

July 2011

Fifteenth Infantry Regiment
"The Old China Hands"



www.15thinfregtassoc.org

July 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fellow China Hands,

First, I would like to wish a happy 100th birthday to Frank Eaton, our oldest known living Can Do Soldier! Frank celebrated his birthday on June 7 at his residence in Florida. We wish him many more.

I wish to thank LTC Nelson Kraft and his officers and Soldiers of the 1st Battalion for hosting an excellent Rendezvous. All reports indicate it was a superb event. It was also great the battalion leadership observed Organization Day with a run and ceremony at the China Gate.

The 3rd Battalion has returned from its year-long deployment training Iraqi security forces. Congratulations on a job well done are in order, as is a hearty welcome home! I would like to thank John Burke and other association members who were able to be there to welcome our Can Do Soldiers home.

On May 31st, I was present as a member of Outpost Europe of the Society of the 3rd Infantry Division when that outpost and the city of Nuernberg dedicated a commemorative plaque honoring the 3rd and 45th Infantry Division's for their role in liberating the city in April 1945. The plaque is mounted on the Tribune of Zeppelin Field where on April 22nd, two 15th Infantrymen received the Medal of Honor – LTC Keith L. Ware and LT John Tominac. Nurenberg was a very important battle for the 15th Infantry as we had three of our Soldiers receive the Medal of Honor for their action there as well as Anti-tank Company earning a Presidential Unit Award. We were honored to have COL William E. Ryan Jr., who was a Lieutenant in the 3rd Battalion in WWII, with us at the dedication.

I am proud to inform you that the summer edition of On Point magazine, the official magazine of the Army Historical Foundation, includes an article I wrote on the history of our Regiment as part of the regimental history series. The magazine is one of the benefits of membership in the Army Historical Foundation. If you are not a member, I can only recommend you join. The foundation's mission is to build the National Museum of the United States Army and it can really use your help. Check out their website at <http://www.armyhistory.org/>.

November 3, 2011 marks the 100th anniversary of the Regiment's departure from Fort Douglas, Utah for China with the first elements of the Regiment going ashore at Chigawangtao on January 18, 1912. We should find a fitting way of marking this truly significant anniversary. Any ideas and recommendations from our membership are welcome.

I would like to thank John Burke for his sixteen year of outstanding service to the Regiment and the Association in almost every job within the Association over that period of time. He culminated his duties chairman of the membership committee. Tom Heitzer and Mike Friend will share the responsibilities of the Membership Chairman, the NCO and Soldier of the Year awards and delivery of The Dragon to the active battalions. John has been our mainstay and has been a truly effective contact man to our active duty battalions. We all owe him a deep debt of gratitude and I especially have valued his wise counsel and assistance in keeping the Association going. He is an outstanding example of the true Can Do man!

Can Do!

Tim

15th INF Regiment Association Founders
Ramon Clarke - Charles Crain - Jerry Cunningham - Michael Halik
Maurice Kendall - Leonard Lassar - Whitney Mullen - Raymond Taylor - Frank Yokum

The Dragon is the quarterly publication of the 15th Infantry Regiment Association. It is published in January, April, July and October.' Neither its editorial nor articles content carry official endorsement of the Association. Input for the Dragon is due the 15th of each month prior to publishing.

ASSOCIATION OBJECTIVES

- To perpetuate and foster the history and traditions of the Regiment.
- To provide opportunities for uniting past and present members of the Regiment into a close and cooperative alliance.
- To promote morale and high esprit de corps among members of the Regiment. ~ To acquire and maintain a repository of regimental historical memorabilia.
- To perpetuate and foster the history and traditions of the Regiment.
- To assist in the maintenance of monuments dedicated to the units of the 15th Infantry Regiment.

Send dues and new addresses to:
Bartolo Viruso, 116 Harriett Road,
North Babylon, NY 11703

Annual dues \$10 for regular members and \$5 for active duty members, due October 1 each year.

Life membership: To age 60 = \$150; Age 61-69 = \$120; Age 70-79 = \$100; Age 80 and above = \$50.

