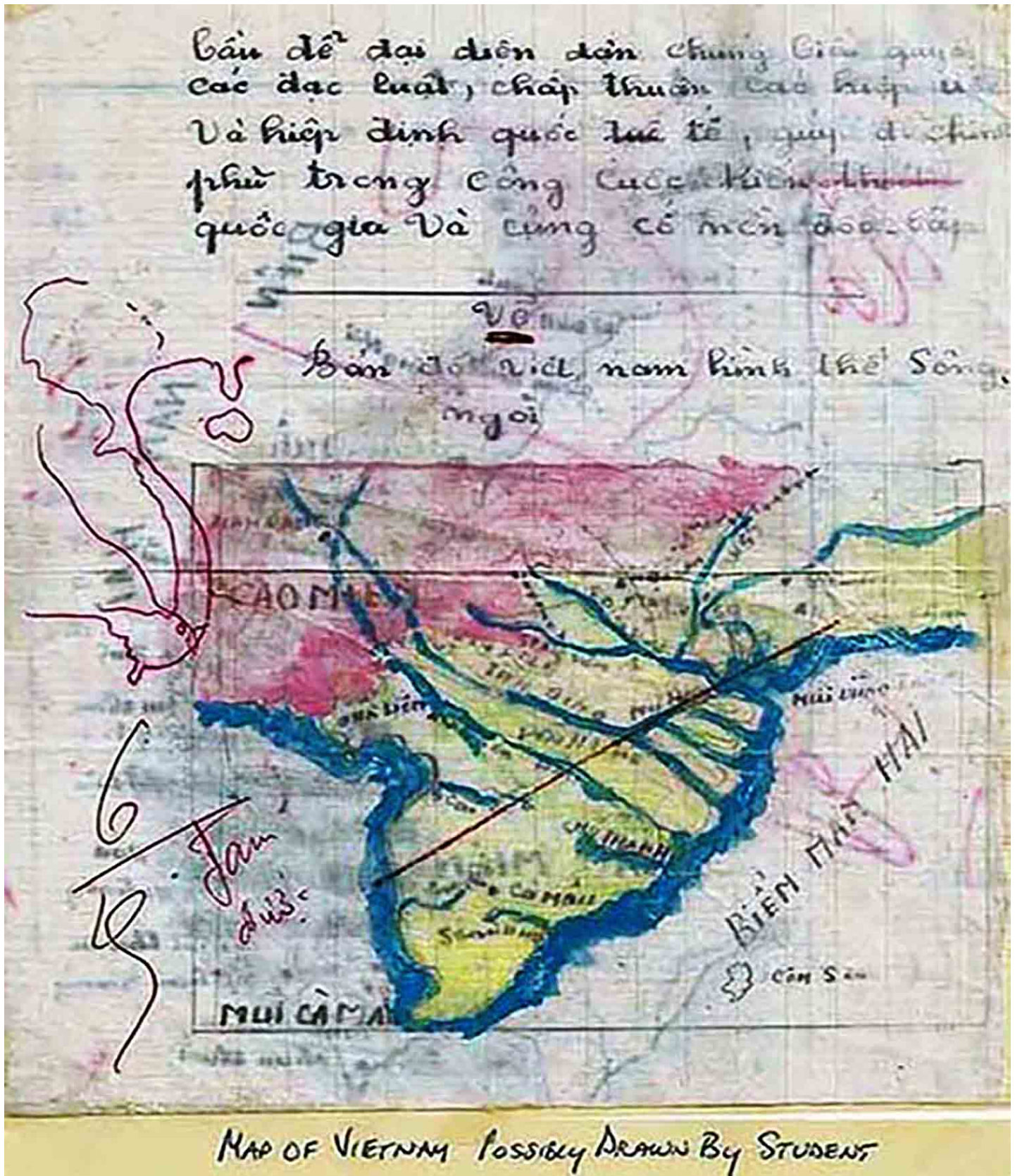
1. No swimming on or near Phù Cát AB by order of Base Commander/
2. NVA Company at BR 885384 – which is south of Texas – Fairly reliable- mission is to attack RD Teams and Phù Cát AB.
3. VC Platoon at BR 876380 – South of Texas – mission is to booby trap areas on Phù Cát AB.
4. Trip/flares will be placed outside of base camp in wooded areas North & West of Base Camp.
5. ADVISORS: A patrol critique will be filled out after you complete an ambush of Blocking Force. They will be returned to Capt Clower or SMSgt Hockenson. Pick up the forms from TSgt Gasbarro or TSgt Anderer.

