



Department of Texas Headquarters

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★ **Teresa Johniken, DAV Adjutant**

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We had a great 2016 Department Convention. I believe that the Commanders Banquet was the best yet. I would like to acknowledge those who made donations to the Department Service Fund and give thanks for their support.

CHAP DONATIONS		CHAP PLEDGES	
Chap 3	\$ 500	Chap 14	\$200
Chap 6	\$ 200	Chap 42	\$200
Chap 32	\$ 500	Chap 61	\$500
Chap 36	\$ 200	Chap 95	\$150
Chap 41	\$ 500		
Chap 126	\$ 200	PERSONAL DONATIONS	
Chap 128	\$2000	David Sweeney	\$100
Chap 137	\$ 200	Jim Ernst	\$100
Chap 150	\$ 125	Ralph Marchesano	\$200
Chap 157	\$ 200	PERSONAL PLEDGES	
Chap 169	\$ 100	Karla Clark	\$ 40
Chap 219	\$ 200	Jay Johnson	\$100
Chap 234	\$ 500	Charles Edwards	\$200
Chap 26 by Ron Hearne	\$ 200		



I was also handed \$100 with a note on a napkin that the donation was from a child who had earned the money on their own. I do not know who the child is but I do know this is a child that we all should be proud of.

Thank you for all you do in order to carry forth our mission of Fulfilling Our Promises made to the Men and Women who served.

REMINDER TO CHAPTERS: Financial Reports are due. If you have questions or need assistance completed your report, please don't hesitate to contact Department Headquarters. Brad and I are happy to help in any way we can.

Teresa Johniken

NEWS BULLETIN

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 6

JULY/AUGUST 2016

CHARTERED BY ACT OF CONGRESS 1932

★ **Dr. Charles Edwards, DAV Commander**

commander@davtexas.org

COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

To every heart there comes a time supreme, one day, one night, one morning, one evening, one hour, one moment opportune, when another ambition has been fulfilled, when another goal has been accomplished, when another dream has been realized. My fellow members of DAV Department of Texas, indeed, I am privileged and thankful to be elected as the Commander of this great Department.

I am thankful to you for giving me fellow DAV Officers who can meet the demands of the times in which we now live and serve. I am thankful for Fellow DAV Officers, veterans who have great minds, strong hearts, true faith, and ready hands. These DAV Officers are veterans whom the lust of office does not kill, veterans whom the spoil of office cannot buy.

Yes, my fellow officers possess opinions of value and convey strong determination for this Department to be successful in meeting our goals and objectives, in meeting our commitment to the mission, vision and values of the Disabled American Veterans. My fellow DAV Officers are veterans who believe in God, our State, and our great Country.

I must express also my appreciation to all past DAV Commanders of this Department who were present for this past convention: Larry Geddie, Rex Lloyd, Teresa Johniken, James Hackney, Tom Parker and Tim Lindsey. My thanks to our immediate past Commander, Jay Johnson – Sir, you have been a shining example of commitment to service and a thoughtful mentor to me and many other members within the DAV, Department of Texas. My thanks to all past and present chapter commanders and all members of the DAV, for your commitment to service, fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served.

As a future challenge for this coming year, I ask all of you to help in taking our membership/recruitment action plan to the next level. Every DAV member shares the responsibility for identifying

and inviting prospective members join the DAV. Indeed, our future as a Veteran Service Organization depends on the fulfilling of that given responsibility.

We must remember that in addition to providing willing hands for service and other activities, new members bring new ideas, new outlooks, and new enthusiasm to our organization. Therefore, it our inherent duty as members of DAV to ensure that this organization is fully prepared to serve the next generation, whether we wish to believe it or not, each of us makes up the current foundation for the future of the Disabled American Veterans.

Some additional challenges for the upcoming year will therefore include:

Number One: DAV Membership/Recruitment Program. We plan to offer the Recruiting Achievement Award at our next convention to the person who has recruited, organized and established a new chapter.

