



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS DENVER (LPD-9)

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From: Commanding Officer, USS DENVER (LPD-9)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09139), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, D. C. 20390

Subj: Command History, USS DENVER (LPD-9) 1968

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A

Encl: (1) USS DENVER (LPD-9) History Report 1968

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded
herewith.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "H. W. Carr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

H. W. CARR

Copy to: (With encl)
CINCPACFLT
COMPHIBPAC
COMPHIBRON SEVEN

USS DENVER COMMAND HISTORY

USS DENVER began her existence in February 1964 when her keel was laid in Seattle, Washington, by Lockheed Shipbuilding and Construction Company. The third ship of the fleet to bear her name, DENVER was launched on 23 January 1965. DENVER was commissioned on 26 October 1968, being christened by her sponsor, Mrs. John Love, wife of the governor of Colorado.

Commanded by Captain J. L. KAUTH, DENVER is one of the newer LPD class vessels, and represents the "all-purpose" concept of the modern amphibious Navy. While previous amphibious task forces had carried troops in one type of ship, cargo in another, and assault craft and tanks in yet a third, DENVER is easily capable of transporting all this mixture of men and equipment simultaneously. She has the additional advantage of being able to operate independently or with a task force, thereby encompassing a truly all-purpose mission.

The LPD's, known in full as Amphibious Transport Dock Ships, have been named after American cities, the namesakes of which were explorers and developers of America. USS DENVER (LPD-9) is 570 feet long and has a molded breadth of 89 feet. She displaces 16,550 tons and is capable of carrying nearly 1000 troops in addition to her crew. Her twin screws can drive DENVER at a speed in excess of twenty knots, and her armament is comprised of four twin 3"/50 rapid-fire mounts. Flag-configured, she presently serves as the command ship of Commander Amphibious Squadron SEVEN.

Following her commissioning in 1968, DENVER proceeded to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Washington, for a three-month outfitting period, after which she steamed to her homeport of Long Beach, California, arriving in January 1969. February marked the beginning of DENVER's initial four-week underway training, which was followed by a two-week amphibious training period. In April she made a voyage to Acapulco, Mexico, for rest and relaxation and Mexican hospitality, after which the Officers and men got back to work once again, and DENVER commenced her return trip to Long Beach Naval Shipyard, where she underwent her post-shakedown availability. Departing homeport early in October 1969, she proceeded to San Diego, California, for interim refresher training and further amphibious training. Her return to Long Beach took place in the end of November, and she remained there until the end of the year.

Harking back over the year 1969, her records reveal several interesting statistics, which include the consumption of over 2 1/2 million gallons of fuel oil, while steaming a total of over 9800 miles during 49 days of underway operations. Not to be overlooked are the nearly 1500 rounds of 3"/50 ammunition and over 58,000 rounds of small arms fire expended in conjunction with DENVER's underway training. The communications department also provided its share of statistics, having logged a total of almost 6000 messages handled during the year.

The primary mission of DENVER is to conduct amphibious warfare, and the proper coordination of the Air and Deck departments in turn is certainly vital to the success of such a mission. A total of 849 aircraft were successfully launched during the year, while the fueling crews pumped nearly 15,000 gallons of JP5 into the helicopters of the many Army, Navy, and Marine aircraft which were serviced aboard during flight operations. Through the cooperation and hard work demonstrated by the Deck Department, Combat Cargo, and Air Officers, DENVER embarked and debarked 2400 troops, 4400 pounds of cargo, nine "mules", a dozen jeeps and ten trailers. The Deck Department also proved itself highly capable during the high speed launching of LVT's as well as perfecting the timing and skilled seamanship necessary in well-deck and other amphibious operations.

DENVER's Supply Department contributed materially to the year's successful record of operations, having been instrumental in requisitioning and procuring the numerous parts, materials and stores so vital to the ship. The morale and spirit of the crew significantly reflect the performance of Supply in that the general mess, wardroom, ship's stores, barber shops, candy store, and vending machines all depend upon the Supply Department for their proper operation. The ship's stores managed to sell over one hundred thousand in merchandise to the crew. In addition, and last but not least, there is the welcome semi-monthly payday that must be conducted each time with no mistakes in accountability.

