

Facebook post reunites....forty-eight years later

By Guest Columnist Marsha Barham, as told to her by Cliff Rushing

In early 1971, then-Major Cliff Rushing of the United States Marine Corps stationed in Norfolk, Virginia, received orders for his second tour in Vietnam. The Rushing family relocated to Clinton and, in April, Maj. Rushing reported to the 3rd Marine Division in Da Nang, South Vietnam. His assignment was to be the Operations Officer for the 2nd Combined Action Group (2nd CAG). This unit was unique to the U.S. Marine Operations in South Vietnam. As the name implies, the unit was an effort involving a squad of Marines (thirteen men and one U. S. Navy Corpsman) and a platoon of Popular Force (PFs) Vietnamese combined to provide a 24/7 presence in an assigned area of operations. The PFs can be equated to our National Guard units, and they generally lived in their area of operations.

The 2nd CAG was assigned a very large area south of Da Nang, and the number of combined action platoons (CAPs) varied from fifty to seventy, organized into companies of ten or more CAPs each. This large area included regular South Vietnamese Army units, South Korean Marines, U.S. Army units, and U.S. Marine units. Coordination with these units



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Pictured (l to r) are Cliff Rushing and Ha Sau Hoa.

was a constant priority.

To assist Maj. Rushing with his responsibilities, Lieutenant Ha Sau Hoa, South Vietnamese Army, was assigned to him as a liaison officer. He quickly became indispensable for the many tasks at hand and served as Maj. Rushing's liaison officer for the

full year of his tour. In the summer of 1971, Maj. Rushing went back to the U.S. for further assignment, and Lt. Hoa continued his duties with the South Vietnamese Army.

There are many experiences to share of their daily travels and interactions with various headquarters, compa-

nies, platoons, etc., but those are not the focus of this article.

Fast forward to 1975: North Vietnam has taken over the country. Lt. Hoa has become Captain Hoa and was serving as an aide to one of the top generals in the South Vietnamese Army when the South fell. The story of how Capt. Hoa and the general barely escaped the fall of DaNang, made their way to Saigon, and eventually escaped the country is a book unto itself.

Meanwhile, now-Lt. Colonel Rushing is stationed at Marine Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. and living in Fairfax, Virginia. Capt. Hoa, as a refugee, has made his way through several refugee camps and is now in Fort Chaffee, Arkansas.

"The first I knew Hoa was in the States was when some U.S. official called and asked if I knew Capt. Hoa and would I be willing to sponsor him so he could be released to begin his life in the United States," said Rushing. "I naturally agreed, and arrangements were made per headquarters to fly him into Washington, D.C. As an aside note, Hoa's sole possessions on his arrival were a T-shirt, shorts, flip flop shoes, and a shaving kit - so began our renewed friendship."

Hoa lived with the Rushing family for three months. During that time, he

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