

USS FRANK E. EVANS DD 754

WWII KOREA VIETNAM



FOOTLOCKER TALK NEWSLETTER NUMBER 76 — FIRST QUARTER 2020

AHOY SHIPMATES, FAMILY & FRIENDS

I can't tell you how disappointed I was when I learned our amendment in the NDAA was scratched last December. We were so close, yet so far. We have learned a couple of things since our amendment was scratched. One item that was evident is our legislatures do not have the entire story about the reason the DOD disallows our request and the Association must be more visible and active about our objective. I say this because if you look at recent stories in the media you will find the headline is about what Congressmen and Senators are doing to get the names on the wall, no reference to the Association.

The Recognition committee is moving at lighting speed to further support the Association's presence in the social media. I am proud to announce that our very own Hanna Ackerman has volunteered to take on the position as External Communication's Director. For those that do not know her, Hanna became a supporter of our cause clear back in 2011 when we had our reunion in Waterloo, Iowa. Hanna wrote a one act play depicting the anguish Eunice Sage went through when she learned her 3 sons were killed in the collision. Since then Hanna has become an author, graduated High School, graduated college, and is currently attending Northern Iowa University working towards her Masters in History. Hanna will be helping the Association develop an external communication plan, setting up external distribution lists and accumulating key contacts within social media.

Steve Kraus

Association President

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Welcome and warm wishes to all new members. Our success in part, is due to our members involvement in the Association. We ask new members to consider volunteering for some task or activity within the organization. Know any one interested in joining....go to our website ussfee.org and click on the tab titled join association or contact the association Secretary Rich Alverdes at richalverdesr@gmail.com or call him at (425) 367-9345

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	CITY/STATE
Hanna Ackerman	Friend of the Association	Cedar Fall. IA
Donna Albert	Wife, Les Albert	Charlotte, NC
Terri Alverdes	Wife, Rich Alverdes	Snohomish, WA
Sam Baker	Grandson, Ron Baker	Newington, NSW
Don Bright	Friend, Eric Ellis	Neosho, MO
Mary Quissell	Friend, Linda Vaa	Brookings, SD
Xiola Watt	Granddaughter, Donna & Steve	Portland, OR

DONATIONS NEEDED — PLEASE HELP

This year the Association has the opportunity to have a plaque placed in the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas. Some refer to this museum as the Nimitz Museum. Many of you may recall we have a small 5" X 7" plaque of the ship already there. We believe this is a fitting location to have a plaque dedicated to the "Lost 74." We are planning on dedicating this plaque next October during the San Antonio Reunion. We need your support in raising the funds! Last year when the Board of Directors approved this project we immediately received commitments for \$ 800. We now need your support to raise the remaining \$1700. If you would like to contribute to this project please send your donation to:

USS Frank E. Evans Association
2286 Morgan Rd
Carlsbad, CA 92008

Mark "Fredericksburg Plaque" in the memo section

or simply go to our website and make your donation through the donations section in the ships store.

FROM OUR CHAPLAIN

Chaplain Al Collins

CHRISTIAN SOLDIER SPIRITUAL ARMOR

Ephesians 6:10-14 "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Romans 13:12. "The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light"

**UPDATES ON PLACING THE NAMES OF OUR LOST 74 ON THE
VIETNAM WALL, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT
BY STEVE KRAUS**

I hate to share this information with you regarding our amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA.) It has been confirmed... our amendment has been scratched from the NDAA. According to our latest intelligence, the Senate Armed Services Committee is institutionally opposed and continues to reflect the desires of the Department of Defense (DOD.)

Please don't think all is lost. We made great headway this year and we pushed harder and further than ever before. In years past, few Congressman and Senators knew about USS Frank E Evans, now almost all are aware of the objective to get the names of the 74 on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington D.C.

Currently we still have Senator Kevin Cramer's stand-alone bill S 849 in the Energy & Natural Resources Committee. We will focus our efforts on pushing this bill for approval, and we will follow-up on our previous request for President Trump to issue an executive order placing the names of the 74 on the Wall. We heard through the various channels that the President has handed this off to Vice President Pence last summer.

