

181 AIRLIFT SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

395 Fighter Squadron constituted, 24 May 1943

Activated, 1 Jun 1943

Inactivated, 20 Aug 1946

Reconstituted and redesignated 181 Fighter Squadron and allotted to the TX NG, 21 Aug 1946

181 Fighter Squadron (SE) extended federal recognition, 27 Feb 1947

Redesignated 181 Fighter Interceptor Squadron

Redesignated 181 Air Refueling Squadron, Feb 1965

Redesignated 181 Tactical Airlift Squadron, 1 Apr 1978

Redesignated 181 Airlift Squadron, 15 Mar 1992

STATIONS

Westover Field, MA, 1 Jun 1943

Farmingdale, NY, 23 Aug-20 Dec 1943

Greenham Common, England, 13 Jan 1944

Chilbolton, England, 15 Mar 1944

Cardonville, France, 20 Jun 1944

Chartres, France, 27 Aug 1944

Laon/Athies, France, 11 Sep 1944

Chievres, Belgium, 2 Oct 1944

Juvincourt, France, 27 Dec 1944

Metz, France, 5 Jan 1945

Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, 15 Apr 1945

Buchschwabach, Germany, 13 May 1945

Straubing, Germany, 13 Aug 1945-20 Aug 1946

Love Field Airport, Dallas, TX, 10 Jul 1952
Naval Air Station Dallas, TX, 1 Sep 1961
Naval Air Station, Fort Worth, (Carswell), TX, 1 Oct 1988

ASSIGNMENTS

368th Fighter Group, 1 Jun 1943-20 Aug 1946

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-47

P-51

F-84

F-51

F-80, 1955

F-86, 1957

KC-97, 1964

C-130, 1978

Support Aircraft

A-26

AT-6

C-47

L-5

COMMANDERS

Col Pendergast

LTC William J. Erck April, 1950

LTC Felix Alcantara, #1997

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Offensive, Europe

Air Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
Mons, France, 3 Sep 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
1 May 1967-30 April 1969

Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army
6 Jun-30 Sep 1944
16 Dec 1944-25 Jan 1945

Belgian Fourragere

EMBLEM



Over and through a golden orange disc, a white, caricatured, English bulldog, wearing black aviator's helmet and white goggles, holding a piece of gray cloth in the teeth and jaws; a long, gray machine gun cartridge belt with yellow shells draped about shoulders of bulldog, and extending into the foreground. (Approved, 25 Feb 1944)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Combat in ETO, 14 Mar 1944-9 May 1945

In June 16, 1946, the War Department recommended Dallas as the location of radar stations for three units of a new Air National Guard. Gov. Coke Stevenson must approve the recommendations before they became effective," the Dallas News' Washington Bureau reported on June 16, 1946. Major Gen. Fred Walker, commander of the Texas National Guard, told the News from San Antonio that the three radar units, if assigned to Dallas, would be augmented by a Dallas fighter squadron, as yet unnamed. A strong group of National Guardsmen in Houston was seeking to have the three radar units located there, Dallas was

informed. Enlistment in the Air National Guard would be restricted to former servicemen with a maximum of six months' air force experience since Pearl Harbor Day, it was announced. Col, T.C. Castle, a B-25 group commander in the early Southwest which began enlisting personnel and waited for its first P-51 at Hensley in August, 1946. The 136th Fighter Group was to have three squadrons of aircraft in Texas and one in New Orleans "available for call in event of federal mobilization."

To be activated at Hensley Field was the 181st Squadron. Reactivated at Houston, then site of the Air National Guard's wing headquarters, was the 111th Squadron. A & M College, College Station, was named the tentative location for the 182nd Squadron. Castle, a manufacturer's representative in Dallas, conferred with Col. William H. Schwartz Jr. Of Houston, who was named the regular army air instructor for the group. More than 1,000 men will be needed, Castle announced, for the squadrons and for air service groups, weather personnel, a "radar calibration unit," and an aviation engineer unit. Application blanks should be sought by writing the Air National Guard, Hensley Field, Col. Castle announced. The emphasis will be placed on youth and keen competition among the 3,000 to 4,000 Air Force reserves in the area is expected, said Col. Castle. On Tuesday, July 9, 1947, the first three of the P-51 assigned to the 181st Fighter Squadron, arrived at Hensley Field. The full complement of planes expected included also four A-26's, four AT-6's, two C-47's and one L-5. Earlier, a news account noted that the 136th Fighter Group was being activated under Lt. Col. Milton Dean Willis, Deputy Commander, that headquarters for the 181st Fighter Squadron "will be at Hensley Field; the 182nd operates from San Antonio; and the 111th from Houston." A news editorial of these period said that although the first Air Guard unit was formed in New York in 1916, the Air National Guard did not come into its own until 1945, when the War Department extended its mission.