Send or Email news items to:

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2600 E. University Ave.
Georgetown, TX 78626
1LT, HHC, 3rd BN WWII
DOD – March 19, 2011
Reported by Maureen Lewis

LOYD CHANCE
5105 Wood Creek Ln.
Garland, TX 75044
G CO, 2nd BN, Korea
DOD – March 27, 2011
Reported by Pat Chance

V. WILLIAM LAUGHLIN
20 Deering Center Rd.
Deering, NH 03244
PFC, F CO, 2nd BN WWII
DOD – Dec. 25, 2010
Reported by Rich Heller

BOBBY G. WILSON
4732 Josephine St.
Columbus, GA 31907-4049
SFC, 15th INF/A%D, Korea
DOD - January, 2011
Reported by Bob Bailey

Organization Day held at Ft. Benning on May 4th

FT. Benning, GA – Officers of the 1st 15th “Can Do” Battalion celebrated their Regimental Founding with an Organization Day three-mile fun run at Ft. Benning, Ga. on May 4. The 15th Infantry Regiment was founded on May 3, 1861 with the founding traditionally celebrated on May 4th of every year.

All officers had the honor of carrying the Regimental Colors. Following the run, a social hour with former “Can Do” leaders was held which included sharing stories and honoring those who have served.

LTC Nelson Kraft reminded the officers present of the rich tradition and history of the “Can Do” Regiment. He stressed that is their obligation to ensure the tradition is passed on to all members of the Regiment in order to live up to the high standards established by those who came before us.

The event culminated next to the “China Gate” which was donated to the Infantry School by the 15th Infantry Regiment in the 1930s.

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According to the organizers, this year's event continued to demonstrate the leadership's commitment to the living customs and courtesies of the 15th Infantry Regiment.



John Burke, MAJ Patrick Douglas, Mark Baker



The Regimental colors are held high



Leadership at the China Gate

July 2011

CHINA 6 SITREP

CHINA Families and Friends:

June 2011 marks the end of 3-15 IN's deployment to Iraq. I am tremendously proud of all that the "China" Battalion accomplished while deployed. The end of the deployment is a significant milestone in the battalion's lifecycle. It signals the culmination of over two years of hard work; first training and preparing for deployment, and then the challenges of the deployment itself. The hard work, dedication, and perseverance of the battalion's Soldiers and Families allowed the unit to complete a successful deployment to Iraq. This deployment significantly strengthened Iraqi Security Forces in the Anbar province and continued to build the ongoing strategic partnership between the United States and Iraq.

The focus of this deployment was different from those that many of our Soldiers experienced in the past. Rather than taking the lead, aggressively seeking out the enemy with US forces, perhaps with some Iraqi support, our collective emphasis was to provide support and training to both the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police as they continued their fight to bring peace and security to their nation. The battalion provided support in many ways over the course of the year.

Transformation of Eagle's Talon is the most vivid example of our success; won by every Soldier, every day working diligently to make our Iraqi partners better and Iraq more secure. Each company played an integral role in the battalion's shared achievements.

In early 2011 the Task Force, in conjunction with our Iraqi partners, initiated Operation Eagle's Talon; an effort to train Iraqi Army platoons on basic infantry skills to improve the Iraqi Army's ability to defend their nation against foreign threats. That mission was tremendously successful. The Iraqi soldiers and officers embraced the chance to train systematically with vigor. Additionally, the leadership of the 1st Iraqi Army Division and its subordinate brigades quickly recognized the value of the training, both as a way to improve the skills of their soldiers, and a means to refine their ability to plan and execute training. By April, Eagle's Talon had progressed so far that direct US instruction was no longer necessary. 1st IA Division directed that each of its brigades develop training plans to continue and expand Eagle's Talon into a month-long, Iraqi-run training program. 1st IA's enthusiasm for planning and executing its own training is in many ways a fitting capstone for the deployment.

