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Monthly Newsletter
June 2025

North Central MN Chapter #7
PO Box 564
Bemidji, MN 56619



NEXT MEETING:
DAV Headquarters at

5441 15th Street NW, Bemidji, MN
Monday, June 16 at 6:30pm

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COMMANDER:	Gene Schwantes - (218) 556-4592
SENIOR VICE:	Darrel Baltzell
JUNIOR VICE:	Tom Annonson
ADJUTANT:	Jeff Meyer
SERVICE OFFICERS:	Tom Annonson - (218) 251-3025
TREASURER:	Jeri Harvey
CHAPLAIN:	Mike Gutz - (218) 444-5015
JUDGE ADVOCATE:	Ward Sutton
SERGEANT AT ARMS:	Bruce Tiegen
OFFICER OF THE DAY:	Glenn Aagard
LEGISLATIVE OFFICER:	Joe Vene
HISTORIAN:	Vacant
EXEC. COMMITTEE:	Bruce Tiegen, Gary Guggenberger, Andy Staudt, Henry Hammerback, Jim Pinsonnault

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

June 1st - Ride for the Troops	July 4th - Independence Day
June 1st - Shavuot begins	July 6th - Bemidji Jaycees Water Carnival Grand Parade at 1300 Hrs.
June 2nd -- DAV Chapter 7 Executive Committee meeting 1630 Hrs.	July 7th -- DAV Chapter 7 Executive Committee meeting 1630 Hrs.
June 8th - Pentecost	July 21st -- DAV Chapter 7 General Membership meeting 1830 Hrs.
June 14th - Flag Day Celebration at Ralph Gracie Park with the Elks and American Legion at 11AM.	July 25th - 27th -- Lake George Blueberry Festival
June 15th - Father's Day	July 26th -- Blackduck Woodcarvers Arts and Crafts Festival 9 am-4 pm
June 16th -- DAV Chapter 7 General Membership meeting 1830 Hrs.	
June 19th - Juneteenth, Celebration of the Emancipation of enslaved African Americans.	
June 27th - PTSD Awareness Day	
July 2nd - Bemidji Jaycees Water Carnival Starts. Fireworks Display at Dusk	



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COMMANDER'S CORNER

Greetings Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope everyone is doing well and will be able to enjoy a great summer here in God's country with family and friends. (hopefully we don't have any more freeze warnings) Remember, safety first, rumor has it that a couple of us might have gotten a little bit older and parts of us might break, tear, pop or get misaligned easier than they used to, so take it easy and enjoy the entire summer or, GO FOR IT AND THROW CAUTION TO THE WIND AND ACT LIKE THE TEENAGER THAT YOUR MIND THINKS YOU ARE AND SHOW THE WORLD YOU CAN STILL DO IT!

We had another great Chapter meeting last night, the highlight was the discussion on next year's annual budget. That is where, if you were in attendance, you would have had an opportunity to have input on where the Chapter spends its money. Again, next year's budget has no DAV Henry rifles or new trucks, but it does have our annual SUMMER PICNIC, WHICH IS TENTATIVELY SET FOR AUGUST 23RD, THE TIME IS YET TO BE DETERMINED, BUT I HEARD THAT FOR SURE THERE WILL BE SOME FANTASTIC DOOR PRIZES AND GREAT FOOD. Make your plans now to attend and have a great time!!! There are always opportunities at DAV to get involved, (like being next year's Commander or Treasurer), partake in good comradery, and have opportunities to help fellow Veterans.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, need medical equipment or are interested in an officer position, please give me a call, I will be happy to do whatever I can to help.

Veteran, serving Veterans,
Gene Schwantes

AUXILIARY COMMANDER'S CORNER

Hello all,

May was a busy month ending with the Memorial Day remembrance ceremonies on Monday the 26th. I hope you all were able to attend one of the observational celebrations for our fallen service men and women in your area.

I am looking forward to our June meeting on the 16th and hope to see you there.