While 500 Dallas men trained at Hensley Field for summer air maneuvers, another 500 rode to Camp Hood for ground maneuvers with the 49th Armored Division. Col. Al Pendergast of Dallas was base commander for the air maneuvers. Fighting for him were former army pilots "who have 176 enemy planes and one enemy warship to their credit." The training that year included flying to Matagorda Island for gunnery practice and to Enid, Oklahoma, for bombing training. Other names still active or still keenly remembered by Texas Air National Guardsmen were heard of in those years. Col. Pendergast was to meet a tragic end in combat in Korea later. Young Lt. Col. William N. Hensley, 33 Bexar County district attorney and son of Hensley Field's namesake, was killed in May, 1951, when his F-84 crashed near Cleveland, Texas. He was commanding officer of the 182nd Fighter Squadron, TANG, and was in San Antonio to bid his family and office staff good-bye before leaving for duty in Korea. His staff gave him a Bible and a Texas Flag, wished him well and saw him off from Kelly AFB around noon that fatal Thursday. About an hour later, the young district attorney with a promising political future crashed into a rice field about 60 miles north of Houston. The son of the noted airplane, balloon and autogyro flyer who died uneventfully in 1929 had, himself, perished violently and while on active duty for his country.

The summer before, the Dallas News noted that Brig. Gen. Harry Crutcher Jr. Had received

federal recognition as a brigadier general in the Air National Guard. Gov. Beauford Jester made the announcement in Austin, noting that Crutcher had 16 years of Air Force experience, 5,000 flying hours, had been deputy commander of a bomb wing in the Mariannas and served at Randolph Field, Midland Army Air Field, Goodfellow and Tyndall air fields. In 1947, Major A.C. Prendergast, executive officer for the Air National Guard, announced that 44 civilian jobs paying \$1,995 to \$4,900 annually would be open for veterans. Persons accepted also will be eligible for drill pay, said Prendergast, announcing that interviews at Hensley will be conducted from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 P.M. Saturday, January 30, 1947.

On July 7, 1950, the TANG received its first four F-84 ferried to Hensley Field from Long Island, N.Y. They would be still be using the P-51's for two weeks training at Brooks Field, San Antonio, Starting Sunday August 9, 1950 said officials. But five pilots and fifteen technicians were to go to jet school at Williams Field, near Phoenix, Arizona that autumn and on their return pass on their knowledge to other pilots and technicians of the 181st. On St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1951, Col. A. C. Prendergast, commander of the 136th Fighter-Bomber Wing, Texas Air National Guard was interviewed by the press "after breezing into Dallas at better than 600 miles per hour from Langley Field, Virginia." "I've got a terrifically wonderful crew of men and the outfit is on a par with anything the regular Air Force has," Prendergast said about the 400 Dallas men in Virginia.

The 136th was in the midst of switching from F-51 to the F-84E and morale among the three squadrons was at an all-time high, the insurance man told the press. Enroute to a "special school in New Mexico," he did not disclose its name. In October, 1951, a dispatch from Korea sent by Capt. Richard K. Baker, public information officer, told about a first anniversary celebration by the "Texas" wing of the Air Force, the 136th Fighter-Bomber Wing at its base.

The 136th had been mobilized one year before, on Oct. 26, 1950, the first Air National Guard unit mobilized since World War II. It had been formed at Langley and, especially in the last three months before the party, had chalked up one of the most impressive records of any unit in the Korean War. The F-84's of the 136th were playing an effective part in Operation Strangle the battle to halt movement of enemy troops, equipment and supplies, and to disrupt enemy communications. In addition, Air Guardsmen had knocked out enemy cable relay stations at Pyongyang which forced the communists to resort to radio transmissions vulnerable to interception; and had also done exceedingly well in attrition against enemy rail equipment and tracks, bridges, buildings, and personnel.