ALL TEAM LEADERS READ AND INITIAL TO SHOW YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE ABOVE INFORMATION



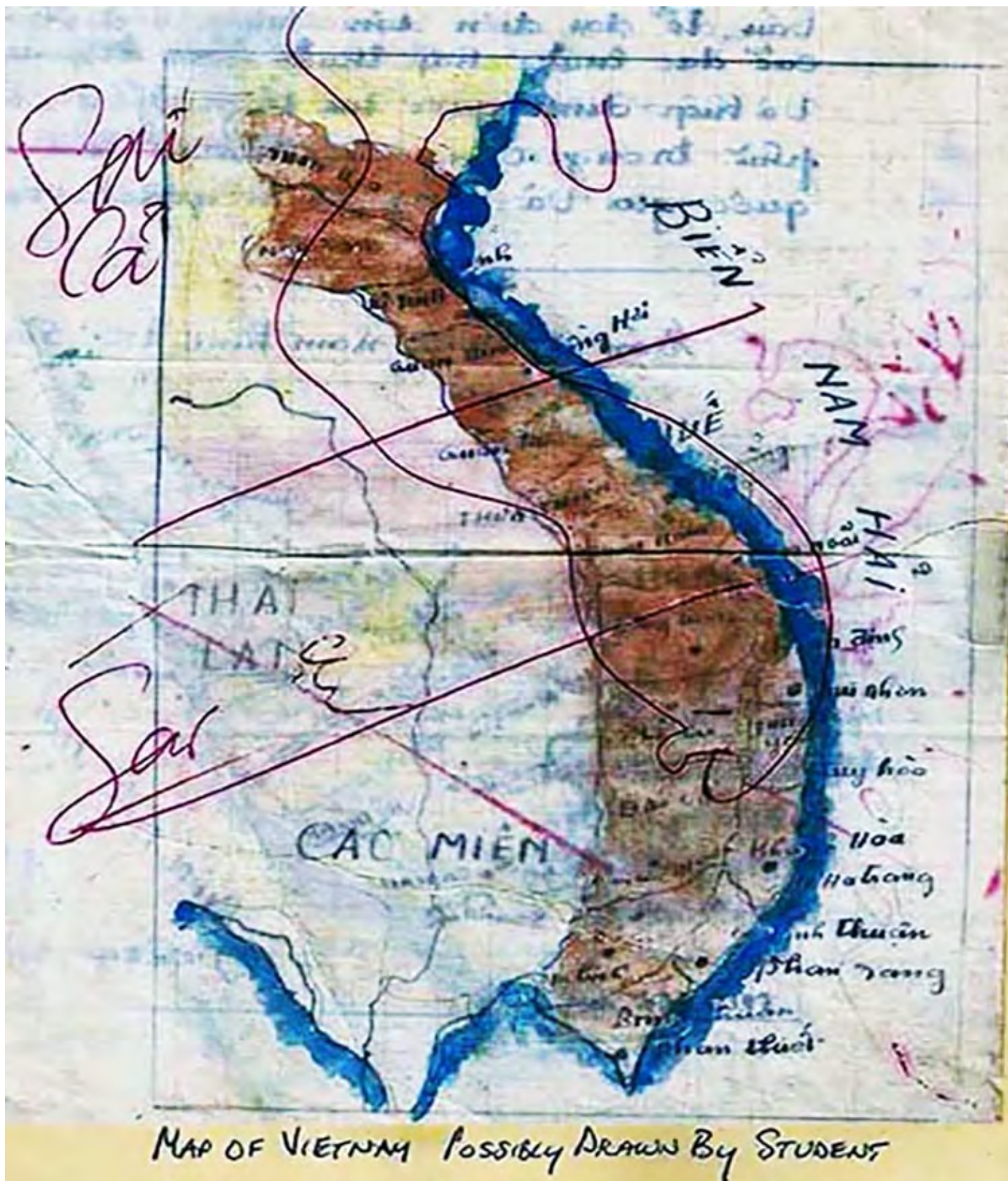
UNKNOWN VIETNAMESE WRITING (POSSIBLY STUDENTS)

3.15_4. Letter: Unknown Vietnamese Writing (Possibly Students).



MAP OF VIETNAM POSSIBLY DRAWN BY STUDENT

3.15_5. MAP of Vietnam: Possibly drawn by students.



3.15_6. MAP of Vietnam: Possibly drawn by students.