



NEWSLETTER SPRING 2023

102 (CEYLON) SQUADRON ASSOCIATION



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Secretary's Ramblings

As we all sit out the winter, listening for the central heating to start up and reaching for another cardigan, at least we have a new year to look forward. A Coronation in May, for some of us, only the second in our lifetime, and the associated holiday weekend. What have you decided to cook for the 'Coronation Big Lunch? What about the 'Big Help Out'? And an extra Bank Holiday!

Then we have our Reunion Weekend at Pocklington over the 2nd of June to the 4th. The Reunion Dinner will be on the Saturday evening (3rd of June) and your Management Group are working on the details of cost, speaker, and theme. I will be circulating the Booking Form for our Reunion Dinner in the next few weeks.

For the coming year, we have received a number of invitations to attend Memorial Services in France from the Mayors of Brissy-Hamegicourt, (May), Wattinges La Victoire, (July) and from the Comite du Souvenir de Martemer, Lissors, (September). Depending on how we plan our visits, we will try to visit our only two burials in Dunkirk, (George Butterworth and William Nicholl, who were killed on an operation to Dunkirk Port on the 28th of April 1942), who were found during your Secretary's work on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission locations.

We were supported again this year by RAF Cadets from the Pocklington School Combined Cadet Force. The section is commanded by Patrick Dare, a House Master at the school who has been keen to establish stronger links to our Association, something that can only be of benefit to both of us.

Remembrance Sunday this year will be on Sunday the 12th of November.

A very, very gentle reminder that Association Membership Subscriptions will fall due on the 28th of February. I will be sending out a general email with a Renewal/Joining Form attached in the next couple of weeks.

I look forward to another successful year for all of us. I also hope to share your company at some time in the coming months. (I am partial to a whisky and soda!)

Harry Bartlett

Your Secretary

Remembrance Weekend 12th and 13th of November 2022

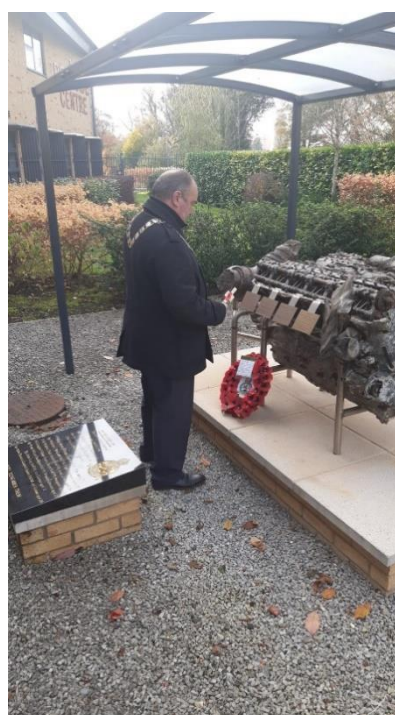
We gathered at Pocklington last November to pay our respects and carry out our duty of remembrance for those lost.

The start of the weekend began with a gathering, at the Feathers Hotel, of Association members and the local branch officers of the 'new' Pocklington and District British Legion Branch, to progress our commitment to mutual support after the Branch Vice Chairman, Trevor Taylor, had addressed us at our Annual General Meeting in June 2022. Before things became a tad hazy, we were delighted to be told that the new Pocklington and District British Legion Branch Standard would be paraded at our Remembrance Service at St. Catherine's Church, Barmby Moor, on Remembrance Sunday and at the Airfield Memorial Service by their Standard Bearer, Mark Abel.

In addition, on the run up to our Remembrance Weekend, I had been in discussion with Patrick Dare, House Master at Pocklington School and the Cadet Officer in charge of the RAF contingent of the School's Combined Cadet Force. More good news! Patrick had arranged for a contingent of Cadets, and their Standards, to parade at St. Catherine's and the Airfield Memorial, as they had done at our Reunion Memorial Service. We also had the services of sixth former Freddie Taylor to play the Last Post and Reveille at the services, (more of Freddie Later!).

Saturday the 12th of November.

Saturday morning arrived bright and clear. We gathered at the 'G' George Memorial at the Beckside Medical Centre, West Green, where we paid our respects to the crew of DY-G JB 848, lost on the 23rd of March 1943, when the aircraft crashed on this site shortly after take-off. We were pleased to have the Mayor of Pocklington representing the people and Town Council of Pocklington. Association Member Colin Stevens laid our Association wreath.