The battalion finished the deployment strongly. The conclusion of the deployment further highlighted the evolving nature of US engagement in Iraq. In May 2011, both B/3-15 and C/3-15 closed Camps Tariq and Al Taqqadum and transferred control of those camps to the Iraqi Army in another visible sign of the ever increasing ability of Iraqi forces to take full responsibility for their own security. As we transitioned these two camps to Iraqi control, we welcomed the unit replacing us to eastern Anbar. We were replaced by 1-325 AIR, an infantry battalion from the 82nd Airborne Division. We spent two and a half weeks orienting our replacements to our area of operations and ensuring that they were prepared to continue the mission. The "Can Do" battalion completed this last tactical task smoothly and efficiently as it has all previous missions. 1-325 AIR is now well positioned to continue and expand on all that the "Can Do" Battalion accomplished.

The last of the battalion landed in GA on 20 June and uncased the 'Can Do' Colors. They are currently enjoying a well deserved period of leave. Soon many of our Soldiers will depart the battalion to either leave the Army, or to move on to new assignments with other units. For those that remain with 3-15 IN, we will take part in a few moral and esprit-de-corps building events in the next few weeks. On 11 August we will conduct a battalion Golf Scramble followed later in the week by the 3-15 IN Battalion Ball and a Hail and Farewell.

In the months immediately following our block leave period we will begin to prepare the 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment to respond to our nation's call by conducting reset of our equipment and individual Soldier training, while always remembering that our Army Families are a top priority.

Can Do!

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Very Respectfully,

CAN DO! VANGUARD, OUT FRONT! ROCK OF THE MARNE!
LTC Jeffrey M. Shoemaker (China 6)
TASK FORCE 3-15 Infantry, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division



Uncasing of the "Can Do" colors

CAN DO RENDEZVOUS 2011

COLUMBUS/FORT BENNING, GA

By Tom Heitzer

FT. BENNING, GA - The Can Do Rendezvous for 2011 was held from May 11th to May 13th in Columbus, Georgia.

As members registered in they were encouraged to sign their name in the "Can Do" Guest Book that was started in 1966 when the 1-15th was stationed in Kitzingen, Germany. This book has been among the many artifacts stored in the China Room that represents the history of the 15th Infantry.

I had a chance to look through this book and found several names I recognized from the time I spent at Harvey Barracks from 1966 to 1968. An icebreaker was the first event held at Rendezvous 2011 in the Suburban Extended Stay Conference Room on Wednesday evening. LTC Nelson Kraft, Commander of the 1-15th Infantry Regiment and John Burke, Membership Chairman both welcomed all those attending this year's Rendezvous. Everyone enjoyed food and drinks while Association members and enlisted personal from the 1-15th Infantry got acquainted and traded stories of their adventures while serving in the military.

Thursday morning vans transported everyone for a tour of Fort Benning with visits to Kelly Hill home of the 1-15th Infantry, touring the China Room, and lunch with the Soldiers at the Brigade Dining Facility. The afternoon included more touring of the fort and dinner at another dining facility before heading back to the hotel.

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Friday we were once again transported by van to the parade field to watch two Infantry Basic Training Units graduate. This was a wonderful experience to watch from our VIP Seating as the Army Marching Band played before, during and after the graduation ceremony.

Afterwards we toured the World War II Company Street, which consisted of the chapel, mess hall, barracks, supply room, and Headquarters Building that was used during World War II at Fort Benning.

Lunch was served in the old mess hall with the modern addition of air conditioning. After lunch we toured the National Infantry Museum which is a must if you haven't ever been to see this beautiful tribute to all infantrymen. This building is much like the Smithsonian Museums in Washington D.C. and you can't see it all in one day. So if you plan to come visit in the future, set aside a couple of days to tour.

Rendezvous ended with a short ceremony at the China Gate prior to the Regimental Dinner on Friday evening in the Regimental Room of the Conference Center. It started with a cocktail hour followed by welcomes from LTC Nelson Kraft, Tad Davis, Vice President of the Association, and Lt Benjamin Gross and then dinner.