Number Two: The establishment of the DAV, Department of Texas Eighty Year Celebration program committee. We will celebrate our 80th year as a department in 2018. We will also elect our next National Commander, one of our own, a very good friend and colleague, Dennis Nixon. Therefore, we must start now and plan for historical achievement.

Number Three: This year I made a one-year appointment of a Veterans Suicide Prevention Officer for the DAV, Department of Texas. We are losing too many of our brothers and sisters and anything that we can do as a Veterans Service Organization, we must begin now.

Fifty-five years ago, on January 20, 1961, President John Fitzgerald Kennedy shared these famous words with all of us at the conclusion of his inauguration address:

“The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it – and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you, and what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of mankind.”

On this day, I challenge all of us to continue and ask what we can do in support of our great organization, the Disabled American Veterans.

Now, let all of us remember that the energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will be a new

beginning for the DAV, Department of Texas and for all those who serve within our state – the glow from our commitment to service will enable all of us to keep the balance as we meet the challenge for the next twelve months.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless the Disabled American Veterans. God bless the State of Texas and may Got continue to bless the United State of America, the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Dr. Charles W. Edwards Jr.

★ Robert Squyres, Membership Chairman
svicemdr@davtexas.org

Well, here we are. The 2016 convention is over. The delegates that you chose to represent you at the convention have elected new officers and we are honored to have Dr. Charles Edwards as our newly elected Commander, to lead us through this next year. There is so much turmoil in the world today we need such great leadership for this 2016 – 2017 year.

The membership year is coming to a close, and we have not achieved goal. The goal for The Department of Texas for the membership year 2015-2016 was 58,932, as of June 20, 2016 we had 58,839. We are at 99.84% or 93 short. By the time you get this we will probably be past the deadline of June 30, 2016. I will be working until then to try to obtain our goal.

We will receive our goal for 2016 – 2017 the first part of July. I am personally looking for a fantastic membership year for 2016 – 2017. I expect each Chapter to surpass this year’s membership. I promise that Chapter 139 which had 104.4% of goal at Department Convention will have at least 110% of goal at the 2017 Department Convention. Next issue I will have goals to share with you, and what I hope we can achieve.

Why is membership important? There are many reasons given, but I feel the main reason is: The more members we have, the more people we have helping Veterans. Helping veterans and their families is the only purpose of the DAV.

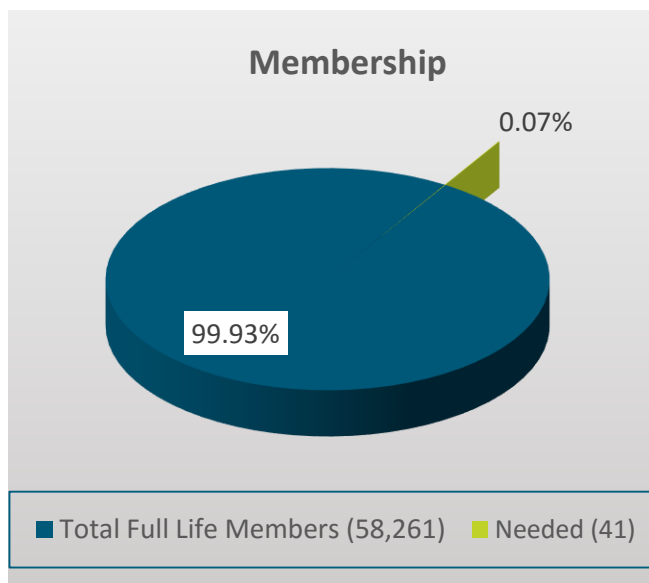
More members mean: more people to get involved with veteran’s issues. More people to host local employment and hiring workshops. More people to host Workshops for Women Veterans. Workshops to help prepare veterans enrolling in VA and filing claims. More people to help veterans and their families that are in need. Membership

is not about bragging rights, rather it is about strength in numbers.