Driffield.

Following our act of remembrance at the Becks Medical Centre, we travelled to Driffield to pay our respects at the Northend Park Memorial. The memorial is dedicated to those lost, while serving with 102 (Ceylon) Squadron, when RAF Driffield was bombed by the Luftwaffe on the 15th of August 1940. Among them, ACW Marguerite Hudson, the first member of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force to be killed by enemy action.

The Association wreath was laid by Stephen Grist, our Newsletter Editor and a remembrance cross was laid by your Secretary for Marguerite.



We were also able, while in Driffield, to drop off a Squadron Association wreath to John Forrester, the Driffield Royal British Legion Parade Marshall to be laid at All Saints Church, Driffield the following day. (Note: The wreath was laid by a female member of the Driffield Air Cadets on our behalf.)

Pocklington Burial Ground.

During the weeks preceding Remembrance Weekend your Secretary had been contacted by Anthony Oakden, who was researching a relative, Sergeant John Westlake Symons, 20 or 21 years old. He was the pilot of Halifax DY-T HR804 and he, and his crew were, at Pocklington and took off for an operation to Frankfurt on the 25th of November 1943, at 2350 hours. In the early hours of the 26th of November, John returned to England with his aircraft badly damaged, to the extent that he ordered his four of the crew to bail out over Kent, after which he continued to try to reach Pocklington, accompanied by the Flight Engineer, Sergeant R.W. Buckle and one of the Air Gunners, Sergeant T. Jones who was possibly injured when the aircraft was damaged. At 0355 hours the aircraft crashed at Warter Priory on the outer approach to RAF Pocklington. All three were killed, John being buried in the Pocklington Burial Ground. (The Squadron lost four aircraft, with twelve aircrew killed that night.) Anthony wrote the story, printed later in this issue, of Sergeant Symonds.

This brought to your Secretary's attention to the fact that, in recent years, we, as an Association, did not appear to have carried out any act of remembrance at the Burial Ground. Enquiries identified that we had six other members of 102 (Ceylon) Squadron buried there.

Flying Officer James A. Turnbull. 21 January 1944 Killed when returning from an operation to Berlin when DY-O crashed near Norwich.

Flight Lieutenant Stanley B. Dalmais. 30 July 1945. Killed on a training flight in DY-D

*Sergeant Vivian B. Florent. 9 June 1944. Killed when DY-M crashed near Catfoss while 'Gardening'.
(There is no information why he came back to Pocklington as his family lived in London.)*

*Sergeant Charles R. Garrick, Sergeant John J. McShane (RCAF) and William A. Miller (RAAF). All killed
on 3 October 1943 when on a training flight in DY-Z JD276. The aircraft crashed Southeast of
Pocklington after overshooting the runway.*

On Saturday afternoon, John Williams, Paul Campbell and your Secretary visited the Burial Ground and laid crosses at the graves of all of our 102 Squadron airmen.

(We also laid a cross at the grave of Aircraftsman Keith Mervyn Ward who we were unsure of as a 102 Squadron member. Subsequent enquiries revealed he was killed in an air-raid on RAF Holme on Spalding on 31 August 1941 and was claimed by his parents who lived in Pocklington. This also explained why he lies separate to the Commonwealth War Graves plot.)



These members of 102 (Ceylon) Squadron will be in our future annual acts of remembrance.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 13th of NOVEMBER.

After forecasts for rain, once again, a thin sun managed to shine on our acts of remembrance at St. Catherine's, Barmby Moor, the Airfield Memorial, and in the annual Pocklington Town Remembrance Day Parade.

Our Chaplain, Annie Harrison, had worked hard to organise our inclusion in the morning service and to produce an excellent Orders of Service for our services at St. Catherine's and the Airfield.

Our thanks also go to the St. Catherine's PCC, in particular Lewis Anderson, for their help in facilitating the morning service on a Sunday when there would not normally be a service.



Photographs by Lewis Anderson PCC.

The Standards are paraded.

