



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS DENVER (LPD-9)
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

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From: Commanding Officer, USS DENVER (LPD 9)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

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Encl: (1) USS DENVER (LPD 9) 1977 Command History

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


R. E. KEE

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CINCPACFLT

USS DENVER (LPD 9)

COMMAND HISTORY 1977

As 1977 started, DENVER was completing her regular overhaul in Long Beach Naval Shipyard. Fast cruise on 5 & 6 January was followed by Sea Trials on 11 - 12 January. As this month drew to a close, so did DENVER's stay in Long Beach. DENVER left the west coast's busiest commercial port on 26 January and arrived in her homeport of San Diego on 27 January.

This year's shortest month passed quickly, but not uneventfully. On 18 February, Captain Donald S. JONES was relieved by Captain Robert E. KLEE as Commanding Officer, USS DENVER (LPD 9). The next week, Captain KLEE got the DENVER underway to Seal Beach where the ship spent one day loading ammunition. The next day's return to San Diego brought a surprise - a sudden change in schedule required the DENVER to participate in the series of Amphibious Operations which comprised the USS TARAWA (LHA 1) operation evaluation.

On 3 March, DENVER got underway from Naval Station, San Diego for this operation evaluation. Even though she had been away from the "Gator" side of business for over a year, DENVER and her crew performed well in every phase of this multi-faceted amphibious operation and, on the return to port on 25 March, DENVER had the best safety record of any ship involved.

Not one to rest on her laurels, DENVER started Refresher Training of 28 March. This extensive training was completed on 22 April when DENVER received a series of excellent and outstanding scores on the final battle problem. After this, DENVER remained the busiest ship in EASTPAC as Amphibious Refresher Training was swiftly completed from 9 - 20 May.

The next week DENVER was again underway. This time the 600 PSI Mobile Training Team was onboard to assist our engineers in training for the propulsion exam.

A brief tender availability was followed by a break from the standard "SOCAL OPAREA" routine. On 13 June, DENVER departed San Diego enroute to Montague Island, Alaska, with most of Marine Battalion 1/7, thirty-one Midshipmen on summer training and COMPHIBRON FIVE embarked. After nine days of extensive amphibious operations and some good fishing on Montague Island, DENVER sailed through the Cook Inlet to visit the port of Anchorage, Alaska for the Fourth of July holiday weekend. Monday, the Fourth of July was the highlight of this visit: Captain KLEE was interviewed on a local television station, platoons of sailors, midshipmen and marines marched in a parade, and DENVER's afternoon Open House cordially greeted over 2700 visitors.

Leaving Anchorage the next day, DENVER travelled to Vancouver, British Columbia to participate in the Vancouver Sea Festival and serve as Flagship for RADM Paddock, COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC, from 9 to 11 July. Leaving Vancouver 11 July, DENVER participated in one more amphibious landing at Camp Pendleton before returning to San Diego on 16 July.

Continuing to demonstrate she can steam better than the best, DENVER got underway four days later with the Propulsion Examining Board (PED) onboard for her Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE). The many months of hard work and determination displayed by the Engineering Department carried them through this test with flying colors to prove that DENVER, as Chief Engineer LT [REDACTED] has been known to say, "IS THE BEST DAMN LPD".

August was a month spent mostly inport, however, it was not a slow month in any way. A tender availability and a visit to the deperming pier kept the crew busy when they weren't passing PMS, PQS, Medical and other inspections.

The last day of August and the first two of September were spent underway for local operations. The next week, the entire crew stayed busy with the pre-deployment loadout.

The loadout was completed on Friday, 9 September and on the following Tuesday, 13 September DENVER departed San Diego enroute for a seven and one half month deployment to the Western Pacific.

During the initial transit phase from 13 September to 19 September, DENVER and other PHIBRON FIVE ships participated in CONVEX 2-77, designed to train reserve officer staffs in organizing and directing merchant convoys. From 21 September to 28 September DENVER continued west, arriving in Eniwetok on 28 September in order to deliver vital supplies and machinery for the Eniwetok cleanup. DENVER departed Eniwetok 30 September and joined the Seventh Fleet during her transit to Okinawa.

After arriving in Okinawa on 7 October, various Marine units were loaded aboard as DENVER joined Task Force 76 for exercise Fortress Lightning, a Marine amphibious brigade exercise, which took place on the beaches of Mindoro from 14 October to 24 October.

After the exercise, DENVER returned to Okinawa, loaded BLT 2/9 and transported them to Numazu, Japan on 1 November. Again returning to Okinawa, on 5 November DENVER unloaded Marine Artillery Battalion 3/12, then proceeded to Inchon, arriving 7 November. Battalion 3/12 was off-loaded, then DENVER's crew went ashore in Inchon for their first WESTPAC liberty. DENVER departed Inchon 10 November and went on to Sasebo, where she entered an upkeep which lasted through Thanksgiving.

Departing Sasebo on 26 November, DENVER sailed to Inchon to onload Battalion 3/12 on 28 November and return them to Okinawa on 1 December.

On 2 December RADM Morris, COMPHIBRON ONE (CTF 76) broke his flag aboard DENVER. On 3 December DENVER sailed to Numazu, unloading BLT 2/9 on 5 December. Leaving Numazu the same day, DENVER sailed to Pusan, Korea via Japan's inland sea and the ~~Shimonseki Straits~~. DENVER arrived Pusan 8 December and departed 10 December for a brief visit in Pohang. CAPT Klee, CTG 76.5, supervised the sortie from Pohang as his Task Group, comprised of DENVER, USS MOBILE (LKA-115), USS FORT FISHER (LSD-40), and USS BARBOUR COUNTY (LST-1195) joined a South Korean task group in order to commence exercise SSANG YONG (Twin Dragons) VII. CAPT Klee was CATF for the U.S. forces during this exercise which ended 16 December.

On 19 December, DENVER arrived in Okinawa. RADM Morris and his staff returned ashore. DENVER departed Okinawa 20 December, stopped briefly in San Fernando, R.P. on 22 December, then continued south to Subic Bay, R.P., arriving 23 December to commence an upkeep which continued through the end of the year.