
Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center

eNews - Dec. 19, 2013

Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season

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Operating Room (OR) Update

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) goal is to provide our Veterans with the best quality health care.

Dorn VA Medical Center (VAMC) continues to make repairs to the facility's air handling system in its operating rooms. Engineering staff discovered several pieces of loose filter material lodged inside the hollow turning vanes of the air handler. These vanes are present throughout the ductwork at each change of direction and are not able to be cleaned or inspected due to the method of attachment to the ductwork.

Due to the design of the system, Dorn VAMC officials are exploring reengineering the system to include an addition of 27 filters at the terminal grills of the OR and the sterile core. This would be an added layer of filtration to protect the OR and sterile environment.

At this time, we do not have a confirmed re-opening date; however we are working hard to complete this major effort as quickly and safely as possible. Our sincerest apologies go out to our Veterans and their families. We are doing our utmost to take the proper corrective action to bring the Dorn VAMC OR suite back into operations. Patients requiring urgent surgical care are being referred to community partners or another VA Medical Center.

Continued updates will be made released as new information is made available.

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Are you a Veteran and need to apply for VA Health Benefits? Where can you apply? Visit the Eligibility Office or apply online at www.1010ez.med.va.gov or call 1-877-222-VETS. Thank you for your service.

Thirty-Two VA Medical Facilities Named “Top Performers”

WASHINGTON (Nov. 19, 2013) – Thirty-two Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities from across the nation were recently recognized as “top performers” by the independent panel that accredits and certifies health care organizations.

“We are proud of the medical facilities that have been recognized for demonstrating VA’s commitment to provide the high-quality care our Veterans have earned through their service,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “This achievement highlights the hard work of our VA medical staff to serve Veterans.”

The recognition came from The Joint Commission, a not-for-profit organization that ensures the quality of U.S. health care by its intensive evaluation of more than 20,000 health care organizations.

While all 151 VA medical facilities are accredited by The Joint Commission, the list recognizes facilities that are the top performers based on The Joint Commission’s annual review of evidence-based care that is closely linked to positive patient outcomes. This program recognizes Joint Commission-accredited hospitals for a significant achievement in accountability and performance measures.

The Joint Commission recognized 19 VA medical facilities as top performers in 2011/2012 and 20 VA medical facilities in 2010. Nine VA facilities have been rated as top performers for two consecutive years – a noteworthy distinction.

“VA health care has been a leader in performance measurement, electronic health records, research and clinical quality for more than a decade,” said VA Undersecretary for

Health Dr. Robert Petzel. "I am proud of the staff that works hard every day to care for America's Veterans."

The top VA performers cited by the commission are the following 32 medical facilities:

- Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center * Tuscaloosa, Ala.
- VA Loma Linda Healthcare System Loma Linda, Calif.
- VA San Diego Healthcare System San Diego, Calif.
- Grand Junction VA Medical Center * Grand Junction, Colo.
- Wilmington VA Medical Center * Wilmington, Del.
- Bay Pines VA Healthcare System Bay Pines, Fla.
- Carl Vinson VA Medical Center Dublin, Ga.
- Marion VA Medical Center Marion, Ill.
- VA Northern Indiana Health Care System Fort Wayne, Ind.
- Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital Columbia, Mo.
- Minneapolis VA Health Care System Minneapolis, Minn.
- John J. Pershing VA Medical Center Poplar Bluff, Mo.
- VA St. Louis Health Care System St Louis, Mo.
- VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System Reno, Nev.
- Bath VA Medical Center Bath, N.Y.
- VA Hudson Valley Health Care System * Montrose, N.Y.
- Fargo VA Healthcare System Fargo, N. D.
- Dayton VA Medical Center Dayton, Ohio
- Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center Muskogee, Okla.
- Portland VA Medical Center * Portland, Ore.
- James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center Altoona, Penn.
- **Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center * Columbia, S.C.**
- Mountain Home VA Medical Center Mountain Home, Tenn.
- South Texas Health Care System San Antonio, Texas
- White River Junction VA Medical Center * White River Junction, Vt.
- Hampton VA Medical Center Hampton, Va.
- Spokane VA Medical Center * Spokane, Wash.
- Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center Clarksburg, W.Va.
- Martinsburg VA Medical Center Martinsburg, W.Va.
- Huntington VA Medical Center * Huntington, W.Va.
- William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital Madison, Wis.
- Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center Milwaukee, Wis.

An asterisk denotes a top performer rating for a second or third year. In addition to being named in this report, this year's top performers are highlighted at www.jointcommission.org and The Joint Commission's Quality Check website at www.qualitycheck.org.

