



9th Infantry Division



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6th-31st, ship's crew swap war, sea tales

DONG TAM – When the 6th Battalion, 31st Infantry, moved from Nha Be to this 9th Division base camp, they had to leave behind 18,000 tons of fun and a bunch of good friends.

The 18,000 tons belong to the SS Hyria, a tanker ship that transports petroleum between Singapore, Hong Kong and Nha Be. The friends are found among the ship's British crew.

When Captain M. T. John docked his vessel at Nha Be, the crew used their free time to stretch their sea legs on Vietnamese soil and mingle with the ground-bound infantrymen of the 6th/31st, swapping war and sea tales.

The infantrymen would board the ship to enjoy its facilities and British hospitality. British and Americans would relax together over coffee, exchange movies or take an occasional dip in the ship's pool. The change of pace proved a great morale booster for soldier and sailor alike.

One infantryman summed it up by saying, "It was great, just like a Caribbean cruise, except that the ship didn't go anywhere."