



NEWS YOU CAN USE

Weekly News for National Guard Families

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U.S. Army National Guard Expands Polycom Voice and Video Network as Part of Communications Modernization Plan

Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group Signs Statement of Support for The National Guard and Reserve

Websites:

National Guard Family Program Online Communities for families and youth:

<http://www.guardfamily.org/>

<http://www.guardfamilyyouth.org/>

TRICARE website for information on health benefits

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/>

Civilian Employment Information (CEI) Program Registration for Army and Air National Guard, Air Force, and Coast Guard Reserve

<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/esgr/index.jsp> (Note to those viewing this page in **Word or PDF format:** You must copy this address and paste it into your browser's address window.)

Cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve who are currently on active duty

<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2004/d20040331ngr1.pdf>

Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) contains links and information about schooling, distance education, scholarships, and organizations devoted to the military family

<http://www.militarychild.org/index.cfm>

Militarystudent.org is a website that helps

<http://www.militarystudent.org>

military children with transition and deployment issues. It has some great features for kids, parents, special needs families, school educators, and more—even safe chat rooms for kids.

Disabled Soldiers Initiative (DS3)

<http://www.armyds3.org>

This website provides information on the new DS3 program. Through DS3, the Army provides its most severely disabled Soldiers and their families with a system of advocacy and follow-up.

Have an article, announcement, or website that you'd like to share with the National Guard Family Program Community? Send your suggestions in an e-mail to Richard.Flynn@ngb.af.mil.

READINESS

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\$9 million to Be Used to Build National Guard Complex at Gary Airport

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

June 28, 2004

Gary, Ind.

More than \$9 million in federal money should soon be available to complete a **National Guard** complex at Gary/Chicago International Airport.

The Senate has passed the National Defense Authorization Act, which includes \$9.38 million for the Armed Forces Reserve Center, which will be used by three **National Guard** units, according to a news release from Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind.

Before the money is officially allocated, the Senate's Conference Committee must give its approval.

Specialized groups in the center will be a Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team, medical, air evacuation and meteorological units, the news release said.

Last year, \$15 million was used to begin work on the complex. Construction could begin as early as this fall, **National Guard** officials said. When finished, the center is expected bring 40 full-time and 200 part-time **National Guard** jobs to the airport.

"Construction of a new Armed Forces Reserve Center at the Gary/Chicago airport is another important step toward ensuring that our troops have the resources they need to protect our country," Bayh said in the release.

Airport officials have welcomed the complex as a way to bolster security locally and to bring attention to the airport.

Relatives Say Goodbye; Deployment to Last at Least 1 Year

June 29, 2004

Corpus Christi, Texas

About 150 members of a Texas Army **National Guard** battalion are going overseas for service, including a stint in Iraq.

The headquarters company of the 386th Engineer Battalion is expected to deploy for at least a year. Sunday's sendoff at the Omni Hotel Bayfront Tower included military officials and elected civilian officials including Nueces County Judge Terry Shamsie and Corpus Christi City Councilman Rex Kinnison.

Some relatives said Sunday they do not support the war in Iraq and believe there's no need to put their loved ones in danger.

"I don't think there is a reason for them to be going out there," 68-year-old Maria Garcia, grandmother of Spc. Maria Nieto, told the Corpus Christi Caller-Times in Tuesday's editions. "There is always going to be fighting over there."

Isidro Garza of Alice, who was deployed in Operation Desert Storm, said he knows departing to Iraq is necessary to maintain freedom in the United States and goodbyes are never easy.

"I don't like leaving my family," said Garza, 40. "But when you wear the uniform, the camouflage, it means possible war. If you wear it, you need to serve."

Sgt. Ray Villarreal of Corpus Christi will not be around to experience his daughter Lorelei's "terrible twos."

"My daughter is so close to him," said Villarreal's wife, Amanda, as she watched the 1-year-old in her long pink dress.

About a dozen of Villarreal's relatives attended the send-off. Lorelei could not take her eyes off her father.

"Every time he walks out the door, she's like 'Dad, no, no!'" said Villarreal's wife. "I am setting pictures of my husband all over the house so she won't forget him. He also got a camcorder and left her a message. It has him talking, telling her hello and it shows him playing around with her."

Battalion's duties will include breaching enemy obstacles, planting obstacles, creating protection for soldiers and basic engineering support such as limited construction and roadwork. Engineers, before deployment overseas, will train for four months at Camp Shelby, Miss., and Fort Irwin, Calif. A similar sendoff was held Saturday in Kingsville for members of Company A of the 386th Engineer Battalion.

1,250 Soldiers Report for Duty Across Idaho; Small Towns Say Goodbyes to Guard Members

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The Idaho Statesman

June 29, 2004 Tuesday

By Gregory Hahn and Roger Phillips

EMMETT -- William Sevier shaved his head Sunday night.

He did it himself -- no use paying for something so simple.

The 22-year-old from Emmett works at McDonald's in Caldwell. He wears glasses that look a little too big when his head is so freshly shaved. And he drives a tank -- an M1A1 "Heavy," nicknamed for its heavy armor.

Pvt. Sevier is one of 1,250 members of the Idaho Army **National Guard** who reported for duty today at 16 armories around the state. They'll join about 750 others at Fort Bliss, Texas, where they'll be trained to go to Iraq later this year.

"It's kind of hard," Sevier said. "But I signed up to do this, so let's go do it."

The largest **National Guard** deployment in Idaho's history is about to hit small Idaho towns like Sevier's Emmett. About 63 Guardsmen -- most from Emmett and Boise -- mustered Monday morning at the Emmett Armory, a run-of-the-mill building stuck behind the animal barns and the grandstand at the dusty Gem County Fairgrounds.

While the soldiers replaced their worn-out boots and checked the contents of their bags and rucksacks, they said they think their families at home may end up having a harder time for the next 18 months than they will.

Sevier said he didn't think the reality has really sunk in with his parents in Emmett. But since the troops were given their orders, they've wanted to spend as much time with him as possible.