Lindey J. Moe

MILITARY HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCE DAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:

- June 6 – Anniversary of the World War II – Allied invasion in Normandy, France, now known as D-Day.
- June 14 – Flag Day – A Day to celebrate the adoption of the U.S. flag.
- June 14 – Army Birthday
- June 23 – Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday
- June 27 – National PTSD Awareness Day – A Day to bring awareness about issues related to PTSD.



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THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER #7 REGULARLY CONVENED ON 19 MAY 2025 AT 1830.

OPENING CEREMONY: * OPENING PRAYER * PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A. ROLL CALL of OFFICERS to determine if a quorum is present.

Commander	Gene Schwantes	Present
Senior Vice Commander	Darrell Baltzell	Present
Junior Vice Commander	Tom Annonson	Present
Adjutant	Jeff Meyer	Present
Treasurer	Jeri Harvey	Present
Chaplain	Mike Gutz	Present
Judge Advocate	Ward Sutton	Excused
Sergeant-At-Arms	Bruce Tiegen	Present
Officer of the Day	Glen Aagard	Present
Historian	Vacant	N/A

B. Members Present: 15

C. Introduction of Guests or Visitors:

1. Welcome new members George Brook of Bemidji, and Warren Affield of Fosston, welcome!

D. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

1. Motion to accept minutes as read by Tom, 2nd by , the motion carried. There were no additions, subtractions, or modifications.

E. Treasurer's Report:

1. The April treasurer's report was read by Treasurer Jeri, the motion to accept was made by Andy, 2nd by Randy, and the motion was carried.

F. Communications:

1. DAV State has sent us a handy and informative guide to negotiating the many new and special traffic laws and rules. This will be handed over to Tom for inclusion in the newsletter and the Adjutant will keep a copy on file if you desire your own copy.
2. The DAV State Executive Committee approved donations to each of the chapters in the amount of \$3,500 (\$112,000 total), with the stipulation that the funds be used for "helping individual Veterans and or their families that are in need." They are also requesting a report via email or by mail explaining how these funds were spent.
3. Both DAV National and DAV State have congratulated us on our 100-year anniversary. DAV National also sent us a beautiful plaque commemorating our centennial anniversary, which is now hanging in the Chapter 7 headquarters building.
4. DAV State also sent us a letter of recognition and congratulations on achieving our 2023/2024 membership goal (and thank you to Tom, our Jr. Vice, for your efforts in achieving this goal). In addition to the letter, we also received a new battle streamer for our guidon, which was added at the general meeting on 5/19/2025.
5. Beltrami County sent us a letter of proposed changes to commercial billing, which, on first reading, does not appear to impact Chapter 7 at all, but a copy of the letter will be kept in the file should anyone care to reread it.
6. The 2025 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention will be held this year at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas NV. If you have any interest in going, please contact the Adjutant or Commander for all the details pertaining to this event.
7. Veterans Campground on Big Marine Lake sent us a thank you for the previous donations and a request for additional donations. This is a budgeted item, and no further action is required.
8. Bemidji Community Food Shelf has sent us a thank you letter for our donations to them; this is also a budgeted item, and no further action is required.
9. New Salem Lutheran Service Group has sent us a thank you letter for hauling away their garage sale remnants.
10. The VA Fargo office has sent out an informational letter detailing their text reminder program. If you have not participated before, you should consider asking for text reminders for your next VA appt.; they are wonderfully convenient and have kept this writer from missing more than one appt. in the past.

G. Committee Reports:

1. Membership: 2 new members were recognized tonight, George Brook of Bemidji and Warren Affield of Fosston; welcome!
2. Service Officer: Tom reported a total of 7 Veterans whom he helped and/or

referred over to the County Veteran Services Officer for assistance in getting the benefits they earned.

3. Hospital/Sickness and Distress: Mike reported there were several Veteran funerals this past month; however, they were unknown to him, and none were members of the DAV Chapter 7.

