



COLORADO MILITARY HISTORIANS

NEWSLETTER

XVIII, No. 11

November 2017



***Sua Sponte* – US Army Rangers in the Modern Era**

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Part Four – Rangers Post-Vietnam to 2000

Rangers continued to go through changes after Vietnam. During the Post-Vietnam period the Rangers Battalions were finally re-established as a permanent part of the establishment in the Army, and ranger tactics and missions evolved. This article will cover the raising of the first two battalions, 1983 Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, the conversion to the 75th Ranger Regiment (1984), Operation Just Cause (1989) in Panama, Operation Desert Storm (1991), Operation Gothic Serpent (1993) in Somalia, and tan berets.

1st and 2nd Ranger Infantry Battalions (Airborne)



A few years after they were inactivated in 1971 the Army decided that Ranger units were needed in the Army of the United States. On January 28, 1974, the 1st Battalion (Ranger), 75th Infantry was activated at Ft. Benning, GA. The 2nd Battalion (Ranger), 75th Infantry was activated on October 1, 1974 at Ft. Lewis, WA. In an interesting turn of fate these units were incorporated into the 10th Special Forces in the CARS system. After WWII, and the disbandment of Ranger Units, the veterans of the Ranger Battalions of WWII lobbied for their heritage to be saved in the CARS system as the lineage of Special Forces. The Rangers lineage was matched to the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), ("Merrill's Marauders"). This was corrected in 1986 when the 1st and 2nd Battalions were returned to the lineage of the WWII Ranger Battalions (Baker, 2010). As you can see above the beret flash has a white border, this is because the berets for the Rangers were black, being authorized January 30, 1975. Stay tuned for part two of this story.

Each of the two battalions had a Headquarters Company and three Ranger Rifle Companies. Each rifle company consisted of a headquarters element, three rifle platoons and a weapons platoon (Bahmanyar, 2005).

In 1980 the Company C, 1st Battalion participated in Operation Eagle Claw to provide security for 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment, Delta ("Delta"). While the mission to secure the airfield did not occur, it illustrated a role that the rangers would perform for years to come. Providing security for their "big brothers" in Special Operations (Baker, 2010). The failed rescue attempt of the Teheran hostages lead the military to realize the United States needed to have a unified Command for special operations. The Joint Special Operations Command was constituted and activated at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, designed to study the special

operations requirements of all military services, and to ensure standardization. Brigadier General Richard A. Scholtes, former Assistant Division Commander (Support), 82nd Airborne Division, was assigned as the first Commander, and promoted to Major General (Baker, 2010). Personal note, BGN Scholtes had been the Chief of Staff of the 4th Infantry Divisions (Mechanized). One of my last duties as the Assistant G2 for Training was to brief then COL Scholtes on the re-organization of the 4th OPFOR Company.

1983 Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada

The causes of the invasion of Grenada are beyond the scope of this article, however there is a book called *Urgent Fury. The Battle for Grenada*, by Mark Adkins (1989), which goes into great detail on the political factors leading up to the invasion. Sufficed to say the issue was communist aggression from Cuba. Cuban “construction workers” were building an airport in Grenada, which the Organization of American States found to be a threat to the security and stability of the region. President Reagan ordered the Special Operations Command to invade the island and neutralize the Cuban Army troops in Grenada (Adkins, 1989).

The operation was intended to be, initially a Special Operations task, with the initial airborne drops, and seaborne insertions to take place early on the morning (about 0100 hrs.). After the bombing of the Marine Barracks in Lebanon, the Marines wanted a part of the operation, so the assault was moved to later in the morning (0530 hrs.). A primary Ranger mission for the battalions was, and remains, airport seizure. Ranger battalions spend part of their training time practicing for these operations (Pushies, 2016). Therefore the initial task assigned to the Rangers was the seizure of the new airport at Port Salines. On October 25, 1983 elements of the 1st and 2nd Battalions jumped onto the airfield. The jumps took place at an altitude of 600’. They encountered heavy anti-aircraft fire, and had they jumped at higher training altitudes of 1200’ the jump would have certainly ended in a disaster. Once the airport was secured for the 82nd Airborne Division, the rangers moved to their secondary mission of rescuing the US medical students at the True Blue campus of St. George’s Medical College. By 0830 hrs. all 130 of the medical students were under the protection of the 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion (Ranger). Once at the campus, the rangers learned that there were more US students at the Grand Anse campus, and elements of the 2nd Battalion secured them (Adkins, 1989; Baker, 2010; Russell & Mendez, 1985).

On October 26th the 2nd Battalion, reinforced by Company C, 1st Battalion, assaulted the Cubans at the Cavigny Barracks. During this operation three Rangers were killed when three Blackhawk helicopters crashed. On October 27th pockets of resistance provided by Cuban personnel at their barracks at Edgemont were eliminated. Overall, the mission was a success, the medical students were returned to the United States and the prestige of Cuba was severely damaged in the region. Some of the lessons learned during this operation dealt with the poor coordination between the various service elements. The troops also had poor maps of the area. Most of them made use of Michelin guides and tourist maps (Adkins, 1989; Baker, 2010; Russell & Mendez, 1985).

Conversion to the 75th Ranger Regiment



Following the operations in Grenada the Ranger Battalions were expanded. On July 1, 1984 the Ranger Regiment as organized in the Army of the United States. The new designation was 75th Infantry (Ranger) Regiment, and the regimental headquarters was established at Fort Benning, GA. In an interesting issue in heraldry, according to Baker (2010):

Although assigned in May as the first commander of the newly organized 75th Infantry (Ranger) Regiment, Colonel Wayne A. Downing was actually the third in line as *Colonel of the Regiment*. This title was awarded to recognize Colonel William O. Darby for the period from 9 September 1943 through 15 August 1944 in the European Theater of Operations as the First Colonel of the Regiment. The title as Second Colonel of the Regiment was provided to recognize Colonel Frank D. Merrill from 30 October 1943 through 10 August 1944, commanding Ranger operations in the Pacific Theater. In July Colonel Downing became the Third Colonel of the Regiment (p. 645).

The 3rd Ranger battalion was activated on October 3, 1984 and was assigned to Fort Benning, GA where it remains today. (Baker, 2010). The unit shoulder sleeve insignia, airborne ovals, and beret flashes are represented above. At this time, the beret flashes were worn on a black beret.