I know how immensely disappointing this is for our amendment to be shot down, especially during the holiday season. There is no doubt in my mind and in the minds of the majority of people across this country that the names of all 74 belong on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. The doubt comes from a select few in Washington D.C. who think their loyalty to their buddies in the DOD over shadows the will of the people.

We are not giving up! Our objective is to get the names on the wall. I speak on behalf of the Relatives of the Lost, Survivors and Association Members... this will remain our number one objective!

**TWO CHOICES FOR THIS YEARS 3 JUNE MEMORIAL CEREMONY
Washington D.C. or Long Beach, California**

We are expanding our Association's sponsored 3 June Memorial Ceremony to include Washington D. C. this year. Please mark your calendars. At the time of this printing we have the following information:

WASHINGTON D.C.

Date:3 June 2020

Time 10:00 A.M.

Location: To Be Determined

Contact: Terry Vejr — trvejr@gmail.com or 971-645-8655

LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

Date:3 June 2020

Time 10:00 A.M.

location: Navy Memorial Park, Shoreline at the Aquarium

Contact: Pete Peters — rep1029@aol.com or 310-527-4373

USS KIDD (DDG100) UPDATE

By Rich Alverdes

SAN DIEGO (17 Jan, 2020) The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Kidd (DDG 100) departs Naval Base San Diego. Kidd, part of the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group, is on a scheduled deployment to the IndoPacific. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brandie Nuzzi)



OPERATION MAIL CALL

As an added edition to our update on Friendship Alliance with the USS KIDD, and while they are on deployment, it would be an outstanding opportunity for us, as members, to send an email to the KIDD and let them know we are thinking and praying for them while they are deployed. I'm suggesting you send a message to the Captain of the USS KIDD and ask him to share your message with the crew. You can contact the Captain at the following address: co@ddg100.navy.mil, his name is Commander Nathan S. Wemett

I know from past contacts with all Commanding Officers of the USS KIDD that they (Officers and Crew) really appreciate hearing from us while they are away from their families and friends.

REUNION 2020....MAKE SURE YOU HAVE MARKED YOUR CALENDARS!!!

WHEN: OCTOBER 21—24 2020

WHERE: SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

DETAILED INFORMATION AND REUNION PACKAGE: MAILED IN THE MONTH OF JUNE

THE FIRST USS KIDD DD661



This is the 1st USS KIDD. We thought it would be nice to learn about this ship since in the last article we shared about the new XO for the USS KIDD (DDG 100), Commander Noland, who is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana and where this ship (DD 661) is now anchored as a museum ship. So here is some brief history and background about the 1st KIDD to fly the pirate flag.



The first USS Kidd (DD661) was launched on February 28th, 1943 by the Federal Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company in New Jersey. In June 1943 the USS Kid cruised the Atlantic and Caribbean escorting large combatant vessels until she departed for the Pacific in August 1943. During this time the Kidd was underway with a task force to strike and to support the Bougainville Landings. During a November strike on Rabaul, Kidd dropped astern of the formation to rescue the crew of a plane from the aircraft carrier Essex (CV 9). Japanese planes dove at her in an attempt to sink her, the Kidd stood up to the attack and splashed 3 Japanese planes and completed the rescue.

The Kidd next screened carriers making air attacks on Tarawa during the Gilbert Island invasion in November 1943 when she spotted a group of low flying enemy bombers heading toward the carriers. The Kidd again took up the task of support, warned the carrier and took out 2 enemy planes.

In January 1944 the Kidd sailed for Funafuti, and was involved with the invasion of the Marshall Islands. The Kidd then became part of the Philippines invasion fleet, entered Leyte Gulf in October screening the initial landings and provided fire support. The Kidd returned to Mare Island Naval Yard for Overhaul in December 1945 and then joined Task Force 58 for the invasion of Okinawa. During her time there the Kidd was attacked by enemy planes with one crashing into her causing damage, killing 38 men and wounding 55.

