

## **32<sup>nd</sup> COLLEGE TRAINING DETACHMENT (AIR CREW)**



### **MISSION**

### **LINEAGE**

32<sup>nd</sup> College Training Detachment (Air Crew)

### **STATIONS**

Dickenson College, Carlisle, PA

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **COMMANDERS**

### **HONORS**

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

### **EMBLEM**

### **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

World War II changed many facets of domestic life throughout the United States of America. The effects of these changes still resonate in all sectors of American society. It cannot be ignored that numerous social, political and economic institutions throughout the country had to make various adjustments to adapt as a nation at war. American colleges and universities provide a solid context for the examination and interpretation of these changes World War II induced. Dickinson College, a small liberal arts college in Central Pennsylvania, went through a number of transformations as a result of the outbreak of World War II. Perhaps the most visible of these alterations was the establishment of the Thirty-Second College Training Detachment. This Air Corps' program was officially initiated on March 1st, 1943 when "the War Department discovered that there were not available sufficient military training facilities to expand its aviation personnel. It, therefore, called upon the Liberal Arts colleges and universities to give training in the basic academic subjects."

As a result of Dickinson's "outstanding reputation," it was chosen as one of the 281 schools to partake in this government funded program. Generally speaking, Dickinson was extremely proud of the part which it took in the war effort, "... proud that she has been able to serve the country in this latest venture. We need no better proof of the effectiveness of such a program than to pick up a newspaper and see for ourselves the splendid work that the Army Air Corps is doing. Sharing in this vast program has been a rich experience accompanied by a justifiable sense of a job well done." The Thirty-Second College Training Detachment changed the history of Dickinson, having numerous effects on the social, political and economic life of the College.

Admission policies during World War II did not change drastically, as students were admitted from high school when they had completed the necessary courses for college entrance. Dickinson College did participate in a nation-wide program which stated that men with at least three and a half years of high school experience might be admitted to college and that after one year these men would be eligible for a high school diploma. This program provided a distinct advantage to draft eligible male students because it allowed them to "complete as much as three semesters of college work before being called to active duty."

Aside from the general Liberal Arts courses which the College offered, the War made Dickinson adapt to new classes aimed at paraprofessional training. Courses such as pre-medical, pre dental, pre law, pre engineering, pre business, pre theological all were offered at Dickinson during the War. All students (including those planning on enlisting) were encouraged to begin this pre professional training because "the post-war world would offer enlarged opportunities for service in all of the professions, and would require the highest standards of training for success." Women were also encouraged to take part in these pre professional courses so they might gain training to supplement the reduced man power during the War.

Dickinson College administrators and faculty realized that expert guidance was needed in all dealings with students, to ensure a satisfying outcome "both in relation to their government service and their professional careers. Consequently, in cooperation with the United States government, the College established the Office of the Liaison Officer to regulate the guidance of all students with selective service status. In addition, the College created the Board of Deans to help facilitate the advising of all students enrolled at Dickinson.

Economic aspects of Dickinson life were also changed as a result of the War. The scarcity of students enrolled --- 195 in the fall of 1943 --- brought the fee for a semester to \$350 dollars for men. It was also established that "because of the war, costs for men would be established on a semester basis," presumably so as to account for mid-year enlistment. For woman, the fees to attend did not change drastically, as it already cost \$850 dollars for a two semester year at the College, due to the policies of residence in force at the time.

Campus life at Dickinson also went through various reformations to adapt to a nation at War. Many of the student realized that "they had to have a stake in the struggle and that they must give up moments of leisure time."

Dickinson students, faculty, and administrators recognized the sacrifice that many individuals were making and displayed a great deal of pride at their unwavering support for these individuals. For example, the 1944 Microcosm states that "Dickinson's tradition is steeped in the heritage of service to its country's flag. The sons of Dickinson have rallied to the nation's cause in every war for 170 years. As our country faces the greatest conflict of them all, we find ourselves again writing another chapter in the golden book of patriotism." One reason why students displayed such dedication to the war effort can be explained by the fact that many members of the Dickinson community were taking an active part in the great military effort. The 1944 yearbook boasted that more than one thousand Dickinsonians could be found in branches of the service, "giving their utmost for an Allied victory." , as a symbol of the College's steadfast commitment to the War effort, as well as a reminder of its cost, a "service flag" was placed on Old West, above the "old stone steps," to honor those Dickinsonians killed in action.