Operation Just Cause (1989) Panama

In 1989, the 75th Ranger Regiment was re-assigned from the 1st Special Operations Command (Airborne), to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (Airborne) (Baker, 2010).

During Just Cause the Regiment was part of Task Force Red¹, the largest part of a Joint Special Operation Task Force (“JSOTF”). The task force had many missions. The Regiment’s initial mission, for the 2nd Battalion and Companies A and B of the 3rd Battalion, was to seize the airfield at Rio Hato. The Rangers dropped onto the airfield at 0100 hrs. December 20, 1989. Simultaneously, the 1st Battalion and Company C of the 3rd Battalion conducted a drop onto the Omar Torrijos International Airport. Morale was a bit low because of the change from the OD107s to the BDUs that had already been issued to the Big Army. We will see this kind of thinking was to reappear again, see Tan Berets section below. There was a great deal of confusion on the ground despite practice for airfield seizure. Some of this was caused by loading Regimental personnel into the aircraft at the last minute, presumably so that they could get a star on their jump wings. The rangers cleared their initial objectives. The Rangers on Rio Halto seized their second objective, a concrete building, were then relieved by the 7th Infantry Division. The Rangers had a total of four missions on Panama. In addition to the two airport seizures, they raided the Penonome Prison as a security force for Delta, and Isla de Coiba another prison (Bahmanyar, 2005; Bahmanyar, 2003; Neville, 2016).

Operation Desert Storm (1991)

As some units were still returning from Operation Just Cause, Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990. In response President Bush initiated Operation Desert Shield on August 7, 1990. The UN Security Council voted to authorize Coalition Forces to use all force necessary to eject the Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The ground war began on February 24, 1991 at 0400 hrs. One hundred hours later Saddam Hussein surrendered (Baker, 2010).

The utilization of the Rangers, and other special operations troops was limited. Apparently General H. Norman Schwarzkopf did not like them. I have found some references to ranger operating with SEALs and the British SAS hunting Scuds in the desert. According to Bahmanyar (2005) rangers conducted raids and provided quick reaction forces for Coalition Forces. At some point the Regimental Headquarters and the 1st Battalion conducted an airborne drop into the Ali Salem airfield followed by a road march. There were no casualties

Operation Gothic Serpent (1993 Somalia)

As a result of a famine in Somalia UN forces were sent to Somalia to help with the relief efforts. US Marines were part of this force. In early 1993, the Marines were withdrawn. After 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed when forces of Mohammed Farah Aideed ambushed them on June 5, 1993, the mission changed from humanitarian to capturing Aideed (Baker, 2010).

Task Force Ranger was activated on August 22, 1993, made up of Company B, 3rd Ranger Battalion. They were deployed to Mogadishu (“The Mog”) on August 26, 1993. The Rangers supported the operations of 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment, Delta, and assisted by elements of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR). Delta and the Rangers conducted operations against the forces of Aideed. On October 3, 1993, a raid was conducted to capture aides of Aideed in a hotel in downtown Mogadishu close to the Bakara

¹ This is a designation that will remain into the /Global War on Terror (“GWOT”). Task Force Red designates Rangers; Task Force Green is used for Delta, and SEALs Team 6 are Task Force Blue (Neville, 2016).

Market, one of the largest arms markets in the world (aka “Indian Country”). This is the operation made famous by the book and movie *Black Hawk Down*. This was a typical, for the times, raid where the Rangers provided security as Delta conducted the snatch. The Rangers fast roped onto the four corners of the building and set up security positions. The aides were captured, and removed by trucks. Unfortunately, the mission was conducted in almost the exact same plan as other missions. The Somalis were prepared for the raiding forces. The locals set up roadblocks that hindered the evacuation column of trucks and HUMVs. During the raid three helicopters were shot down, with two landing in the middle of the city. From then the task force lost the initiative, and the operation turned into a rescue/recovery operation. The Rangers and Delta fought off overwhelming local forces. The Rangers and Delta fought throughout the night with the support of the 160th SOAR (Bahmanyar, 2003; Bahmanyar, 2005; Baker, 2010; Neville, 2016).

Baker (2010) noted:

The encircled Rangers held their ground as special operations aviators attempted to rescue them. Company C, 3rd Ranger Battalion, moved to assist their beleaguered comrades, but was ambushed by waiting Somali forces in the contested area. They were forced to return to the airfield, where they linked up with Company A. Two Malaysian mechanized companies and one Pakistani tank platoon joined the two Ranger companies, consolidating as an ad-hoc task force. Company A took the lead aboard Malaysian personnel carriers followed by Company C. Company B remained in reserve at the airfield. (p. 804)

A number of the Rangers were not able to get onto the rescue vehicles, and had to run out of the combat area. Each October the Ranger Regiment conducts a run to commemorate this part of the action. This has become known as the “Mogadishu Mile.”

In a personal note, in what can be described as cowardice, President “Billy Bob” Clinton pulled the rangers out of Somalia, as though they had been defeated. The raiding forces sustained 18 KIA and 57 WIA. Compared to the estimated 2500-3000 KIA for the terrorists, this is one of the most one-sided victories for Rangers. According to Bahmanyar (2003) in the aftermath of this action the Clinton administration refused to intervene in Rwanda resulting in the slaughter of at least 800,000 people.

Tan Berets



As noted earlier, the Ranger Battalions were authorized to wear the black beret in 1975. This was a symbol of their elite status. The beret goes back in ranger history to WWII when the rangers who had completed the British Commando could wear a green beret. Rangers in Korea and Vietnam wore black berets, but this was unauthorized. In the “Army’s on-going Transformation” the black beret was authorized the black beret was authorized for wear by the army on June 14, 2001. After establishing a uniform committee, the Regimental Commander elected to change the Rangers over to the tan beret (Bahmanyar, 2005). As you can see above, the border of the beret flash was changed from white to black.

Rangers Lead the Way!

Next Month: The Global War on Terror – 2001 – 2007

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Greg Skelly's "Roll Call" Campaign Reports

The Reports below are from Brian Howell

Report #1

Flying Blind Rush

Dear Johnny,

I know it's been a while since I last wrote, but I've been terrible busy since we last talked. I'm missing you loads, little bro. I remember how badly you wanted to fake your age and sign up with me, but I'm glad you didn't. Bloody stuff this war. Thought I'd tell you about what happened to us the other day as we've been getting off the French beaches (sorry, no pics of the French girls yet. Working on it).