Another important reason for membership is: strength in our legislative process. We need numbers to show our state and federal legislators how many people their decisions effect. It not only effects the veteran, but it effects their families as well.

Please remember "UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL". We must ensure our comrades receive what was promised them, "GOD BLESS OUR VETERANS" and "GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA"

Robert Squyres



★ Anita Lee, DAVA Commander
anitaleedava@gmail.com

Thank you! I am so honored to have been elected as your Auxiliary State Commander for the great state of Texas.

Congratulations to Commander Dr. Charles Edwards and his newly elected line officers.

Let me introduce to you our newly elected line officers. Congratulations to you all. I know that this will be an exciting and productive year for all of our auxiliary members.

Charlene Parker – Sr. Vice Commander
Gay Lynn Lee – 1st. Jr. Vice Commander
Cherie Hansard – 2nd Jr. Vice Commander
Fannie Lowe – Chaplain
Patty Rapisand – Judge Advocate
Darlene Spence – Adjutant/Treasurer

We need to work on our membership program right from the beginning of the year in order to meet our goal of 100% quota for the year 2016/2017. With the extended membership program put in place in recent years, we have the opportunity to reach out further into our communities to promote the growth of our organization. I encourage each membership chairman to setup membership drives in your area. Your continue support will be paramount to the success of our future.

With the beginning of this New Year, let us keep our eyes "Looking towards the Future through Windows of the Past". We continue to search for better ways and new ideas to help our veterans. We as Texans say "things are always bigger in Texas" so let us all put our best foot forward and show our veterans that we are committed to service to both the veteran and their family.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you as Commander. I am looking forward to working with each of you in the coming year.

Make your plans to attend the DAV National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia from Friday, July 29th through Wednesday, August 3, 2016. It will be a great opportunity to meet new friends, exchange ideas and explore more information regarding the DAV and DAV Auxiliary.

Anita Lee

★ Darlene Spence, DAVA Adjutant
psdspence@aol.com

This year's State Convention is now behind us, but the memories of a successful work year will remain. Speaking of memories, how about the Saturday night 70's theme? The decorated dinner tables and members dressed in costumes from the 70's era gave us reasons to sit back, reminisce and enjoy a wonderful evening of good food and music.

An oversized Texas thank you to all who donated items, and to all others who participated in the State Department DAV Auxiliary's fundraising project. It was a very successful fundraiser and you can continue to support the Auxiliary by purchasing one or more of the remaining t-shirts for yourself and/or your family members. You may call or send me an email and I will gladly mail your order to you.

Congratulations to our newly elected line officer's. Commander Lee's theme, "Looking forward to the future thru windows of the past" lets us know to anticipate an

exciting year of challenges to help our veterans and their families have a better future.

Remember the National Convention is just around the corner and I hope to see Texas have a record breaking number of members in attendance. Our State Commander Anita Lee and our National 1st Jr, Vice Commander Craig Johniken need our support. The strength of our organization is dependent upon our ability to seek new and improved ways to assist our veterans. If I can help, please don't hesitate to contact me at 210-322-1910 or davatexas20@gmail.com. I am eager to do my part and I encourage you to do the same.

“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”

– Mahatma Gandhi

Darlene Spence

★ John Gragowski, DAV DEC District I

decdist1@davtexas.org

Lubbock, Chapter 44 held elections:

Commander - Robert Simmons
Sr Vice - Laurie Urias
1st Jr Vice - John Davenport
2nd Jr Vice - Denise Estenson
Adjutant - John Gragowski
Treasurer - Harry Carroll
Chaplin - Rod Manning

Meetings are every 2nd Saturday of the month at 1100 hrs
- meal to follow.

Taylor County Chapter 36 recently gave an appreciation award to Gloria Hickman celebrating 36 years of dedicated service to the community and Hubert Smith celebrating 33 years of dedicated service to the community and DAV. Chapter 36 is very grateful to have such dedicated members.

