

# TIGER TRACKS



Spring 2008

The Newsletter of the Steel Tigers 77th Armor Association



## REUNION 2008: SOCIETY OF THE FIFTH & 77TH ARMOR ASSOCIATION AUGUST 28—SEPTEMBER 1, 2008



From its celebrated symbols of patriotism to its undiscovered neighborhoods, the sights and sounds of the nation's capital inspire millions of people every year. Packed with famous sights, free attractions, and an endless calendar of special

events, Washington, DC offers year-round inspiring experiences. Spontaneous jazz notes tumble out the windows of U Street's nightclubs, while world-class performers take the stage at the highly acclaimed Kennedy Center. Kayakers tackle the Potomac River as it winds past the elegant marble tributes to America's great leaders.

This year the city will host a joint Society of the 5th Division – 77th Armor Association Reunion, Thursday, August 28—Monday, September 1, 2008. Please mark your calendars and make reservations soon. Key information includes:



**DATE:** Thursday, August 28—Monday, September 1, 2008.

**REUNION REGISTRATION:** You may register at [www.armedforcesreunions.com/5inf](http://www.armedforcesreunions.com/5inf) or use the registration form enclosed in this newsletter. All registration forms and payments must be received on or before July 25, 2008.



**HOTEL:** A special rate has been arranged at the Sheraton National Hotel 900 South Orme Street, Arlington, VA 22204. For reservations call 1-888-627-8210 and ask for the Society of the 5th Division group rate.

**RATE:** \$119 (single/double) / \$129 (triple) / \$139 (quad) + tax (currently 10.25%). **The room rate includes the American Breakfast Buffet in the hotel restaurant each morning.**

**CUT OFF DATE:** July 25, 2008 is the cut off date. Reservations received after this date will be processed on a space available basis, at the prevailing public rate.

**SHUTTLE SERVICE:** Complimentary shuttle van service departs every 30 minutes to and from Washington National Airport, Metro at The Pentagon, and Pentagon City Fashion Center.

**PARKING:** Garage parking is available for \$3 per night for registered hotel guests.

**RV PARKING:** Oversize vehicles or RVs can park in the hotel's satellite parking lot across the street from the hotel, but if you require RV hook-ups please contact Harmony Place located at 8018 Richmond Highway (Route 1), which is about 8 miles from the hotel. Call (703) 360-4460 for information, reservations, and directions. There are no campgrounds in Arlington County.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled 24 hours in advance of arrival date. Record your cancellation number. Call (703) 521-1900.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Should you require a wheelchair, Zask Medical rents wheelchairs. Please call (703) 354-1266 for information and to make any reservations. ScootAround also rents wheelchairs.

Please call (888) 441-7575 for more information and to make reservations. For additional information on accessibility in Washington, DC consult [www.disabilityguide.org](http://www.disabilityguide.org).

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## 77TH ARMOR ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS

**HONORARY COLONEL  
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**EXECUTIVE BOARD**  
WALTER EVANS  
BRUCE GOLDSMITH  
TOM MILLER  
JOE D. OFFUTT  
MIKE O'BRYEN  
TOM ROSSER  
JIM STAFFORD  
BILL ROSEVEAR

## 77TH ARMOR ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Dear Steel Tigers, Family Members, and Friends,

I am honored to have been elected as President of the Steel Tigers 77th Armor Association at the 2007 Reunion in November. Having served this association as Quartermaster, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President and Web Master, I know that we need excellent support staff. I am pleased to announce that we have elected a slate of competent and committed Officers who will serve through 2009. I am particularly pleased that Gerry Dubois is Vice President of the Association. He has always been an inspiration for me and I know he will serve us well. Jerry Brown, a Past President, is our new Chaplain. Don Cummings has assumed the office of Secretary which is a demanding job. Bob Basner and Kevin Dunne were re-elected as Treasurer and Quartermaster, respectively. Both deserve our praise for jobs well done.

Mike Leone was re-elected Sergeant at Arms, but sadly, Mike passed away shortly after the 2007 Reunion. I am deeply moved by the fact that Mike and Linda decided to spend his last days in our company at Scottsdale.

For those of you who often wait until the reunion, please consider paying your membership dues early this year. Membership dues for the Steel Tigers Association are due in January of each calendar year.

I am committed to lead this Association in a new direction for the next two years. Our membership is not limited to veterans of Vietnam. Our number includes a significant number of active duty personnel and we are pledged by our Constitution to support them. Reunion 2007 was the first since 2003, without active duty members present - they were in Iraq! We need to increase our efforts to incorporate our younger active duty comrades and lay the foundation to welcome future Steel Tigers.