"Basically, this last month it's been, 'You want to come over for dinner?' " he said, holding his hand up like a phone.

Soldiers feel quiet support in the small town of Emmett

On Monday, the streets of Emmett weren't lined with yellow ribbons. The store marquees still advertised sales and specials.

The only outer clues to the muster at the armory was a small "We support our troops" sign leaning against an Idaho-shaped stone marker on the town's main drag and a reassuring quote on the Emmett Christian Church's reader board.

"The father of a righteous man," it read, "has great joy."

Emmett's soldiers include Gem County's 3rd District Magistrate Judge Gordon Petrie, who left with the first wave of the Guard earlier this month. And the troops from this

small town are feeling the support from their friends and neighbors.

Spec. Steven Kelly -- just 21 years old -- was walking around the Emmett Cherry Festival when a stranger thanked him for serving in the **National Guard**.

"A lot of people stop us and say thanks," he said. "It's pretty comforting."

Kelly has lived most of his life in Emmett. He graduated from high school here, got married here, and knows many people here.

"In a small town like Emmett, everybody is so close together, everyone is praying for us," he said.

First Sgt. Stan Clinton of New Plymouth could have retired from the **National Guard** five years ago, but he opted to stay. Now that he's preparing for the first deployment of his 25-year career, he said he's noticed the little things that he has taken for granted.

"I go through town and everyone says hello, and now no one is going to do that for 18 months," he said.

Last month, his wife of 34 years, Martha, and their five children threw him a surprise party with 150 family members and friends, many of whom he hadn't seen in years.

"I was so choked up," he said. "It was the most emotional experience I have ever had except having my first child."

And Monday night? There was a big send-off party at Tik's Tavern, smack in the middle of Emmett, for Clinton, Sevier and the other Emmett Guardsmen leaving this week.

Coffee, doughnuts and old-fashioned patriotism

Tona Henderson hasn't let Sgt. Tim Boismier pay for a doughnut for the past week .

He threatened to stop coming to her Rumor Mill Bakery if she didn't let him pay, she said. But with so few days before he and the rest of the Emmett-based tank company leave, she just put her foot down.

"He comes in every morning," Henderson said. "It's hard not to cry."

The Rumor Mill, though, is not your average doughnut shop. Henderson started putting up pictures of current and past veterans about two years ago, and now the walls are covered with them.

"The town needs to support these people," said Jack Dodson, who's on the wall himself. He served in Germany during the Korean War.

Dodson, who wasn't married when he enlisted ("Oh, heck no -- I was wild and free!"), is concerned for the families of the Guardsmen who are staying behind.

Patrick Neeser, though, is concerned for the soldiers.

The Boise man is a counselor for combat veterans, and he knows some of the soldiers mustering this week will need to come see him when they get back.

"We're gearing up for their return, at this point," he said. "We fully expect that there will be mental health casualties."

Neeser came to Rumor Mill on Monday because Vietnam vet Rick Cooney wanted to

show him one of the few places he feels comfortable and safe -- decades after Cooney last faced combat.

Cooney suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder after Vietnam, but the military didn't have the infrastructure to treat him and his fellow veterans correctly, Neeser said.

"I lived with this," Cooney said. "My life is such a turmoil."

The mental health safety net is much better now, Neeser said, with counselors like himself all over the country. Neeser already is treating four U.S. vets who served in Iraq, and he's not sure what to expect when these soldiers return.

"I don't know what's going to happen with these citizen soldiers," he said. "If they're like, 'Wait a minute -- I was at home in Emmett and now I'm here.' "

Smiles, jokes and high spirits in the 3rd Platoon

Sgt. Matthew Askew has been to Iraq before, as a Marine in the first Gulf War in 1991. As a Guardsman, he served in Bosnia as well. He's one of the most experienced soldiers in the Emmett company's 3rd Platoon, and he spent part of Monday's muster sitting against the wall in the platoon room, staying out of the small talk. He said he hadn't really been too worked up about leaving in the weeks and months leading up to this week's deployment.

"This morning," he said, "I'm a little nervous."

If the younger guys were, they too covered it up, with smiles and jokes and the chin-up, far-away gaze of a soldier.

"They get the stare," Askew said. "They get hardened."

Askew left Iraq a much younger man. He's not surprised he and his company are being called back there. They left with Saddam Hussein still in charge.

"It's kind of hard to watch any dictator in the world," he said.

Pvt. Matt Douglas was 8 years old when Askew was fighting in Iraq the first time. Now, the Payette native is about a month out of basic training. He signed up for the Guard in October -- hoping to better his life, get some direction and contribute after the attacks of 9/11. But after he got some help fitting his gas mask to his newly shaved head, he admitted that he was going to a war zone sooner than he expected .

"I didn't think it would be this fast," he said.

About the 116th Cavalry Brigade

The 116th Cavalry Brigade of the Idaho Army **National Guard** represents about 4,300 citizen soldiers -- men and women who in their civilian roles are lawyers and cops, state and federal employees, food-service workers and corporate executives, small-business owners and students.

The 116th is comprised of these subordinate units: the 116th Headquarters Co., which oversees the brigade; 2-116th Armor Battalion; 1-148th Field Artillery Battalions; 116th Engineering Battalion; 216th Military Intelligence Co.; and 145th Support Battalion.

The brigade's role is primarily combat. Its primary mission is to provide battlefield

commanders with tanks, heavy artillery and personnel.

The 116th was first organized in 1920 as the 116th Cavalry Regiment, or Snake River Regiment. The regiment was part of the 1st Cavalry.

In the early years, soldiers in the brigade rode horses. Often soldiers from around the state would arrive by train at the Boise Depot with horses and then ride their horses to the **National Guard** Armory.

Today, those horses have been replaced with some of the Army's most advanced equipment, including the M1-A1 Abrams tank, M2-A2 Bradley fighting vehicle, and the M109A6 Paladin self-propelled howitzer. The 116th's Apache and Blackhawk helicopters are not going to Iraq.