Lt. Col. William J. Erck assumed command of the 181st in April, 1950, after Col. Prendergast was promoted to group commander. Back at Hensley, the 181st flew "varied missions, ranging from spraying cities with DDT in polio control programs to mercy missions."

The 136th began flying combat missions three days after it got to Korea. It also built an AF hospital in Japan, and an airfield in Taegu, Korea. The 136th in its Korean mission had proved the ability of "weekend warriors," or civilian reserves to maintain proficiency through part time training and, in war, to perform according to the highest professional standards.

Hensley Field has continued its role of an active and vital military installation to the present day, although it has had its moments of stress. In 1956, Maj. Gen. K.L. Berry, Texas adjutant general, gave "consideration: to the possibility of moving eight units of the Air Guard from Dallas' Love Field and Hensley Field and Hensley Field to Carter Field in Fort Worth. The argument was between the Guard and the U.S. Navy, reportedly on a Washington level, and was concerned with the Guard's charge that the Navy was delaying a needed expansion of militia facilities.

In 1955, Hensley Field air commanders got permission to fill in enough of Mountain Creek Lake to add 500 feet to the base's NE-SW runway. The project was approved by the Navy Public Works Department. But in 1956, the Guard was chafing under the need for more room and better facilities - although its threat to move to Fort Worth never materialized. Since then, the problem of facilities for expansion have been handsomely solved with the presentation to the TANG on July 12, 1961 by U.S. Navy construction officers of the new \$1,048,037 hangar and training facilities.

Lt. Col. D.N. Presley, commander of the 136th Fighter Group, said, "For the first time since the 136th was activated in 1947 we will have adequate facilities. We will use these new facilities to increase the efficiency of the unit to an all-time high." By now, the Guard's Dallas squadron had Korean War type F-86, but the San Antonio and Houston groups had received F-102 a much heavier more modern and operational plane. The new hangar climaxed a 2-year building program. It contained 74,000 square feet, including 50,000 square feet of maintenance and shop space and 13,800 square feet of office and administrative space. An adjoining 3-story annex housed a 3,400 sq ft x-ray-equipped medical and dental section, and equal space for a cafeteria-style kitchen and dining room. The completely air-conditioned annex also contains modern briefing rooms and other operational facilities. Up to eight jets could be serviced simultaneously in the new hangar, and the Guardsmen were proud as Navy Capt. R.D. Thorson relinquished a ceremonial key to Col Presley in dedication ceremonies that Wednesday in the new hangar.

Hensley Field had become more of a year-round operation for the Texas Air National Guard in recent years. Using the major share of Air Force reserve facilities, the Guard has staggered its training program to allow its personnel to stagger their 2-week training tours over many weeks of time. The program has apparently resulted in a more continuous and efficient operations, as well as working less of a hardship on the employers of the civilian soldiers.

In July 1960, the Wing officially moved from Dallas' Love Field to its present home at Hensley Field bordering the Dallas Naval Station. In 1961, a \$2 million construction program was started and the new Wing Headquarters building was dedicated in October 1964.

From the post war 1940's through Korea and until 1964, the Hensley Field Air Guardsmen carried on in the grand tradition of airmen, sashing about the skies in fighters. Along came a new mission and some new/ old aircraft. The KC-97s were met with mixed emotions by pilots of

a silk scarf, 50 mission "crush" era. And there were all the expected grumbles as airspeed slowed to a mere 250 knots. As one pilot put it, "There's something solid and reassuring about that big old blimp with the hose hanging out the tail." Pilots and crewmen quickly took to their task of slow-but-sure gas passing. In short, they learned to love their bird, while pioneering the techniques of aerial refueling.

