

The Tyrants' Foe

The Newsletter Of The Texas Rifles

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Commander's (Reagan Guards) Lieutenant's (Texas Rifles) Dispatch

Well, TMD and Liendo have passed us by, but they were great events for the Rifles. We continue to bring in quality recruits, our attendance is good and we are consistently putting the best-drilled and most authentic Civil War reenactors on the field. My kepi is off to all of you.

It is an honor for me, personally, to find myself in the position I am now in as I truly believe myself to be lucky to just be in this unit with you fellas. I will do everything I can to keep us on a constant upward trend. We are doing great, but there is much more we can achieve.

As I have said before, my vision of the Texas Rifles' future is one where we are consistently putting 60 to 70 men in the field that are of the same caliber that we have right now. That is a tall order, but over time, I think it will be very attainable if we continue to work as we are now. To be able to do that, we have to count on guys stepping up to help out. We are on the cusp of a new year, and we need to keep our current momentum. If one person is left in control of any one aspect of what keeps this unit going for too long, they get burned out and it is not fair to expect the same guys to do things like recruit, organize, manage the quartermaster inventory, command and research. So, if you are not active on any of these fronts and want to be, don't be shy. Talk to myself, John, Frank, or anyone volunteering currently and ask how you can help. Then, when someone is ready to give up the reigns on something, we have someone ready to take them up.

Some old business before I talk about what's next. At Liendo, we held our elections for Company G, Reagan Guards. An announcement, that I am excited to share, is that John Keahey has officially resigned as Sgt. Major of the Battalion (effective December 31st) so that he can serve with the Texas Rifles in the field again and he was elected as Co-Commander of Reagan Guards at Liendo. The official results of the elections are as follows:

Rob Williamson - Lieutenant, Reagan Guards (Captain, Texas Rifles)
John Keahey - 1st. Sergeant, Reagan Guards (Lieutenant, Texas Rifles)
Frank Marek - 1st Corporal, Reagan Guards (1st. Sgt., Texas Rifles)

Phil Sozansky was appointed Corporal, Reagan Guards (Head NCO, Texas Rifles to perform the duties of Second Sgt.) by the newly elected executive board.

As you can see, we have gained a spot in our Battalion rank structure, The Texas Rifles Commander used to hold the Battalion rank of Sgt. We only need 4 more recruits to reach

the point where our Texas Rifles positions are equal to those we are commissioned for by the Brigade.

Coming Up

Dickens on the Strand is this coming weekend in Galveston. This event is growing and I hope any of you who can, will be there to support it. The Major has instructed the battalion to show up with a campaign impression (no A tents) and to bring some rations to cook in the camp. The regular marches will occur, as well as some new activities. Regional Coordinators, call your fellas and let me know by Wednesday who will be there. I will be there Saturday all day. Anyone who wants to can show up Friday night and spend the night. Hay will be provided for bedding. If you come Saturday, try to be there by 10:00 a.m. as this is when things get started. I can't remember the exact cross street off the Strand where we are going to be, but If you are going and have not been before, talk to Chris Strzelecki, Frank Marek, or call me, and I will give you the exact intersection. I will also send out a message to the yahoo group when the major calls me back with the information.

The **Winedale Business Meeting and Muster** will be January 10th through the 12th. This is shaping up to be another great weekend not only for the fun, friendship, elections and competitions, but for the instruction programs as well. The official instructional schedule is not finalized yet, but will be circulated later this month. It is not too late to volunteer, so let me know if there is something you would like to teach or be taught.

With the holidays in front of us, everyone needs to plan ahead for Brigade and Texas Rifles dues, which will be collected at Winedale as well. Brigade dues will be \$40.00 and TR dues will be \$12.00.

IMPORTANT! I need everyone to e-mail me with what meals you would like to have at Winedale. Available meals and their prices are as follows:

Saturday Lunch	\$6.00
Saturday Dinner	\$8.00
Sunday Breakfast	\$6.00

Please e-mail me at rwilliamson@vignette.com and let me know your plans for meals. I need to know this by the end of the month.

So, we are wrapping up the 15th complete year for the Texas Rifles as a unit and it has been a great one. We showed up in force, we had an amazing experience at Sharpsburg and we welcomed several new friends into the unit. I hope to see you all at Dickens this weekend to finish strong and lets all look towards starting off the next 15 years of this great organization at Winedale in January.