The Kidd returned to San Diego for inactivation and decommissioned on 10 December 1946. Because of the actions in Korea, the Kidd was recommissioned in March 1951. In 1953 she did Westpac cruises and then sailed for the East Coast in 1960 doing Naval Reserve training cruises.

In 1964 the Kidd was decommissioned and entered the Atlantic Reserve Fleet. After her time in the reserve fleet she was towed from Philadelphia and arrived in Baton Rouge on 23 May 1982 where she was transferred to the Louisiana Naval War Memorial Commission. The Kidd received 4 battle starts for World War II and 4 battle stars for the Korean War.

INFORMATION ABOUT SENATOR JACK REED

By Tim Wendler

"On this Veteran's Day, I am thankful for all the Veterans who put their lives on the line to keep our country safe. I also wonder why my country has not remembered my father's sacrifice at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall in the way that California and many other states have done. I understand that Senator Jack Reed (RI) has been obstructing this worthy honor for fallen sailors. At a time when Democrats and Republicans cannot seem to agree on anything, members of both parties are supporting this in Congress. Senator Reed won't meet with one of his own constituents, the sister of one of our Lost 74 sailors on the USS Frank E. Evans, to even hear us out. If you share my disappointment, please share this message."

Joanne Messier-Derosiers shared this message: "I have just been made aware that Rhode Island Senator Jack Reed does not support adding the names of the "Lost 74" to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington D.C. As you know, my brother Dick, a young kid from Cumberland Rhode Island was one of the 74 U.S. sailors lost at sea June 3, 1969, while serving their county fighting an unpopular war. I want you all to be aware of Reed's stand. I ask that you get in touch with your Senators and Congressmen. Please let them know we are disappointed in Senator Reed's lack of support and that we are committed to getting the "Lost 74" the honor they deserve by adding their names to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall."

IN MEMORIAM

Turn Again to Life – by Mary Lee Hall

If I should die and leave you here a while, be not like others sore undone, who keep long vigils by the silent dust, and weep. For my sake – turn again to life and smile, nerving thy heart and trembling hand to do something to comfort other hearts than thine. Complete those dear unfinished tasks of mine and I, perchance may therein comfort you.

SHIPMATES

NAME	CITY/STATE	DECEASED
STG3 David M. Koontz (1963-64)	Mesa, Az	07 Jun. 2019
MM3 Carl W. Lenz (1950-53)	Onawa, IA	18 Dec. 2019
LT Benton Thompson (1965—60)	Austin, MN	31 Aug. 2019

RELATIVES OF THE LOST

NAME	CITY/STATE	DECEASED
Shirley Sawatzke	Yankton, SD	08 Nov.2019

Shirley was Ernie Sages sister and the Aunt of the Sage Brothers.

MEMBER RELATIVES

NAME	CITY/STATE	DECEASED
Geneva Essington Mother of Mary (Manley) Lee	Centralia, Il	11 Jan. 2020
Jane Newsom Adams Mother-in-Law of David V. Kraus	Rancho Bernardo, CA	24 Jan. 2020
Brenda Bradian Mother of Jennifer Stephens	Marietta, GA	28 Feb. 2020

AN ARTICLE THAT WAS PUBLISHED IN THE CONCORD MONITOR

**Imaginary line in the ocean' keeps the names of the Lost 74 off the
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall**

By RAY DUCKLER Concord Monitor columnist Published: 1/3/2020 3:59:10 PM

Gary Vigue died more than 50 years ago, but his brothers want his name to live forever. He earned it, they say. Glen and Scott Vigue want Gary's name included on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., that somber, shiny black tribute with the names of 58,320 who died during the war. They want the same for the other 73 men who were killed when the USS Frank E. Evans sank into the South China Sea minutes after it was accidentally rammed by an Australian aircraft carrier during nighttime training exercises.

The dead are known as the Lost 74. Lost because they can't be found on The Wall. Lost because the U.S. government wanted to limit negative publicity during its public-relation campaign to justify the war. And lost because 73 bodies were never recovered.

Before this tragedy, the Evans and its crew had a stellar record, a strong reputation for success. But a technicality – the Evans did not sink within a designated war zone, missing by 100 miles – has created a movement that's picked up steam the past few years.