We are starting a new OEF/OIF PTSD group.
Place: 2555 Grape St, Abilene TX
When: Every Tuesday starting 26 April 2016
Time: 1400-1500

John Gragowski

★ Tom Archer, DAV DEC District II

decdist2@davtexas.org

The time of the Department Convention has come and gone, but memories were made. The disco theme for the banquet was great, most enjoyable. Don't put your luggage away too far, the National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia is fast approaching.

Much has been achieved in the past year, but much is yet to be done. Until the last veteran has come home and achieves a way of life deserving that which they so richly deserve, our work must continue.

The map to a more accurate route to achieve the most for our comrades can only be achieved through our combined efforts. Those efforts shall be outlined at the National Convention in Atlanta. I encourage each of you to plan on being there the last weekend in July.

Tom Archer

★ Ron Minter, DAV DEC District III

decdist3@davtexas.org

I would like to begin by saying how great it was seeing everyone again at the Department Convention. As we move forward and continue our mission of service I want to share an upcoming event. DAV Chapter 3 will be partnering with the VA Medical Center in Waco on October 1st as they host the 28th Annual Program Graduates Reunion. The reunion is designed to join staff and supporters of the PTSD residential treatment program as they celebrate 28 years of serving combat veterans. There will be live entertainment, car show, and a catered meal for the Veteran's, their families and VA Medical Center staff. Please feel free to join us at the VA Medical Center in Waco on October 1st from 10 am to 3 pm. This is not only a great opportunity to show our support, but also a chance to bring DAV to the forefront and a general awareness of our programs and services.

Additionally, I want to encourage all of you to foster a relationship with your local VA Medical Centers, outpatient facilities, etc. and determine their needs. These facilities usually have a "needs list" that can be obtained upon request. This provides an opportunity for us to partner with our community leaders and businesses in helping meet the needs of our Veteran's. These types of initiatives and events will further ensure our legacy of service to Veteran's. And, when conducting such events, PLEASE remember that you're volunteering your time in

service to Veteran's and needs to be reported through DAV's LVAP program.

Ron Minter

★ Jennifer Kellogg, Women Veterans

jennifer.kellogg@va.gov

I am a woman.

I served in the military.

I am a veteran.

I would like to thank Commander Edwards for allowing me to be the Department of Texas Women's Veterans Coordinator. I appreciate the honor and am cognizant of the responsibility bestowed upon me.

I am a veteran. I am the daughter, step-daughter, sister, cousin, niece, granddaughter, great-granddaughter and infinitum of a veteran. Myself, my mother, father, step-father, brother, cousins, uncle, and grandfather have all served in the Armed Forces. If my lineage is traced, my family has offered to lay down their lives for this Great Nation since its very foundation. It is a family tradition to serve. We have served in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps. We have served in times of war and peace, in times of trial and truce.

Comrades, we could focus on the diversity of my family's service, we could point out that this one volunteered and that one was drafted. We could focus on our different branches. We could point out that this one served 2 years and that one served 22. Or we could look at what we have in common: a heart for service, a love of country, a willingness to die for what we believe in; the principles of a Great Nation.

Women veterans often feel overlooked and forgotten. If we remember that only 1% of the population has served, and that women make up 15.7% of the 1% we realize that a mere .157% of the Nation's population are female veterans. That is only about 500,000 women. It is very likely that the person that is thanking our husband or our brother for their service is not trying to slight us, but has simply not made the connection that we may be one in a half million women in the nation who has worn the uniform.

So what do we do? We educate the public. We acknowledge our service. We don't ask for special acknowledgement we ask for the same acknowledgement. We wear our "I am a veteran" shirt or hat with pride. We tell our war stories. We acknowledge that we are veterans, that our female comrades are veterans. We thank each other for the service we gave,

and continue to give to our Nation. Mother Teresa said "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples."

I am a woman.

I served in the military.

