DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS DENVER (LPD 9)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS DENVER (LPD 9)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Washington Navy Yard, Washington D.C.

Subj: SUBMISSION OF COMMAND HISTORY FOR USS DENVER (LPD 9) CY 1996

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Biography and Photo of Commanding Officer
(5) Biography of Executive Officer
(6) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet for Visitors
(7) Biography of Capt (Ret.) H.T. Jenkins Jr.
(8) 3¼" Disk

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following is forwarded as the history of USS DENVER (LPD 9) for calendar year 1996.

2. USS DENVER (LPD 9) is the third United States Navy ship to bear the name of American pioneer James William DENVER and the capital of the state of Colorado. DENVER's primary mission is to provide an aviation and amphibious launch and recovery platform in support of amphibious assault operations. Secondary missions include providing logistical support for amphibious assault operations, humanitarian relief, and the training of helicopter pilots, Marines, special warfare personnel, reservists, and midshipmen.

3. The following major personnel changes occurred over the last year: The Chaplain, LCDR S. Smith was relieved by LT M. Hogg. The Chief Engineer, LT M. Gouchenour was relieved by LCDR J. Shirley. The Air Boss, LT D. Williams was relieved by LT J. Massello. The Navigator, LT E. Johnson was relieved by LTJG E. Conzen.

D. K. DUPONT

Command Composition and Organization

Commanding Officer
Captain Hopper

Executive Department

Executive Officer
LCDR Guillory

Chaplain	Navigator / Admin Officer	Medical	Dental
LCDR Smith	LTJG Conzen	LT Olcott	LT DeLuca

Engineering Department

Chief Engineer
LCDR Shirley

Main Propulsion Assistant
LTJG Tinder

Damage Control Assistant
LT Beltejar

Aux Division	M Division	B Division	E Division	R Division
ENS Muñoz	ENS Such	LTJG Abobo	ENS Grinold	ENS Zimmerman

Deck Department

First Lieutenant
LT Mason

Combat Cargo	Ship's Bos'n
CW02 Vallee	LT Vincent

1st Division	2nd Division	3rd Division
LTJG Kait	LTJG Tulodieski	LTJG Keenum

Operations Department

Operations Officer
LT Carter

CIC Officer
LTJG Durlacher

Communications Officer
CW02 Stephens

EMO
LTJG Lott

Supply Department

Supply Officer
LT Kao

Disbursing / Sales Officer
LTJG Hill

Food Service Officer
LTJG Heiss

Air Department

Air Officer
LT Massello

A/C Fuels Officer
LT Lacore

Chronology Calendar Year 1996

January

01 – 06	Inport Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates
07 – 16	Operations "Iron Siren" and "Iron Magic"
17 – 22	Inport Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates
23 – 29	Underway, Central Arabian Gulf
30	RAS w/ USS WILLAMETTE & USNS SPICA
31	Transit to Kuwait

February

01 – 03	Inport Kuwait City, Kuwait
04 – 08	Underway, North Arabian Gulf
09	RAS w/ USS WILLAMETTE & USS SHASTA
10	Enroute to Kuwait
11 – 13	Anchored off Kuwait
14 – 17	Underway, Central Arabian Gulf
18 – 25	Inport Manama, Bahrain
26	Transit to Kuwait
27 – 29	Inport Kuwait City, Kuwait

March

01 – 02	Underway, Central Arabian Gulf
03	RAS w/ USS WILLAMETTE
04	Transit to Jebel Ali
05 – 07	Inport Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates
08 – 09	Underway, South Arabian Gulf, Straits of Hormuz transit
10 – 13	Inport Muscat, Oman
14 – 15	Underway, ARG Flight Ops & TORP Evasion Exercise, SOH transit
16 – 17	Exercise Eastern Maverick
18 – 21	Inport Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates
22 – 27	Underway, Straits of Hormuz transit
28	CHOP to SEVENTHFLT
29 – 31	Underway, Indian Ocean

April

01	Strait of Malacca transit
02 – 04	Inport Kelang, Malaysia
05 – 09	Underway, South China Sea
10 – 12	Inport Manila, Republic of the Philippines
13 – 14	Underway, South China Sea

15 – 18	Inport Hong Kong
19 – 26	Underway, Western Pacific
27 – 28	CHOP to THIRDFLT
29 – 29	Crossing of International Date Line / "Groundhog Day"
30	Underway, Eastern Pacific

May

01 – 02	Underway, Eastern Pacific
03 – 04	Inport Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
05 – 11	Tiger Cruise, Transit to San Diego, CA
12	Camp Pendleton Offload
13	Arrive San Diego, CA
14 – 31	POM