Although the brigade is a **National Guard** unit, it has distinguished itself in active military training. In July 1998, the brigade was the second **National Guard** brigade ever invited to participate in desert warfare training at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif.

-- Ken Dey

What's happening with the Idaho Guard?

The 116th Cavalry Brigade will deploy 4,300 troops to Iraq, including 2,000 Idahoans. Troops also are coming from Oregon, Utah, Montana, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The first wave of 750 Idaho troops involved in the deployment flew June 10 to Fort Bliss, Texas.

On Monday, about 1,250 Idaho troops reported for duty at 16 armories around the state. They'll spend the next few days preparing themselves and their gear.

On July 1 and July 3, the troops will fly to Fort Bliss.

The brigade will spend the summer and fall training and should arrive in Iraq in the late fall. The brigade is expected to spend a year in Iraq.

Militia musters date to 1600s

HISTORY LESSON

When soldiers muster, they essentially report for duty. Muster means to assemble or summon troops.

The **National Guard** first mustered in December 1636, when the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony ordered the organization of the colony's militia companies into three regiments: North, South and East. The colonists had adopted the English militia system that obligated all males from ages 16 to 60 to possess arms and participate in the defense of the community.

The early colonial militia drilled once a week and provided guard details each evening to sound an alarm in case of an attack. The growing threat of the Pequot Indians to the Massachusetts Bay Colony required that the militia be in a high state of readiness.

Source: **National Guard** Bureau, U.S. Department of Defense

Contact reporter Gregory Hahn at ghahnidahostatesman.com or 377-6425. Contact reporter Roger Phillips at rphillipsidahostatesman.com or 373-6615.

Pfc. William Sevier's head was freshly shaved Monday. "I did it myself last night," said Sevier, a member of Company A, 2-116th Armor Battalion, which is deploying Thursday to Fort Bliss, Texas. Sevier's civilian job is at a Caldwell McDonald's restaurant.

More than 1,100 Soldiers Prepare for Afghanistan Assignment

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The Associated Press

July 1, 2004, Thursday

Edinburgh - More than 1,100 Indiana **National Guard** soldiers will be leaving for Afghanistan in the coming weeks after a send-off ceremony Thursday at Camp Atterbury.

Gov. Joe Kernan and Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, the state's adjutant general, spoke to the soldiers during a departure ceremony.

Most of the soldiers belong to units of the 76th Infantry Brigade based in Indianapolis, New Albany and Columbus, and were called up in April for up to 18 months of active duty. Other soldiers from about a dozen out-of-state **National Guard** units have joined them in recent weeks at the training camp about 25 miles south of Indianapolis.

Kernan told the soldiers that they were continuing a Hoosier tradition of answering the call of duty.

"I know there is apprehension," Kernan said. "(But) in this new world we have found ourselves in, where the Guard and (Army) Reserves have taken a more active role, you are prepared."

Members of the brigade have been training since earlier this year for a yearlong mission in Afghanistan, where they will help train the Afghan National Army.

About 6,500 Army and Air **National Guard** troops from Indiana have served on active duty since 2001. Last year, nearly 1,500 Indiana Guard soldiers served in the Middle East during the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. Most have returned home.

Army to Recall 468 From Florida - Troops Likely Will Go to Iraq, Afghanistan

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Orlando Sentinel (Florida)

July 3, 2004 Saturday Final

By Pamela J. Johnson, Sentinel Staff Writer

The Army next week will begin calling back to active duty nearly 500 Floridians who recently left the military to resume their civilian lives.

They are needed to boost troop strength in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It might be a shocker for some of them," Lt. Col. Ron Tittle of the **Florida National Guard** said Friday night.

He said the 468 being called up include 55 inactive members of the **Florida National Guard**. They will be among 5,600 from the Army's Individual Ready Reserve to receive orders nationwide.

The involuntary call-ups, the first large-scale one since the 1991 Persian Gulf War, will start Tuesday and run through December.

Those set to be activated left the military before their eight-year commitment and became members of the IRR. Unlike members of the **National Guard** and Reserve, individual reservists do not perform regularly scheduled training and are not paid unless they are called up.

Those called up will have at least 30 days to report for 18 to 24 months of duty. Pregnant women will be excluded as well as those who successfully petition for exemption based on medical or other limitations.

Otherwise, they will be assigned to Army Reserve and **National Guard** units that have been or soon will be mobilized for deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan.

"Everything has to be put on hold, and it impacts their employment," Tittle said. "But they've served before, and I'm guessing a lot of them would be willing to serve again."

The Army is aiming its recall on people who recently left the military and have up-to-date skills.

"The IRR has the advantage that these folks are already trained," said Dave Foster, a spokesman at Army Public Affairs in the Pentagon.

"They possess the soldier skills and the job skills. They have expertise. Many of them have been out only a year or two."

Of those called up, some will be assigned to motor-transport operations, automated-logistical-support operations, and light-wheeled-vehicle mechanics, and others will be administrative specialists and combat engineers, officials said.

"These individuals are ready to go," Foster said. "They can more easily plug into the unit that's getting deployed."

Anyone who served in a "war zone" within the past year would be exempt from the call-ups, he said.

He said he thinks that Iraq and Afghanistan were considered a "war zone" but was uncertain whether that applied to any other countries. Currently, he said, soldiers are deployed in 120 countries in the U.S.-led global war on terrorism.

"If a civilian in the military for four years got out of Iraq in April," he said, "they wouldn't be called up."

The call-ups will relieve some of the troops who have had their tours extended, he said. The shortage of military is so severe in Iraq that the Army in April broke the promise to some active-duty units, including the 1st Armored Division, that they would not have to serve more than 12 months in Iraq. It also has extended the tours of other units, including some in Afghanistan.

Tittle said he did not think the forced call-ups would be setting the stage for a possible draft. Since the war began, several hundred people have voluntarily returned to service.

"You've got more than 100,000 in the Ready Reserve," he said. "They still have an obligation. The intent here is trying to stabilize Iraq. And the number of military there are stretched."

REUNION

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Emotional Homecoming Greets Peoria-Based Guardsmen

Associated Press

June 29, 2004

Peoria, Ill.