Soldiers from the 1-15th Infantry and the 3-15th Infantry attended the banquet along with Association Members John & Elizabeth Burke, Tad Davis, Diane Davis, Mike & Peggy Friend, Henry & Pennie Burke, Larry Burris, Roy Clark, Mahlon & Diane Taylor, Robert Killian, Wayne Killian, Leonard & Priscilla Lassar, Jeff Lassar, Shirley Lassar, Tom Heitzer, Egan & Mary Fehnel, Philip Fiumara, and Willie Garner Sr.

After dinner the award of the Order of Saint Maurice was presented to Association member Leonard Lassar for outstanding service to the infantry while on active duty with the US Army and conspicuous contributions over an extended time.

Leonard served as a Combat Medic with the 15th Infantry Regiment in Korea from December 1952 to July 1953. Mr. Lassar is also a founding father of the 15th Infantry Regiment Association. His wife, Priscilla Lassar, was given the award of the Shield of Sparta for her significant contributions and long time support of the numerous individuals and groups comprising the Infantry community. Priscilla provided valuable assistance to her husband in organizing the Outpost Harry Survivors Association in 1981.

Henry Burke awarded Tad Davis one of his special decorated walking sticks to recognize his contributions to the Society of the 3rd Infantry Division and his service as past commander of the 1-15th Infantry Regiment.

Special thanks to LTC Nelson Kraft, MAJ Melvin Sanders, LT Benjamin Goss and the many others who without their unyielding support and dedication, were instrumental in providing us with a first rate Rendezvous. Plans are already in the works for next year's event when we will once again come together to celebrate the proud "Can Do" traditions of our great Regiment.

Pictures by Diane Taylor



At the Audie Murphy Fitness Center



The logo at Headquarters 1st BN 15th Infantry Regiment

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Diane and Mahlon Taylor



Headquarters, 1st BN 15th Rgt



Willie Garner, Mahlon Taylor and Henry Burke



Association members attending Rendevous at General Marshall's desk in the China Room, 1st Bn 15th Infantry Headquarters, Kelly Hill, Ft. Benning, Georgia



Infantrymen in full gear come out of smoke bombs



China Room



Group photo of Association members and Active Soldiers of the 1st Bn 15th Infantry and the 3rd Bn 15th Infantry at the China Wall Monument prior to the banquet during Rendezvous

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

**The Society of the Third Infantry Division
92nd Annual Reunion
September 8- 11, 2011
Astor Crown Plaza Hotel
New Orleans, LA**

“At Your Service”



By Ed Holt, Master Sgt. (retired)

EDEN PRAIRIE, MN – Hi to everyone. I want to introduce myself as your new Dragon Editor. The bar was set pretty high by David Adams and while I may never be the editor he was, I will make every effort to honor the fine tradition set forth in this publication.

This is your publication. Your feedback, articles and guidance to me is what will define the contents for everyone to enjoy. I am at your service.

I want to give you a short introduction as to how I got here. I began my military career way back in 1967. Right out of the gate, the Army pointed me in the direction of military journalism. After basic training, I attended the Defense Information School and after a short posting at Ft. McPherson, Georgia, I was sent to Germany. I spent all of 1968 with the 3rd Infantry Division at Harvey Barracks, Kitzingen, Germany. That year is my connection to you all.

In 1969, I was sent to VII Corps Support Command near Stuttgart for six months and finally to V Corps Support Command in Frankfurt for another six months. All my assignments were in military public affairs.

In January 1970, I got out of the Army and went to college. I married, started work in social services for Hennepin County in Minnesota and life seemed pretty settled. I still work for the county and it's been for over 34 years now.

Without being too philosophical, a variety of mixed emotions resulted with my re-entering the military through the Minnesota Army National Guard in 1989. I wasn't satisfied with the experiences of being a Soldier in the late 60s and early 70s and the negative social attitudes displayed towards those who served their country at the time.

I ended up spending the next 20 years in the Army Guard, finally retiring when I turned 60 in late 2008. Most of my time in the Guard was in support of the 34th Infantry Division, all from a Public Affairs standpoint. I've done it all, from the writing and photography to the administrative roles of Non-Commissioned Officer-In-Charge of Mobile Public Affairs Detachments. Yes, once as First Sergeant as well.