Despite the many social changes which the Dickinson College community endured as a result of World War II, students and faculty must be commended as, according to the staff of the College yearbook, at least, "the transformation into a College-at-War scheme was a tranquil one."

The first contact that the government had with the College regarding the establishment of the Air Corps program can be dated back to January 20, 1943, when the United States Government sent a Western Union Telegram to Fred P. Corson, the president of Dickinson at the time. This telegram stated, "We (the Government) need information in connection with possible army air force program for sending cadets to colleges where civilian pilot training facilities exist. Categories which will be available March 1st (1943) or April 1st (1943) for this program and which could not be needed for probable civilian enrollment. Fred P. Corson responded to this telegram by communicating his interest in the establishment of such a program, noting that this program would be both "economically and socially worthwhile" for the College to take part in.

Consequently, a letter of intent was drafted by the Army Air Forces Headquarters of The Material Command and sent to Dickinson, with the intent of giving the College more information about the Air Corps program. This letter stated that Dickinson had been selected for the training of approximately five hundred trainees to begin on the first of March, 1943. , the document asserted that a government appointed planning committee would be visiting the campus to "establish the requirements of the training program and to prepare a formal contract which would authorize payment for services and facilities." From this Letter of Intent a formalized training unit contract was drafted and signed by the president of the College on February 18th, 1943.

This contract established the activating expenses (\$81,679.40) of the program, the price for use of Dickinson's facilities (\$3,444 per month), maintenance of the program, medical services for the cadets, the manner of payment between the College and the Government and issues surrounding the eventual termination of the program. In addition, the seventeen page contract articulated the need for the College to "keep adequate records" of the program, as well as a requirement of anti-discrimination with regard to employment. The agreement also established strict guidelines for the renegotiation of the aforementioned contract.

The original plan with regard to enrollment was that 250 cadets would enter the five month training period on March 1, 1943, another 250 would enter on April 1 1943 and after that, an additional 140 cadets would be added monthly, so as not to exceed 700 enlisted men on campus at any given time. This plan, was not followed, as the College was made to provide for an additional 250 cadets in the first month (March 1943) because other area colleges had wavered in their support for the program.

The United States Army Air Forces provided the college with explicit instructions regarding the five month (744 hours) curriculum for the cadets. They established a clear objective; "Preparation of Air Crew Students, both mentally and physically, for intensive ground training in the Preflight Schools." This curriculum had three distinct areas which included academic preparation, military training and physical training.

The academic training "included such subjects to prepare the Air Crew Student for preflight, flight, and ground school instruction. The general plan for academic instruction was to provide the student with adequate knowledge in the areas of Mathematics (80 hours), Physics (180 hours), History (60 hours), Geography (60 hours), English (60 hours) and Civil Air Regulations (24 hours).

In addition to this, military training was to provide the cadet with the "instruction in the basic military indoctrination, military customs and regulations, and infantry drill." In order to achieve this, the cadet was required to complete 84 hours in Infantry Drill, 40 hours in Ceremonies and Inspection, 120 hours in Physical Training, 10 hours in Hygiene and Sanitation, 10 hours in Customs and Courtesies of the Service, 6 hours in Interior Guard and 20 hours in Medical Aid.

Perhaps the most important instruction the cadets received during their time with the detachment was their flight training. The Air Corps required that each cadet obtain 10 hours of flight instruction while enrolled in the program. All of the flight training at Dickinson was carried out at the former Wilson Airport in New Kingston. As a result of the emphasis placed upon this instruction, the Government provided the College with detailed instructions on every aspect of the flight training. Here is the schedule for each hour of flight instruction:

- 1st Hour-- Familiarization ride, straight and level, gentle level banks.
- 2nd hour-- Gentle climbing turns, gentle gliding turns, medium level banks.
- 3rd hour-- Review, steep level turns, stalls, steep 360 degree turns.
- 4th hour-- Stalls, spins, review.
- 5th hour-- Gliding turns, climbing turns, stalls.
- 6th hour-- Stalls, spins, landings.
- 7th hour-- Landing practice, Elementary Eights, Rectangular Courses.
- 8th hour-- Elementary Eights, Rectangular Courses, Landing Practice.
- 9th hour-- Rectangular Courses, Traffic Patterns and Landing Practice.
- 10th hour-- Traffic Pattern Flying, and Landing Practice.