Last week our unit, part of the 5th Rangers, was assigned to make an advance through the hedgerows in Normandy with some engineers, tank destroyers and regular infantry all 'in support,' as the boys fancy saying. Now these hedgerows are nothing like Mrs. Poole's bushes down the street. They're thicker'n a French girl's armpits. Not that I'd know personally. Yet. Anyhow, the only way to get through these things is to blow 'em up, or, to use these massive shears on the front of a tank. Luckily, the shavetails up in higher command decided in their infinite grace to give us one of these. But not a Sherman, mind you, just a little think called a Stuart. The Brits, they call 'em 'honeys', partly cause their really sweet- very fast and reliable- and partly cause they're just a sorry desperately lonely lot that can't get a girl for nothing.

Anyways, we set off to advance on the Germans, but before we can get through even one of these horrid green walls, we had to stop to scout- wouldn't get very far if our Stuart got 'brewed up' after slicin' though just the first one, would we now, lil bro? Course, you can't see nuthin through these damn things. (Don't tell Ma I said that.) So, we get a brilliant idea- we call in the US Army Air Force! But those flyboys got something up their arses (no for Ma on that too) about us footsloggers. What did we get? A pissed drunk captain who'd just got demoted and lost his girl, flying a shoebox with wings they call a 'Cub.' Lotta good that did. Only thing he ever saw was one German Panzer- somebody said it was one of those 'Tiger' tanks, apparently, they're everywhere- but only cause he was so drunk he nearly ran into the bloody thing!

Anyway, to our ever-lovin shame, we 'scouts' couldn't see jack (... yeah, Ma can't hear that either), but the demo guys next to us, THEY spot a panzerschrek- kinda a German version of our trusty bazookas. So they fire on 'im and get his loader, but

can't take 'im out. That's when we unleashed- and boy was it a sight! Better'n duck season down on Uncle Henry's pond. We lit that, (yeah ok Ma), "guy," up. Now, about that same time, we hear a great pile o' shootin over to our left. Apparently the GI's had handed it to the Gerry's on their first volley. Then, we heard the 76mm guns of the Wolverine's opening up. I think they were shooting at some anti-tank gun. Probably one of those massive 88's the Krauts use for killing bombers and such. I heard there was a sniper over there too, trying to pick off the .50cal gunners, but he musta been near-sighted, cause those boys are all ok.

Speaking of which, we were all excited having taken out the schrek, and watching our little tank bust through the first big green mess, that it took us a moment to notice that Frank wasn't cheering with us. When I looked over, he had a big bloody hole right through his temples. Damn Krauts! (Sorry, Ma) Why'd they have to give the eyeglasses to THAT sausage-eater?! Anyway, we let loose on him too. I picked up his scoped rifle- I think I'm gonna apply for sniper training soon. Like to give some back, if you know what I mean.

Now, here comes the interestin' part, lil bro. You remember that tank that the drunk pilot almost crashed into? Well, he had us pinned down real good- mostly cause he'd a made a right mess of our precious Hedgerow Honey, and then we'd a got nowheres. It turns out that our Sarge is in this tank too, and he says the driver is some I-tal-yun guy named Luciano. I know, sounds like an opera singer, like the one they got down in Nashville, don't it? Apparently this guy has a death wish- something about the Krauts killing his Uncle Louie back in Sicily for informing the Allies of their positions in return for some Tommy Guns. Guess it's a family thing. Anyways, before any of us knows what's happening, this guy guns it like a bull seeing red, straight past the German 'Tiger.' It lets off a thunderous shot, lil bro, but totally misses our little flying tank. In fact, our tank gets behind the German one, ready to 'give 'em one up 'em, as the Brits say, but out pops an entire squad of Jerries! Immediately, Luciano jams it in reverse- you could hear the gears grinding just like that time you stole Fred Smith's tractor and almost got it stuck in the ditch on the way to Orchard Hollow. Member that? Good thing no one ever found out. You owe me one, lil bro. Oh, then, to everybody's shock, our Lieutenant, he orders us to go around the Hedgerows to back up this mad tanker!

Anyway, did I ever tell you those Kraut boys, they are crazy? They start charging our tank throwing explosives, but they miss quite badly. But- I did mention they were nuts, didn't I?- they try it again, but apparently one or two of their bombs were duds. Can't believe Luciano got out of that.

But then- get this- the 'Tiger', it backs up, turns, and fires straight at them. We all thought our armor boys were goners for sure. Strangest thing, though, it blew a hole straight through that turret! And, as we found out later, it happened just when Luciano had asked Sarge, who was commanding the tank, for a smoke. He bends down to hand him one and BAM! Sarge owes im smokes for life- literally!

Then, before they can recover, the panzer sends another round their way! But this time, Luciano, 'Blind Luck' as they call him now, had put that baby in motion and the shell bounced near the treads. Blind Luck rams that throttle full steam ahead and runs straight over those Krauts, who had been hittin' the dirt due to our engineer buddies, who'd just arrived in their 'track along with a scout car from the Tank Destroyer section. Luckiest damn guy I ever saw. (sorry Ma) I wanna be wherever that guy is.

Anyway, I hear he's getting a promotion for what he did, sorta like a story I heard about a guy ridin his horse in front of the whole Reb Army in the Civil War, without getting shot. Apparently, his buddies snuck up while he was distracting the Rebs and won the day. Or was that just something from those moving pictures? Don't remember. Anyway, his 'heroics' (nuts) got us further than anything else that day, and the TD's and infantry eventually came our way, as they couldn't dig out that 88. In the end, we pushed those Jerries back.

Say hi to Ma for me, and study hard. I'll bring you back one of those Jerries' guns if I can.

Keep praying for me, lil bro. I'll be back before you know it.

Pvt. O. Danny Boye

Report #2

Clearing the Kraut Hedge

Lieutenant's Log, June 23rd, 1944.

Yesterday, at 20:45, command came down from HQ that we had to finish breaking through the Hedgerows- apparently the stall we had with stiff German resistance had created a bottle neck for getting troops and supplies off the beaches, and made us vulnerable to a counterattack.