The page in the Roll of Honour was turned during the service by Geoffrey Bartlett, son of Najla Bartlett whose father was killed flying with the Squadron. Our Chaplain, Annie, led the moving service, which included a poem, by William Burke, a soldier of the First World War, who was born in nearby Huggate and killed in France in January, 1917. The poem was read by Patrick Dare, OIC Pocklington School Cadets. Following the poem, the Exhortation, followed by the last post played for us by Freddie Taylor, The Silence, Reveille and the Khohima Epitaph, read by Paul Campbell. (*More about Freddie Taylor later!)

We then moved to the Commonwealth War Graves section of St. Catherine's Churchyard where we held our service of remembrance at the Cross of Sacrifice. Wreaths were laid by the Mayor of Pocklington, Kerry, Parish Councillor for Barmby Moor Parish Council, Pocklington & District Branch Royal British Legion Mrs. Taylor and, for our Association, by Najla Bartlett.

The Standard Bearers, Mark Abel (RBL Pocklington & District Branch Standard), Pocklington School Cadets, Tom McDowell (School Standard) and Kian Doherty (Yorkshire Regiment Standard) formed up at the cross and our Chaplain conducted the service. Again, the Last Post and Reveille were played by Freddie Taylor, a student at Pocklington School.



The Airfield Memorial.

Our service at the Airfield Memorial was, as usual, held with a lovely 'cooling' Yorkshire breeze. Sadly, due to other duties we seem to have failed to have taken any photographs of the wreath laying party. Particularly annoying as we had been joined by William Cuthbert, whose Uncle, Sergeant John Charles Doughty, was killed on the 13th of January 1944 when his aircraft, piloted by Pilot Officer George York, (RAAF), was shot down with the loss of all of the crew. (See item.)

Again, our Chaplain led us through our act of remembrance and wreaths were laid at the base of the memorial by all those who had been present at St. Catherine's.



Our Chaplain, Annie Harrison, leads our service at the Airfield Memorial



The Pocklington School contingent.

(L to R – Jacob Annetts, Ethan Pym, Kian Doherty, Tom McDowell, their Officer Commanding, Patrick Dare and our trumpeter, Freddie Taylor.)



The Airfield Memorial wreaths and crosses.



Following our service, we gratefully sought refuge from the Yorkshire 'breeze' in the Wolds Gliding Club where, once again, Judith Stevens had prepared tea and biscuits for us. In addition, for those with long journeys home, we were treated to warm mini-quiches and sausage rolls provided by Elizabeth Hampton and Mrs. Doughty. An hour later there were biscuit crumbs and nothing else!

(***Freddie Taylor.** *Our trumpeter, who volunteered his services after being asked by our Chaplain in June last year, had played the Last Post and Reveille for our Reunion Weekend services.*

Again, he volunteered his services to our Chaplain for November and was there, in St. Catherine's Church on the Sunday morning. Now, those of you with eagle eyes will have seen in the photographs that Freddie is using elbow crutches. Something I didn't see until I went into the Church to brief him on our Order of Service. That was when I found out he had broken his ankle the previous Saturday morning while playing rugby for Pocklington School!

His mum told me that he had insisted that he had to play and so, not only did he play for us in the Church, but also in the Commonwealth War Grave section and at the Airfield!

Not only that, but he played the Last Post and Reveille at the two war memorial services during the Pocklington Town Remembrance Parade, still on his elbow crutches! After the parades I spoke to Freddie and his father to express our thanks for his dedication and support. Freddie's response was simple, he didn't want to let us down on such an important day!

Pocklington Town.

Our specific duty to 102 (Ceylon) Squadron Association being done, John Williams and your Secretary made their way into Pocklington to join the Town Remembrance Sunday Parade.



This was made all the more poignant having lost long serving Association member, Graham Horton only a few days before. Graham's father was an Air Gunner with the Squadron. Graham had always laid our Association wreath in recent years. Graham used to joke that we only let him do it because he still had his RAF issue beret, with badge! Wherever you are Graham, we missed you and did our best to carry on your sincerity and pride in representing those we lost from the Squadron and our Association members.