Trust and Go Forward!

Rob Williamson

The Acting, Proto, Semi, Pre, Ante, Contractual Lieutenant's Inkwell

The Bayeux Tapestry

For those of you not familiar with the Medieval period or art, you have probably never heard of the Bayeux Tapestry. This tapestry was stitched around 1070 and remains a very long piece of linen embroidered with dozens of scenes connected with the Norman invasion of England in the year 1066. I suspect that the dates 1066 and 1215 are the two dates most people associate with the European Middle Ages. 1066 was the year of the Battle of Hastings in which the Normans under Duke William the Bastard (bastard in this case being a reflection of the marital state of William's parents, not a personality judgement) defeated and conquered the English people. From then on William became known as William the Conqueror; a far more suitable name for children's history books and therefore a good thing. 1215 was the year of the signing of Magna Charta, the beginning of constitutional government in Western Europe.

What makes the Bayeux tapestry important is that it is the best contemporaneous evidence we have for clothing, weapons and equipment of early medieval knights and soldiers. It is both a work of visual art and an outstanding historical documentation of that period. Any resource on the early middle ages will reference the Bayeux tapestry. It defines the period.

What other objects represent both visual art and an outstanding documentation of their era? For World War II that work of art for me is the "Victory at Sea" film series produced in the 1950's. Using combat movie footage and beautiful music, this work of art documents the struggle of Americans during WWII. Highly edited and with the original film soundtrack replaced by symphonic music, Victory at Sea still manages to define the emotions of the 1940's.

What is the equivalent of these works of art for the American Civil War? The quick answer would be the photographs taken of the war by Matthew Brady and others. These pictures were really not assembled into a work of art until Ken Burns came along just a few years ago with his PBS documentary series. For most Americans though, the best exposure they will have to the Civil War will be what we provide to them in a living history context. Something like 6% of Americans read for pleasure. A tiny fraction of TV viewers belong to public TV stations such as PBS. Like it or not, we are the Bayeux Tapestry, the visual art piece of the Civil War. What we do, and how well we do it, impacts the public perception of the war.

For all members of the Texas Rifles past, present and future; I look forward to continuing with you in being the best historical and visual resource available to the public about the Civil War.

Regards,

John Keahey

BECAUSE THE SERGEANT SAYS SO!

“Customs of Service” by August V. Kautz is an outstanding manual describing the duties of soldiers from Privates on up to Sergeant Major. While reading through this manual, I came across a few items that I think can help us in our impressions as soldiers.

Duties of the Soldier

(47.) One of the first things a soldier has to learn on entering the army, is a proper military deportment to his superiors in rank: this is nothing more than the military way of performing the courtesies required of a well bred man in civil life, and a punctual performance of them is as much to his credit as the observance of ordinary rules of common politeness.

A soldier’s life is very structured and a part of that structure is obedience and respect for rank. Not only should officers be saluted and shown proper courtesy, but the NCOs above you in your chain of command should be shown the respect due them. Why should we do this in our hobby? It is only re-enacting after all, right? Break the word re-enacting down. We are ACTING as soldiers in the War Between the States. For us to do that well, we should ACT like soldiers.

The Infantry Soldier

(147.) A well instructed and disciplined infantryman is always prepared for duty. His hours of leisure are devoted to preparation. His clothing is prepared and cleaned, his knapsack always packed, his arms and accoutrements in order, and his ammunition secure.

(148.) The supply of necessary articles in the field should be limited to the smallest possible amount; and industry will make up for many a deficient article. Messes unite, and each carries an article that can be used in common.

These two items go together and apply to the campaign style re-enactor as well as the soldier he represents. A soldier on campaign can not, and would not want to, carry a lot of excess weight. That is why our company discourages large tents and camp furniture. The Texas Rifles are campaigners and your gear should reflect this by being sparse enough and light enough to pack in a moment’s notice. You should set your goal to help the company be the first on the line when the battalion is called to form up. You should also try to keep our camp looking neat and orderly. Consider the fact that if we were in

garrison there would be constant inspections of our barracks. Carry this “habit” into the camp. After all, we should look like soldiers, not hobos on a camp out.

