



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS DENVER (LPD-9)

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From: Commanding Officer, USS DENVER (LPD 9)
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Encl: (1) 1975 Command History of USS DENVER (LPD 9)

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

D. S. Jones

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Copy to:
CINCPACFLT
COMPHIBRON FIVE

USS DENVER (LPD-9) COMMAND HISTORY

As the new year 1975 began, USS DENVER was moored at Naval Station, San Diego. The major portion of the month of January was spent conducting routine upkeep.

On 28 January the DENVER was underway for UH-1E wet-well exercises. The DENVER anchored off Del Mar, California while the UH-1E's did touch and go landings on the flight deck. Well deck exercises were simultaneously conducted with two LCM-8's. On 30 January USS DENVER departed the Del Mar area for Coronado Roads where she anchored until joined by USS CANON (PG-90), USS ANCHORAGE (LSD-36), and USS RACINE (LST-1191). The DENVER later weighed anchor and in company with USS ANCHORAGE and USS CANON conducted firing exercises. The DENVER anchored in Coronado Roads upon completion of the gunnery exercises.

On 31 January, DENVER weighed anchor and in formation with USS MOUNT VERNON (LSD-39), USS RACINE, and USS CANON conducted CONEX event number 801, Gunnery Surface Shoot. Following the exercise, DENVER participated in UH-1E flight operations.

On 1 February DENVER proceeded independently for a simulated mine field exercise. Upon completion of the exercise, the ship returned to the Del Mar boat basin off Camp Pendleton for amphibious exercises through 4 February. On 5 February the DENVER proceeded to Naval Station, San Diego.

On 28 February DENVER again got underway for Coronado Roads Anchorage for ship to shore control training. On 1 March the ship returned to Naval Station, San Diego.

USS DENVER conducted independent ship exercises on March 3, 4, and 5 in preparation for her forthcoming deployment. On 6 March the ship returned to Naval Station, San Diego.

On the 28th of March 1975, DENVER departed her homeport of San Diego for a seven and one-half month deployment in the Western Pacific as a unit of Task Force SEVENTY-SIX. Deploying with her were USS MOBILE, USS ANCHORAGE, USS MOUNT VERNON, USS DULUTH, USS BARBOUR COUNTY, and USS TUSCALOOSA, all units of Amphibious Squadron FIVE of which DENVER is Flagship.

At Pearly Harbor the Squadron Staff shifted to USS DULUTH and the Commodore flew ahead to WestPac for briefing on the worsening situation in South Vietnam.

DENVER then departed Hawaii and proceeded independently toward Okinawa at best speed in order to offload the full load of Marine Corps vehicles carried aboard. The Engineering Department received many "Well Dones" for their performance in keeping the ship at full speed for eleven straight days.

Upon arrival off Okinawa, the Deck Department swung into action and on the night of 17 April accomplished the offload of vehicle cargo, and unloaded Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 3/9 in 26 hours of continuous hard work.

The ship got underway at midnight on the 18th of April for a holding area off Vung Tao, South Vietnam. On the way plans were made and facilities set up for the possibility of holding many thousands of refugees. On the 22nd of April DENVER moved into an area within sight of Vung Tao and assumed her position amongst some 48 other ships of the U. S. SEVENTH Fleet.

On the 29th of April DENVER became one of the first ships to receive South Vietnamese refugees as "Huey" helicopters began arriving onboard. In order to make room for more helos, seven had to be jettisoned over the stern. During all this confusion the ship's special organization for handling refugees was called into action and the orderly progression began as our new charges were directed to the well deck for temporary shelter and assistance.

During the next several days the ship processed some 7,500 Vietnamese refugees through the well deck and into our waiting Assault Craft Unit ONE landing craft. After processing they were shuttled to waiting Military Sealift Command ships. The hours became incredibly long as Marine helos came aboard with load after load of refugees, yet the crew of DENVER willingly stayed on the job assisting and feeding the thousands of refugees.

These last refugees were all taken in by boats of the Amphibious ships and some landing craft that were salvaged and manned by DENVER's crew. In the end, the MSC shipping was all filled and the warships started taking on refugees for transport to Subic Bay Philippines. DENVER's share came to over 500 people who were bedded down under a "tent city" erected on the flight deck amidst salvaged helicopters.

While at Subic Bay CTF 76, RADM WHITMIRE, and his staff embarked in DENVER for the remainder of DENVER's WestPac deployment.

After a few days in Subic the ship departed for Okinawa arriving at White Beach on the 12th of May. The next morning DENVER got underway on short notice in response to the "Mayaguez Incident" but word was received on the 25th to head back to Okinawa when the Mayaguez was recovered.

The rest of the month of May and June saw DENVER supporting the Marine Corps with routine transits from White Beach to Numazu at the foot of Mount Fuji in Japan and a side trip to Pusan, Korea.

July found DENVER taking MOBILE under tow when that ship had a major engineering breakdown. That evolution and some extremely rough surf off Numazu caused the loss of several days in the already tight schedule. Those days were made up in a record breaking switch of BLT's in Okinawa as DENVER conducted the unprecedented simultaneous onload of one BLT while offloading another in four hours. The ship then went to Yokosuka, Japan for much needed repairs arriving 18 July.

The ship next got underway on 19 August for Pohang, South Korea to put Marines ashore for training prior to a landing exercise in August. During transit DENVER experienced a rather major fire in the after engine room which was brought under control by the superb efforts of the Engineering Department personnel involved in fighting it.

After picking up Marines in Pohang, DENVER and other ships of Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO conducted a joint landing with Korean forces near Pohang, Korea. Some extremely rough weather and surf conditions were encountered. Afterwards, DENVER visited Inchon, Korea from 28 August to 2 September. The ship arrived back at White Beach on 10 September after putting BLT 2/9 ashore at Numazu.

On Thursday, 11 September 1975, a change of command was held on board. Captain Harry T. JENKINS was relieved as Commanding Officer by Captain Donald S. JONES.

When next underway on 17 September DENVER was enroute for a port visit to Hong Kong and thence to Subic Bay. While in Hong Kong the ship was required to get underway to avoid Typhoon Alice. On 27 September DENVER arrived in Subic Bay for upkeep and departed on 6 October.

On 13 October the DENVER returned to Okinawa to await the arrival of her relief, USS JUNEAU. On 28 October the relieving process began and the evening of Wednesday, 29 October, found the DENVER underway for Pearl Harbor.

Arriving in Pearl Harbor on 8 November, Commander Amphibious Squadron FIVE shifted his flag to the DENVER. On 10 November the Sea and Anchor Detail was set with the final destination of Naval Station, San Diego.

On Sunday, 16 November, DENVER returned to her homeport of San Diego and began a leave and upkeep period.

The DENVER finished the year by getting underway from 15 through 18 December for local operations in SOCAL. Christmas and the close of the year found DENVER with COMPHIBRON FIVE and Staff embarked moored to pier 6, Naval Station, San Diego.