In May 1967, the 136th initiated one of the most unique and far-reaching operations in Guard history up to that time "Operation Creek Party." This was a ten year, all-Guard mission which refueled jet fighters for the active duty U.S. Air Forces in Europe, and took Texas "tankermen" to Rhein-Main Air Base at Frankfurt, in what was then West Germany. In 1976, the Wing was transferred from the Tactical Air Command to the Strategic Air Command and continued its air refueling mission.

On the refueling tracts over Germany and the English Channel, the men of the 136th ARW bucked headwinds, rain and cloud covers to get their fuel to the fighters; on the ground, men worked around the clock to keep the planes in the air. For 10 years, the wing performed its mission in Europe, in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and throughout the United States. Refueling the new OV-10, supporting the F-16 and F-17 fly off, the F-111 compatibility tests, the C-130's and gassing the USAF "Thunderbirds" between shows.

When the final curtain dropped that chilly, overcast Friday in April, 1977, it was "Old 361" a weary, veteran KC-97L from Texas that lowered the last refueling boom in the most successful reserve operation of all times. The 136th ARW, first to deploy a tanker to Germany to launch "Operation CREEK PARTY" in May, 1967, was also last to leave Rhein-Main AB, April 30, 1977. Last flight honors went to Lt. Col. Robert McDonald and his crew. When the chocks were in place, someone tossed the customary can of brew up to the cockpit. And, just as a special remembrance of the last flight, the crew deplaned into a blast of cold water. In the face. Courtesy of the Lt. Alan Crawford. Although there were laughs and good times in this decade of CREEK PARTY, it was also serious business. It was a true test of the ability of the Air National Guard to handle its wartime mission, somewhat more than just another refueling operation that happened to originate from the old Zeppelin aerodrome outside Frankfurt. It was much more. It meant: Maintenance crew chiefs up to 0430 for preflight. Flight crew briefing at 0630. An educational benefit that no book, professor or college can give. An opportunity to know and become friends with fellow Guardsmen that a hundred drill weekends would not offer.

It was 0730, April 29, 1977 when Aircraft 361 departed Frankfurt on the final trip across the Atlantic. "We were 25 minutes out of Rhein-Main and many of the troops were already asleep," recalled Capt. Bill Crow, 136th CAM quality control officer. "I felt the plane shudder and I knew what was wrong. Then I looked out the window to see an engine feathered." Old 361 had blown its No.3 engine. Once back on the ground in Frankfurt, it took only five hours and 35 minutes for 18 dedicated men to change the engine and head out for Texas again. "In my 20 years on the job, I've never seen that many people turn out to do that a fine a job in such a short time," Crow said. "That's better than a recent 'record time' engine change back at Hensley, in just two and a half hours. But that was under ideal conditions with the right equipment and

the right tools." Those 18 workers, from an assortment of departments in the wing, included Lt. Col. Galen Lambert, Capt. Crow, Mario Mastrogiacomo, Robert Mayo, V.J. Turner, Robert Sohm, Thomas McNeil, William Syfrett, Darrel Hayes, Richard Keating, and Bobby Gragg. Also in the group were Joe Dugger and Walter Sitz, Rudy Browder, Charles Davis and Donald Gourley, Billy Blackerby and Ximmie Dumire.

On 1 April 1978, the unit converted to the C-130B and was redesignated as the 136th Tactical Airlift Wing. The Wing was also transferred from Strategic Air Command to Military Airlift Command. Along with this conversion came a new mission providing airlift of troops, military equipment, passengers, mail, and aero-medical airlift to and from areas requiring such airlift and to participate in operations involving the air-land and airdrop of troops, equipment, and supplies when needed.

The 136th Tactical Airlift Wing began participation in Operation "Volant Oak" in March 1980 with a deployment to the Republic of Panama for 30 days. Operations into Central and South America were flown to support the forces operating in the USAF Southern Air Division. Support activities included logistics and contingency missions, joint airborne operations, unit training, and area familiarization flights. Also, the Wing performed personnel airdrops, inter-Latin American/ South American airlifts, search and rescue, and humanitarian airlift.