(152.) A good soldier makes his company and regiment his home, and never absents himself without proper permission, and then returns punctually at the expiration of his pass. The habit of always being absent is exceedingly pernicious; it cultivates tastes and habits that are detrimental to the soldier’s best interest, and he is almost sure to be absent when he is most wanted, and loses, perhaps, a favorable moment to do himself a credit.

The bottom line is that you need to be there when it is time to fall in. It is understandable to want to go to Sutler’s Row and visit with friends outside of the company, but you need to keep track of your time away from camp. The Texas Rifles are a campaign company, and this means that we stay fairly busy with drill and other duties, but I can not remember going to an event where time was not set aside as free time for the men. Use this time to have fun, but be prompt on your return to camp. It is unfair to make your friends wait when we are trying to form the company and it does not say much for your dedication to our company’s goals by constantly being late. Remember too, that in the times that we are representing, soldiers who are late or absent from duty were dealt with harshly. Obviously in re-enacting you will not be punished, but you should act as if you might be. Why?

BECAUSE THE SERGEANT SAYS SO!

FJMarek

1st Sgt. of Texas Rifles

Regional Reports

Houston Regional Report

TMD

Your usual reporter Wolfie has asked me to write up this article. In case you haven’t heard the Wolf has gotten a BIG promotion and missed both TMD and Liendo. So I am going to try to sum up the efforts of the Houston region in this article.

Two of our Houston members worked hard all year to help the George Ranch Historical Park put together the Civil War area at the event. Of course I am talking about John Keahy and Michael Covington. This year in order to insure a decent number of federals to fight against the 1st Texas, The Texas Rifles agreed to serve as federals. I must admit it was better than having half of us in the Confederate camp and half in the Yankee camp. This way we all got to serve and drill together. We were joined by a new recruit, Bruce Buskirk. It seems Chris Castagno has joined up with a WW II group of which Bruce is a

member. Chris said he would join if Bruce joined the Rifles. Nice job of extortion Noodles! Don Tucker brought out his best friend Pete Aydelotte. He was visiting from Oklahoma, and he fell in with us for Saturday and Sunday. He will fall in from time to time as time allows. Rodney Bode helped me push spectators into our camp from the roadside. As the folks walked through they were witness to all sorts of camp life: coffee brewing, musket cleaning, and card playing. Speaking of playing, Jerry McGee provided the cadence for us all weekend, and he did a nice job. Jerry has moved off to Missouri, so It may be awhile before we see him again. Know any drummers? Doug Davis and Paul Lemmer also fell in with the Rifles to do battle with those darn Confederates. Jim Bosworth served in two areas: civilian and military. You won't want to miss Winedale to see the photos of Sgt. Marek at Jim's barbershop. They are priceless! We also got to see a long lost face! Dennis Taylor fell in with us, and it was great to have him back in the line. And of course our favorite fifer, Eddie Voscamp!

Cartridge Rolling Party:

A couple of weekends before Liendo a few of us met in the Woodlands to roll ammo. Steve Wolford hosted the day, and fed us with the usual goodies. He sure knows how to throw a party, feed Strzelecki and he will come! We also had two new folks join us. Daniel Lofton (mentioned in recruiting report) and Michael Parthum of Rosenberg. Michael came out to meet us at TMD and is in the process of purchasing all of his gear! Wow! He is a teacher and a photography buff. We enjoyed looking at some of the Sharpsburg photos that Wolfie and I brought took at the event. Sgt. Marek also attended after a scenic route through Montgomery County. A word about powder and caps. We need both. So when you go to an event, buy some caps and throw them in the ammo box. This January at Winedale buy one or two pounds of powder. That way we will have enough ammunition to last all year.

Liendo Plantation:

Last weekend the Texas Rifles enjoyed some of the best reenacting weather in a long time. The nights were crisp and the days were warm. Although the company was squeezed between a road and Company D, we managed quite well. Attending from the Houston region were: John Keahey, Von Capps, Doug Davis, Don Tucker (and his beautiful wife), Sgt. Marek, Rodney Bode, Eddie Voscamp, Chris Castagno, Bruce Buskirk, Mike and Darryl Covington, Jack Bell, Chuck Stem, Robert McKnight, and Daniel Lofton.