According to David F. Lenker, one of the twelve to fifteen flight instructors operating at the New Kingston Airport, all this level of instruction was doing was "teaching the cadets to be comfortable in an airplane so that later the cadets would have some experience with flying."

This curriculum, including the military, academic, physical, and flight instruction was followed with meticulous detail, as instructors were reminded that any fault in their instruction could prove detrimental to the overall education and ability of the cadets.

Many physical changes were made to the Dickinson College campus so that the cadets could be housed and fed in an effective manner. For example, the Old Gymnasium --- on the corner of Louther and North College Streets --- was converted into a modern mess hall "supplied with adequate equipment and repainted." With regard to housing the men, East College, the Conway Hall, and several fraternity houses were converted so that the cadets could use them as barracks. Perhaps the most notable alteration made to the campus came as a result of government funding which drastically improved the academic facilities of the college. Both the Tome Scientific Building and Denny Hall were enlarged for instruction. Dr. Herbert Wing states, "four new recitation rooms were laid out in the basement of Denny Hall; the museum of Tome was changed to a laboratory; and ten new rooms were constructed in the basement of Tome." , cadets also studied in West College, the Psychology building, and Bosler Hall.

When the program was initiated in the early days of March, 1943, the President Corson quickly established that he would be the director of the 32nd Training Detachment. Soon after that decision, he appointed famed history professor Herbert Wing Jr. as assistant director, Mr. Benjamin James as Wing's assistant and Mr. George Shuman Jr. as the Business Manager. The Army Air Forces originally appointed Major Fred J. Maurada as Air Corps commandant of the training detachment. Major John D. Hartigan and Captain James Poach Jr. were also leaders of the Thirty-Second detachment as well.

According to an article from The Dickinsonian, "Practically every member of the college faculty was called upon to teach in the War College. Some of them changed their field of work to the departments where there was special need- mathematics, physics and geography." In addition to the regular Dickinson faculty, Corson had to hire additional faculty and staff to account for the growing cadet population. In fact, during the period of the Air Corps program, the Dickinson College faculty was nearly doubled. Most of these new faculty members were government paid, providing yet another advantage to Dickinson, as the College was able to save money on some of their instructor's salaries.

Despite the fact that the Government maintained that no institution could reap any economic benefits from a program such as the training detachment, indirect profits were gained by colleges through renovation of buildings, government funding of staff salaries and other miscellaneous program operation costs. These "indirect profits" were vital to Dickinson, who, like so many other colleges and universities throughout the country, was struggling to keep the institution economically solvent during the trauma of the second world war.

The trustees of Dickinson had numerous debates and discussions about fiscal policies which aimed to afford the College some monetary relief, especially in the post-war period. "Post War Rehabilitation" was a subject that was clearly on the minds of the administrators of the College --- especially the more conservative minds --- as they speculated whether "increasing government participation in American Higher Education (like the Air Corps program) would shift the control . . . away from the independent college units and toward over-all government supervision."

Trustees of the College asserted that there had been numerous "anxieties and efforts" encountered in the establishment of the Air Corps program, also noting the conflicts of interest between the governmental negotiation committee and the administration of the College. The minutes from a December 4th, 1943 trustee meeting states, "red-tape, mass regulations, conflicting policies and changing directives, coupled with the bureaucratic form of many headed management, have supplied strong arguments for 'private collegiate enterprise.' " In the final analysis despite the brood of difficulties which the establishment of the Air Corps program brought, administrators of Dickinson College clearly came to the realization that they could sacrifice aspects of their political agenda so that the College could secure some sorely needed economic relief.

Despite the fact that Dickinson always received "excellent" evaluations from the Government with regard to the academic, physical and flight instruction that the College was giving the cadets, it was announced on January 29, 1944 that the Air Corps program at Dickinson College would be discontinued. Seventy of the 120 colleges around the country which still had Pre-Flight Student programs were also directed for termination. The February 1, 1944 letter from the Government to the trustees outlines the principles of the termination of the contract, stipulating that the program would officially come to an end on June 1st, 1944. It stated simply

that "the subject (Dickinson) contract will be terminated effective with the graduation of the trainees now in course at your institution."