Also in 1983, the 136th Tactical Airlift Wing participated in Team Spirit 83, a joint South Korean-U.S. Forces exercise in South Korea; Sentry Cowboy II, a large composite force exercise that the Wing planned and coordinated; Operation Red Flag, hostile environment training; and Operation Coldfire in support of Reforger 83. During Operation Coldfire, the 136th Tactical Airlift

Wing transferred several hundred people and tons of cargo without any accidents or injuries. In addition, the Wing was able to generate all scheduled sortie missions due to outstanding maintenance support. In December 1983, the Wing's 531st Air Force Band was evaluated as "Outstanding" and was recognized as the premier band in the Air Nat Guard.

From 2 March through 16 March 1985, the 136th Tactical Airlift Wing participated in Sentry Cowboy III at the Gulfport Permanent Field Training site. This completed the largest composite-force exercise of its kind in the history of the Air National Guard up to that time. More than 2,000 people were involved to practice airlift and fighter tactics in simulated hostile environments, and the realistic training was stressed on each of the 1,406 sorties flown during the exercise. One of the many milestones for the exercise was the use of video tape by both ground and air threats — aircrews were able to observe first-hand what actual attacks would look like. Another first was the use of a Wing-level Combat Operations, which removed the burden of flight planning from the flying crews at the squadron level.

During 8-22 June 1985, the 136th Tactical Airlift Wing participated in "Sentry Chaparral." The mission of this airlift was to support the U.S. Army's 49th Armored Division by transporting personnel and equipment and other support missions from several pickup points throughout

Texas to the Division's annual training site at Fort Hood, Texas.

From 13 May to 1 June 1986, participated in Volant Partner" in Zaragosa, Spain. The purpose of this deployment was to increase readiness of the MAC gaining units in Europe with the Air Reserve forces and the NATO host bases. The training was a unique experience for the Wing. Where the majority of the personnel regularly trained in an office-type environment and commuted to the local bases, Volant Partner provided wartime scenario training and living conditions. Operationally, sorties were flown to different European locations transporting various wartime required material.

In August 1986, the 136th Tactical Airlift Wing received the first of the new C-130H "Hercules" aircraft. On 2 August, a special welcoming ceremony was held at the base hangar. The first aircraft was named the "Spirit of Texas" in honor of the Texas Sesquicentennial.

In mid-February 1987, soldiers of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, commenced Exercise Golden Eagle 87. The Army unit received multiple intra-service support including refueling support from the 136th Tactical Airlift Wing. The 136th supplied one of four C-130 fuel bladder configured aircraft for the exercise. This was a mission were 36,000 pounds of jet fuel were carried within the C-130H via rubberized fuel bladders.

The 136th Tactical Airlift Wing, continuing a long established tradition of humanitarian efforts by the Air National Guard, provided evacuation relief for patients of the Corpus Christi State School for mentally retarded and severely handicapped children. Flying two C-130s members of the unit evacuated 161 bedridden children from Corpus Christi and flew them to Kelly AFB, San Antonio. The Children remained at the USAF's Wilford Hall Medical Center until the hurricane abated. Once Hurricane Allen subsided, two more C-130s were used to return the children to Corpus Christi. Because of the medical needs of the children being evacuated, a medical team from the 136th Tactical Hospital provided assistance during the flights. It took two flights to evacuate all the children.

Between 9 and 24 December 1989, the 136th Tactical Airlift Wing deployed aircraft and personnel in support of routine rotation operations called Volant Oak at Howard Air Base, Panama. The rotation proceeded as normal until 20 December when Operation Volant Oak was changed to Operation Just Cause. Operation Just Cause was the military mission ordered by President George bush to capture Panamanian President and Dictator General Manuel Antonio Noriega and bring him to the United States to stand trial on drug trafficking charges.

From 21 December 1989 at 0030 hours through 24 December, the aircrews of the 136th were subject to hostile ground fire but no serious damage was sustained. The crews of the 136th Tactical Airlift Wing flew a total of 55 sorties for 53.8 hours. Thirty-nine of these sorties and 13.9 of these hours were in direct support of Operation Just Cause.

The 136th Tactical Airlift Wing had experienced two Presidential Call Ups for 90 days under Article 10 of the USC 673b. Aircrews and maintenance personnel as well as numerous support

personnel were deployed to the United Arab Emirates in support of Operation Desert Shield which, on 16 January 1991, was renamed Operation Desert Storm as the Allied Forces began to attack Baghdad, Iraq.