So, being the most experienced group of Rangers, we of course, 'led the way.' We were supported by an infantry squad to our left and an engineering squad with a half-track to our

left. For this mission, due to its importance for the entire front, we were given direct air support- a flight of P-38 Lightning fighter-bombers. Crazy things those, but damn beautiful when they turn up in the right place.

So, about 0400, we got up and prepared to clear the rest of the hedgerows. We hadn't had much food stationed up where we were, so we made due with C-rations and some berries the Corporal had found in the hedges. Still hoping we can

At 0500 we were ready to head out. We knew there were Germans still lurking in those stupid green walls, so we had to move carefully. We brought along our Stuart, which the men are growing quite fond of. There were a few scuffles about which pinup our tank would be named after- Some wanted Jane, others Greta- until Rusty, a behemoth from 'bama insisted on Viv. (Viviae Blaine, that is). It could have turned bloody, but when a local of the French resistance pointed out that Viv was related to life, as in viva la France, all agreed it was settled. Besides, nobody much wanted to be on the business end of Rusty's fists.

As we set out, we decided it would be best if we alternated overwatch with the engineers, while the infantry covered our left flank. This turned out to be the best move of the day, as about 0630, who did our spotter discover, but an infantry squad and a Pak 40 hiding in the hedges! As soon as we spotted them, we alerted the engineers, who promptly unleashed a barrage of fire that well and truly pinned them. The Rangers laid down fire on the gun, and got them pinned, but that shield gave them too good a cover to move them right away.

So, at 0640, we called in the 60mm. This ranged in rather quickly, and before we knew it, those sausage-eaters were up and running. I don't know how they got that Opel in there to tow it so quickly- it seemed to materialise out of thin air. However, rather than let them get away, we brought 'Viv' around to hit them with some enfilade fire. This really put the fire under them, but somewhat backfired as they sped away even faster.

Meanwhile, the infantry on our left had been pouring fire into the German squad- which turned out to be two squads. The GI's lieutenant, not one to mess around, after all -as he'll oft remind you- 'es been to cadet school.' Well, schoolboy ordered one of his squads to put down covering fire whilst he had his new recruits- his 'boots'- charge the enemy position. Sounded like typical tactical doctrine, but my boys are glad I haven't been to that school yet.

That's because, well, that's when things began to go all FUBAR. At about 0650, our FO- the boys have nicknamed him 'spot' like some sort of hunting dog, - noticed some movement in a copse of trees to our front and just to the right. Sure enough, soon as those doughboys were huffin it across the open field to charge the Krauts, they got caught in the crossfire of a German panzer- I think it must have been a Tiger- lots of those round these here parts.

To make it worse, we couldn't chase the Pak with Viv, or she'd meet an early demise for sure. But we had to get that Tiger or those greenies would be pushin daisies right quick. Our main gunner for Viv must've forgot his glasses, cause he missed those coward Kraut gunners and their Opel with four or five shots. Finally, my sergeant got sick of it and climbed up behind Viv's turret and manned the .50 He promptly made that Opel a burning heap. Not sure what happened to the crew, but they weren't manning that gun anytime soon- which also paved the way for our armor to make a move.

At this point, the engineers loaded their 'track and made one of the boldest moves I've seen in years to save those GI's. They raced out across the field right in the face of that Tiger, which didn't fail to let off a couple shots. Fortunately, only one grazed the track on its... tracks because of the buildup under those 'rows. Bet they're startin' to appreciate that bocage right about now. Anyway, then the engineers piled out of their track on the near side of the copse, where that Tiger couldn't eye them. Readying their satchels, they prepared to assault.

At the same time, the infantry on our left poured more fire into the Kraut squad, which was near breaking point. Those poggies were still caught out in no man's land, and taking a lot of fire from that Panzer, so we knew we had to act quickly.

I had moved my squad up, but there was something in those berries that didn't agree with the boys, so they chose to fire instead of assaulting the position. At least, that's their excuse for their soiled pants. The Colonel told me later that they should've assaulted- could've taken some prisoners and gained some intel- but those poor b%st&rds were just Osttrueppen- mostly Polish from what I could gather. Nazis just stuck 'em there to take our bullets while they ran away.

So, finally, as the situation got more desperate, I had 'Viv' fire on the Krauts, which broke their resolve, and then had 'Spot' bring the mortar in on what turned out to be their second line- a fresh squad!. Ranged in first time! Give that crew some extra rations! But more impressive than that, 'Spot' ranged the artillery, step by step, onto that Tiger- and the 105's took it out just before the engineers were going to assault. You can have a thousand of your raw croots- I'll take a boy with an eye like that everytime. Bet those gomers were relieved.

The Krauts saw that their line was untenable and quickly retreated. I gave the boys good words all around, and began to hunt down some chocolate, beer and cigarettes for them. I heard later that the dogfaces lost 3 good boys. Damn Krauts. But, my spotter and tank saved the rest of their lucky hides. I'll put in for a commendation for both. And maybe some further training. And the berries are now verboten for the rest of the campaign!

Lieutenant Howell

WWI Air Combat Report from Jeff Lambert

As proof that half the battle is showing up, there was a small dogfight at Friday Night Fights last week where all four of the participants added to their experience scores. Hauptmann Skelly was accompanied by Lt. Irons on a patrol over the British sector of No Man's Land. Each of them were flying brand-new products of the German aircraft industry-- Skelly was testing the new triplane from Fokker, while Irons put the improved Albatros D.Va through its paces. Both proved to be formidable aircraft, as Skelly used the amazing maneuverability of his triplane to twice shoot down the Camels which attacked him, flown by Lt. Lambert.

Meanwhile, Irons held his own against Lt. Forte's SE5a and was able to escape the battle with minor wounds and a badly damaged, but not destroyed, Albatros. Lt. Forte reported the death of Lambert at the hands of Skelly. His report also noted that Skelly mercilessly hunted down Lambert as he was trying to clear his guns, which had obviously jammed. There is no longer any doubt that chivalry, at least on the German side, is dead. Forte did succeed in putting enough bullets into Skelly's engine that the German ace was observed gliding to a landing in No Man's Land, near the German trenches. All await news of the German's fate. Irons returned to his airfield and, although bleeding badly, landed safely. The Gruppe commander has made inquiries of the units in the frontlines to determine the whereabouts of his best ace.