Last month, the cause lost traction when the Department of Defense rejected the latest effort by the USS Frank E. Evans Association to honor these men.

This organization is fighting for Gary Vigue, who graduated from Dover High School and whose son, Shawn Vigue, lives in Concord.

Shawn has said in the past that he prefers not to comment about his father, and I wasn't able to reach him by phone this week. He's no doubt following the story, though, and you can bet anyone connected to this topic isn't going to fade from view or let miles of red tape derail them. This is too important. This, they feel, is injustice run amok.

"Great country we live in, huh?" said Scott Vigue, dripping with sarcasm. "This has been going on for years, and I don't understand why they can't put their names on. This country is screwed up."

Scott was 8 years old, living in Farmington at the time of the naval accident off the coast of Vietnam. Glen was gearing up for his graduation from Farmington High School. "I was close with Gary," said Glen, a retired factory worker. "We were quite close and it was pretty tough."

A chaplain and an officer knocked on the family's front door, shortly after the catastrophe on June 3, 1969. Gary, they were told, was killed in a tragedy that the United States government was in no rush to announce. Perhaps that's why some of you haven't heard the story.

The USS Frank E. Evans was an American destroyer that played a vital, consistent role during 1960s portion of the Vietnam War. It had earned the nickname the Gray Ghost because of its many Houdini acts that had kept it afloat during battle. It had earned a Battle Star for its service during World War II, then five more during the Korean War, and was due to return to action in the near future.

Then came the nightmare, on a training mission with 40 other vessels. An Australian aircraft carrier shifted off course due to human error and rammed the Evans. The ship sank fast. Stephen Kraus, the president of the USS Frank E. Evans Association, compared the collision to an 18-wheeler running over a Volkswagen Beetle.

CONCORD MONITOR ARTICLE CONTINUED

“Sometimes people ask me about it and I tell the story of what happened,” said survivor Ron Perkins of Manchester. “I can describe it and then all of a sudden I hit a point where I can’t talk. It gets to me and I break down a little, and I have to stop talking.” When asked about the names of the Lost 74 remaining off The Wall, Perkins added, “This is ridiculous.”

The Wall is reserved for those killed within the 100-mile radius known as the Combat Zone. The Department of Defense has maintained that these men have no place on The Wall. No place for the Lost 74. They were 110 miles outside the zone. One body was recovered. The other 73 remain in their watery grave, while a shiny piece of granite stands in tribute without those names.

Kraus is a survivor living in California. He’s the face of this movement. “We’re totally frustrated,” Kraus said by phone. “Year after year, something that seems so simple is so complex, and we cannot figure it out.”

He can’t figure it out because 343 names have been added to the Wall since its completion in 1982. President Ronald Reagan made an exception in 1983. He ordered the names of 68 Marines, killed in a plane crash while flying back to Vietnam after leave, be added to the memorial. Why the apparent hypocrisy? Because that plane was ordered back to the war zone in an official capacity. The Evans had no such orders on the day those practice missions were held. The Evans had provided naval gunfire, slamming the Vietnam coastline to open room for U.S. troops. It was due to receive its 15th Vietnam Service Medal the very day it sank.

Kraus was working in the Signal Shack the day the Evans went down. During the wee hours of June 3 Gary Vigue was on the bridge. The Australian carrier slammed into the bow, which sank in minutes. Nearly 200 men, most in the stern, got out. Kraus escaped through a door, a lucky man like Perkins. Two New Hampshire men died, including Gary Vigue and Ron Thibodeau. Kraus explained his frustration over the missing names this way: “The only reason we were there was to fight in the Vietnam War. This was not an exotic Polynesian cruise. We want the names on that Wall.”

Our state’s leaders in Washington say they’ll continue to fight. Senator Jeanne Shaheen, in fact, was a co-sponsor of the bill that sought to right this wrong. The bill that died last month, when the Department of Defense nixed a proposed amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act. A prepared statement emailed to me by Shaheen said, “continue to urge the Department of Defense to drop its opposition and act on its own to add the names.”