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Our Veterans - James Hardy Sims

By Kevin Lee Mclver, Public Affairs Officer



World War II Army Veteran James Hardy Sims outside his house near Whitmire, S.C. Sims has been a VA patient for about 16 years where he enjoys the health care he receives at the William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center. VA Photo/Kevin Lee Mclver

The American Veteran. For some, these mere words conjure up heroic images of Soldiers in dust-covered battle dress uniforms storming enemy positions against overwhelming odds in a faraway land most Americans will never see.

When I see American Veterans, I witness years of sacrifice in their eyes. I feel the tremor in their voices as they vividly recall a close call. I feel the pride swell inside as they talk about their military service.

Our Veterans come from the deserts of Utah, the backwoods of Missouri, the swamps of Louisiana, the mountains of Alaska, and the inner cities across America. These are “Our Veterans,” and it is our VA mission to provide them with the best health care possible. Certainly, it is our honor to serve them as they honorably served the United States of America.

Over the summer I was privileged to meet one of these American heroes — World War II Veteran James Hardy Sims and his wife Margaret of Whitmire, South Carolina. At first the 92-year-old appears a quiet sort, but once you sit down with him you soon discover that he abounds with a quiet humor.

Although time has somewhat faded some of his memories of the war, our conversation that summer afternoon provided a unique glimpse into his life.

Hailing from Newberry, Sims served in the Civilian Conservation Corps for two years before being inducted into the Army at Fort Jackson at the age of 21 in December 1942.

Sims was assigned to Camp Tyler, Tennessee, for about a year and then on to New York before shipping overseas to England in November 1943 to serve as a balloon crewman. These defensive balloons were tethered with cables over the battlefield to protect Soldiers and equipment from low strafing enemy aircraft.

Assigned to Battery C, 320th Balloon Battalion, his unit would soon take its place in the annals of history. In the book *Spearheading D-Day: American Special Units in Normandy*, author Jonathan Gawne cited the 320th as a unique combat unit for two reasons. "First, it was the first barrage balloon unit in France and second, it was the first black unit in the segregated American Army to come ashore on D-Day."

Sims' unit supported a British regiment and went in with them to Normandy; fortunately, Sims recalled, his unit did not lose a man in combat. However, it certainly encountered the hazards of operating in a combat theater.

"After we got in there, we setup the balloons on the east side and some on the north," said Sims. "We sat there with machine guns and watched those Germans (aircraft) come in firing. I don't know how many airplanes were shot down."

In addition to dangers from the air, Sims mentioned ground attack was an ever-present possibility, including enemy sniper fire.

"They told us to be careful and not to smoke at night," said Sims, "but one night we were talking with a Soldier from another unit. He pulled out a lighter to light a cigarette and he was shot dead by a sniper."

Sims served in Europe from November 1943 to November 1944, and then rotated back to the United States.

"We were back in the states about 5-6 months when we boarded a ship and went to Hawaii."

According to Sims, they were preparing to support combat operations in the Pacific Theater when the United States dropped the atomic bombs in August 1945. His unit returned to the United States three months later and he was honorably discharged in November 1945. Sadly, no personal photos are available of his Army service as they were lost and only his discharge papers remain.

After the war, Sims worked in farming for four years and then spent 17 years working in a cotton mill. In the 1990s, he became a VA patient, and he continues to receive his health care from the William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center. Sims, who sees Dorn's White Team in Primary Care, is happy with the health care provided by his team of professionals.

"They are really nice," said Sims. "They are wonderful. I know the medicine they give me I could not afford."

According to Sims, members of his unit were exposed to a type of gas, perhaps for the purpose of inflating barrage balloons.

"A lot of the guys over there were around that gas and that got into your system," he remarked. "A few years ago I had some symptoms. The doctor did some research, gave me some medicine, and it healed me up."

As a VA employee who is also a VA patient, it makes me proud to hear compliments from our patients about the quality health care they receive from VA.

Certainly, it was an honor to meet this quiet man of Whitmire — James Hardy Sims — who so honorably served our nation during WWII.

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Veterans Court Program



A view of the medallion presented to 10 Veterans who graduated last month from the Veterans Court Program during a ceremony at the Richland County Judicial Center. The program is an initiative of the Fifth Judicial Circuit Office of the Solicitor in Richland County and the Dorn VA Medical Center. VA Photo/Kevin Lee McIver

Ten Veterans graduated last month from Veterans Court Program during a ceremony at the Richland County Judicial Center.