Our company spent a good part of each day involved in drill. The Houston Boys did themselves proud. The Rifles performed well during both days' battles. When I watch the boys of our company and compare our behavior to the antics of the other companies, I am always proud of Company G. You fellas do a fantastic job. Whether you are leading us or following orders. I am proud to be one of the BAYOU BOYS!

Chris Strzelecki

The snoring one!

Central Texas Region Report

The past eleven months have been outstanding for the CenTex Region. From Taylor to New Braunfels, we have grown and flourished, much as the entire company has. Bo Ramirez(sp), a gallant new member, has joined the ranks, and we could not be happier. The Texas Rifles Renaissance 2002 has worked its magic throughout the region: impressions have improved, communication has gradually increased, and gatherings (cartridge rolls, etc.) have become more frequent. Indeed, for the first time in many years, the CenTex Region has been a significant presence at major Texas Rifles events all year long. In my first year of being regional coordinator, I must say that I am very pleased with our development.

That said, I am far from contented. There is still much to be done in the coming year. Our accomplishments have been substantial, but we are not finished by any means. We must continue to strive as a region to recruit from the vast population that composes our respective hometowns. "Gods and Generals," to be released in February 2003, has enormous potential as a membership drive. Theaters around the region will likely desire reenactors as an interactive addition to the movie, so let's oblige them and do a little recruiting in the process. On another subject, cartridge roll participation needs to increase dramatically. The last two have been slightly...errr...under-attended. Mr. Lucas and I can only roll so many rounds by ourselves, boys! In any event, we must replenish our ammunition boxes, lest we run out in a fight.

In closing, I have to say a word or two about authenticity (I can't resist, you know). Although we have come a great distance in the previous year—nearly everyone in the region owns an RDII jacket—there are still other aspects of our physical impressions we can cultivate. Braces, socks, shirts, trowsers, hats (Mr. Lucas), haversacks, canteens, shelter halves, etc. can all be improved or replaced. These are detail items that round out impressions and also happen to have numerous practical applications in the field. Let's sustain our commitment to continual authenticity improvement by trying to update our gear a little here and a little there. The difference will be noticed, I can assure you.

It has been a great pleasure serving as regional coordinator this year. I anticipate another fantastic year with Gettysburg, Port Gibson, and Chickamauga on the horizon. I expect to create a new CenTex phone web relatively soon, so be looking for it soon! In the meantime, I remain, sincerely,

2Sgt. P. M. Sozansky,

CenTex Regional Coordinator

Recruiting Report October, 2002

Well folks the work just keeps on going. I am pleased to announce another three recruits for the Texas Rifles. Again our website has proven helpful, since we were contacted through the internet by Daniel Lofton. Daniel is from Mt. Belvieu, Texas. You may remember that Ken Slocki came to us from that same town. If you came to Liendo, you had a chance to meet Daniel. He fell in with us and did a fine job. Welcome Daniel! Speaking of Liendo we found two recruits at the event! Michael Jackson from Jersey Village. Michael was brought to us by Bruce Buskirk. They have a common friend in a WW II group, and when they got to talking it seemed that Michael was interested in Civil War reenacting. He hopes to attend Dickens on the Strand so you may get to meet him if you attend that event. Also from Liendo comes Charlie Reynolds. He, like Daniel Lofton, is also from Mr. Belvieu. I haven't yet met Charlie, but John Keahey passed him onto us at the event. I hope he also can come to Dickens. This time of year is a great time to find a recruit. The next two events are pretty low key. No hard marching or rough camping. So it makes a good time to bring out someone who has expressed an interest. Winedale is January 11 –13. Try to bring at least one new person with you to this year's muster. Until next time remember... We want a 50 man company at Gettysburg!

Chris Strzelecki

Recruiting Coordinator

The Schuylkill Arsenal

Winding through the downtown area of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is a shallow stream within vertical concrete walls. This manmade conduit contains the Schuylkill River (pronounced school-kill). At the time of the American Revolution the Schuylkill defined the western limit of the city, but with continued growth, the Schuylkill was swallowed by urban sprawl. The river was the source of the name of the Schuylkill Arsenal.

The Schuylkill Arsenal began during the War of 1812. Contractor theft and inefficiency had left the US Army with a uniform shortage. Troops on frontier posts and at the various fronts were in rags because the Quartermaster Department failed to cope with the army expansion due to wartime needs.