4. Legislative: Bidal Duran (district 2a representative) reported the legislative omnibus bill had passed that featured three key Veteran components.

5. Entertainment: NA

6. Publicity and Fundraising: Tom reports the extra newsletters normally given to the Bemidji Veterans Home and CBOC did not get distributed for the month of May due to Tom being out of town but promises that this month will be distributed as usual.

7. Medical Equipment: 10 Issues and 8 Donations.

8. The Scholarship Committee reports that the 2025/2026 school year application process has been closed, and the awardees selected will get notification this week.

H. Executive Committee Action Items:

1. No Executive Committee Actions were sent to the general meeting this month.

I. Old Business: No old business was brought forward to the general meeting.

J. New Business:

1. Veteran in need requested by Darren, Beltrami County Veteran Services office, for an Army Veteran needing help with his electric bill in the amount of \$994.43 dollars. Andy made the motion to help the Veteran up to \$1000; Dave made the 2nd , and the motion carried.
2. Northwoods Caregivers, which provides much-needed transportation to our Veterans, is requesting an additional \$2000; Andy made the motion to approve the \$2000.00 dollars, Dave made the 2nd, and the motion carried.
3. Jeri presented the budget committee's proposal for the 2026 fiscal year budget, along with the surplus of \$15,000 dollars that needed to be added somewhere into the budget to balance it. Suggestions included increasing our support to the following:
 - a. Adult Day services by \$1000.
 - b. The Honor Guards by \$1000.
 - c. MACV increased by \$4000.
 - d. The MN DAV Foundation's transportation program, outdoors program, and the unrestricted categories for a total of \$3000 (\$1000 to each).
 - e. Scholarship Committee increase of \$6000.
 - f. Greenwood Cemetery by \$1000.
 - g. An increase to \$1500 for the Ride for the Troops organization.
 - h. An increase for both the Middle River Goose and Deer hunts of \$1000.00 each.
 - i. Increase support for Northwoods Caregivers by \$1000.00.
 - j. Chapter 41 by \$2000.

All of these suggestions will be sent back to the budget committee for consideration and addition into the proposed budget for fiscal year 2026, and then it will be presented at the June general meeting for final approval by the membership.

K. Good of the Order:

1. A reminder that this year's Memorial Day Ceremony at the Greenwood Cemetery will be starting at 10 AM on the 26th of May.
2. June 26 at 10 AM, DAV Chap 7 will be hosting the Regional Chapter Training. Chapter Officers and appointees are encouraged to attend.

L. Closing Ceremonies performed.

M. Motion to Adjourn: Motion by Mike and 2nd by Tom. Motion carried.

➤ The meeting adjourned at 1954 hrs.

➤ Next meeting 6/16/2025 @1830.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Howdy y'all, what's happening?

It's that time for another article, but this time we have come to the last article in our series about spiritual temperaments, because we have come to the last one - intellectual. So, let's jump right into the questions that allow you to relate, or not relate to this temperament.

As an intellectual:

- I feel closer to God when I learn something new about Him that I did not understand before. My mind needs to be stimulated. It's very important to me that I know exactly what I believe and why.
- I get frustrated when the church focuses too much on feelings and spiritual experiences. As far as I know, it is so important to understand the Christian faith and have a proper doctrine.
- The words concepts and truth are appealing to me.
- I feel close to God when I participate in several hours of uninterrupted study time - reading God's word or good Christian books. I would certainly accept any opportunity to teach or participate in a discussion with a small group.
- A book about church dogmatic (principles and truth) is appealing to me.
- I spend more money on books than on music
- I love to learn.

Well folks this will be a short article for now, but next month we will be looking into the book of Ephesians.

Just a reminder to all those soldiers out there, we are celebrating the 250th birthday of the United States Army as it was first established as the Continental Army on June 14, 1775, under the command of General George Washington. This celebration will take place on June 14, 2025, in Washington D.C., in the form of a military parade. Notice the Continental Army was formed by the Continental Congress, prior to Independence Day (July 2, 1776). Just a bit of trivia info for you, most of the United States Army Posts are in the south.