In terms of actual numbers, Dickinson in January of 1944 still had 700 trainees on the campus. The estimation was that about 138 would graduate on February 12th, and about 140 more cadets would graduate on each of February 12th, February 26th, March 25th, April 22nd, and May 27th. College administrators knew as early as January 1st, 1944 that there was a distinct possibility that the Air Corps program would be terminated. The Government cited several reasons in their explanation to the College, most of which centered around the Air Corps' lack of need for more aviation pilots. Fred P. Corson stated that some of the reasons for the termination were political, but all of these reasons reflected the reduced requirement for trained men after more than two years of intense effort at building up the military forces of the United States , it appears that the termination of the Air Corps program at Dickinson was a product of the College's location more than the overall reputation of the way the program had operated there.

Dickinson College administrators, realizing the numerous benefits which the College reaped as a result of the Training Detachment, attempted to persuade the government to allow the program to continue through the next year. Director of the program and president of the College Fred P. Corson was most influential in this effort. Corson wrote various letters of appeal to government officials and presidents of other schools to try and fight for the retainment of the Air Corps program. Corson stated in the minutes of a trustee meeting that Dickinsonians in Congress, including Lansdale Sasscer, a very influential member of the majority party, were seeking to have the order changed, and Dickinson College continued with a reduced quota of trainees. In a February 1st, 1944 letter to Congressman Sasscer, Corson pleaded for the retention of the Training Detachment, using the argument that the order of termination came too suddenly and created a most serious condition in colleges which had relied on the program. Corson stated, "our concern is not selfish since our only reason for existence is the total service that we can render under the peculiar conditions of maintaining and perpetuating a democracy where education of the sort which the American college is giving is so essential. "The main goal of Corson in his letters to various governmental officials was to get the termination of the program postponed until at least January, 1st, 1945. If this was done, Corson believed the investment made by the government in the establishment of the Air Corps program would be enhanced significantly.

Corson's efforts to delay the termination process were not ignored, as Congressman Sasscer did appeal to General H. "Hap" Arnold, commander of United States Army Air Forces. In his letter, Sasscer pointed out that every inspection made by the Government in evaluation of the program had culminated with a rating of "excellent," while also asserting that both the educational and financial requirements established by the Air Forces were "more than satisfactory." Sasscer also stated that there could be possibly fatal consequences for the institutions forced to eliminate such programs. For example, Congressman Sasscer noted that, "the discontinuance of this program at Dickinson means the breaking up of the teaching staff. . .

Should the policy of termination prevail, I am afraid it would mean the closing of Dickinson and the other colleges directed to discontinue this program."

In addition to the letters which Corson wrote to Sasscer, he also drafted letters to the presidents of other local schools participating in the same Air Corps program. Corson composed writings to Lafayette College, the University of Pittsburgh, and Albright College with the intention to persuade them to fight with the same vigor and determination against the decision to discontinue the Air Corps program. In the end, Fred Corson's attempts to stave off the destruction of the Training Detachment were doomed to failure. Government officials did not accept Corson's argument on the worth of delaying the termination of the Air Corps program. A final memorandum came from the United States Government to the trustees of Dickinson College on February 16th, 1944, officially stating that "those schools which have leased facilities for the accommodation of the training unit be notified that such leases should be disposed of as quickly as possible." Consequently, the 32nd College Training Detachment was terminated with the last cadets graduating on May 27th, 1944, concluding another episode in the long and eventful history of Dickinson College.

The Government's decision to discontinue the Air Corps program at many of the northeastern colleges and universities introduced numerous questions and problems surrounding the original contract made between those institutions and the Army Air Forces. As a result of this, Corson decided that there needed to be a meeting of representatives of colleges holding Army Air Force contracts. On January 20th, 1944 representatives from Clarion State Teachers' College, St. Vincent College, the University of Pittsburgh, Slippery Rock College, Duquesne University, Albright College, Geneva College, Kutztown College, Allegheny College, Susquehanna University, Lafayette College, Indiana State Teachers' College, Edinboro College and Dickinson College met in Pittsburgh to "discuss mutual contractual problems." Most of the discussion at this meeting centered around economic issues, as most of the institutions present affirmed their apprehensions at the fact that the Air Corps program did "not protect the colleges and universities against monetary loss because there were so many expenses which were not covered under the government contract. Issues with regard to activation expenses, instructional costs, faculty vacation and illness, selective service status of staff and educational allowances for service men were all discussed at this meeting in an attempt to come to a better understanding of government decisions on these matters.