Enter a man named Callendar Irvine. Mr. Irvine was put in charge of clothing the entire US Army. His solution to the preparation of large clothing stocks before the invention of the sewing machine was so good, that the same system was used by the US, and CS, Armies fifty years later. Irvine clothed the US Army of the period with a staff of three, yes count them yourself, three employees. These three employees cut-out the uniform parts in standard sizes, packaged everything needed to produce the complete garment, passed the packages out to seamstresses, and received back the assembled garments. Seamstresses were paid by the piece. Greedy contractors were removed from the process because Irvine dealt directly with the sewers. Building rent was paid in cloth scraps. Costs were reduced and production rose to 4,000 garments per week. And the U.S. Army

ceased to face Canadian winters wrapped only in their blankets instead of clothing. With the return of peace the tiny U.S. Army continued the same process, but eventually moved the clothing establishment into government owned buildings positioned along that small river; hence the Schuylkill Arsenal. Arsenal, in this case, meaning a government owned factory, not necessarily a weapons depot.

Even with the invention of the sewing machine prior to the Civil War, army clothing was entirely hand sewn. Experimental use of machine sewing on army clothing was so disappointing that it was banned. With the US Army expansion in the Civil War from 12,000 men to over one million, it looked like the death of the Schuylkill Arsenal hand sewn system. The demand was too great for huge amounts of clothing. Actually, the old system founded by Callendar Irvine surpassed itself. The number of Philadelphia area seamstresses was expanded to 40,000. Other “arsenals” for clothing were set-up in other major cities and some machine sewing was accepted. Production rose again to meet demand and by the middle of the war the Schuylkill Arsenal was competitively bidding for non-regulation uniform contracts.

The Confederate government copied the familiar Schuylkill Arsenal system. “Depots” were established in Southern population centers and again small staffs cutout standard size garment kits for distribution to local sewers. One of these depots was located in Richmond, Virginia. And that is why eastern Federal troops wore predominately hand sewn clothing from Philadelphia and fought against ANV troops wearing hand sewn clothing made in Richmond.

John M. Keahey, 11/25/02

Book Reviews

A Critical Review of Nicholas A. Davis's *The Campaign from Texas to Maryland, with the Battle of Fredericksburg*

Although far from comprehensive, the first attempt to chronicle the Texas Brigade's service with the Army of Northern Virginia was Nicholas A. Davis's *The Campaign from Texas to Maryland, with the Battle of Fredericksburg*. An ordained Presbyterian minister, Davis served as chaplain of the 4th Texas Regiment from August 1861—November 1863 (1). During this period of time, he preached on a regular basis, assisted the medical staff in ministering to the sick and the wounded, and generally endeavored to make life more bearable for the soldiers placed under his care. Not surprisingly, his efforts in this regard quickly endeared him to the officers and men of the entire brigade. (2)

Chaplain Davis's unique relationship with the soldiers from the Lone Star state extended well beyond attending to their spiritual and physical needs, however. Following the brigade's conspicuous involvement in the bloody summer campaigns of 1862, he became disturbed by the failure of the Richmond press to award “Texas the credit due her gallant

sons” for their achievements on the battlefield. (3) Convinced that his regiment’s combat reputation would suffer if such negligence went unanswered, Davis decided to secure for his fellow Texans the recognition he believed they deserved. In furtherance of this objective, the chaplain wrote and published *The Campaign from Texas to Maryland* in early 1863.

Despite his clear intention to produce “an account of the 4th alone,” Davis felt compelled to include “many incidents of the other Texas regiments” in order to round out his narrative. (4) The result of that decision was a remarkable contemporary description of the Texas Brigade’s rapid maturation into a combat command par excellence. Writing in a vivid and dramatic style, Davis recounted virtually every major aspect of the brigade’s early experiences in the Confederate army. Not confined to discussion of only their exploits in battle, the chaplain also wrote extensively of the Texans’ many “trials and hardships, privations and sufferings” while in camp and on campaign. (5) In exploring these subjects, he focused primarily upon the plight of the brigade’s wounded, who, in his judgment, “suffered much on account of. . . inadequate arrangements and also from the inefficiency of Surgeons, and the neglect of hospital officers and nurses. . . .” (6) Outraged by this tragic state of affairs, Davis used his book as an opportunity to criticize the medical facilities in and around Richmond—and those managing them.