June

01 – 10	POM
11 – 30	Upkeep and Training

July

01 – 03	Upkeep and Training, Underwater Hull Cleaning
04	Independence Day
05 – 08	Upkeep and Training
09 –10	3-M Assist Visit, Fast Cruise
11 – 14	Underway, to North East Pacific
15 – 18	CNO Project 779-01 – SSTD Wake Physics Data Collection Trial
19 – 21	Inport Esquimalt, British Columbia, Canada
22	Underway, to Everett, WA
23 – 25	Inport Everett, WA
26 – 27	Underway, to SOCAL
28	Burial at Sea for Capt (Ret) H. T. Jenkins Jr.
29	Inport San Diego, CA
30 – 31	Upkeep and Training, Intermediate Maintenance Availability

August

01 – 16	Upkeep and Training, Intermediate Maintenance Availability
17 – 26	Upkeep and Training
27	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy visit
28 – 31	Upkeep and Training

September

01 – 11	Upkeep and Training
12	COMPHIBRON ONE Change of Command
13 – 23	Upkeep and Training
24 – 25	Underway, SOCAL / Swing Ship
26 – 29	Upkeep and Training
30	Underway, to Seal Beach

October

01 – 03	Inport Seal Beach, CA / Ammo Off-load
04	Underway, to San Diego
05 – 06	Inport San Diego, CA
07 – 11	INSURV / dead stick move to Southwest Marine
12 – 31	Planned Maintenance Availability

November

01 – 30	Planned Maintenance Availability

December

01 – 13	Planned Maintenance Availability
14 – 31	Holiday Leave Period

1996 Narrative

1 January 1996, DENVER was pierside in Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates finishing up a holiday routine inport period. DENVER was in the Arabian Gulf in January 1996 beginning the ship's third month of a six month deployment. This was DENVER's 15th overseas deployment. As part of the Peleliu Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG), with the USS PELELIU (LHA-5) and the USS ANCHORAGE (LSD-36), DENVER was on station in the Arabian Gulf in support of both U.S. and U.N. policy.

From 6 – 16 January, DENVER and the ARG were heavily involved in Operations "Iron Siren" and "Iron Magic". The overall purpose of these operations was to improve readiness and interoperability between the UAE and US Naval forces. DENVER was heavily involved in conducting concurrent heliborne and surface amphibious landings with UAE. DENVER once again, came pierside at Jebel Ali from the 17th through the 22nd January for the customary offload. After a few days of liberty, DENVER was underway once again in the Central Arabian Gulf, conducting various Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) exercises, UAV flight operations, small arms fire, and replenishments at sea (RAS) with the USS WILLAMETTE & USNS SPICA for transit to Kuwait.

The first 3 days of February were spent offloading LCU-1648 and the AAV's in Kuwait City. DENVER got underway again in the Northern Arabian Gulf to conduct more ARG exercises with the RHIB's and UAV. Following another RAS with the USS WILLAMETTE & USS SHASTA, DENVER returned to anchor off Kuwait for 3 days of backload. Upon completion, DENVER began its transit to Bahrain, taking advantage of this at-sea period to conduct internal drills and DC training. The inport Bahrain period lasted from the 18th to the 25th February, and this time was ideal for upkeep, minor repairs, Captain's call, and of course, liberty. On the 21st, DENVER was visited by COMPHIBGRU THREE, Rear Admiral Saffell. Soon, DENVER was underway again, enroute back to Kuwait, only slowing down for gas from the USNS YUKON. On the 27th, DENVER anchored off Kuwait, finished a quick backload, and then pulled into port for a couple of days.

The month of March began underway. A PhotoEx, more flight operations, RHIB training, and a RAS with USS WILLAMETTE, were all conducted on DENVER's transit back to the United Arab Emirates. While inport Jebel Ali, aspiring seamen took the E-4 advancement exam, and salty Third Class Petty Officers took the E-5 exam. After a bit of liberty, DENVER got underway again, conducted ARG flight operations and transited the Strait of Hormuz. On the 10th, DENVER arrived in Muscat, Oman. While inport, DENVER underwent Gulf net communications testing, and E-5's had their takes on the E-6 advancement exam. DENVER got underway again on the 14th for a busy transit back to Jebel Ali. After passing through the Strait of Hormuz, DENVER successfully conducted a torpedo evasion exercise (ASW-17-SF). Flight quarters, ECC drills, and main space fire drills kept the crew busy, before DENVER started on Exercise Eastern Maverick. However, this exercise was short lived due to the extreme number of fishing vessels in the area at the time, and DENVER's loss of it's air search radar. DENVER pulled in once again to Jebel Ali on the 18th for 4 days. This would be the last port visit in the Arabian Gulf. After another Strait of Hormuz transit and an underway refueling, DENVER inCHOPped to SEVENTHFLT, and continued on its Indian Ocean leg eastward.