Alright y'all, have a great summer, stay cool, and be safe.

Blessings,
Mike and Julie Gutz

MINNESOTA: UPCOMING WOMEN VETERANS OUTDOOR EVENTS

Women's trips are designed to introduce and deepen the unique and meaningful benefits of time spent in nature within a safe space inclusive of all women. Join us on a kayak tour of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Experience a series of sea kayaking and hiking day trips from our Little Sand Bay Base Camp.

Contact John Carson at john@davmn.org to signup for one of the following events.

July 17th – July 20th, 2025 or August 21st - August 24th, 2025

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MINNESOTA: RESOURCES FOR WOMEN VETERANS

Main Resources

- DAV Women Veterans
<https://www.dav.org/women-veterans/>
- VA Center for Women Veterans
<https://www.va.gov/womenvet/>
- Women in Military Service for America Memorial
<https://www.womensmemorial.org/>
- Department of Labor – Women Veterans
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/womenveterans>
- National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators
<https://www.naswvc.org/>
- Women Veterans Call Center
855-VA-WOMEN (855) 829-6636
- Foundation for Women Warriors
<https://foundationforwomenwarriors.org/>

Health Resources

- Women Veterans Healthcare
<https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/>
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
[acog.org](http://www.acog.org)
- Endocrine Society
endo-society.org
- Minnesota Endo Warriors
<http://www.mnendowarriors.org/>
- Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality:
glma.org
- Office on Women's Health
womenshealth.gov

- Hormone Health Network
hormone.org
- Healthy Women
healthywomen.org
- National Institutes of Health – Office of Research on Women's Health
<http://orwh.od.nih.gov>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – WiseWoman
cdc.gov/wisewoman
- VA Women's Health Services
<https://www.va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/womens-health-needs/>
- You Matter – Suicide Prevention
<https://youmatter.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/ok-not-ok/>
- The Holistic Psychologist
<https://yourholisticpsychologist.com/>
- National Institute of Mental Health
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/women-and-mental-health/index.shtml>
- MGH Center for Women's Mental Health
<https://womensmentalhealth.org/>
- American Psychiatric Association, Diversity & Health Equity Education – Women
<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/professional-interests/women/womens-mental-health>



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MINNESOTA: UPCOMING DAV MN OUTDOOR EVENTS

The Minnesota DAV Department's Outdoor program has scheduled their upcoming events and posted them on their website. Check them out at: <https://davmn.org/events-activities/events-for-veterans/>

MINNESOTA: MINNFLUENCE

Our voices are louder together. For this reason, DAV of Minnesota innovated an effective platform for Veterans, their families and concerned citizens. MinnFluence is a free, one-of-a-kind tool to ensure Veteran advocates can keep up with current legislative issues and swiftly engage with state lawmakers. "MinnFluencers" will receive updates on progress of legislation for Veterans, their families, and survivors. When important issues arise that could impact DAV of Minnesota arise, subscribers will receive ready-to-send emails to engage their respective elected officials. MinnFluence also allows Minnesotans to easily track how their elected state representatives voted on key Veterans issues. You do not need to be a Veteran to sign up; Veterans, families and the community are invited to join. Together we can build a stronger, louder voice to support the men and women who have served.

To sign up go to <https://davmn.org/about-us/minnfluence/>

NATIONAL: MEMBER NEWS

The link below is to the National's web page that highlights some of the activities of Chapters and members from around the Country. The page has some interesting accounts of the various things that might spark some ideas that other Chapters might consider incorporating in their local areas of influence.

Check it out at <https://www.dav.org/news-media/member-news>

NATIONAL: COMMANDER'S ACTION NETWORK (CAN)

To stay informed and take action to support federal legislation and policies affecting veterans, their families and survivors, please join DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network).