Towards that end, Honorary Sergeant Major of the Regiment, Joe D. Offutt, and I attended the ReFlagging Ceremony for the units of the 4th Brigade 1st Cavalry Division which is now the 4th Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Armored Division, Old Ironsides, with headquarters at Fort Bliss. We met the new 1/77 Armor Commander, LTC James Nikolas and CSM Anthony Murguia who will be reassigned in June. Nevertheless, they are very enthusiastic about our Association. So enthusiastic, in fact, that Joe D and I gave them the hats off our heads during a reception following the ceremony. We would have given them the shirts off our backs had it not been such a cool day in El Paso! We also spent time with CPT Jim Walker and 1SG Dean Fowler of A Company. The good news is we will have the 1/77th Armor in Joe D.'s back yard and he is already launching a recruiting drive. The old 2/12 Cavalry is now the 1/77th Armor, but the configuration will remain as it was as a Cavalry Battalion. Two Tank Companies and two Mechanized Infantry Companies. Now for the bad news, A and B are now Infantry Companies, so some of us will need to adjust.

Also, our Historian needs help from the veterans of Kosovo and Iraq. We are seeking volunteers from these deployments to give us the broader perspective we need to help us educate a new pool of potential members about the Association. Finally, our Membership Vice President, Tom Miller, is in contact with COL Dave Hubner and LTC Miciotto Johnson who commanded the 1/77 in Iraq. We plan to join COL Hubner and his soldiers in Las Vegas for a tenth anniversary reunion of the 2004 deployment to Iraq.

I look forward to working together with you to assure the future of our Steel Tigers.

Respectfully,  
Charles H. Winslow  
President

# FALLEN HERO MICHAEL V. LEONE 77TH ARMOR ASSOCIATION SERGEANT AT ARMS



Mike at his April 22, 2007 wedding to Linda

Michael V. Leone, 61, died on January 3, 2008 in Kansas City. Mike served with the Steel Tigers in Vietnam. He was a loader in HHQ Company.

When his active duty service ended, he joined the National Guard. Following his military service, Mike was the Chief of Police in Canton, MO and Gower, MO, and a police officer at Lake Waukomis, Weatherby Lake, Biscayne Bay, Florida, and Tomball, Texas. Mike was employed by American Protective Services for 22 years and then by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) until his retirement. He also worked at the Kansas City, MO Public Library where he met his wife, Linda.

Mike was buried at Leavenworth National Cemetery. A highly respected man in the law enforcement community, the funeral was attended by six different city police departments, two local sheriffs, and several prosecuting attorneys, as well as a large number of employees from the library where both he and his wife, Linda, worked part-time. Mike was given full honors from both the VFW and the police departments.

According to Linda, Mike “enjoyed your friendship and the reunions so much . . . He was very grateful that he was searched out and told about the reunions. It meant a lot to him to be able to attend. We were told before we left for the last reunion in Scottsdale that his days were numbered. He probably shouldn't have been there, but he couldn't be talked out of it. He had to see you all one last time. He was very fond of each and every one of you. He considered serving with you in the Army to be one of his greatest privileges.”

In lieu of flowers, his family asked that memorial contributions be made to the Disabled American Veterans ([www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org)).

*They shall not grow old as we who are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them.*

## REQUEST YOUR DD-214 ONLINE

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files. Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents.

The NPRC has provided the following website to assist veterans wishing to request their DD-214s online at: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov/>

Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for the NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time. This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes.

Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the web site.

## 2007 REUNION PHOTOGRAPHS ONLINE

Our 2007 reunion was extra special because we enjoyed the company of a number of first timers and infrequent visitors. To see pictures, go to [http://www.steeltigers.org/gallery\\_reunion14.php](http://www.steeltigers.org/gallery_reunion14.php) starting at page 14. You will see Reunion 2006 (El Paso) at the top of the page, followed by the 2007 reunion photos.

**SOCIETY OF THE FIFTH DIVISION &  
STEEL TIGERS: 77th ARMOR ASSOCIATION  
AUGUST 28 – SEPTEMBER 1, 2008  
SHERATON NATIONAL HOTEL (ARLINGTON, VA)**

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 28**

1:00pm - 7:00pm **Reunion Registration Open**

1:00pm - 3:30pm Pentagon Tour hosted by 77th Armor Association but open to all. See registration desk for details.