About 130 soldiers from a Peoria-based Illinois Army **National Guard** unit got their old lives back Monday after a twice-extended, 14-month tour of Iraq that left three of its members dead.

Cheers turned to tearful hugs and then smiles as several hundred flag-waving relatives and friends greeted three buses packed with returning guardsmen from Company F, First Battalion of the 106th Aviation Regiment, which flew more than 1,300 Chinook helicopter missions.

"This hangar is usually filled with helicopters. Today, this hangar is filled with happiness," U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin said during an emotional homecoming at a base near Peoria's airport where the unit shipped out in February 2003, weeks before the war began.

The Democratic senator, who voted against the Iraq war resolution, said it was an apt coincidence that the guardsmen returned the same day the U.S.-led coalition handed over

power to Iraq's new interim government.

"It would not have happened without you and so many like you who walked away from their families to do their duty for their country," said Durbin, who predicted it could be four years or more before all U.S. troops leave Iraq.

U.S. Rep. Ray LaHood said the long sacrifice by guardsmen and their families helped plant a foothold of peace in the volatile Middle East.

"We are in your debt, the people of Iraq are in your debt, all freedom-loving people are in your debt," said LaHood, a Peoria Republican.

More than 1,000 Gather to Welcome Soldiers

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Associated Press

June 29, 2004

Davenport, Iowa

Gov. Tom Vilsack was among more than 1,000 people who welcomed back 70 members of a Davenport-based **National Guard** unit that was activated before the war in Iraq began.

"We are so, so proud of you today and we are so happy to see you back," Vilsack told the members of Detachment 1, Company F, 106th Aviation unit on Monday. "Beyond the great service you have done, you have also reminded all Americans that we owe a debt of gratitude to all those that have served.

"Thank you for your service and sacrifice," Vilsack said.

The unit's tour of duty was extended twice after it was called up in February 2003, and many family members had trouble believing their loved ones would return home this time. They originally were expected home in the fall, then in April.

"We've been planning this ceremony for a long time and they kept giving us more time," said Erin Snyder, the Family Readiness Group coordinator and wife of Staff Sgt. Trevor Snyder. "It was very generous of them."

Vilsack's wife, Christy, and U.S. Rep. Jim Nussle, R-Iowa, joined the crowd in a hangar at the Davenport Municipal Airport at Mount Joy, waving flags and holding signs to greet the returning soldiers.

Families and soldiers embraced outside the red, white and blue-decorated hangar before separating once more to attend the welcoming ceremony.

"Today, Mount Joy is not a place, it's a feeling," Nussle told the standing-room-only crowd in the hangar. "We say, job well done."

During the 90-minute ceremony, all present shared a moment of silence to recognize those who were lost, including CW4 Bruce Smith of West Liberty and Sgt. Paul Fisher of Marion. Both were killed during a Nov. 2 missile attack that downed their Chinook

helicopter.

Two others, Sgt. Gerald Santos of Davenport and Spc. Chad Baetke of Bettendorf, were wounded in that incident and awarded the Purple Heart.

"Soldiers, you are all heroes to us," said Maj. Gen. Ron Dardis, the adjutant general of the Iowa **National Guard**. "You left behind what you cherish most. Thank you for the sacrifices you've made."

BENEFITS

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DFAS Reserve Pay Center of Excellence Unveiled in Cleveland; Better Productivity Will Improve Service to Key Military Customer Group

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PR Newswire

July 1, 2004, Thursday

DFAS officially opened the Reserve Pay Center of Excellence within its Cleveland-based DFAS Military and Civilian Pay Services operation, Tuesday (June 29). The move further improves the services DFAS provides to the men and women who defend America.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20030428/DCM078LOGO>)

All Reserve and Guard payroll activities are being transferred from Denver, and eventually from Indianapolis, to the Cleveland site, thereby establishing in DFAS one location furnishing pay account support for Army, Air Force and Naval Reserve and Guard Component customers.

The productivity gains derived from running these operations from an established, centralized pay support site will be significant.

"DFAS is constantly striving to improve the way it serves its customers," said Patrick T. Shine, director of DFAS' Military and Civilian Pay Services business line. "The Reserve Pay Center of Excellence will make us even more responsive to the needs of a critical component of America's defense -- the Reserve and Guard."

Pay and customer service operations went "live" for the Air Force Reserve Command in the Reserve Pay Center in May. Payroll operations for the Air **National Guard** will be transitioned next, followed by the Army Reserve and **National Guard** later, based on continued cooperative efforts with the U. S. Army Financial Management, Reserve and Guard communities.

To smooth the transition and ensure the needs of the end customer were met, this undertaking has been closely coordinated with leadership in the Reserve and Guard communities. Their guidance has been critical to the project's success.

The Reserve Center of Excellence initiative did not result in the loss of any jobs; Denver

personnel who previously worked in Reserve and Guard pay support functions have been reassigned to other high priority military pay tasks. As the Army Guard and Reserve workload moves from Indianapolis, no loss of jobs will occur at that location.

About DFAS

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is the world's largest finance and accounting operation. It provides responsive, professional finance and accounting services to the men and women who defend America. In Fiscal Year 2003, DFAS paid about 5.9 million people, processed more than 12.3 million invoices from defense contractors, disbursed more than \$416 billion and managed more than \$194 billion in military trust funds. For more about DFAS visit <http://www.dfas.mil>.

GUARD IN IRAQ

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For Gatekeepers of 81st, Job is Full of Stress, Pride

The News Tribune (Tacoma, Washington)

June 28, 2004, Monday

By Adam Lynn, The News Tribune

Balad, Iraq - Nearly 1,000 trucks and 3,000 people per day come through the gate of Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

It is the job of the 81st Brigade Combat Team's 181st Support Battalion to make sure none of them is carrying a bomb.

It's a stressful mission and far from the Washington **National Guard** battalion's normal area of expertise.

The soldiers of the 181st are experts in logistics. They usually drive and repair trucks, not search them for weapons or explosives.