Senator. Maggie Hassan’s prepared email said, “They deserve to be recognized alongside their fellow servicemen at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.”

Representative. Ann Kuster also responded by email, saying she would “continue to advocate on their behalf.”

Perhaps one day, the Lost 74 will get the credit they deserve. They were on a ship that sank during the Vietnam War. A ship that had recently engaged in combat, then was destroyed while practicing for more combat. Their families want to touch these names, maybe trace them with a pencil. Maybe that will influence grandkids and great-grandkids to visit The Wall, see the names, wonder what happened.

“A friend of mine from high school went to visit the memorial and he came back and asked why my brother’s name wasn’t on it,” Glen Vigue said. “I didn’t know what to say. It’s about an imaginary line in the ocean.

“Ridiculous.”

BRICK PLACED ON VETERANS WALK

USS Frank E. Evans DD 754 Brick Placed on Veterans Walk
Simons Island, Ga. Sec. 4 Row 13, Thanks to John Coffey



MEMORIAL STONE DEDICATIONS FOR 2020

The remaining three memorial stones in the states of our “Lost 74” are scheduled to be dedicated this year. The locations are as follows with the most current tentative dates:

- ◇ North Carolina at Sandhills State Veterans Cemetery, located at 8220 Bragg Blvd. Fort Brag, North Carolina. We are trying for a May dedication date, it has not been confirmed as of this newsletter
- ◇ Wisconsin at The High Grounds, located at 7031 Ridge Rd. Neillsville, Wisconsin. Dedication will be on 25 May (Memorial Day.) The dedication will be part of the High Grounds Memorial Day Ceremony.
- ◇ West Virginia at Brooke-Hancock Veterans Memorial Park, located at 27 Marshaling Yard Dr. Weirton, West Virginia. The dedication is scheduled for Sunday, 19 July. We do not have a time of day set as yet.

WE WILL POST THE UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE DEDICATIONS ON THE WEBSITE AS SOON AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE

CONTACT PERSON: TERRY VEJR, trvejr@gmail.com or 971-645-8655

MEET MICHAEL D. "MIKE" MCGOUGAN CONTINUED THIS IS PART 2 OF A 3 PART SERIES

"I worked with the Aussies and New Zealanders back in World War II (Chief Reilly left the Navy for awhile following World War II) and now it is better than it used to be," the veteran chief replied. "It is good to know you can work with them. Perhaps we will be able to pick up new ideas between the countries."

Before his assignment to the Evans, Chief Reilly was a crew member of an aircraft carrier. "A destroyer, of course, is much smaller than a carrier and has fewer men," the senior chief said. "This permits a closeness among the crew. It is almost like a big family."

I left the Evans and returned to Her Majesty's Australian Ship Melbourne to write about the Evans' "Sea Spirit in a Family Way"—featuring the Reilly's and Sages—and the destroyer's mission in the exercise.

I had been in the SEATO Command Information Bureau media center writing press releases until about 0200 (2 a.m.) on the morning of June 3 (six days after my visit to the Evans). Before "hitting my rack" to sleep, I stepped out onto a weather deck and leaned against the rail for a few moments, taking in a magnificent scene on the sea before my eyes. The South China Sea was like a placid lake with a full moon overhead and no breeze blowing. I looked across the almost-still water and could see the lights of many other ships near and far off in the distance. It was so clear that it seemed visibility was unlimited.

In the previous 11 months that I was assigned to go out on the ocean aboard a variety of ships—mostly U.S. Navy ships—that were carrying out a variety of missions between Vietnam and the Philippines, I had never experienced a more "accommodating" South China Sea with weather above and beyond that was both ship and sailor "friendly."

The previous day Commander Michael Hudson, Royal Australian Navy, the SEATO Fleet Operations Officer, evaluated the participating navies' efforts in Sea Spirit by remarking: "We are developing into a team, each member understanding what the others will do in a particular situation." SEATO participants appeared to be sailing on a smooth course toward an ultimate "victory."