To enroll, go to the DAV.org website and do a search for the "Commander's Action Network" it will direct you to a results page and there you will find the link to sign up and become an active participant in the program. Once you are enrolled you will periodically receive emails with "canned" letters to your individual representatives on legislative matters pertaining to veterans' issues that are currently before them in Congress encouraging them to act on behalf of all veterans that the proposed bill in question is addressing. Simply click the "take action" button at the bottom of the email and the letter will automatically be sent.

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NATIONAL: CHALLENGES VETERANS FACE

There are nearly 16 million veterans in the U.S. as of 2023. In 2024, DAV helped more than 1 million of our heroes address their challenges in positive, life-changing ways.

Every veteran is affected by service. They may face health problems, employment issues, and struggles around accessing their benefits—immediately after service but also in the years to come. These are some of the most common issues they encounter and how DAV can help.

Navigating the Complex World of Benefits

Benefits and policies for veterans continue to change and become more complex from year to year. The system can be hard to navigate. It takes knowledge and persistence to understand what's available, what's required to file the right claims, how to manage appeals and—most importantly—how to see the process through.

To assist, DAV has professional benefits advocates available throughout the U.S. and in Puerto Rico. They're at VA hospitals, at DAV locations and also on installations, and they're ready to counsel service members for claims when they separate or many years later. Last year, there were 561,358 claims presented to the Veterans Benefits Administration under DAV representation for 1,538,112 specific injuries and illnesses and DAV represented claimants received more than \$30.4 billion in benefits.

The Changing Needs of Veterans

The ever-changing face of the military and of service itself means that our veterans require individualized support—for wounds both visible and invisible—over their lifetime, depending on when, where and how they served.

Post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, hearing loss, illnesses caused by toxic exposure and other injuries can show up years later and affect any stage of life. Veterans may lose jobs or face crises. New veteran populations—women, minorities, LGBTQ+ and others—may face inequities. As needs change, as the veteran population changes, DAV offers a lifetime of help to all veterans.

Making the Move to Civilian

Transitioning back to civilian life can be an especially tough time for veterans. “Finding the mission again”—creating a purposeful life through employment, service or education—is critical. Struggles in transition can cause serious problems, including depression, homelessness and increased risk of crisis. Disabled veterans facing disasters or emergencies at this point are especially vulnerable.

This is an important time for the vital services provided by DAV. Our free, professional assistance helps veterans, and their families get the health care, disability, education and financial benefits they earned. We connect them to opportunities for meaningful employment. DAV can provide emergency grants and connect veterans to local help. Most importantly, with DAV, a support network is always available, for a lifetime.



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VA: IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING YOUR VA ID CARD

As a Veteran receiving health care, one of the most crucial assets you possess is your VA ID card. It's imperative to understand why maintaining and updating your VA ID card is essential and how you can ensure it remains functional.

Identification at VA Facilities

Your VA ID card serves as your primary identification at VA facilities. Whether you're seeking medical care, accessing benefits, or attending appointments, this card is vital. It streamlines the identification process, reducing potential human errors and allowing seamless access to your personal files and medical records.

Check-in for Appointments

When you have appointments at VA facilities, your VA ID card is a necessity for check-in. It helps staff quickly verify your identity, ensuring a smooth and efficient process.

Updating Your VA ID Card

If you need to update your VA ID card, visit the enrollment office at your local VA facility. No appointment is necessary for this process. The staff at the enrollment office are there to assist you in updating your information. Don't hesitate to ask any VA employee for guidance or assistance. They are more than willing to help you navigate the process of updating or obtaining a new VA ID card.

Inspecting Your VA ID Card for Serviceability

Image Accuracy

Ensure that the photo on your card accurately reflects your current appearance. If not, it might be time for an update.

Expiration Check

Regularly check the expiration date on your VA ID card. An expired card might hinder your access to services and benefits. If your card has expired or is about to, it's crucial to visit the enrollment office for renewal.