"This is outside the comfort zone for a lot of people," said Lt. Col. George Abbott, the battalion's commander. "But we're soldiers, and we're going to do what we're told. I'm very, very happy with the battalion's performance."

Aside from providing security, the chore gives U.S. troops a daily chance to mingle with Iraqis, many of whom come to the camp each day for a chance to earn money for their families by providing day labor.

Lt. John Adams supervises the east gate into Anaconda. It is the one that nearly 200 Iraqi soldiers use to enter camp for their training exercises with American forces.

"We're building some relationships," said Adams, an Auburn resident who grows shellfish on Puget Sound in his civilian life. "We know just about every guy by name

who comes through here."

There are three gates into Anaconda - north, south and east. The soldiers of the 181st are in charge of guarding them all.

It's labor-intensive. They must pat down all Iraqi nationals coming on or leaving the post. They must check the identification of military civilian truck drivers delivering supplies to Anaconda and search their vehicles. They must confirm that U.S. convoys coming into camp are who they say they are.

They also must be prepared to shoot anybody who tries to crash through their intensive security measures, which include .50-caliber machine guns.

"Cause if they get through here, they're right in the middle of that post," said 1st Sgt. Dave Case of Everett. "That would be bad."

Brigade commander Brig. Gen. Oscar Hilman agreed.

"We can't let any bad people get in," Hilman said.

It's hectic work. Trucks and pedestrians begin lining up at the north gate before 6 a.m. to begin the arduous search process necessary to enter the post, said Capt. Stan Seo, who supervises the north gate.

"Life at the gate is extremely busy," said Seo, a Bothell resident who works as a King County sheriff's deputy back home.

Seo's gate sees the bulk of all traffic coming onto Anaconda: up to 1,500 people and 400 vehicles per day.

It's the only place that local drivers can enter the camp, and lines often form, Seo said.

When lines form, tempers often flare, he said.

"It's usually not directed at us," Seo said. "They're just jockeying for position. Nobody likes to wait in lines."

Soldiers often must break up fights between drivers and settle other disputes about who gets in first, he said.

They also chase off Iraqi children who gather at the gates to peddle things such as bootlegged CDs and drinks to people waiting to get in, said Sgt. 1st Class Larry Gingrich of Wapato.

"It's a security risk, and it's not safe for them to be out there running around the trucks," said Gingrich, who works as a boilermaker back home.

They also must guard against suicidal people who are willing to use themselves or cars as bombs.

"That's our biggest concern, that someone will have a come-to-Allah moment, strap on a bomb vest and give us a problem," Adams said.

It is not an idle fear. A bomb blew up at the north gate in March, killing an American soldier and a member of the Iraqi **National Guard**, Abbott said.

Then there's danger from U.S. troops, who lock and load their weapons when they drive "outside the wire," said 1st Sgt. Case. Some troops don't display the proper care and negligently fire their guns, Case said.

Within the past few days, a U.S. soldier inadvertently fired his weapon and hit a guard tower at the south gate, he said.

Still, members of the 181st take pride in their jobs, said Pvt. Soloman Mayfield of Seattle.

"Keeping the LSA safe is satisfying," said Mayfield, a community college student in the States.

His partner, Sgt. Tyler Hood, said he finds other benefits to sitting behind a .50-caliber machine gun for hours at a time.

"You've got a lot of time to review on your thoughts and think about how you're going to further the rest of your life," said Hood, an auto-body repairman from Lacey.

He and Mayfield are thinking of opening a nightclub together when they get back home."That would be all right," Hood said.

With the experiences they're getting in Iraq, they wouldn't have to hire bouncers.

National Guard Karaoke Party Continues During Rocket Attack

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The Associated Press

Wednesday, June 30, 2004 · Last updated 4:45 a.m. PT

Tacoma, Wash. -- From Village People's "YMCA" to Marvin Gaye's 1971 anti-Vietnam war anthem "What's Goin' On," Washington National Guard troops were not about to let a rocket attack stop their songfest.

About a dozen members of the 81st Brigade Combat Team were rocking at the Saturday Night Karaoke Club when a siren warned them of the second rocket attack of the day on

Logistical Support Area Anaconda at Balad, Iraq, the News Tribune of Tacoma reported. The newspaper has a reporter and photographer embedded with the unit.

Led by the brigade's commander, Brig. Gen. Oscar B. Hilman, who favors Frank Sinatra tunes, the troops grabbed body armor and helmets and scurried into a nearby concrete bunker.

With light provided by green glow sticks, the soldiers then broke into a capella versions of songs they all know by heart: "Under the Boardwalk," "Lean on Me," "Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay," "King of the Road" and "What's Goin' On."

"Father, father, we don't need to escalate," they sang. "You know, war is not the answer, 'cause only love can conquer hate."

After hearing the all-clear signal, they hustled back to the song machine and tore into Prince's "Purple Rain."

Sgt. Junior Smith of Tacoma said he had his wife send him the karaoke machine, and what began as a gathering of four or five friends has evolved into a Saturday night tradition for many others.

"It's something for the soldiers to do so they can forget about what's going on here," Smith said, "at least for a while."

National Guard Troops, Families Reach Out To Iraqi Children

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The Associated Press

July 1, 2004, Thursday, 12:38 AM Eastern Time

By Holbrook Mohr, Associated Press Writer

Even as the war rages, and the desert heat pushes the mercury beyond 100 degrees, a group of **Mississippi Army National Guard** soldiers are going beyond the call of duty to help the children of Iraq.

Stealing time away from their military responsibilities near Balad, Iraq, members of the Jackson-based Task Force 185th Aviation Group have already rebuilt parts of a school, an agriculture center and a clinic.

Now, they want to help the children of Iraq rebuild their lives. They call the humanitarian efforts "Mission Open Hearts" and "Operation Candy Bombers."

Mission Open Hearts started last year with the 168th Engineer Group out of Vicksburg. When that group rotated back to the United States, they passed the torch to the members of the 185th - also known as the Catfish Brigade, named for one of Mississippi's most plentiful exports.