Harry Bartlett (Secretary)

Sergeant Cyril (Billy) Warner (1916 – 1975)

A short time ago we were contacted by Maureen Warner as she had mislaid the contact details for our Norwegian friend, Bent Lonrusten. It turns out that she was arranging to visit the memorial of LAC John Elwood in Norway, constructed by Bent, as her father, Cyril Warner, was the Navigator/Second Pilot of Whitley DY-C (N1421) which was shot down by a 'flak' unit near Sylling, Norway, on the 30th of April 1940. They had flown from Kinloss in Scotland on an operation to Oslo/Fornbu and, sadly, John Elwood the Air Gunner was the only fatal casualty. Cyril and the remainder of the crew, Murphy, Graham and Magee, parachuted out and were, eventually, taken as Prisoners of War. They spent the rest of the war in various camps. (Note: They were the second loss for the Squadron as the 'Phoney War' became very real.

Cyril had joined the Royal Air Force in 1932, at the age of 16, as an apprentice mechanic. After training he was stationed at RAF Manston as a mechanic. He then volunteered for aircrew at the start of the war and trained as a Navigator/Pilot. On completion of his training in the West of England he was posted to 102 Squadron, (before we adopted the 'Ceylon' title), at stationed at RAF Driffield. He was then part of a detachment sent to RAF Kinloss, under the command of Squadron Leader J.C. Macdonald, to fly retaliation operations against German targets in Norway after bombing attacks on Orkney by the Luftwaffe flying from Norway.

Cyril had met his future wife Pat in 1938 and they got engaged in 1939 but they decided to wait for the time being. Little did they know that they would have to wait until May 1945 for his return before marrying on the 14th of October 1945.



The following poem, written by David Broadbridge, a friend of the Warner family, was a tribute to Cyril's on parachuting out and the happy outcome for a Norwegian girl.

Cyril landed in a tree with his parachute entangled in the branches. Unable to retrieve it, he was forced to leave it behind. A local girl from the nearby village who was soon to marry, made very good use of the silk material by making her wedding dress from it.

The Parachute

(In Memory of W/O Cyril Warner)

Not that you knew how you made
my day when you dropped in
from the Norway sky that night:
others heard your plane come down,
but one turned as false as the lights
you walked towards, and sent
you wading, uncompassed through snow,
in five years in the camps.
Later they cut your parachute down.

How I wish you could have seen me
on my wedding day, wearing your silk,
walking on air: as you once were.

(David Broadbridge)

Note: Cyril's brother, Flying Officer James Herbert Warner (photo below), was one of the crew piloted by Vernon Byers, as Navigator in Lancaster ED934/G AJ-K 617 Squadron (The Dambusters). He was killed when his aircraft was, they were shot down over the island of Texel, on the outward flight, in the second wave of aircraft taking part in Operation Chastise, (Dams Raid). His body was never recovered, and he is remembered on the Runnymede Memorial.)



Halifax HR804 near Warter.

(by Anthoy Oakden)

On the night of 25th / 26th November 1943 the crew of this 102 Squadron aircraft took off from Pocklington airfield at 23.50hrs for an operational flight to bomb Frankfurt. There was thick cloud cover over the target area, but the crew released their bomb load onto pathfinding markers that lit up the area they were to bomb. On their return to Yorkshire while awaiting their turn to land at Pocklington the aircraft flew into the ground at 03.55hrs on the edge of the Yorkshire Wolds, near Warter Priory. The port outer propeller was feathered at the time, and it was thought that the pilot had adjusted the rudder trim tabs to be set in the wrong direction. Sadly, three members of the crew were killed while the other four survived.

Pilot - Sgt John Westlake Symons RAFVR (1397027), aged 20, of Limpsfield, Surrey.
Buried Pocklington Burial Ground, Yorkshire.

Flight Engineer - Sgt Roy William John Buckle RAFVR (1865368), aged 19, of Folkestone.
Buried Margate Cemetery, Kent.

Air Gunner - Sgt Thomas Jones RAFVR (1515860), aged 23, wife of Warrington. Buried Appleton Thorn Churchyard, Cheshire.

Navigator - Sgt R W Chandler RAFVR (1601104).

Bomb Aimer - Sgt R D Walker.

Wireless Operator / Air Gunner - Sgt G E Bennett.

Air Gunner - Sgt N Meed / Medd.



John Symons' grave in Pocklington cemetery. His brother 2Lt Geoffrey Norman Symons RA (113675) was killed in France on 27th May 1940 and is buried in Merville Communal Cemetery, he was probably killed in the retreat as British forces made their way to Dunkirk to await evacuation.