The pilot rankings remain unchanged, although Skelly and Irons have each earned enough points to choose another Pilot Skill. Everyone else remains as they were in September, while the new scores for the pilots involved in the October dogfight are:

SKELLY-- 17 victories, 1285 experience points (752 adjusted, plus 116 observer points)

FORTE-- 7-1/2 victories, 658 experience points (409 adjusted)

LAMBERT-- 3 victories, 572 experience points (191 adjusted)

IRONS-- 4 victories, 549 experience points (258 adjusted)

The next flight in our campaign will be November 17.

BALANCE OF POWER AT COMMENCEMENT OF WWI

(Or, why were the Central Powers able to last for over four years – and almost win?)

POPULATION: Excluding colonies, the combined Triple Entente of Great Britain, France, and Russia in 1914 population was about 253 million vs. 115 million for Germany and Austria-Hungary, a more than 2:1 advantage for the Allies. The extensive colonial possessions of Britain and France further lopsided the count, although the colonists' willingness to fight for the mother country varied considerably. The imbalance was even worse considering the lone power without colonies, Austria-Hungary, was beset with ethnic minority populations that were generally clamoring to be free of the Empire, and served the Hapsburgs begrudgingly. Britain faced like problems with India and Ireland, but at least they were neither an integral part of the homeland, nor contributing critical military support.

ACTIVE & RESERVE FORCES: On paper, this looked like no contest: The Entente boasted 12.2 million men, active and trained reserves. Italy would later contribute close to another million. The Central Powers, including the Ottomans, responded with 7.7 million. Several factors argued against relying heavily on these numbers. First, over half the Central Powers strength was invested in the German Army, far and away the best trained, led, and equipped in the world. Second, the largest Allied component – Russia – was deficient in virtually all aspects pertinent to an army: inadequate equipment, haphazard logistics, poor training, with execrable leadership at every level. In past wars, Russia's sheer numbers mostly compensated for these shortcomings, but modern technology quickly negated that. The French fixation on reclaiming their lost provinces from Germany – rather than winning the war (and getting the provinces returned in a peace treaty) so distorted their strategy and training to the point that it played right into the hands of their German arch-enemy (a shockingly high proportion of French casualties occurred in the first 3 months). The Italians were equally bad, and ended up proving a drag on the Allied war effort. Britain alone had a well trained, albeit small professional army, that numbers-wise simply couldn't stand up to the German juggernaut. However, with top leadership no better than that of the grossly incompetent French, the expanded British Army was likewise fated to suffer horrendous losses for generally minimal results.

INNOVATION: The Allies were almost always sadly behind the power curve when it came to military innovation. Germany reigned supreme in aircraft development*, the submarine, artillery, poison gas, and trench warfare tactics. The one time the Allies invented a possible war-winning weapon - the tank – they failed to adequately develop it, then prematurely committed it with elegant ineptness - which so blunted its impact that the Germans were content to devote minimal effort in counteracting it. Later developments improved the weapon, but it never achieved its true potential until the next World War.

INDUSTRY: Comparison of pre-war GDP also seemed to overwhelmingly favor the Allies. The combined GDP of United Kingdom, France, Russia, and Italy measured in 1990 dollars was about \$970 billion. The combined Central Powers figure, including the moribund Ottoman Empire, was a mere \$353 billion. Again the figures are very misleading. Russia's economy, though large, was substantially disjointed. Lack of transportation infrastructure hampered trade and commerce, and incredible bureaucratic corruption hamstrung the transition to a war economy. Britain, heavily dependent on imports, proved highly vulnerable to commerce warfare (e.g., U-boats). On the other hand, Germany was the recognized economic powerhouse of Europe, and superb infrastructure

coupled with intelligent economic direction fueled a robust economy easily converted to war effort. Cut off from imports by the British blockade, the Germans developed substitutes for critical raw materials, though this diluted their economic power to some extent.

- Here again, Allied arrogance and incompetence directly helped the Germans: Early in the war, Dutch aircraft genius Anthony Fokker first offered his services to the Allies. They promptly rebuffed this outsider in favor of their own designers. He only then turned to the Germans. A series of superb Fokker designs enabled the German Army Air Service to dominate the skies for much of the war.

NAVIES: The Allies ace card was the Royal Navy. As an island nation totally dependent on imports, protection of sea commerce was Britain's number one priority. Germany, much more self-sufficient, did not require a large navy. The Kaiser's ill-considered entry into the naval arms race could only be considered a threat, and helped force the British into the Triple Entente. While qualitatively superior in many respects to the Royal Navy, the German High Seas Fleet lacked the numbers to compete head-to-head. As the German Army absorbed the bulk of the nation's military budget, the Navy had to make do with the balance. Britain had never maintained a large army in peacetime, thus could devote sufficient resources to maintain a naval advantage over her German rival. The French, and later Italian, navies should have been an added bonus, but due to inherent and endemic leadership problems in those forces, often proved more troublesome than they were worth. Germany's ace card turned out to be the submarine, lightly regarded in pre-war. Untested in combat operations, even the Germans weren't sure of what they had, but soon realized they had a potentially game-changing weapon. The Allied naval staffs were slow to realize the menace, and even slower to take positive steps to combat it. As events developed, the German U-boat force came about as close as the German Army to winning the war.

LEADERSHIP: To characterize Allied military leadership as abysmal would be understating the case by a degree of magnitude. The French, firmly fastened on revenge for their calamitous defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, centered their plans solely on recovering the lost provinces. As the French Army's 1870 defeat was justifiably attributed to passivity, the response was total, if irrational, commitment to the offensive. This ignored the fact that the terrain defended by the Germans was perfectly suited to the purpose, and that the Germans outnumbered them as well. Refusing to consider the possibility of the outflanking move through Belgium actually made by the Germans, defective French deployment greatly played into their enemy's plans. The resulting French offensive - against mostly second line troops - inflicted near fatal casualties on the French Army for negligible gains.

The British Expeditionary Force was adequately positioned to blunt the Germans, but with the French stupidly slow to re-position quickly, were badly outnumbered and forced to give ground. As the war progressed, the British under Douglas Haig continually bloodied themselves against prepared defenses and practically ruined their army. Haig callously described the unnecessary butchery of British soldiery as acceptable "wastage". An attrition war sacrificing 2 soldiers for every enemy casualty was considered perfectly satisfactory to the generalship of the Western Allies.