“The Veterans Court Program is a combined initiative of the Fifth Judicial Circuit Office of the Solicitor in Richland County and the Dorn VA Medical Center,” said Dorn Veteran Justice Outreach Coordinator Shirley D. Furtick. “Participants are Veterans who became involved in the criminal justice system because of offenses related to physical and/or emotional traumas experienced before or during their tour of military service.”

According to Furtick, the Solicitor decides if the Veteran meets criminal criteria for acceptance into the program and the judge decides if the Veteran is accepted. To be eligible, a Veteran must be eligible for VA health benefits and treatment services; be charged with a non-violent misdemeanor or felony offense; plead guilty to the offense; and sign a contract to participate for a minimum of nine months in the program.

As stated on the Solicitor's website, successful completion of the Veterans Court program will result in the dismissal of charges and eligibility for expungement. "This is important because a conviction could be a barrier to future employment and assistance," added Furtick.

The Dorn VA Medical Center provides the participants access to VA health care services to help address the Veteran's physical, mental health, and recovery needs. These VA services include primary care, specialty care, mental health (inpatient and outpatient), substance abuse, acute medical, surgical, physical medicine and rehabilitation, neurology, oncology, dentistry, geriatrics, and extended care.

The Health Care for Homeless Veteran (HCHV) Veteran Justice Outreach Coordinator serves as a member of the court team. The coordinator screens Veterans at the local jail to determine VA eligibility; assesses clinical needs; refers the Veteran to VA and non-VA service providers; and provides case management and monitoring once the Veteran's needs have been identified. The HCHV case managers work with Veterans to assess housing needs and link them to resources for job skills assessment, training, and employment.

Performance, compliance and sobriety determine how long a Veteran remains in the program and all participants spend at least twelve months under the supervision of the Veterans Court per information on the Solicitor's website. Other information on the website outlined that the Veterans Court employs escalating sanctions in response to non-compliance with program requirements. Should the Veteran use drugs or alcohol, miss counseling or court appointments, become medically non-compliant, display a poor attitude, or in any other way not comply with the program requirements, the judge will order sanctions. These sanctions include, but are not limited to community service, additional counseling sessions, increased drug testing, jail time or dismissals from the program.

"At the graduation ceremony held Oct. 18, several of the Veterans spoke of the program as a second chance; an opportunity to heal family relationships, experience being sober and drug free, to be physically healthy, and have access to primary care," highlighted Furtick, who added, "one Veteran identified the program as an opportunity to regain their honor and dignity."

Created in November 2011 as the first of its kind in South Carolina, the Fifth Circuit's Veterans Court Program is designed to assist Veterans who have pending charges in Richland or Kershaw counties and Veterans must be a resident of one of these counties to enter the program.

As a special note, Furtick added that at the ceremony Veterans personally thanked the VA providers and service programs who worked with them during their recovery.

"Each participant earned a certificate of completion and a medallion," said Furtick, "and the medallion was presented by Solicitor Dan Johnson as a reminder of their challenges during the program and their commitment to fully make use of a second chance."

For more information, visit:
<http://www.scsolicitor5.org/GeneralSessionsCourt/VeteransCourtProgram.aspx>.

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Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, **chat online**, or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for **deaf and hard of hearing** individuals is available.



Louis “Lou” Blanding Fowler: An American Hero

By Kevin Lee McIver, Public Affairs Officer

It is an honor to meet an American hero who safeguarded a nation. Recently, I was fortunate to meet Louis Blanding Fowler. His story of youth, war, capture, and escape certainly could be told on the big screen.

Hailing from South Carolina, Fowler enlisted in the Army Air Corps at age 18 during World War II and was assigned as a gunner on a B-24 Liberator bomber. Ultimately, the B-24 and its crew arrived in Italy and joined the 378th Bomb Squadron, 454th Bomb Group, at a time when the survival of 25 bombing missions earned servicemembers a trip home.

On March 19, 1944, the fate of the 10-man crew changed forever as they took off on their 14th mission, to join 400 bombers bound to destroy enemy targets in Austria and defeat Nazi Germany’s Third Reich. For many of these Americans, it would be their final mission, as the enemy was waiting in the sky above.



Lou Fowler stands in front of the "South Carolina" pillar at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. Photograph courtesy of Lou Fowler

After the aircraft dropped their bombs, Fowler's B-24 was hit by enemy flak, and enemy fighters pounced on the crippled aircraft. At 18,000 feet, the crew was ordered to bail out. Because parachutes were provided but not worn (due to bulky clothing needed to protect crews from the extreme cold temperatures at high altitude), gearing up took time. To Fowler's shock, his parachute disappeared in an explosion, but his saving grace was that the parachute that had belonged to the belly gunner, who had been killed, still remained.