Nearly fourteen decades after its initial publication in war-torn Richmond, Davis’s partial history of the Texas Brigade remains the most valuable primary account of the Lone Star state’s major contribution to the Army of Northern Virginia. Since *The Campaign from Texas to Maryland* was written by an eyewitness while the war still raged, it justifiably attained a high degree of credibility unmatched by the many memoirs published in the years immediately following the conflict’s end. The narrative’s important status as an exceptional first-hand account does not, however, extend to its standing as a brigade history. On the contrary, the celebratory nature and limited scope of Davis’s book severely diminish its usefulness in this capacity. By no means an example of modern scholarship, the chaplain’s writing is largely devoid of interpretive analysis. Influenced, no doubt, by his two-year membership in the brigade, Davis considered the Texas regiments to be the finest in the Confederate service. In his opinion, the army’s other units were “brave enough, but they fight too slow.” (7) This biased perception clearly led him to conclude that the Texans would be unable to sustain their combat superiority throughout the war unless “supported by men of their own metal, . . . men who, when the fight begins, will not stand and ‘listen [to] the battle shout from far,’ but will rush forward at the word, and carry the field by storm.” (8)

Although an obvious overstatement, Davis’s assessment of the brigade’s prospects for future battlefield success exemplifies the partiality inherent in much of his work—a condition further complicated by the premature publication of his narrative two full years before the army’s surrender at Appomattox Court House. Had Davis resisted the impulse to publish quickly—motivated as it was by a genuine desire to bolster his regiment’s reputation—he might have used the additional time to make substantive changes to his manuscript, thereby improving its overall effectiveness as a brigade history. On the other hand, Davis might have just as readily followed in the footsteps of thousands of ex-

Confederates in succumbing to the desperate sentimentality of the postwar South. Such an act would have almost certainly relegated The Campaign from Texas to Maryland to the level of Lost Cause myth-history, as opposed to the far more reputable cornerstone position the chaplain's work currently occupies in Texas Brigade historiography.

By 2Sgt. P. M. Sozansky

(1) *Harold B. Simpson, Hood's Texas Brigade: A Compendium, (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill Jr. College Press, 1977), 92.*

(2) *A. V. Winkler, The Confederate Capital and Hood's Texas Brigade, (Austin: Von Boeckmann, 1894), 36-37.*

(3) *Nicholas A. Davis, Chaplain Davis and Hood's Texas Brigade: Being an Expanded Edition of the Reverend A. Davis's The Campaign from Texas to Maryland, with the Battle of Fredericksburg (Richmond, 1863), ed. Donald E. Everett, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 179.*

(4) *Davis, Chaplain Davis, 179.*

(5) *Davis, Chaplain Davis, 181.*

(6) *Davis, Chaplain Davis, 102.*

(7) *Davis, Chaplain Davis, 152.*

(8) *Davis, Chaplain Davis, 151-152.*

Grant Speaks

I spend most of my CW reading time reading nonfiction. This time I ventured out into the world of historical fiction in the book titled, *Grant Speaks*, by *EV Ehrlich*. It is really a fun book to read, and it manages to tell you a lot of history while mixing in a bunch of interesting thoughts about Grant and his CW peers.

The premise of the book links up to Grant's name. As you are aware Ulysses Stimson Grant, was the name that Grant "acquired" at the point. His middle name isn't Stimson. So anyway in the story, Grant actually impersonates the real cadet who is appointed to West Point. In essence their lives are switched. Kind of like a Civil War parent trap gone afoul. Throughout the novel our "hero or villian" (depending on your politics) makes his way through his prewar, civil war, and post civil war career.

In my opinion this is definately worth a read. After all the cover bears Grant's likeness as the figure on a whiskey bottle label. That should interest a number of you right away!!

Chris Strzelecki

Newsletter Deadlines

The February 2003 newsletter deadline is Wednesday, January 29th.

Thanks,

Rob

SUTLER ROW

The following contacts produce or sell goods of the finest quality. They are the recommended source of supply for members of the Texas Rifles.

John Keahey:

2810 West Pebble Beach

Missouri City, TX 77459

281-261-0665

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