Unlike on the Western Front, the Russians had room to conduct maneuver warfare, but almost always botched it so badly that the Germans consistently smashed them. The Russian General Staff, was, if anything, even more incompetent than their Western counterparts. This was only

exacerbated when the Czar took over command of the Front. While the Russian Army enjoyed some significant success against the Austro-Hungarians, it simply could not contend with the professionalism of their German opponents. The amazing part was not that the Russian Army collapsed, but that it lasted as long as it did.

Serbia: The Serbs defensively fought well and smartly against the Austrians, holding out for two years against vastly greater numbers. The addition of Germany and Bulgaria to the Balkan conflict tipped the odds conclusively against Serbia.

Austria-Hungary: Their leadership was very nearly as bad as that of Russia. Their multinational Army gradually disintegrated as the higher echelons were composed almost exclusively of Magyars and Austrians. The death of the ancient Emperor in 1916 removed a firm – though sometimes infirm – hand from conduct of the war. AH's greatest military successes came only when the Germans were an integral part of the operation.

Germany: German military leadership was light years better than that of not only their opponents, but their allies as well. Unlike the other powers, German senior officers, to a large extent, were usually promoted on merit rather than class or favoritism. The German Army not only exhibited more thorough planning in their military operations, but showed greater flexibility in quickly responding to opportunities or crises.

As the premier armed forces of the Central Powers, Germany had the advantage of unity of command. Her allies were clearly subordinate, and the Germans need only pay scant attention to any objections from the others. The Western Allies were theoretical co-equals, so agreeing on a strategy or specific operations was problematic. Unified command was not achieved until they almost lost the war.

The German armed forces also trained their personnel to a much higher level before actually committing them to combat. On the other hand, the Allies practiced training on the job, which led to horrendous losses and poor performance. To be sure, the Germans made a number of errors and missteps, but they were sporadic, e.g., the exception rather than the rule.

GEOGRAPHY: Another salient advantage the Central Powers possessed was the benefit of interior lines. Despite technological developments of radio and telephone, the Allies had difficulty coordinating application of their military power. Germany and Austria-Hungary, on the other hand, more effectively used their extensive rail network and communication facilities to constantly surprise and wrongfoot their opponents. Thus, they could transfer large bodies of troops between fronts before the Allies could react.

ALLIES: As the war progressed, each side had the opportunity to enlist other nations in the conflict. The Germans craftily maneuvered the Ottoman Empire into a full alliance, not only causing the British to divert very significant resources to the Middle East, but cutting Russian grain from its Mediterranean markets. This last was especially significant, as it hamstrung Russian credit and exchange, which in turn depressed the economy as the war progressed. The usual bungling by Allied (especially British) leadership was at an especially abysmal level here, and guaranteed the Ottomans would survive until the almost the end of the war.

The next major shift was the addition of Italy to the Entente. This was an extremely poor bargain for both Italy and the Allies. Nominally part of the Triple Alliance when war broke out, the Italians remained neutral, since they were only required to join only if either Germany or Austria-Hungary were *attacked* by another power. The wisest course for Italy would have been to remain a neutral. But the prospect of a land grab from the Hapsburg Empire bedazzled the government, and this was duly encouraged by Britain and France. More sober analysis revealed that Italy could contribute very little to the overall war effort. Extremely mountainous terrain defined the border between Italy and Austria-Hungary, and prosecuting an offensive through over such ground would prove difficult even for well trained troops, which the Italians were not. While the Austrians were forced to split off limited forces from the Eastern Front, the loss was hardly felt, as it was the German Army that broke the back of the Russians, not Austria-Hungary. Moreover, the Austrians fielded significant numbers of specialized mountain units, while the Italians had only a few. Though comprised of some excellent ships, neither could the Italian Navy materially affect the maritime power balance in the Mediterranean. The French fleet and Royal Navy squadrons were more than enough to deal with both Austria's fleet and the puny Ottoman Navy. In the end, not only did Italy not contribute much to Allied victory, but proved to be a positive drag on the overall war effort: their humiliating defeat at Caporetto in late 1917 forced the British and French to rush several divisions to shore up the sundered Italian front.

Bulgaria entered next, and this, coupled with German involvement, totally unbuckled the Serbian defense. The Bulgarians proved a tough nut to crack, as they kept the huge Salonika garrison (in effect, a giant prison camp for all the Allied troops committed there) at bay almost until the end.

As with Italy, the entry of Rumania to the Allied cause was another major disaster. If anything, the Rumanian Army was even worse than the Italian. Their total and cataclysmic defeat in 1917 added hundreds of miles of front for Russia to defend, with no compensatory advantages. And the Central Powers greedily gleaned all of Rumania's resources, especially oil.

Japan: As an ally of Great Britain, Japan duly declared war on the Central Powers in 1914, and proceeded to gobble up Germany's Asian and Pacific colonies at scant cost to themselves. Arguably, the Japanese contributed more to the Allied cause than Italy, as late in the war, they sent a couple destroyer squadrons to the Mediterranean to help the hard pressed Allies against a relatively small number of submarines, which Allied incompetence (especially French) never figured how to deal with.

The neutral that really mattered – the U.S. – reluctantly and belatedly entered, as Germany could not reconcile its military and political requirements. The Germans were indeed fortunate that Woodrow Wilson, and not Theodore Roosevelt – won the election of 1912. (A second Roosevelt presidency might not only have spun an earlier entry to the war, but also with much better preparedness.) Their gamble that unrestricted submarine warfare could strangle Britain before the U.S. achieved a critical mass in France very nearly worked.

SUMMARY: By all superficial measures, one might have expected the Central Powers to be overwhelmed within a couple years at most. Yet superior leadership, technology, innovation,

and operational excellence not only negated the Allies advantages, but pushed the Entente powers to brink of defeat, rescued only by the late, but decisive entry of the United States into the conflict. In retrospect, it was largely U.S. underwriting of the Allied war effort, through massive loans and the sale of munitions that helped keep the Allies from an earlier collapse, until America eventually contributed its military power to decisively tip the balance.