Throughout February, members of the 1630th TAW (Provisional) took part in an historic movement, stockpiling more than 60 days of supplies for an entire army corp within the theater of Operations. Operation Desert Storm ended shortly after the famous "Flanking Sweep" into western Iraq and Euphrates River.

The wing was also able to support 60 days of Desert Shield with 83 volunteers and 3 C-130 aircraft. Esprit de corps was high and personnel were ready to go; eager and willing to do their part. Within three days, the entire volunteer package had been assembled and processed for deployment. The Wing assembled two different type C-130's (E's and H's) into the largest airlift unit in the AOR, flew all tasked missions, and did it without injury to personnel or damage to aircraft. Personnel in the Air National Guard were well trained and ready to perform every facet of their mission, and it showed. All functional areas accomplished their wartime tasking with 100 % success rate.

They came together from more than 140 units at nearly 50 bases across the United States- active duty, guardsmen, and reservists- to form what has been touted by many visiting commanders as a shining example of the total force concept. And their nickname became a standard for everything they did they're the 1st DAWG (First Desert Airlift Wing).

Less than two weeks later, major support elements from Scott AFB, Illinois, started to arrive. Not long after, Air National Guardsmen from the 136th TAW out of Hensley Field, Texas, the 139th TAG out of St Joseph, Missouri, and the 130th TAG from Charleston, West Virginia, arrived to form the nucleus of the Wing.

Since those early days, the 1st DAWG has logged more than 23,000 safe flying hours, hauled nearly 50,000 tons of cargo, and transported almost 40,000 passengers. The group also racked up an impressive record of firsts and set the standard for airlift operations and people programs. In the words of Col. John R. Wingfield III, the 1630th TAW(P) Commander, his victory speech on Feb 28th, he told members of his command the war was over, he said, "Every goal that we've been working toward since August has been realized. In the history of warfare, there has never been a campaign as decisive and successful and as quick as this one. And each and every one of you should feel very, very proud of your contributions. This has been a national effort and national victory...I'm bursting with pride for everyone in this wing and all our fellow allied servicemen- everyone has given 110% for this effort and you deserve every honor that is to be bestowed upon you.

In 1994, continued to support airlift operations in the former Yugoslavia as part of a United Nations' humanitarian relief effort. At the end of July, the Wing flew on C-130 to east Africa in support of Operation Support Hope. In November of 1994, the Wing participated in Operation Mongoose II. On 24 May 1994, Colonel William M. Guy was promoted to the rank of Brigadier

General.

The Wing has earned its reputation as a full partner with the Air Force by deploying around the globe in support of national defense objectives. The wing has been active in Bosnia, Somalia, Saudi Arabia and South America for the last several years.

Groundbreaking for the Wings new facility occurred on 26 November 1996 at the Naval Air Station, Fort Worth (Carswell Field). The 26 million dollar construction program will provide the wing with 21st century facilities as we enter the new millennia.

For the past week more than 140 members of the 136th Airlift Wing Maintenance and Operations Group have arrived here with smiles on their faces, eagerly jumping into the arms of their love ones. They arrived home just in time for Father's Day. "I'm glad to be back," smiled Maj. Mark LaDrew, as his kids mauled him with precious hugs and kisses. The Wing members departed here March 2011 and spent the following months in Afghanistan defending freedom. This particular deployment was very difficult for our members as well as our aircraft. There were numerous insurgent attacks that were very close calls and caused minor damage to our aircraft. To date the 136 AW has deployed numerous times totaling more than 6,000 Airmen since 911 in support of Operations NOBEL EAGLE, IRAQI FREEDOM, ENDURING FREEDOM, HORIZON and NEW DAWN; an average of six deployments per unit member. "Welcome back," said Col. John Conoley, 136 AW, vice-commander, as he shook the hands of all deployers exiting the aircraft from Afghanistan and thanked them for a job well done. Though these members are back home safe and sound, reunited with their love ones, let us not forget those who are still deployed in the war zone. Especially the family members who are left behind to care for the home front. They are just as important as their members who are deployed to the area of operations in Southwest Asia. Give them your support as well as their deployed member.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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