Although he was wounded, Fowler struggled to harness the parachute; then he was pitched out of the hole in the fuselage. Fowler and only two other crewmembers made it out of the dying aircraft. He soon lost consciousness.

When Fowler awakened, he was aided by locals and the next day joined a band of Yugoslav rebels who attempted to help him escape to the border. Sadly, the group was captured by German soldiers who immediately executed three of the others. Fowler was now a prisoner of war (POW).



Lou Fowler in uniform after he entered the Army Air Corps and before he deployed to combat operations in Europe. Photograph courtesy of Lou Fowler

Over the next several months, he was interrogated, transferred among prisoner-of-war camps, and forced to endure the misery of a cargo ship transporting POWs. He also survived Europe's version of the brutal Bataan Death March.

On the evening of April 25, 1945, Fowler and two other POWs escaped their captors and were picked up by the U.S. Army.

After the war, Fowler returned to South Carolina and married Glennie McLaurin from Dillon in 1948. After 64 years of marriage, they have three children, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Fowler went to school on the GI Bill after his discharge. He graduated from Presbyterian College in 1949, and went on to have a 40-year career with IBM as a sales representative. He now speaks to diverse groups about his experiences in hope that it educates people about the sacrifices of the greatest generation in World War II, inspires others to join or support the military, and motivates Veterans to seek out VA health care.

Fowler started receiving VA health care in 1945, and since 1999, he has been a patient at the William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia, S.C.



Former Dorn VAMC Interim Medical Center Director, Robert Hamilton, left, congratulates Lou Fowler after his discussion at the Lunch-n-Learn program for summer interns where the Veteran talked about his experience as a World War II airman and POW. VA Photo/Kevin Lee McIver

“I like VA health care for its high quality of total health treatment,” Fowler said.

He particularly likes “VA’s individual attention, professionalism in all departments and staff, its efficiency, the follow-through after appointments, and how the staff respect and show their concern for us.”

I learned three important things from this American patriot. First, keep the faith, despite even the most overwhelming odds. Second, have a purpose in life and work to fulfill that purpose. And third, love and serve our nation.

Louis Blanding Fowler—Veteran and American hero from South Carolina—has mastered these values; it was an honor to meet him.

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VA Police reminder – no Weapons allowed on VA property – it is Illegal!

- So you must keep weapons off federal property.
- This ensures your safety, the safety of our Veterans, and our staff. Thank you.

Prosthetic Service Card

- A Prosthetic Service Card is given to eligible veterans for the repair of Wheelchairs, Artificial Limbs, Blind Aids, or Braces.
- The PSC is a faster method to receive repairs.

- Instead of contacting the Prosthetic Service and requesting repair authorization, the vendor has the authority to repair the item up to an established dollar limit and then invoice the VA for payment.
 - Visit Prosthetics or telephone ext. 6328 for more information.
-

Affordable Care Act & what Veterans need to know

- There are more than 1.3 million Veterans & 950k dependents of Veterans without insurance. In South Carolina, there are an estimated 420,000 Veterans and 119,000 are enrolled in VA health care. Most uninsured Veterans are eligible for VA health care but they must apply.
 - If you are enrolled in VA health care, you do not need to take any additional steps to meet the health care law coverage standards.
 - If you are not enrolled in VA health care, you can apply at any time.”
 - Veterans receiving VA health care will see no change in their benefits or out-of-pocket costs when the law takes effect.
 - Veterans’ family members and Veterans not eligible for VA care may secure coverage through the Marketplace at www.HealthCare.gov.
 - More information is also available on the VA web at <http://www.va.gov/health/aca/index.asp>.
-

Wi-Fi on Columbia campus

- Free Wi-Fi available for Veterans and families
 - Use your personal device to connect to “Dorn VA” wireless network during your visit
 - No password needed
-

Fix the Phones

- We have a working group established and we are moving forward to improve our telephones.
 - We greatly appreciate your patience as we undertake this project to improve communications.
 - Look for more information and announcements in upcoming issues of eNews.
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Chaplain Service Contacts

- VA staff chaplains are available to help Veterans, families and staff.
 - Location: 100 across from the cafeteria
 - Telephone: 803-776-4000 x6332
-

Suicide Prevention Team Contacts

- Cynthia Davis, *Suicide Prevention Coordinator*, (803) 776-4000 ext. 7034
 - Amy LaClaire, *Lead Suicide Prevention Coordinator* (803) 776-4000 ext. 4360
-

Social Work Service Contacts

- Primary Care PACT Social Worker at extension:
 - Red Team x 6883
 - White Team x 6453
 - Blue Team x 4225