On April 1st, DENVER transited the Strait of Malacca, and pulled into Kelang, Malaysia on the 2nd for a couple of days of liberty. DENVER's next port visit was Manila, Republic of the Philippines. DENVER spent 3 days there. For many of the ship's crew, this was their homeland. The last of the Asian ports was Hong Kong. Good shopping and sightseeing were on everybody's mind, but none forgot that the transit home was soon to come. DENVER got underway on the 19th and headed east, inCHOPping to THIRDFLT and crossing the International Date Line (gaining an extra day to everyone's dislike) along the way.

May was a good month. On the Eastern Pacific transit, the ARG pulled into Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. "Tigers" embarked and enjoyed many activities and special events: Steel beach, static displays, ship maneuvering drills, live fires, tours, ARG air power demo, just to name a few. On the 11th, DENVER arrived off the coast of Camp Pendleton, quickly conducting its offload. Finally, 1100 on Monday, 13 May, DENVER returned to her homeport. A post deployment leave and upkeep period commenced immediately.

The leave period lasted through June 10th. The remaining month of June kept everyone busy starting with an "I" Availability with SIMA San Diego, an elevator assessment, DC and aircraft firefighting training, Navy / Marine-Corps Relief Society campaign drive, habitability assessments, offload of L-Form, boiler inspection, and the physical readiness test.

On the 1st of July, DENVER began it's underwater hull cleaning. Independence Day (no, not the movie), the 4th of July, found DENVER celebrating the nation's 220th birthday by ringing the ship's bell 13 times at 1000. After a great holiday weekend, DENVER got back to business. After a 3-M Assist visit and Fast Cruise, DENVER got underway on the 11th transiting to the Northeast Pacific. After transiting through the Strait of Juan De Fuca, DENVER arrived at the Canadian Nanoose Testing Range for CNO Project 779-01. This project required the DENVER to run the range on tight tracks in order to provide proper SSTD wake physics data collection. DENVER's OOD's and Conning Officers demonstrated top shiphandling expertise. This project was followed by a great liberty stop in Esquimalt, British Columbia. The crew greatly enjoyed themselves in the nearby city of Victoria as well. DENVER then transited south to Everett, Washington, for a 3-day port visit, and to embark guests for Burial at Sea. DENVER got underway on the 26th and transited back out of the Strait of Juan De Fuca, and headed south towards SOCAL, streaming and testing NIXIE along the way. On Sunday, 28 July, the cremains of Capt (Ret.) H.T. Jenkins Jr., were laid to rest. His ashes were scattered to the sea, from the deck of a ship he once commanded. His family was onboard for a moving memorial service to a great man. Please see enclosure (7). DENVER pulled back in to San Diego on the 29th, and it was back to business as usual.

The month of August started with another SIMA availability period. DENVER also underwent a 3-M inspection, various inport training modules, and ammo transfers. On the 12th, Admiral Krekich, COMNAVSURFPAC visited DENVER to address the crew. His visit was followed by Rear Admiral Saffell, COMPHIBGRU THREE, on the 15th and 30th, and by the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy on the 27th.

Upkeep continued throughout the month of September. Compass swing tests were conducted on the personnel boats and motor whale boat. Radar navigation team, ship's 3-M, ESWS, and engineering training modules were conducted. Navy-wide advancement exams were held. On the 23rd, DENVER performed a fast cruise, and got underway the following day in the SOCAL operation area for Swing Ship, and pre-INSURV at-sea walkthroughs. Upon return to San Diego, DENVER began making preparations for the upcoming ammunition off-load. On the 30th, DENVER got underway for NWC Seal Beach.

The ammo off-load commenced on October 1st, and thanks to the rapid, professional, and safe weapons handling and elevator operation by DENVER's 3rd and Auxiliaries Division personnel, the evolution was completed in time to leave Seal Beach in the afternoon of the 3rd, and return to San Diego on the morning of the 4th. But the hard work wasn't over yet. The weekend was spent making INSURV preps. On the morning of the 7th, INSURV team embarked. DENVER was well prepared and the INSURV board agreed. The crew began to move off the ship to a berthing barge in preparation for an extensive yard period. DENVER dead-stick moved to Southwest Marine shipyard on the 11th to begin a Phased Maintenance Availability (PMA). The next 4 ½ months were to be filled with long hours of back-breaking labor for all concerned, as a tremendous amount of effort and dollars were poured into the ship.

During November and December, much of DENVER's equipment went through major overhauls, replacements, deletions, and additions. Nevertheless, DENVER's crew remained ready by maintaining high levels of professional in-rate and damage control readiness. Training was held daily, safety stand-downs were held periodically, and the physical readiness test was given. Among the many achievements this year, DENVER won the coveted 1996 Chief of Naval Operations Safety Award for the large amphibious category. This was a testament of DENVER's commitment to its safety programs and the crew's overall safety awareness. The year was coming to an end. DENVER accomplished much this year, and now it was time for the Holiday Leave Period. 1996 came to a close with the crew enjoying the festive spirit.