Col. Bradly MacNealy, the commander of the 185th, discussed the goals of the two missions with The Associated Press in an e-mail interview from Iraq.

"The Open Hearts Mission is to gather donations for the Iraqi kids that live in poverty with no school supplies, no basic hygiene supplies, no running water and much disease," MacNealy said. "Operation Candy Bombers is a unique way to distribute small items to every corner of Iraq."

MacNealy said the project started when crew chiefs on a helicopter flight from Baghdad to Mosul dropped plastic bags filled with toothpaste, candy and other items near a group of waving children.

"The effect here in Iraq will be far reaching," MacNealy wrote. "Every child that receives school supplies, hygiene supplies and other items will have a better chance to live and learn. Thousands of Iraqi children could benefit, resulting in a better perception of U.S. efforts in Iraq and a better chance to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people."

Kim Dubuisson, project manager for Open Hearts Mission in Mississippi, said helping Iraq's children has been uplifting for her son, 20-year-old Spec. Justin Hall, and other members of the 185th.

Dubuisson, along with the other members of the 185th Family Readiness Group - the family and friends of the deployed soldiers - and Jackson-based Trustmark Bank are collecting school supplies and money to ship the supplies to Iraq.

The soldiers deliver the goods - about 60 packages so far - to the schools in the war-torn country.

MacNealy recalled the first time soldiers from the 185th visited an Iraqi classroom full of 7- and 8-year-old girls.

"As soon as we walked in the room with our battle uniforms on, the girls became terrified, started screaming and ran to the back corner of the room, huddled in the corner crying and trembling.

"As one of the soldiers slowly moved toward the children with gifts of pencils, paper, dolls, and candy, the little girls calmed down and started warming up," MacNealy said. "It took several minutes but before we left that classroom the girls were all smiles and sitting in our laps as happy as they could be."

Dubuisson said those children are the future leaders of Iraq and the interaction they have with American soldiers will have a lasting impact on their perception of the United States.

She said members of Open Hearts Mission are collecting the same type school supplies that their own children might need for a new school year. They also are collecting toothbrushes, soap and other hygiene products as well as rice, flour, powdered milk, dried beans and corn meal.

Trustmark has volunteered to collect the items at its branches in Mississippi, Florida, Memphis and Houston. The group is also seeking cash donations, which can be given to any branch teller. The money will be used to help ship the packages.

"The essence from our perspective is that it provides a very valuable need for the families here to personally engage in a positive way to help the soldiers over there and more importantly to leave the Iraqi school children with a positive, real life experience with

America," said Trustmark President Gerard Host.

Dubuisson agreed.

"No matter how you feel about the war, whether you are a Republican or a Democrat, these humanitarian missions are above politics," she said. "It's one human being touching another."

HOMEFRONT: DEALING WITH DEPLOYMENT

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Independence Day Holds New Meaning

By Cole William, Staff

Hawai'i families of deployed soldiers reflect on sacrifice

By William Cole, Advertiser Military Writer

Larson Miral, a Honolulu police officer, won't be officiating over the sparklers and other fireworks at the family barbecue in 'Ewa Beach this Fourth of July.

He's wearing another hat: a camouflage-covered one in Iraq, where he and about 10,000 other soldiers either based in or from Hawai'i are doing their part - fighting and sometimes dying on behalf of the "independence" in Independence Day.

Miral, 39, is one of nearly 400 Hawai'i citizen soldiers with the 411th Engineer Battalion who deployed to Iraq several months ago. About 200 Hawai'i **Army National Guard** members of Charlie Company, 193rd Aviation, also are serving in the country. State officials announced Friday that some 2,000 members of the **Army National Guard's** 29th Separate Infantry Brigade have been placed on alert for Iraq or Afghanistan.

On the home front, Miral's wife, Sherri, said she'll be waving the flag a little more vigorously as she handles a job and three children ages 11, 6 and 2.

"It's not just a year," she said. "It's 18 months, because even though they tell you you're going to be a year in theater, he had to go to Schofield for three months to train and couldn't come home."

Another three months is tacked on the end for processing back home.

For the reserve families - unaccustomed to the type of deployments active-duty soldiers more frequently go on - Fourth of July is one more holiday out of many that will be missed by deployed spouses, and one more visible reminder of the dramatic change in lifestyle that's been made, but also a day whose true meaning is brought into a sharper focus.

"It'll cause us to reflect that we're here, but daddy's gone some place to help us and to

help the people that are there, and that's what this is about, us trying to help somebody else," Sherri Miral, 41, said.

Sgt. Larson Miral, a 10-year Honolulu police officer, is based at Camp Victory North in Baghdad. He had been helping rewire buildings and put up new housing for soldiers, but lately he's been manning checkpoints as a military police officer in the so-called Green Zone in Baghdad.

It's his first combat deployment after serving on active duty and then joining the Reserve years ago, his wife said.

"I'm very proud of my husband, and I love what he's doing. I get (angry) at the military for sending him there," Sherri Miral said. "But I love my husband, and he signed up to do what he did."

Miral finds herself thinking not only about her husband's service, but of her father's in Vietnam.

"I remember him going off to Vietnam. When you're a kid you don't think of stuff like this," she said. "But when you are older and you have kids of your own and your husband is put in that same situation that your father was in, you have time to think - he did it for our country. Even though people don't like it, they are doing it for their country."

It's Sgt. Gabby Baltero's first combat deployment, too.

The 37-year-old Kalihi man, who works at a Toyota warehouse and is married and has two boys, 9 and 11, is guarding checkpoints at Camp Victory North with the 411th Engineer Battalion.

There's a post exchange, but not a lot to do outside of work, and the temperatures have been reaching 100 degrees or more at the camp, a former Saddam Hussein game reserve. His wife, Jackie, has sent him rice upon request, repeatedly.

"He's doing OK. He says he misses us a lot and wants to come home," Jackie Baltero said.

Independence Day has taken on new meaning for her, too.