(NOTE: Sgt Chandler, the Navigator, was still flying with 102 Squadron on 10th / 21st January 1944 when Halifax LW227 was attacked and badly damaged by a night-fighter on Ops to Berlin. He and all his then crew bailed out and became POWs. The nights of 20th / 21st and 21st / 22nd January 1944 were exceptionally bad for 102 Squadron, on the first raid they lost five aircraft with 16 deaths and on the second they lost four aircraft with nineteen deaths. In addition, thirty 102 Squadron airmen became POWs in these two nights.)

(Anthony Oakden)

SGT JAMES CHARLES DOUGHTY (1386802)



“Jimmy” Doughty was Flight Engineer on Halifax MZ647 and sadly killed in action on 13th August 1944 with all his crew when their plane was shot down over Rehborn by a German night fighter during a raid on Russelsheim.

Initially buried in a communal grave in the local church yard they were later reinterred at the Rheinburg Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery along with some 3500 allied aircrew lost over Germany.

Born on 14th May 1923 at 37 Lomond Grove, Camberwell, in south London James Charles Doughty (Jimmy) was the 3rd of 4 children born to James and Florence Doughty and their only son. His father served as a Captain with the Royal Field Artillery during WW1 and had difficulty readjusting to civilian life which affected Jimmy’s early years. Initially owning an “open all hours” grocery shop in Camberwell James moved the family to a similar shop in Regents Park in north London in the mid-1920s and after a short time left that shop and “chased” whatever work he could get. During the 1920s the family lived at 11 different addresses until finally ending up in Southend, Essex by 1930 where Jimmy’s younger sister was born and James finally found a secure job which moved the family to Barking, Essex (now part of Greater London).

After leaving school Jimmy found work at the Plessey factory in nearby Ilford although it wasn’t what he wanted to do but those were difficult times and work was hard to get. As war loomed life inevitably changed for the family, starting with the construction of an Anderson bomb shelter in the garden (more of which later) and then everyone “doing their bit”. Jimmy’s factory turned output over to the “war effort”, his eldest sister Iris went to work for the telegram office and second sister, Winnie, joined the ATS. The youngest sister Maureen (Babs) was still at school. Jimmy couldn’t settle at the factory and like many other young men was anxious to take a more active part. Desperate to fly but being underage to join the RAF didn’t stop him from signing up only to be found out and returned home to work in the factory again. Jimmy knew that his cousin had joined the RFC in 1917 and subsequently killed himself on take-off just 10 days after the RAF was formed but this didn’t deter him. His desperation to sign up was heightened when their house was bombed one night and the family only escaped with their lives thanks to the Anderson shelter.

Unfortunately, their house was too badly damaged, so they had to move once again. Jimmy's sister Winnie was dreadfully homesick in the ATS, so he started writing to her regularly with news of the family and his later experiences in the RAF. These letters were an obvious comfort to Winnie as she kept them for all of her life. Finally, Jimmy was old enough and, after competency tests, joined up on 12th April 1943 being initially based at RAF Regents Park.

In a letter to Winnie dated 4th April he tells her, "Had to do a darn good test in one room, they had an arrangement shaped just like a cockpit of a plane, with joystick rudder bar and everything, and there was a glass chart on the dash board with a small square in the middle, and on this chart was a small dot of light moving in all directions over it. And with the aid of the joystick and rudder-bar you had to keep the light in the square, and it wasn't so easy as it sounds".

The initial posting to RAF Eastchurch at Sheerness in Kent was quickly followed by a move to Torquay, Devon for more physical and combat style training. In a letter dated 8th July he wrote "We are also thrown off the wall into the sea, for dinghy drill, (it's about 15' drop)!" After finishing basic training in Torquay, the next move was in early September to the Aircrew Training Centre (ATC) in Wales where on 14th October he wrote "We went out on the drome Monday and ran up a 'Blenheim'. It was quite good sitting there, speeding the engines up & watching various pressure & temperature dials."