By their continuous and manifest military incompetence, Britain and France so exhausted their own war making potential that by late 1918 they were in little better shape than Germany. Rather than defer to Pershing's American armies to prosecute a 1919 invasion of Germany (and thus American pre-eminence at the peace conference), they were more than glad to accept the limited success of an armistice, as opposed to a definitive invasion of Germany in 1919. This in turn guaranteed a renewal of the conflict twenty years down the road.



There can always be a pickup game.

UNIT OF THE MONTH (Not Sponsored)

Member Name	Scale	Manufacturer	Era	Unit
Dave Newport	28mm	Gripping Beast	Medieval	SAGA Norman Knights
Terry Shockey	15mm	Eureka	WWI	Serbian Infantry
Doug Wildfong	28mm	Old Glory	18th/19th Centuries	Pirates
Doug Wildfong	28mm	Old Glory	SYW	Prussian Horse Gun and Limber





GAME OF THE MONTH

Total Escape Games Sponsor



Member Name	Scale	Era	Rules	Description
John Brown	15mm	Ancients	BBDBA	Carthage vs Pyhrrus
John Mumby	6mm	Napoleonics	Snappy Nappy	Battle of Saalfeld 1806
David Newport	28mm	Ancients	Legion vs Horde	Rome vs Carthage
Greg Skelly*	28mm	WWII	Roll Call	Carenton

***Denotes this month's winner**

Each month CMH members host games at the monthly meeting. This award is for the effort put out by the host.

Notice: Last month's winner was David Manley, not Nate Forte.





Minutes from CMH Board Meeting Oct. 8

Present: Nate Forte, President; Jim Rairdon, Vice President; Terry Shockey, Secretary; Larry Irons, Treasurer; Doug Wildfong, Historian

Discussion:

1. Need to file our organization license with the Secretary of States office in November.

2. We need to file a 990-N tax form. This has not been done in years and needs to be addressed. We could reincorporate as a new group but will need some legal help with this. In the mean time we will remain a 501-C7 organization.

3. If the rental contract with Hyland Hills remains the same we can remain at Baker. But we will need to increase our monthly income by \$50.

4. We might raise the dues to \$45 to help with the costs of rental. Additionally we would need to add new members.

5. We are exploring other venues for the club meetings. BelMar library is free. They do have tables but the time duration is strictly set from 12PM to 5PM. The American Legion Post 178 in Lakewood at 16th & Simms is also a possibility.

6. Veterans Wars will have the usual concessions; donuts, hot dogs, chips, chile, & cookies. The board voted not to spend more than \$100 toward concessions.

CMH November Scheduled Events

This table shows what events are scheduled for CMH. Next months Friday Night Fights (FNF) and the monthly meeting (MM) are listed. It is recommended to schedule your game for future meetings and will appear on this page.

Date	Meeting	Location	Start Time
November 3	FNF	TEG	7PM
November 10	FNF	TBD	7PM
November 11	Veterans Wars	Baker Rec Center	9AM - 6PM
November 12	MM	Baker Rec Center	9AM - 5PM
November 17	FNF	TBD	7PM
November 24	FNF	TBD	7PM

TEG - Total Escape Games
6831 W. 120th Ave.
Suite C

Broomfield CO 80020 www.totalescapegames.com

FNF (TBD) may or may not occur due to a lack of a scheduled host/location.

Upcoming Events:

November 11-12: Veteran's Wars @ Baker Rec Center

Game Line Up Saturday 11/11/2017

9 AM to 1 PM

1: Act like a pirate, grab some booty!

Embark on a dangerous quest on the coast of Florida to grab some precious Spanish booty. Be the one to grab the most booty without suffering serious casualties and walk away with bragging rights.

Historical Context:

The **1715 Treasure Fleet** was a [Spanish treasure fleet](#) returning from the [New World](#) to [Spain](#). At two in the morning on Wednesday, July 31, [1715](#), seven days after departing from [Havana, Cuba](#), eleven of the twelve ships of this fleet were lost in a [hurricane](#) near present-day [Vero Beach, Florida](#). Because the fleet was carrying silver, it is also known as the **1715 Plate Fleet** (*plata* being the Spanish word for silver).^[1] Some artifacts and even coins still wash up on Florida beaches from time to time. ^[not verified in body]

Around 1,000 sailors perished while a small number survived on lifeboats. Many ships, including pirates, took part in the initial salvage. Initially a [privateer, Henry Jennings](#) was first accused of [piracy](#) for attacking such salvage ships and claiming their salvages.

Rules: Blood & Plunder; Scale: 28MM

Players: 6 --Players Can Bring: Blood and Plunder rules, measuring device, D10's (everything else is supplied)

GM Tim Parker

#2 : HOTT Tournament 10:00 AM

Try your hand at an awe-inspiring 15mm HOTT (Hordes of the Things) Tournament! Play will be on 30" by 48" pre-set boards inspired by historical battlefields. Armies will be 72 AP in size, thus most closely approximating the scale of BBDBA. Players will be welcome to play solo or to team up in pairs, as they choose. Loaner armies will be available. Large Spear and Large War Band will be welcome. Contact John Brown (jsandmbbrown@msn.com) for questions or comments.

Time Slot : 1000-1700,

Players Can Bring: 72 AP HOTT Armies

Number of Open Slots / Players: Unlimited (8-12 can be expected)

#3: Get to the Boat!

As the second Dervish revolt erupts throughout the Sudan, a Nile village government house was immediately besieged by small angry bands of Dervish. The attacks were piecemeal so far but are getting more intense. The heavy gunboat *Cairo* has broken through and has reached the dock and is ready to disembark the rescue squads. A squad of Grenadier Guards had made their way from the desert to rescue the Government staff a week ago and are ready to escort them to the *Cairo*. This is going to be a rough one.

This will be a Colonial street fight where the mission is to get the government staff to the awaiting gunboat. The Dervish will be using special deployment rules that will make it interesting for the Allies. Checkout this blog link of the battle to get an idea of what your in for: [Get to the Boat Small Unit Action](#).

Rules: The Men Who Would Be King (TMWBK) – Special Leadership Attributes for the Egyptians will be used just to make it interesting. Allied units are 12 man and Natives 16. There will be 4 British/Egyptian Leaders and 2 to 3 Dervish Leaders.