"My husband's working with the freedom of Iraq now, and it makes me really proud of him because he's protecting the country and he's doing what he thinks is right," Baltero said.

The Fourth of July "is not just the weekend now," she added. "I look at differently because my husband's more involved with it."

Miral and Baltero and their families and another 411th wife, Chris Bernardino, will be getting together at Miral's house today for a barbecue.

Bernardino, whose 48-year-old husband, Jeffrey, is a staff sergeant in Iraq, said this Fourth of July will be "very different."

"It's not the same. I'm happy I'm with friends who are going through the same thing," the 48-year-old Mililani resident said. "But it's not the same thing. I have a birthday coming up and it's not the same, either."

Chris Bernardino and her husband, a heavy equipment operator in Iraq, were rarely apart.

They car-pooled, and she now catches the bus.

"Patriotism - I do celebrate our troops because they do a great thing and stand for our freedom," she said. "It's sad our husbands have to sacrifice their joy to do what they need to do to keep terrorists out of our country."

"I think they (U.S. forces) have got to give them their country back as soon as possible," Bernardino added. "I want my husband to come home as soon as he can - and then retire. It's been 23 years he's been in the reserves."

HEALTH ISSUES

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Anthrax Smallpox Protection Policies Updated

United States Department of Defense

News Release

June 30

William Winkenwerder, Jr., MD, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, today announced that the anthrax and smallpox vaccination programs would include selected units within the U. S. Pacific Command, additional personnel now serving with the U.S. Central Command and selected other groups of individuals.

"The decision to protect additional personnel with these vaccines reflects our concern for their health and safety as well as the continuity of essential operations," said Winkenwerder. "When we began these vaccination programs we stated that we would periodically review them, evaluating the threats to our forces and vaccine availability. We recently completed such an evaluation and determined that the threat continues. In light of our successful implementation of these programs and the increased quantities of vaccine, we will include additional forces in the vaccination programs," he offered.

Vaccination offers an extra layer of protection, in addition to antibiotics and other measures, that is needed for members of the armed forces, emergency-essential DoD civilians and contractor personnel carrying out mission-essential services.

The program update will continue to include personnel assigned or deployed to the selected units for 15 or more consecutive days. DoD will offer the vaccinations to family members in these geographic areas on a voluntary basis. We will pursue vaccination, subject to appropriate Personnel and Contractor procedures, of emergency essential civilian employees and comparable contractor personnel in these geographic areas.

DoD continues to reserve a portion of the vaccine supply for contingency use by other federal agencies. The Office of Homeland Security heads the planning effort among federal agencies for use of the vaccine.

Anthrax remains one of the top biological warfare threats to U.S. troops. Vaccination is the safest and most reliable way to protect U. S. Forces from a potential threat that is highly lethal, even with early treatment. Since June 2002, DoD has vaccinated more than

750,000 service members with more than 2.2 million doses of anthrax vaccine. Refusals among service members leading to separations from the service have been extremely rare since 2002, only four per 100,000 persons vaccinated.

Because of its contagiousness, smallpox is also considered a top biological warfare threat. It can cause a severe rash covering the whole body that can leave permanent scars, high fever, severe headaches or backaches. Smallpox infection kills about three out of ten people infected. This disease, as a bioweapon, can generate significant consequences and critically interrupt military operations. Since December 2002, DoD has vaccinated more than 625,000 service members.

The Department continues to work aggressively with the Department of Health and Human Services, using a new federal coordinating committee and the Bioshield Legislation to prioritize and develop new and better vaccines and other medical countermeasures for biological threats to civilians and the military.

More information about the Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program is at <http://www.anthrax.mil/>; and about the Smallpox Vaccination Program at <http://www.smallpox.mil> .

TRIBUTE TO OUR FALLEN HEROS

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Friends, Family Pay Tribute to Soldier Killed In Iraq

The Associated Press

July 2, 2004, Friday, 12:09 AM Eastern Time

A North Carolina soldier who died in Iraq was trying to protect the soldiers in his unit when he was killed, his commanding officer told mourners at his funeral Thursday.

About 500 people filled a church to honor Capt. Christopher Cash, a man they remembered as a natural leader who always tried to help others.

Cash, 36, of Winterville, was an infantry officer and company commander in the N.C. **National Guard**. He was in a Bradley armored vehicle leading his company June 24 in Baqubah, Iraq, when insurgents attacked with small arms and rocket propelled grenades. He was shot as he shouted from his vehicle for his men to take cover, said Lt. Col. David Barnhill.

"I'm going to miss that big smile," Barnhill said. "But if there's one thing that can be good today, it's that as long as America has men like Chris Cash ... then this country is going to remain strong."

Cash's **National Guard** unit was activated Oct. 1, according to a release from the North Carolina **National Guard**.

Cash, an exercise physiologist, leaves behind his wife, Dawn, and two sons, Mathew, 11, and Christopher, 13, from a previous marriage. Mathew and Christopher live in Rocky

Mount with their mother, Samantha Cheatham.

Many of Cash's co-workers at ViQuest, a health and fitness center in Pitt County, attended the funeral.

ViQuest will not be the same without him, said Cash's friend and fellow soldier, Capt. Patrick Heines, who returned from Iraq in the spring.

"It will be hard to work out and not see Chris," he said.

Barnhill said Cash was an excellent leader.

"Chris turned out to be a great commander - competent, capable, hardworking and he had the ability to inspire those underneath him," he said.

At his burial, Cash was posthumously awarded a Bronze Star for meritorious service, a Purple Heart for being injured in battle and a combat infantryman.

Soldiers carried Cash's casket, fired a salute and presented an American flag to his widow at the cemetery.

"The North Carolina **National Guard** lost a great soldier and a great leader and America lost a great son," Barnhill said.

Cash grew up in Old Orchard Beach, Maine, and graduated from East Carolina University.

"Christopher Cash died a hero, and on this day his country, his community, his church would like to say thank you," said David Brownlee, pastor of Covenant United Methodist Church.