Jennifer Kellogg

★ Glen Towery, Suicide Prevention

suicideprevention@davtexas.org

On Sunday, June 14, 2016, I was appointed the very first state of Texas Suicide Prevention Chairman by newly elected Texas State DAV Commander, Charles Edwards. It is an honor and a privilege to serve under the administration and guidance of Commander Edwards and I have pledged to do my best to define this position and live up to the importance of my newly appointed title. I am tasked with finding a way to determine the amount of and decrease the incidences of veteran suicide among the DAV members in Texas.

It is important to me that you understand a little more about who I am and a little personal history and how this appointment came to be. I am a native Texan born in El Paso, in 1952.

My father was stationed at Fort Bliss and I was born there in an army hospital. My father, Stonewall Towery, was a Buffalo Soldier and was, subsequently, sent to Korea where he fought and was captured and held for about 75 days. My family has a tradition of military service. My bother Stonewall served in the United States Navy during the Vietnam conflict. My first cousin, Banqui Parker, was a helicopter machine gunner in Vietnam and served with the 101st Airborne Division. I have two sisters, Stephanie Johnson, US Marine Corps, retired and my famous sister, Vecepia Towery, who won a million dollars on the popular television show Survivor, served as an officer in the Air Force. Last, but not least, is my son Keith Towery, who also served in the United States Marine Corps and is a combat veteran of the Iraq war.

I served in Vietnam from 1970 to 1971 on the destroyer USS Rupertus DD851. I was in combat aboard that ship numerous times and we earned a Special Citation from the Secretary of the Navy for meritorious valor while engaging the enemy in combat. Also, I was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Stars. I was medically evacuated from Vietnam and sent to the Oakland Naval

Hospital where, soon after recovery, I was honorably discharged in San Francisco, California.

After being discharged, I didn't realize that my real fight would begin with a condition I couldn't see, explain, nor realize was there. A condition that would lead me to try to kill myself in order to cope with the internal pain and unchecked emotions and feelings that were swelling up inside of me. It would eventually lead me to self-medicate with alcohol and drugs and, yes, eventually to homelessness. When I came out of military service there was no such thing as PTSD. No one knew that it existed. There were labels for my condition such as "Shell Shock" or "Battle Fatigue", but these conditions were treated as though they would, with time, dissipate and go away. However, my condition did not go away and I have battled it ever since, even now.

Since PTSD was diagnosed as a real condition, and after several years of therapy and the support of a loving family and friends, I have been able to manage it and live a productive and relatively happy life.

In the coming months, I will work with Commander Charles Edwards making recommendations that offer solutions to this problem of veteran suicides throughout America and our DAV organizations statewide.

This is not something that one person can perfect on their own, rather it will take the best and the brightest of us to make it work.

Glenn Towery

★ Fannie Lowe, DAVA Chaplain

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I am very grateful to have the privilege of serving as your chaplain for the 2016–2017 DAVA year. To be of service to you, our veterans and their families as well as others is a special benefit that gives me great joy and satisfaction. I believe that the gift of service to our fellow comrades is in its self a legacy that lives on through us, and should never be allowed to perish.

During this year may we strive to be more compassionate, giving, kind and loving.

Proverbs 14:31 states, "Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honor Him." Although we cannot assist every veteran who is in need, we can pray for God to send help wherever it is needed. Many veterans and their families are within our

reach, therefore let us begin this New Year with the knowledge that we can fulfill our DAVA Purpose. We can help secure a better future for our veterans by working together; remaining committed to the organization; volunteering where we can; reaching out to bring in new members; being supportive where ever we go; and, remembering each other in our daily prayers.

I'm looking forward to the future through eyes of a servant. If I can be of service and support, please allow me to do so. You may request any services that I, as your State of Texas DAV Auxiliary

Chaplain can provide. You may contact me by phone at (512) 461-2924; by mail at 20605 Raptor Roost Rd., Pflugerville, TX 78660; or, at e-mail address, fannielowe@aol.com.