1:00pm - 12:00am Hospitality Room Open

8:00pm Society Executive Board Meeting

Evening and Dinner on your own. The hotel shuttle provides transportation to Pentagon City Mall and the Metro. Please see the bell desk for schedule

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 29**

Breakfast, included for hotel guests

7:30am - 8:30am **Reunion Registration Open**

8:30am - 3:00pm MEMORIALS TOUR & MEMORIAL SERVICE (description follows)

3:30pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration Continues** Additional hours will be posted at the reunion, if necessary.

4:00pm - 5:30pm Steel Tigers Executive Committee Meeting

4:00pm - 12:00am Hospitality Room open. Silent Auction bidding.

6:30pm - 10:30pm CAPITOL STEPS (description follows)

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 30**

Breakfast, included for hotel guests

8:30am - 9:45am Society Executive Committee Meeting

9:00am - 2:30pm Hospitality Room open. Women only before noon

9:00am - 2:30pm MOUNT VERNON TOUR (description follows)

10:00am - 12:00pm General Session Business Meeting

Lunch on your own. Free afternoon to explore on your own

1:00pm - 2:00pm Steel Tigers Membership Meeting

7:00pm - 11:00pm Dinner Buffet, with pre-dinner music by the US Army Band and guest speaker Ronald E. Neumann, Ambassador to Afghanistan (retired)

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 31**

Breakfast, included for hotel guests

7:00am - 8:30am Past President's and wives breakfast

8:30am - 9:15am Chapel Service

9:30am - 10:15am Society General Membership Meeting

10:30am - 4:00pm STEVEN F. UDVAR-HAZY CENTER (description follows)

6:00pm - Cash Bar and social hour

7:00pm - 10:00pm Banquet Dinner, entertainment, installation of officers, guest speaker, and dancing.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1**

Breakfast, included for hotel guests

Farewells and departures.

**Register online at [www.armedforcesreunions.com/5inf](http://www.armedforcesreunions.com/5inf)**

# SOCIETY OF THE FIFTH DIVISION TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

## MEMORIALS TOUR

**Friday, August 29**

Begin today's tour at Arlington National Cemetery, where we will board Park Service Trams and proceed to the Tomb of the Unknowns for the changing of the guard and laying of a memorial wreath. Then continue on the tram tour of the Cemetery, to see Arlington House, home of General and Mrs. Robert E. Lee, and the gravesites of President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert, lit by the eternal flame. After leaving Arlington enjoy lunch on your own and free time at the Ronald Reagan Building food court. After lunch we'll head for the WWII Memorial, the first national memorial dedicated to all who served during World War II. The Memorial, which was established by the American Battle Monuments Commission, honors all military veterans of the war, the citizens on the home front, the nation at large, and high moral purpose and idealism that motivated the nation's call to arms. We'll have a brief service and wreath laying here before heading to the Vietnam Wall. This imposing granite structure lists the names of all service members who lost their lives in that conflict. Here the group will place another wreath in memory of fallen comrades.

**8:30am board bus, 3:00pm back at the hotel**

**\$25/Person includes bus, escort, and admission. Lunch on your own.**

## CAPITOL STEPS

**Friday August 29**

The only group in America that attempts to be funnier than the Congress, Capitol Steps is a troupe of current and former Congressional staffers who satirize the very people and places that once employed them. They monitor events and personalities on Capitol Hill, in the Oval Office and other centers of power, taking a humorous look at serious issues and providing laughs for millions. Capitol Steps has become a Washington, DC institution for providing a tasteful blend of musical and political comedy.

**6:30 pm board bus, 10:30 pm back at the hotel**

**\$62/Person includes bus, escort, and show**

## MOUNT VERNON TOUR

**Saturday, August 30**

Board bus for a walking tour of Mount Vernon, the Georgian-style mansion and estate of our first president, George Washington. Fourteen rooms of the house are open to the public. The spectacular view from Mount Vernon's portico presents a panorama of lush green lawns extending to the Potomac River. Forty acres of manicured grounds, including Washington's Tomb, pleasure gardens, and restored dependencies are available for visitors to enjoy. Enjoy lunch on your own at the Mount Vernon food court at your leisure.

**9:00am bus, 2:30pm back at hotel**

**\$48/Person includes bus, guide, and admission**

## STEVEN F. UDVAR-HAZY CENTER

**Sunday, August 31**

This museum, part of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum, is dedicated to the preservation and display of its collection of historic aviation and space artifacts. Located at Washington International Dulles Airport, the facility has large aviation and space exhibit hangars. The museum currently has over eighty aircraft and dozens of space artifacts on display including the Space Shuttle "Enterprise," an SR-71 Blackbird, the Dash 80 prototype of the Boeing 707, and the B-29 Superfortress "Enola Gay." Lunch options include a food-court style McDonald's and coffee place. You may tour the exhibits at your own pace, but there is a lot of walking, so please wear comfortable shoes.