Each department on the ship is of course dependent upon every other. How efficiently could she operate for example without the Executive Department to provide the personnel for the other departments? Inasmuch as DENVER was slightly overmanned during the year, she served also in the capacity of a "training center afloat" for many men who have since augmented the crews of several other ships and units of the amphibious force. DENVER's reenlistment rate has been highly satisfactory and in recent months has shown an increase.

Educational facilities were amply utilized by the crew, with many individual USAFI courses having been ordered through the Educational Services Officer during the extended in-port periods. Night and adult school courses were readily available and attended by several of the crew in the Long Beach area. The advancement in rating program has also been consistently high.

Also contributing their share of the workload, and the statistics, were the members of the Medical Department. A total of 2403 prescriptions were issued and over 3700 immunizations given. Darkroom personnel processed a significant number of X-rays, and a total of 891 lab tests were performed. The Medical Officer and his team treated only six in-patients, but almost 4000 sick call visitors.

In charge of the religious program aboard DENVER is the ship's Chaplain, who performed the ship's first baptism on 4 May 1969. Baptized was [REDACTED], ten months old, the son of MM2 and Mrs. [REDACTED].

The first year following a ship's commissioning is often a trying one in many respects. A ship, just as any other large organization, requires considerable time and practice in order to settle into an effective and efficient operating routine. In spite of shipboard procedures being fairly standardized throughout the Navy, each ship, nevertheless, experiences her own set of difficulties and peculiarities. DENVER encountered her share of minor problems, but on the other hand, achieved quite an enviable number of awards and commendations as well, even though she was but a newcomer to the fleet.

DENVER's Supply Department received the Blue "E" for supply excellence, while also achieving an average grade of 97% during the annual supply inspection---the highest ever recorded by a PHIBPAC ship. Having shown superiority of messing facilities afloat, she was also awarded "runner up" in the Type Commander's Ney Award competition. Her Air Department was awarded the Yellow "E" for Aviation Excellence after having received outstanding grades in all inspections held over an entire 18 month period. The final refresher training average was 99%. This was the highest known grade ever awarded a Pacific Fleet Air Department. DENVER was recommended for, and later received, the Amphibious Assault Award for excellence in amphibious operations. Deck, Operations, Communications, Air and Navigation Departments played a big role leading to this achievement.

While DENVER's first year as a vessel of the fleet was a successful one, certain adversities were encountered, and a number of valuable lessons were learned from them. Supply realized, quite soon, the need for accurate inventories during outfitting; certain equipment for which the ship had an allowance was not initially on hand. Only through the diligence and resourcefulness of the Supply Department was the necessary equipment obtained. It was also learned that the medical facilities onboard, while adequate for handling a small number of casualties at one time, were not capable of coping with mass casualties.

Installed equipment proved to be the source of several recurring problems, such as the forward and after electro-hydraulic ammunition hoist drives which were overheating and repeatedly breaking down, and the gunfire control system MK56, which required constant attention. Several broken or leaking hydraulic lines in the boat-and-aircraft crane had to be replaced by the Engineering Department, and the 85-pound package conveyor guides were frequently inoperable.

Major conversions and modifications were accomplished to correct some of DENVER's equipment problems. A motor rewind shop was installed for up to 125 horsepower electric motors and a closed circuit television system was installed throughout the ship, which now serves a dual purpose. The crew enjoys the educational and recreational programs which are presented whenever practicable, while the system additionally functions during important evolutions as a monitor for both flight deck activity and well deck boat operations. The activities taking place in these sections of the ship can now be monitored continuously from the bridge while information is simultaneously relayed from DENVER's Combat Information Center to the Officer-Of-The-Deck on the bridge.

Additional equipment installation included the pathfinder radar, mounted on the bridge, and a probe fueling facility placed at the refueling stations for handling both JP5 and Navy Special Fuel Oil.

All in all, the first year of operations proved to be one of new challenge and of learning for DENVER and her crew. Those difficulties which were overcome, the lessons which were learned, the heartaches and hard work, and the rewards that were realized are perhaps now just history. And yet all that took place, nevertheless cannot help but serve as a guideline for her in time to come. DENVER can most assuredly look back with pride at her accomplishments and can look forward as well, with eager anticipation, to the challenges of the future.