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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS DENVER (LPD-9)
FPO AP 96663-1712

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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From: Commanding Officer, USS DENVER (LPD 9)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington D.C.

Subj: SUBMISSION OF COMMAND HISTORY FOR USS DENVER (LPD 9)
CY 1994

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Chronological sequence of events
(2) Biography of Commanding Officer
(3) Biography of Executive Officer
(4) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet for visitors

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following is forwarded as the history for the USS DENVER (LPD 9) for calendar year 1994.

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

3. The following major personnel changes occurred over the last year: The Executive Officer, LCDR R. Rossignol was relieved by LCDR J. Wachter. The Operations Officer, LT [REDACTED] was relieved by LCDR [REDACTED]. The Chief Engineer, LT [REDACTED] was relieved by LT [REDACTED]. The Chaplain, LT [REDACTED] was relieved by LCDR [REDACTED]. The Air Boss, LT [REDACTED] was relieved by LT [REDACTED]. The Navigator, LT [REDACTED] was relieved by LT [REDACTED]. The Dental Officer, LT [REDACTED] was relieved by LT [REDACTED].

W.F. Hopper
W. F. HOPPER

1994 Chronology of Events

January 1st, 1994, found USS DENVER off the coast of Mogodishu, Somalia, in support of Operation Restore Hope. The assessed anti-ship threat was so low that the NEW ORLEANS Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG) spent most of their time at anchor, to minimize fuel consumption. The strong currents, high winds, and rocky bottom conspired such that, even with both anchors deployed, DENVER would find herself dragging anchor one to three hundred yards a day!

The day-to-day sameness was so exacerbating that first DENVER, then the rest of the ARG began calling the waters off Mogodishu "Groundhog Station", in reference to the Bill Murray movie, Groundhog Day. The crew even went so far as to play the opening portion of Sonny and Cher's I've got you, Babe, at reveille. There was a great deal of surprise when everyone learned that they would depart "Groundhog Station" on February 2nd - Groundhog's Day!

The NEW ORLEANS ARG then began the slow transit back to San Diego. Port calls were made at Singapore (12 to 16 February), Hong Kong (21 to 23 February), and Pearl Harbor (09 March). Finally, 0930 on Friday, 18 March, DENVER returned to her homeport. A Post Deployment Holiday Leave and Upkeep Period (PDUPK) commenced immediately. For those men who had the duty that first night back, the wives' club had arranged for the Olive Garden Resteraunt to cater the crew - quite a treat!

PDUPK ran until 17 April, but DENVER stayed inport San Diego until 25 April, when the ship sailed in support of multiple amphibious training exercises. After a week of helo assaults, AAV assaults, and LCU assaults off Camp Pendleton, DENVER returned to San Diego on 29 April for the weekend, only to leave on Monday, 02 May, for an ammo offload at Seal Beach commencing 03 May. Thanks to the rapid and professional weapons handling by DENVER's third division personnel, the evolution was complete in time to leave Seal Beach in the morning and return to San Diego the afternoon of Thursday, 05 May.

On Monday, 09 May, DENVER commenced her Dry Docking Phased Maintenance Availability (DPMA) at the South West Marine Shipyard, in San Diego. Due to the tidal restrictions, the floating drydock "THE PRIDE OF SAN DIEGO" was not entered until very late that night. The next five 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. DENVER left drydock the evening of Friday, 17 June, while the now infamous O.J. Simpson low-speed Bronco chase was in progress.

Even though much work was left unfinished, the press of arriving ships at South West Marine necessitated DENVER's departure, and so on Friday, 09 September, DENVER made the "deadstick" shift back to the Naval Station. A tremendous effort continued to ensue to make her ready for Light-Off Examination (LOE) and Sea Trials, and after dates were pushed back several times due to emergent work, DENVER undertook and passed her LOE 11 - 13 October, and Sea Trials 26 - 27 October. After all riders were dropped off, DENVER steamed up to Seal Beach on 28 October. There she hosted "Visit Ship" during Seal Beach's 50th Anniversary Celebration. An amazing 50,000 civilians visited, overwhelming the ship in what turned out to be, without reservation, a completely successful Public Relations event. The actual ammo onload commenced Monday, 31 October, and once again went smoothly, allowing DENVER to return to San Diego on Wednesday, 02 November.

Once back in San Diego, the period of "work-up's" which had begun with the Command Assessment of Readiness and Training Part IIB (CART IIB) the week of 17 October could commence in earnest. CART IIA was held 07 - 10 November, and after a short restricted availability 11 - 27 November, DENVER commenced the Tailored Ship Training Availability (TSTA) process, with TSTA I (inport) 28 November - 02 December, and TSTA I (underway) 12 - 16 December.

Finally, at the end of the year, DENVER commenced a Holiday Leave and Upkeep Period (HOLUPK) from 17 December to 17 January. The 1993 Holiday Season had been spent off the coast of Mogodishu, and the 1995 Holiday Season will again occur during deployment, so the 1994 HOLUPK had a great deal of special meaning to DENVER's crew.