By 4th January 1944 training had moved on and he writes "I am finally on a Halifax Mk3, the latest plane off the production line." After leaving the Aircrew Training Centre, the next posting was to Selby, Yorkshire and by early March Jimmy was hoping to start flying at last. On 22nd April he wrote "Please do not talk about the "thrill of flying" as it's just a bind, it's just like sitting in a car & going along, only you can sleep more comfortably in a car than you can in a crate." In his next letter he tells of being "airsick for the first time following violent evasive action with a fighter (an English fighter after practice). Before leaving Selby on another trip his plane was forced to land in Anglesey with engine trouble but thankfully no one was hurt.

Finally, by late May/early June he joined 102 Squadron where by the 18th June he'd undertaken "a few French & one German" trips. More trips followed.

Clearly during both training and active service Jimmy was popular with his fellow crew mates as many came home with him on leave possibly because he lived close to London with its many attractions or perhaps because he had unmarried sisters who might be at home!



Studio portrait of 428858 Pilot Officer (PO) George York RAAF and his fellow crewmembers from 102 Squadron RAF. All were killed in action when their Halifax bomber was shot down over Rehborn by a German night fighter on the night of 13 August 1944. Identified, back row, left to right: PO York; Roy H Osborne, RAF; 423726 PO Alf H Harvey. Front row: PO Jack Finney, RAF; 422825 Flying Officer E Young; 423711 PO Johnnie G Gordon.

Jimmy's younger sister Babs who was 13/14 at the time was clearly impressed by their smart RAF uniforms as she still talks about it today aged 93! On one visit when based at 102 Jimmy was accompanied by his skipper George York, an Australian. The family dog didn't take to George and started barking continuously at him, so he simply got down on his knees and barked back at the dog which ran off whimpering and kept well away for the rest of the visit.

In June 1944 another of his crew mates, Jack Finney married a local Pocklington girl and Jimmy wrote, "We had a pretty good leave went to Jack's wedding first & then proceeded to give London the once over."

In early August 1944 Jimmy was home on leave for a few days but, unfortunately, his sister Winnie was still away in the ATS and Iris was on holiday with her future husband. He returned to Pocklington on Tuesday 10th and Florence wrote to Iris to tell her the latest news and that, "Jimmy went off this afternoon, he didn't care about going back, like all good things come to an end." The family had no idea when he would next be flying but in the early hours of Friday 13th Florence woke up having had a nightmare in which she saw Jimmy in a burning plane calling out to her. Glancing at the alarm clock she made a mental note of the time. The next morning she didn't say anything to James or Babs but as soon as the telegram arrived telling them he was missing she told them she knew he had been killed which was sadly true. Iris wasn't told until she returned from holiday, and we don't know when Winnie was told, but do know that they both felt guilty at not being there to comfort their mother. Iris kept the letter from her mother hidden for all her life and it only came to light following her death. In those days it was impossible to get details of exactly what had happened so it wasn't until 29th January, 1949 that the official letter from the Air Ministry arrived. The letter included the approximate time the plane was lost, and this matched exactly with the time Florence had noted following the nightmare which was still firmly etched in her mind.

Such was the sadness of their loss that none of the family could bring themselves to visit Jimmy's grave, and for many years it was too painful even to talk about him although his photo had pride of place in their various homes and for Winnie it was by her bedside right up to her death in 2019.



However, in 2010 both Winnie (aged 90) and Babs (aged 80 living in Canada) agreed they should make the visit if only to get closure. Iris had died 4 years previously, so she was represented by her son (William) and his wife. A wreath was jointly laid at the communal grave by Winnie and Babs, and both agreed they now finally felt closure after being able to say their goodbyes. It was after this that Winnie mentioned the previously unknown letters from Jimmy copies of which together with other documents and photos have now been passed to the Squadron archives. I have subsequently visited the grave on two further occasions leaving memorial crosses and photos of the other crew members.

My name is William Cuthbert and Jimmy was my uncle. He was only 21 when he was killed.



*“And when you come to 102
And think that you will get through
There's many a fool who thought like you
It's suicide but it's fun”.*

Anonymous 102 Squadron member, 1941



Royal Air Force - Pocklington Airfield

The home of 102 (Ceylon) Squadron RAF and 405 (Vancouver) Squadron RCAF No 4 Group Bomber Command during World War II from where so many gave their lives in the cause of freedom.

This memorial was raised by Old Comrades in gratitude to all those men and women who served in both squadrons in War and Peace.

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