Scale: 28mm

Players: 4 to 6

GM: Last Stand Dan Gurule

#4: Battle of Kontum; North Vietnamese troops are in their second week of assaulting the city of Kontum. In this assault on the night of May 26, 1972, an NVA regiment with tanks are attempting to break through the perimeter and capture the Kontum airport.

ruleset: Cold War Commander; players: 4

scale: N scale

GM Eric Elder

#5 Patrol with the Lafayette Escadrille

Scenario: A patrol with the Lafayette Escadrille over the Front lines in WW1. Can you meet the challenge? A variety of missions offered

Rules used: Wings of War/Wings of Glory

Miniatures Provided : WOW/WOG 1:144 Minis. Up to 6 players

2 PM to 6 PM

#1 : “Battle of Cambrai; November 20, 1917” The Allied Command proposes using the New “Tanks” in a mass attack to break the Hindenburg Line and capture the town of Cambrai in Northern France. They hope to end this war to end all wars.

Up to 10 players using Bill Daniel’s rules and a host of 285th scale tanks against an NPC German command.

GM Bill Daniel

#2: The SUDAN Erupts...Gunboats sent to Begin Evacuation

The second Dervish revolt has begun without warning. The heavy Gunboat *Cairo* was sent upriver a week ago and is now caught in the area of Khartoum. Orders were sent to evacuate the VIPs from the Government house.

Meanwhile, this section of the Nile must be secured. The Egyptian troops have given up and fled into the desert. Several Egyptian transports were captured and are being used for resupply and to patrol the river.

The gun emplacements have been occupied and reinforced with captured Egyptian crews and inexperienced Dervish gunners. It is rumored that some Artillery Officers have defected to the Dervish and are fighting for them. Their gunnery might be better than reported.

A British flotilla has been sent to recapture or destroy the guns. The gunboats are to bombard the emplacements and possibly land Royal Marines to recapture any guns.

This area must be secured or the *Cairo* will have a hard time coming back out.

This will be a bombardment mission to clear out the Dervish positions. There will be some special conditions for the Dervish/Egyptian gunners.

Rules: Gunboats and Dhows (G&D) – There will be at least two (2) Dervish Commanders and up to 4 British gunboat Captains.

Scale: 28mm

Players: 4 to 6

GM: Last Stand Dan Gurule

2PM to 6 PM continued

#3: Patrol with the Lafayette Escadrille

Scenario: A patrol with the Lafayette Escadrille over the Front lines in WW1. Can you meet the challenge? A variety of missions offered

Rules used: Wings of War/Wings of Glory

Miniatures Provided: WOW/WOG 1:144 Minis. Up to 6 players

Game Line Up Sunday 11/12/2017

9 AM to Noon

Member Swap Meet

Noon; Short Club Meeting

1 PM to 5 PM (as soon as meeting portion ends)

#1: “The Unknown Enemy”; WWI, The Austrians have pushed into the northern part of Serbia. After a needed break from the action they are ready to continue on to victory. But who is out there? There is rumor that the Russians have replaced the Serbs in the area ahead. There is also rumor that the unknown enemy is possibly forming an attack on the Austrians. Who and what, remains to be seen.

Rules: Square Bashing

Period: Scale: 15mm

Number of players: 4

GM Terry Shockey

#2 Patrol with the Lafayette Escadrille

Scenario: A patrol with the Lafayette Escadrille over the Front lines in WW1. Can you meet the challenge? A variety of missions offered

Rules used:Wings of War/Wings of Glory

Miniatures Provided : WOW/WOG 1:144 Minis. Up to 6 players

#3 “Battle of Jenin” The Six Day War Israelis and Jordanians fight for control of the West Bank of the Jordan River and Israeli border.

2 to 4 players, using “Flames of War” rules

Rules taught and figures provided.

GM Hosted by Jeff Lambert

#4 “NIGHT ACTION IN EMPRESS AUGUSTA BAY”

1 November 1943: The American offensive in the northern Solomons presses on: the 3rd Marine Division has landed on Bougainville. The landings are defended by cruisers and destroyers of USN Task Force 39. In response, the Imperial Navy assembles ships to bombard Marine positions and sink their supporting ships. Can the Japanese prosecute a successful night attack and disrupt the landings, or will the defense of Task Force 39 win out? Homegrown rules, ships provided. 4-6 players, using Naval Rules by John Owen

GM: Hosted by John Owen and Doug Wildfong; Figures and equipment provided.

#5: Battle of the Bulge; December 1944

The exact details of this scenario have not yet been determined as this will be one of the Battle of the Bulge campaign games. Not a member of the campaign? You still can play in this scenario, the 99th Infantry division has just arrived in Europe and they have been assigned to the “quiet sector” to adjust to combat settings.

Those squads of the 28th Infantry and the 101st Airborne will have participated in the campaign since D-Day and are assigned to this sector for some R&R. Hope they have accumulated enough experience and extra equipment for this game!

If you will be starting a squad for the campaign, be sure to talk to Greg on Saturday for details and selection.

28mm WWII, Roll Call Rules

GM Greg Skelly

Colorado Military Historians, Inc.

Colorado military Historians (CMH) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote historical wargaming and the study of military history. Founded in 1965, CMH meets monthly on the second Sunday of the month, except in May when it is deferred to the third Sunday. The meeting starts at noon at the Baker Recreational Center, 6751 Irving Street (just a few blocks west of Federal Blvd), Denver CO. The club also hosts gaming at least one Friday night a month, called "Friday Night Fights" (FNF) at 7 PM. FNF will be held at several various locations. See previous schedule or view the website for latest information.

CMH maintains ties with numbers local, regional and national groups to help promote the hobby. CMH is governed by member-elected officers who serve on the Board of Directors (executive board). Terms are one year, with elections held at the May meeting. New members are accepted after attending three CMH functions and a vote of the membership. Dues are \$40.00 per year, payable in January. Members wishing to receive a snail-mail newsletter subscription must pay an additional fee of \$15.00 per year. Authors retain ownership of articles and graphics published. CMH reserves the right to edit or reject submissions to the newsletter.

One year Adult Membership: \$40.00
Half year Adult Membership: \$25.00
(For NEW members who join after June 30)
Family Membership: \$40.00 (one Adult and any number of offspring)
Student Membership: \$20.00 (16 to 22 years old)



CMH Newsletter

The CMH Newsletter is a monthly newsletter published by the Colorado military Historians. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of all CMH members.

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Next Issue: December 2017

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