**10:30am board bus, 4:00pm back at the hotel**

**\$32/Person includes bus and escort. Lunch on your own.**

Driver and guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.

All tours require a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated

### ***CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.***

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the nonrefundable AFR registration fee (\$9 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.

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## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

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In June of 1863, just weeks before the Battle of Gettysburg, a college president asked Lincoln if he thought the country would survive. President Lincoln replied: "I do not doubt that our country will finally come through safe and undivided. But do not misunderstand me....I do not rely on the patriotism of our people...the bravery and devotion of the boys in blue...(or) the loyalty and skill of our generals....But the God of our fathers, who raised up this country to be the refuge and asylum of the oppressed and downtrodden of all nations, will not let it perish now. I may not live to see it...I do not expect to see it, but God will bring us through safe."

As I read the words of President Abraham Lincoln, a divided nation in a desperate struggle for the soul and survival of the nation, I am reminded of the tremendous sacrifice of the men who fought the battles of that war. President Lincoln said that we Americans have been called to be the "refuge and asylum of the oppressed and downtrodden of all nations."

Today, we Americans are still blessed to produce young men and women who will "Insiste Firmiter" for the best ideals of this nation...to help people become free of tyranny of ideologies that enslave people such as Fascisms, Communism, and other radical ideologies.

As veterans of the Vietnam War, we can take comfort and pride in the fact that we performed our duty to our nation and our God, but our fighting days are not over. Our soldiers need our support in the work place, in our communities, in the voting booth. Let's not allow the press, news media, left wing-anti military groups slander the men and women in our Armed Forces.

The men of the 77th Armor still have a lot of fight in them. Our forefathers and men such as you earned free speech and voting that our countrymen as well as others all over the world enjoy. The Germans, Italians, Greeks, Japanese, South Koreans, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary and dozens of other countries enjoy democratic forms of government because of the American fighting man. Look for ways to support our troops who are fighting the war now. God allowed us to come home... some will say it was just a coincidence, but some of us know it was a gift from God.

Just as the Union Army was fighting against slavery and injustice, the American Army of Vietnam and the American Army in Iraq and Afghanistan are fighting against slavery and injustice.

Pray for our troops and their families. When you see them in the streets or in the airports, make a point to shake their hands and let them know we appreciate what they are doing. Tell the children that our soldiers are our pride and joy. Find a soldier and send him a "Care Package" full of good things to eat. As you remember as young men, you never have enough to eat and things from home always taste so much better. Find a political candidate who matches your values and support them with more than just money. There are a thousand things you can do to show your support for the troops; boldly step out and get involved. There is still a lot of life and fight in you.

Hebrews 13: 5-6 "For He [God] Himself has said, I will not in any way fail you *nor* give you up *nor* leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless *nor* forsake *nor* let [you] down (relax My hold on you)! [ Assuredly not!].<sup>6</sup> So we take comfort *and* are encouraged *and* confidently *and* boldly say, The Lord is my Helper; I will not be seized with alarm [I will not fear or dread or be terrified]. What can man do to me?

God Bless Our Soldiers and Their Families.

Jerry A. Brown  
Chaplain

# ACTIVE DUTY UPDATE

The Steel Tigers returned in November 2007 from their 15-month deployment to Ramadi, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08. Since that time, the Battalion saw two changes of command, four changes of responsibility and a fully integrated Company D (Rear-Detachment) to give the Steel Tigers a new look, a new leadership, and new group of warriors with the same hunger for excellence. In addition, the Steel Tigers paid tribute to their fallen comrades. PVT Edwin A. Andino II, SGT Jason L. Merrill, SPC Eric G. Palacios Rivera, SPC Jordan William Hess, PFC Paul Balint Jr., SGT Corey J. Aultz, SGT Milton A Gist Jr., PFC Louis G. Kim, SFC Raymond R. Buchan, SSG Michael L Ruoff Jr., SGT Edward L. Brooks, and SGT Kevin A. Gilbertson will forever be remembered by a simple, but humbling bronze collection of a kevlar, set of ID tags, rifle, and a pair of boots.