One area in which all of the institutions attending articulated problems involved monetary disputes over the activation expenses of the Air Corps program. Many of the Colleges and Universities thought that they should be reimbursed for the improvements which they made to their institutions before the Training Detachments arrived on their campus. The minutes from this meeting stated, "permanent improvements are not subject to reimbursement. . . It is urged that early action be sought and that the proper committee of Association of American Colleges be consulted with regard to these financial issues which so many colleges stand to lose so much." It is important to note that this meeting did not take place to disagree with the termination decision, but instead was the product of area colleges' desire to articulate their concerns regarding various economic issues.



When the Air Corps program finally came to an end on June 1st, 1944, most of these economic issues between Dickinson College and the Government had been resolved. A report from Fred Corson to the trustees of the College states that "it affords me great satisfaction to be able to report that on June 22 (1944) we met with representatives of the material command of the army and brought to a final and successful termination our contract for the 32nd College Training Detachment (Air Crew)." Many of the economic concerns with regard to activation and instructional expenses were resolved as the Army agreed to sell materials to the College at a fraction of their original price. Consequently, the college "received equipment and building improvements for \$25,000, which in actuality were valued upwards of \$70,000." The College still had a surplus of \$125,000 to \$150,000 in an Army and College Current Express fund, "for the use in meeting possible deficits during the immediate months ahead and before the normal student enrollment can be restored."

With this successful and helpful negotiated conclusion of the Air Corps program at Dickinson, it could safely be asserted that the presence of the Training Detachment in two vital years saved the College from substantial economic damage during World War II. Perhaps President Corson said it best when he asserted that "carefully planned for and meticulously carried through, the relationship which Dickinson College had with the government can be termed satisfactory and successful."

Many students articulate their general feelings about the War, and how the College changed as a result of America's participation. Wilma Prescott of the class of 1944 states, for example, that "if you have someone you love in the service, you're thinking about that, and you want to know what's happening. As for changes at the college, the Red Cross recruited a lot of girls. The only visible difference, physical difference during the war was that our place of eating meals was changed." More generally speaking, Helen Bachman of the class of 1946 asserted that students "did everything they could to help the war effort." Most of the former students remember that they were then constantly reminded of the sacrifices which so many people were making during the War as a result of the service flag which was raised over Old West and the national flag flying from the College flagpole. Virginia Weber of the class of 1946 recalled that the students of Dickinson College "were very involved in the war effort because the flag was raised everyday. Walking across campus, students stopped and waited and saluted the flag. It was very much on the students' minds with no question." In general, Dickinson College seemed an institution with students extremely mindful and committed to assisting in the national effort during the second world war.

More directly speaking, the students of Dickinson remember the presence of the air cadets on their campus with vivid detail. They saw the Air Corps program as having a substantial effect on their academic and social lives at the College. Some students like Joyce Anderson (class of '44) were puzzled at to why the Air Corps cadets were at Dickinson at all. Anderson states, "What the heck were they (32nd Training Detachment) doing there? Why in the middle of the war were cadets there studying academic subjects? I found it a little puzzling."

Other students, such as Jacob Barber, felt that the Air Corps program did not have a great effect on the regular college students because the two groups were completely separate. Barber asserts, "we did not share any classes with the training detachment— they would march back and forth to classes singing, and of course we were just rambling around." Increasing this feeling of separatism was a curriculum which did not integrate the cadets and the regular students. The cadets had most of their classes with each other, having very little interaction with the ordinary students of the College. The only effect that the Air Corps program really had on college students was that "the scheduling as far as just attending classes was a little confusing and mixed up because with the army using college classrooms, some of the classes started at seven thirty and eight o'clock." Despite the fact that some students did not feel that the Air Corps program had a substantial impact on their educational experience at Dickinson, most all of the students realized the economic relief that the detachment was affording the College in times of great monetary distress. Helen Bachman spoke with regard to this subject stating, "the college was probably very thankful that they (Air Corps) came because it (enrollment) dwindled from 800 or more students to maybe 200 or 250. Financially, the tuition would not have kept the College going."