Ensuring Barcode and Card Information Accuracy

Your VA ID card's barcode and information play a pivotal role in swiftly accessing the benefits and services you're entitled to as a veteran. Regularly inspecting and ensuring the integrity of these components is essential for a hassle-free experience when utilizing your card at VA facilities. If you notice any issues with the barcode, information accuracy, or physical wear on the card, promptly address them by seeking a replacement or an update at your nearest VA enrollment office.

Maintaining and updating your VA ID card is pivotal for ensuring a smooth experience when accessing VA services and benefits. Whether for medical care, benefit claims, or appointments, a functional and up-to-date VA ID card simplifies the process. The VA is committed to assisting veterans in this regard, providing the necessary resources and support for a hassle-free experience.

Veterans have sacrificed and served our nation, and the VA ID card is a token of appreciation and commitment to providing the care and support deserved. By keeping your VA ID card current and well-maintained, you're taking a proactive step to ensure that you receive the benefits and services you've rightfully earned through your service to the country.



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VA: BENEFITS FOR SPOUSES, DEPENDENTS, SURVIVORS, AND CAREGIVERS

- **Health and disability benefits for family and caregivers**

For spouse, dependent child, surviving spouse, surviving child, caregiver

Find out if you're eligible for health care or related benefits through CHAMPVA or other programs. And learn about our support for caregivers, including training, counseling, and payments.

- **Survivor compensation**

For surviving spouse, surviving child, surviving parent

Find out if you're eligible for VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA DIC) or a VA Survivors Pension.

- **Education and career benefits for family members**

For spouse, dependent child, surviving spouse, surviving child

Find out if you're eligible for money for school or to help you cover expenses while you're training for a job through our Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance Program (also called Chapter 35) or the Fry Scholarship. And learn about how a Veteran may transfer their unused Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to you.

- **Housing assistance for surviving spouses**

For surviving spouse

Find out if you're eligible for a VA-backed loan to buy, build, improve, or refinance a home. And learn how to manage your loan benefits and avoid foreclosure.

- **Life insurance for family members**

For spouse, dependent child, surviving spouse, surviving child

Find out if you're eligible for Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI) coverage or manage an existing policy. If you're the beneficiary of a Veteran's or service member's policy, find out how to get free financial advice and will preparation services.

- **Burial and memorial benefits for family members**

For spouse, dependent child, surviving spouse, surviving child, surviving parent

Find out if you're eligible to be buried in a VA national cemetery, or learn how to plan a burial for a Veteran. You can also apply for help paying for burial costs, request memorial items, and learn about bereavement counseling.

VA: VA ANNOUNCES \$52 MILLION IN AVAILABLE SUICIDE PREVENTION GRANT FUNDS

Posted on May 21st , 2025

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs today announced the availability of approximately \$52.5 million in grants for community-based organizations that provide suicide prevention or emergency clinical services to Veterans at risk of suicide.

Grant applications are due by 4:59 p.m. ET, July 18, and VA will choose awardees by Sept. 30. Organizations can apply for grants worth up to \$750,000 and may apply to renew awards from year to year throughout the length of the program. Info on how to apply is available at the Federal Register.

The grants will be awarded through VA's Staff Sgt. Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program, which was established as part of the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019. In alignment with VA's National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide, which was developed during the first Trump Administration, Fox Grants foster a public-health approach to suicide prevention that blends community-based efforts with evidence-based clinical strategies.

"Reducing Veteran suicide starts with reaching Veterans when and how it's most convenient for them. One of the best ways to accomplish this mission is by working with community-based organizations," said VA Secretary Doug Collins. "We look forward to ensuring these funds are put to use helping Veterans in need across the nation."

Since its launch in 2022, the Fox grant program has awarded \$157.5 million to 95 organizations across 43 states, U.S. territories and tribal lands.

For more information on the grant program and application process, visit MentalHealth.VA.gov/ssgfox-grants.

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