Memorial Dedication to our fallen Soldiers from OIF 2 & OIF 06-08



CPT Thomas McMurtrie and SFC Jason Bostic, Commander and 1SG of Company D, did an outstanding job as they bridged the gap between the soldiers on the front lines with their loved ones back home. LTC Louis B. Rago, II, from Chicago, Illinois took over the Battalion Colors from LTC Miciotto Johnson. He joined the Steel Tiger Family with his wife Sharon and three daughters; Marissa, Angelica, and Gabriella. CPT Daniel Lawrence from Wilmington, Delaware changed command with CPT Ian Lauer as Commander Company C.

All of the Companies conducted a Change of Responsibility. 1SG Robert Trujillo from Taos, New Mexico changed responsibility with 1SG Danny Rebolledo as the Headquarters and Headquarter Company First Sergeant. He joined the Steel Tiger Family with his wife Cyndi and daughters; Allison and Avery. 1SG Peter Baczek from Chicago, Illinois changed responsibility with 1SG Michael Moser as the Company A First Sergeant. He joined the team with his wife Karen and children; Tobias, Diana, Samantha-Jo and Kristen. SFC Carlos Aceves of El Paso, Texas changed responsibility with 1SG Jason Pingo as the Company B First Sergeant, and SFC Kevin Jackson changed responsibility with 1SG David Pitts as



Wreath laying by LTC Johnson & CSM Edwards



One of our Wounded Warriors, CPL Rooney from the battalion Mortar Platoon, paying his respects at the memorial dedication.

the Company C First Sergeant. SFC Aceves and SFC Jackson are familiar faces. SFC Aceves served as Platoon Sergeant of 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, Company C, Task Force 1-77 Armor in Ramadi, Iraq. SFC Jackson served as Platoon Sergeant of 3rd Platoon, Company B attached to Task Force 1-26 Infantry in Taji, Iraq.

They encounter a new challenge as the Battalion prepares to move to Grafenwoehr as a part of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1 ID. The Steel Tigers are done with block leave and Soldier/Family reintegration as they shift focus to prepare for the many adventures ahead.

# SUPPORT NEEDED FOR US ARMY COIN LEGISLATION

US Senators Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI) and James M. Inhofe (R-OK) recently introduced legislation in the Senate that would authorize the minting and sale of commemorative coins to honor the "United States Army and its traditions, history and heritage." These would be the first US coins ever issued to celebrate and honor the US Army as a whole.

The proposed legislation, which must be passed by both houses of Congress before becoming law, would create a series of three coins: \$5 gold coin with a limited mintage of 100,000, a silver dollar with a limit of 500,000, and a 50 cent copper-nickel clad coin limited to 750,000

"The sacrifice of American soldiers of all ranks since the earliest days of the Republic has been immense and is deserving of the unique recognition bestowed by commemorative coinage," said Inouye, a WWII Veteran, during his introduction of the bill.

These commemorative coins will do more than just honor the Army and Army veterans. The proposed legislation would reserve a share of sales revenues to help fund the National Museum of the United States Army to be built at

Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Scheduled to open in 2013, the Army Museum will tell the story of the US Army as an institution and be a tribute to the American soldier. Coin sales could generate up to \$12 million towards museum construction.

"The US Army Commemorative Coin is an appropriate way to honor the Army's rich heritage, and to help make the National Museum of the United States Army a reality," said AHF Government Affairs Director Brad Sellers, the Army's primary partner in building the museum.

"We plan to keep National Army Museum supporters abreast of the coin legislation's status in future issues of Call To Duty. Meanwhile, we'd appreciate it if readers would contact their US Senators and Congressmen to urge their support of the pending legislation," Sellers added.

Visit <http://www.armyhistory.org/armyhistorical.aspx?pgID=1063> to see a sample letter for your representatives in Washington. You can say this in a telephone call or put it in the form of a letter. Either method is effective.

Cut along the dotted line to mail form

## 2008 Membership/Change of Address Form

- New/Renewal Membership       Address/Information Change  
 Donation

### Select Membership Type

All Association members receive newsletters and a Reunion Registration discount. Membership period: January-December.

### Price

- Veteran \$20.00  
 Active Duty Army \$20.00  
 (includes free Steel Tiger hat)  
 Charter Members \$20.00

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Email

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Service Dates & Company (if you remember)

### Method of Payment

- Check       Visa  
 Please make your check payable  MasterCard  
 to "Steel Tigers 77th Armor  American Express  
 Association."

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Credit Card #      Exp. date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

**Please mail this completed form to:** Robert Basner, Steel Tigers 77th  
 Armor Association, 7966 Maple, P.O. Box 38, Birch Run, MI 48415



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