The most notable effect the cadets had on the rest of the students possibly came in the forum of social interaction between the two groups. Most of this interaction predictably came between the female "co-eds" and the cadets. While some female alumni deny the fact that there was any dating between the officers and the students, others remember a great deal of engagement between the two groups. Virginia Weber states,

we dated the 32nd CCD which came in. We used to always go down for a Coke, and things like that which was very normal life. . . We knew men at the Carlisle Barracks. So, we didn't have a dull social life. . . We didn't affiliate with the (usual student) men on campus, because there weren't very many. They just dropped dramatically and of course there were younger men that were there.

With this influx of men on campus, College administrators were forced to take an official stand defining appropriate relations between the cadets and the students. Some administrators were terribly afraid of the harm that might come to some of the Dickinson girls by wrong associations with the officers. Consequently "they had very strict rules about dating. . . You were not to go in any cars, you were to be very carefully supervised . . . Associations were chaperoned, very careful associations." These rules and regulations did not , stop the cadets from interacting with the female students. In fact, in a April 9th, 1944 Dickinsonian article it was rumored that the cadets were ordered to march to and from classes to cut out the lengthy "good mornings" to the coeds." In addition to this, The Dickinsonian, in its weekly publications wrote editorials called "Vignettes of the Army" in which were reported any violations by cadets perpetrated against female students. One such edition reads, "A group of coeds were held up at West and Louthier Streets while the Air Corps filed by. Bringing up the rear was a little, dark-haired soldier who, on seeing the group, muttered out of the corner of his mouth, 'Say, girls, aren't you going to help me with my homework.'" While these reports may appear trivial, they effectively

demonstrate the conservative nature of the policies the College adopted with regard to student-cadet relationships.

One area of social engagement between the students and cadets which may go unnoticed was the interaction between the men on campus and the officers. Despite the fact that there were very few male students at Dickinson during the war, it would be expected that these men would harbor some kind of awkward feelings towards the military personnel. Dorothy Nagle, class of 1946, refutes this by stating that she "was not aware of any resentment" between the cadets and male students, saying that the male students "were pretty important on campus and had a lot of leadership positions in clubs and certainly in the fraternities."

The experiences which many students had with the 32nd College Training Detachment had a great influence on how they remember their time as undergraduates at Dickinson College. The Air Corps cadets changed the academic and social realities of the College, leaving a lasting effect on all students who came into contact with them.

All of the information about how cadets regarded their time at Dickinson College comes from various publications of the Eager Eagle and the Quintillion. The Eager Eagle was a cadet written newspaper which came out every two weeks. In this publication soldiers would write about their experiences at the War College, while also keeping the public up to date of any important up coming events. Quintillion was a Air Corps sponsored "yearbook" which was published at the end of each of the five week training periods. As a result of the lack of personal documentation on the cadets part through diaries and letters, these two sources remain the only ones that could possibly display how the soldiers remembered their time at Dickinson College.

The Quintillion also shows that the cadets seemed to have had an enjoyable experience during their time at Dickinson College. The publication relates, for example, that upon arrival the cadets had many questions revolving around the quality of the food, the integration of academic work with physical training and the state of the residence halls. All of these questions were quickly answered as "the food was grand. The living quarters were great. And the Academic and physical training did us (the cadets) good."

The cadets also found that the social scene was vibrant. One soldier states "Until the wee hours of the morning fellows related their adventures in Carlisle, or Boiling Springs, or Harrisburg. Every one of us felt like a new man." Another indication that the cadets enjoyed their time at Dickinson immensely can be identified through their mixed feelings upon graduation from the Air Corps program. One cadet on his graduation day exclaimed, "our spirits rise and fall with the throbbing tempo of the drums." While many cadets realized that it was time to move on and use the training they had received in dangerous and often fatal flying duties in Europe and the Pacific, many men clearly were going to remember Dickinson and the place where they had become soldiers.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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