GENERAL

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U.S. Army National Guard Expands Polycom Voice and Video Network as Part of Communications Modernization Plan

TMCnet.com-Business Wire

June 29, 2004

Pleasanton, Calif.

Polycom's Rapid Momentum in Federal Space Continues with **National Guard** Deployment of 32 MGC Network Bridges That Seamlessly Facilitate Voice and Video Calls with Multiple Participants across Mixed Networks

Polycom(R), Inc. (Nasdaq:PLCM), a leader in unified collaborative communications solutions, today announced that the United States National Guard Bureau, working through federal systems contractor Science Applications International Corporation

(SAIC), has awarded Polycom reseller AGT the contract for equipping 32 of its Joint Forces Headquarters (JFHQ) offices with Polycom's MGC(TM) multipoint control units (MCUs). This implementation of 32 new MGC-50 and MGC-100 conference bridges, combined with the existing 22 MGC systems already deployed within the National Guard, will complete the deployment of the MGC platform in all 54 JFHQ locations. Polycom's robust MGC platform is enabling Unified Collaborative Communication today for the Guard by facilitating voice and video calls with multiple participants and among mixed IP and ISDN networks, both domestically and overseas. In addition, thanks to its inherent scalability, the MGC line is able to meet the agencies needs as its video network grows.

The **National Guard Bureau** is in the process of modernizing its communications capabilities to optimize response time and readiness, and the ability to facilitate and participate in multipoint voice and video calls across multiple networks is vital to meet this goal," said Susan Dix of the Joint Staff Architecture Branch of the **National Guard**. "We've been impressed with the high quality and reliability of Polycom's video conferencing systems and found that its MGC solutions offer the same, as well as the ability to natively bridge across multiple IP and ISDN networks."

Earlier this year, the National Guard equipped the offices of its 54 adjutant generals with Polycom ViewStation(R) video conferencing systems, adding to its extensive nationwide Polycom video network. The addition of Polycom's MGC MCUs allows the National Guard to connect with multiple participants in both voice and video calls for applications like training, operations, state emergency response and morale and welfare programs for deployed troops. The MGC MCUs also enable gateway communications across multiple IP and ISDN networks, so the National Guard is able to easily connect with existing systems in both internal and external organizations from universities and hospitals all over the world, to the US Governors' offices and the Pentagon.

Polycom's MGC conferencing solutions lead the industry in high-quality multipoint and gateway conferencing support and it is the strength of the MGC platform that will carry us into the future," said Barry Morris, vice president of Polycom Federal Systems. "Combined with the MGC's flexible architecture, Polycom's network conferencing technology is positioned well to meet the requirements of customers like the Army National Guard and it is extremely gratifying to work with the organization as it expands its Polycom voice and video communications network."

"SAIC is happy to once again be working with the **National Guard** to further its modernization efforts through the deployment of innovative voice and video conferencing solutions," said Lisa Daniels, vice president with SAIC. "Polycom's conference bridging systems are ideally suited to help the **National Guard** meet its mission-critical objectives for facilitating conferencing both at the state and federal levels."

About SAIC

SAIC is the largest employee-owned research and engineering company in the United States, providing information technology, systems integration and eSolutions to

commercial and government customers. SAIC engineers and scientists work to solve complex technical problems in national and homeland security, energy, the environment, space, telecommunications, health care, and logistics. With annual revenues of \$6.7 billion, SAIC and its subsidiaries, including Telcordia Technologies, have more than 43,000 employees at offices in more than 150 cities worldwide. More information about SAIC can be found at www.saic.com.

About Polycom

Polycom, Inc. is the world's technology leader of high-quality, easy-to-use video, voice, data and web conferencing and collaboration solutions. The Polycom Office(TM) is our continued commitment to make distance communications as natural and interactive as being there by providing best-in-class conferencing solutions that are interoperable, integrated and intuitive to the user. The Polycom Office is based on industry standards and supported by an open architecture that promotes interoperability in multi-vendor environments and complements leading network infrastructure platforms. For additional information, call 1-800-POLYCOM (765-9266) or +1-408-526-9000, or visit the Polycom web site at www.polycom.com.

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Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group Signs Statement of Support for The National Guard and Reserve

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PR Newswire

July 1, 2004, Thursday

At a ceremony held at its World Headquarters in Tulsa, Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group, Inc. (NYSE: DTG) today signed a Statement of Support for the **National Guard and Reserve**.

Representatives, who are all volunteers, from the Oklahoma Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), an agency of the Department of Defense, joined Gary L. Paxton, President and CEO of Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group, Inc. in signing the document.

According to Col. Gary W. Jackson (Ret.), the Executive Director for the ESGR Committee in Oklahoma, "Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group is one of those companies who go above and beyond what the law says companies must do to protect the jobs of returning Guard and Reserve members from active duty by supplementing the military pay should it be less than their pay with the company. It also offers to continue or cancel any coverage in benefit plans.

"It is an honor to be a part of the ceremony when a major Oklahoma employer, such as Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group, publicly shows their support for its employees who are

Citizen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen or Marines."

Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group has a number of employees who are currently on active duty and have more still who have returned to their civilian jobs after being activated.

"Certainly, businesses encounter inconveniences when citizen soldiers are fulfilling their training and service requirements. Those disruptions, though, are minor when considering the extraordinary sacrifice and commitment of these employees to protect America. We are committed to doing everything we can to protect them," said Gary Paxton.

About ESGR

ESGR is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972 whose mission is to gain and maintain active support from all public and private employers for the men and women of the **National Guard** and Reserve as defined by demonstrated employer commitment to employee military service.

About Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group, Inc.

Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group, Inc. is a Fortune 1000 Company headquartered in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Driven by the mission, Value Every Time, the Company's brands, Dollar Rent A Car and Thrifty Car Rental, serve value-conscious travelers in approximately 70 countries. Dollar and Thrifty have approximately 800 corporate and franchised locations in the United States and Canada, and they have operations at most major airports. The Company's more than 7,000 employees are located mainly in North America, but global service capabilities exist through an ever expanding franchise network. For additional information, visit <http://www.dtag.com> .

End

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