Fannie Lowe

★ Howard Ray, Legislative

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1. Tell Your Members of Congress to Improve VA Health Care: Politicians, pundits and politically-motivated organizations are using the national crisis in access to care at the Department of Veterans Affairs as justification to dismantle and privatize the VA health care system, with some even proposing that veterans be charged for their service-connected care. The VFW says no! Contact your members of Congress and let them know that VA health care reform must be based on the needs and preferences of veterans, not political rhetoric: <http://capwiz.com/vfw/issues/alert/?alertid=72925626>.

2. House Hearing on VA Paper Record Management: The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on Wednesday to discuss the management of paper records within the Veterans Benefits Administration. The hearing was called after the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General investigated 438,000 documents that regional offices had been shredding. According to VAOIG, 155 of those documents were related to veterans' claims, and 130 of them were inappropriate to shred and either affected or could have affected someone's claim. VBA defended itself by saying the issue was a human error, while VAOIG argued it was a systematic error. To watch the hearing, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7OC7Sk0C4U>.

3. House Hearing on Strategies for Veterans Seeking Jobs: The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing Wednesday to discuss

innovative ways to help veterans seeking employment in the modern world. Last month, the committee discussed how to better place veterans in technologically based jobs. This month was a continuance of that discussion, but was more focused on the holistic approach of how to best place veterans successfully into the economy. To watch the hearing, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLsIOr3fzFI>.

4. Senate Passes Defense Authorization: On Tuesday, the Senate passed its version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. While S. 2943 calls for \$206 billion in spending, it also calls on retirees to pay more for their health care, provides less housing assistance to married military couples, and provides only a 1.6 percent pay increase for our active force. The bill also requires women to register with the Selective Service System, and includes language that would require discharge review boards to give liberal consideration to petitions to discharge status if the service members have PTSD, TBI or related conditions to their military service. It is clear that sequestration and arbitrary budget caps are forcing DOD and Congress to push cost burdens onto our military families and retirees. As the differences between the Senate and House versions are negotiated through the conference process, the VFW will work to mitigate the financial burdens placed on our service members, their families and retirees.

5. White House Summit on United State of Women: Over 5,000 women gathered on Tuesday and Wednesday this week in Washington, D.C., for the first ever White House Summit on The United State of Women. In attendance at the event were President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Attorney General Loretta Lynch, Oprah Winfrey, Amy Poehler and many more. Throughout the two-day event, panel discussions were held on important topics for women, including health care, education, violence against women and women in the military. Dr. Jill Biden, who was not able to attend, recorded a video discussing women in the military, issues

they come across and the amazing things they do for our country. Following her video, Gen. Lori Robinson, commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command, made remarks to the crowd regarding her experiences and pride toward females who serve our country. To learn more about the summit, visit: <http://www.theunitedstateofwomen.org/>. To watch Gen. Robinson's remarks, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQpi2BpvcIw>.

6. SCOTUS Rules for Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses: The Supreme Court of the United States ruled unanimously against the Department of Veterans Affairs yesterday for failing to comply with a law aimed at increasing the number of federal contracts awarded to disabled veteran-owned small businesses. The eight justices sided with Kingdomware Technologies, a disabled veteran-owned contractor based in Maryland, which VA did not consider as a potential contractor when it awarded a contract to a company that did not qualify as a veteran-owned small business. Federal law requires government agencies to use a bidding process if two or more disabled veteran-owned companies can offer service at a fair and reasonable price. A federal appeals court ruled VA did not have to follow the "Rule of Two" if it otherwise met the government's goal of awarding between 7 and 12 percent of all contracts to veteran-owned small businesses. In overturning the lower court ruling, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas said meeting annual benchmarks does not allow VA to ignore a mandatory contracting rule; that it applied to all contract determinations. Read the 16-page ruling at: www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/15pdf/14-916_6j37.pdf.

2016-2017 DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS OFFICERS AND APPOINTEES



2016-2017 AUXILIARY STATE OF TEXAS LINE OFFICERS



For More Pictures from the Department Convention and Commander's Banquet,
visit our Facebook page at [fb.com/davtexas](https://www.facebook.com/davtexas).

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