Shortly after 3 a.m. (0300), I was asleep in a forward compartment on the port side of the HMAS Melbourne. The carrier was preparing to launch aircraft. In order to launch aircraft, the carrier must have a ship "take station" trailing a specific distance behind to the rear of the carrier to act as a "plane guard." The plane guard ship follows close enough astern of the carrier to be ready to rescue any pilots and/or aircrewmen from the sea if an aircraft encounters a problem during the launch or recovery (landing) and goes down into the water.

USS Frank E. Evans (DD-754) was ordered to take up "plane guard position" shortly after 3 a.m. to cover the launch cycle of a "squadron" of aircraft that was soon to begin from the flight deck of HMAS Melbourne (R21).

However, as the Evans maneuvered to move into plane guard position, apparently (as was later determined by a Board of Inquiry) several navigational miscalculations resulted, taking the Evans on a course across the bow of the Melbourne.

I remember being suddenly jolted awake but no sensation of a collision. But, the Melbourne's collision alarm was blaring and men were running through the compartment.

“MIKE” MCGOUGAN STORY CONTINUED

I was not quite sure what I should do since I was not a regular crewman of the Melbourne. One of the carrier’s crewmen did confirm to me that the Melbourne “must have collided with another ship.”

I decided I’d better get moving, hurriedly put on my clothes, and headed toward a hatch that led to an outside weather deck. I paused at another hatch at my feet that had a ladder going downward to a lower compartment. Men were now quickly coming up the ladder from below. Steam was rising through the open hatch.

I wondered if there was a hole in the hull at the bottom of the Melbourne or if there had been a fire or explosion down below. Melbourne crew members were rapidly reacting to the emergency. On an instinctive impulse, I followed hustling men out the hatch that led to the weather deck where I was abruptly confronted with a shocking scene that I was unexpectedly compelled to witness.

The Melbourne was almost still in the water, barely moving. Helplessly adrift maybe 50 yards away just along the port side of the Melbourne was the bow section of a ship. The distressed ship lay over on its starboard side. Three white hull numbers 7-5-4 on the port side gleamed against the ship’s gray metal. The remainder of what I thought to be an entire ship angled downward and disappeared beneath the calm moonlit sea.

Then, in an instant, the scene became even more horrific when it dawned on me: the ship was a destroyer—a U.S. destroyer. “Oh, my God, I thought! The 7-5-4 is the Frank E. Evans.”

Crewmen from the Melbourne were already in the water swimming to the aid of destroyer sailors who were thrashing frantically in the sea not far from the bow of the Evans. Evans’ crewmen traded shouts back-and-forth with their carrier rescuers.

A spotlight from the carrier’s flight deck was beamed onto the bow of the Evans. Two of the destroyer’s crew members were trying to keep their balance as they stood precariously on the slippery bow section, the sea swirling at their feet. In a few seconds, the spotlight from the carrier’s flight deck above was switched off. I was feeling: what do I do now? What can I possibly do? I felt so helpless and inadequate as I was witnessing these valiant sailors battling to save their lives.

I went back into the berthing compartment. It was empty and silent. I returned to the weather deck less than a minute later and glanced back toward the Evans. The destroyer had flipped up into a vertical position with the bow now pointed skyward and the numbers 7-5-4 were facing sideways and slipping downward into the ocean.

I turned around, found a ladder, and scrambled upward, passing two decks until I found myself on the Melbourne’s flight deck. A pilot—wearing only a helmet, life vest, skivvies and boots—ran and leaped into a helicopter that was already being prepared for rescue. By the time the pilot had buckled up, the rotor blades were whirring and the helicopter was lifting off the flight deck to search for Evans’ crew members.

**LOOK FOR PART 3 IN THE UPCOMING
NEWSLETTER FOR THE CONCLUSION OF THIS STORY**



USS FRANK E EVANS ASSOCIATION
2286 Morgan RD.
Carlsbad, CA 92008

**CHECK OUT
OUR REVISED
& UPDATED
WEBSITE
USSFEE.ORG**

**OUR NEXT
REUNION IS IN
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TEXAS, OCT.
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