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Other News



CBOC Administrative Officer Rich Boggan discussing the Anderson CBOC project at a town hall meeting with Veterans. The facility will include a 44,000 sq. ft. split-level design. The tentative ground breaking is expected this winter with anticipated project completion in 2015. VA Photo/Kevin Lee McIver



New Freedom Health Center well underway toward completion. This will be a major boon in caring for returning service members. VA Photo/Kevin Lee McIver



The Dorn VAMC leadership and staff have held town hall meetings with Veterans and Veteran Service Organizations in October, November and December. VA Photo/Kevin Lee McIver



More than 50,000 flu vaccines have been given to Veterans. It's not too late, so get your flu shot at your primary care clinic. We have flu shots in stock, but please call ahead to ensure availability and to confirm times. VA graphic



Moonshine realty TV star Tim Smith visited Dorn VAMC Veterans in the Community Living Center last month. VA Photo/Ken Holt

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2013 Dementia Training Seminar at Dorn VAMC on Nov. 8. This was a great training opportunity about caring for individuals with Dementia. VA Photo/Ken Holt



2nd Annual Health Fair at the Avenue of Flags. Thanks to all our staff and our Veterans who supported the event. VA Photo/Ken Holt

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Greenville VA Outpatient Clinic official ribbon cutting was held on Nov. 1 with Maj. Gen. Mastin Robeson, USMC retired, Sen. Tim Scott, and Sen. Lindsay Graham speaking at the gala event. VA Photo/Kevin Lee Mclver

Upcoming Events

Dec. 25, 2013

Federal Holiday. All VA facilities closed with the exception of the Emergency Department.

Jan. 1, 2013

Federal Holiday. All VA facilities closed with the exception of the Emergency Department.

Educational Classes

Note: Although current at time of publication, please verify classes will still be held over the holidays before arriving on campus. Thank you.

[Women Veterans Health Group](#)

Dec 18, 2013 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (EST)

WJB Dorn VAMC, Women Veterans Clinic, Bldg. 100-A, Rm BD135

[Tobacco Treatment Group](#)

Dec 18, 2013 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (EST)
Building 103 2nd floor Classroom

[Evening Women's Group Meeting](#)

Jan 2, 2014 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM (EST)
Sumter CBOC – 407 North Salem Ave., Sumter, SC

[Survivors of Suicide Support group](#)

Jan 2, 2014 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM (EST)
WJB Dorn VA Medical Center, 6439 Garners Ferry Rd., Columbia, SC 29209. Building 106
(Psychiatry) Second Floor in Room A201

[Primary Care/PACT Caregiver Support Group](#)

Jan 3, 2014 9:00 AM - 10:00 PM (EST)
WJB Dorn VAMC, Women’s Clinic, Bldg. 100-A, Rm BD135

[Tobacco Treatment Group](#)

Jan 8, 2014 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (EST)
Building 103 2nd floor Classroom

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Get more news

Internet: www.columbiasc.va.gov



Facebook: www.facebook.com/VAColumbiaSC



Twitter: www.twitter.com/VAMCColumbiaSC

WJB Dorn Contact Information and Address

Main telephone line: (803) 776-4000
Address: 6439 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC 29209

Parking Suggestions, Valet Service and Shuttle Service

Courtesy of an Army Veteran and Volunteer

Suggest you use VALET PARKING - at the canopy entrance at Bldg. 100 – It's FREE and easy! This service operates from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Use OVERFLOW PARKING – when Lots 1 and 18 are full (usually from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. weekdays), please go to OVERFLOW PARKING in front of Bldg. 1 and 2. Please do not use the Valet Lot. In the rear of the hospital, use Lots 2 and 3, and the lot at Bldg. 106.

Park tight – In the gravel lots, please leave space for other vehicles.

Use the SHUTTLE SERVICE – You may call for a ride at 803-695-6780, or, when you leave a clinic, you may ask the receptionist to call a Shuttle for you.

If you are attending the monthly Health Benefits Seminar for new patients, held in Bldg. 5 (Auditorium), please park in the front Overflow Lot in front of Bldg. 1 and 2. This is an easy walk to Bldg. 5. You may use the front stairs at Bldg. 5, or the elevator entrance at the rear of the building. If the Overflow Lot is full, try the rear parking areas, and then call for a Shuttle.

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- Also, if you do not wish to receive future editions of the WJB Dorn VA Medical Center eNews newsletter, please REPLY to this email with UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject field.
 - If you received this newsletter from a third party and want to receive future editions, please send an email vhacmspublicaffairs@va.gov with SUBSCRIBE in the subject field or follow the steps to subscribe as outline in the previous bullets.
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