My civilian employer was supportive, even during a nine-month deployment to Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of Stabilization Force 14 when the 34th Infantry Division served as NATO peacekeepers during Operation Joint Forge. Along with that deployment, I've also been deployed overseas to Panama twice, Norway once and back to Germany again. I've been activated for State Active Duty more times than I can count in response to floods, tornados and even the 2008 Republican National Convention.

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Most importantly for me has been the opportunity to serve with so many men and women who make up our Armed Forces. I look for ways to recognize and honor all service members. Hopefully, my efforts here will continue that. I am at your service...Ed

MEMBERSHIP REPORT JUNE 15, 2011

John Burke

Eligibility:

Regular: Persons eligible for regular membership are those with present or prior honorable service with the Regiment or units attached or supporting the Regiment.

Associate: Spouse, parents, children or siblings of any person eligible for regular membership and any person with a special interest or affinity for the 15th Infantry Regiment.

This is my final report as Membership Chairman. After 16 years as Membership Chairman it is time for me to stand down. Mike Friend and Tom Heitzer have jointly assumed the duties and responsibilities of Membership Chairman. They have also assumed the responsibilities associated with the NCO and Soldier of the Year awards, and delivery of The Dragon to the active battalions. I very much appreciate their stepping up to the plate will work closely with them to transition the duties and will support them in any way I can.

Over the past few years we have canvassed rosters of other service organizations to identify veterans of service with the 15th and extended them an invitation to join the Association. (sometimes multiple times) Since the Association was formed we have enrolled over 2000 members. Early on the majority of members were WWII veterans followed by Korean War veterans. Three years ago the active rolls were near 1000. Due to reported deaths and delinquent dues the numbers are now significantly lower. My guess is that within 10 years most of the WWII and Korea veterans will not be around and the Association will be comprised of those that served in the Cold War and afterward. It is evident that in order to maintain status we have reached in our Association we need to increase our membership from more recent periods of service.

Below is a breakdown of memberships by type and period of service with the Regiment.

Members By Type

Periods Represented

Regular Life	254	China Hands	2
Associate Life	10	World War II	87
Regular Annual	285	Korea	218
Associate Annual	<u>14</u>	Cold War	78
	563	Ready Forces	29
		OIF	125*
		Associate	<u>24</u>
			563

*Members currently serving with the active battalions, 1/15- 56 and 3/15 - 21.

Would you like to sponsor a membership for Active Duty soldiers? For each \$10.00 contribution an Active Duty soldier can be brought on the rolls for two years. If interested, make contributions to the Association Treasurer, address shown on page 2

New Members

John R. Love
109 Bison Court
Freeport, PA 16229
C CO 1 BN
May 1944 – Dec 1944

Andrew J. Erickson
7401 Blackmon Road APT 2605
Columbus, GA 31909
HHC 1 BN
Jan 2011 – Present

David B. Gross
3300 Stadium Drive APT 1108
Phenix City, AL 36867
HHC 1 BN
Dec 2008 – Present

Kristopher E. Lovingood
6 Crow Court
Columbus, GA 31909
HHC 1 BN
Jan 2011 – Present

Ed Holt
17200 Park Circle
Eden Prairie, MN 55346
HHC REGT
1968 – 1969

Shedrick E. Donnette
3201 1st Ave. APT D-112
Columbus, GA 31904
B Co 1 BN
Oct 2009 – Present

New Members (cont'd)

Scott E. Dunlap
5944 Reed Ave.
Columbus, GA 31909
FSC 1 BN
May 2004 – Present

Tyler J. Dvorak
9142 Marne Rd. Room 404B
Fort Benning, GA 31905
HHC 1 BN
Jan 2011 – Present

Britton K. Gerald
5790 Leonard St.
Fort Benning, GA 31905
C CO 1 BN

Deno Harold
Bldg. 9143 Rm 116 Marne Rd.
Fort Benning, GA 31905
B CO 1 BN
Feb 2011 – Present

Timothy J. Hillion
7401 Blackmon Rd. #3903
Columbus, GA 31909
HHC 1 BN
Mar 2009 – Present

Michael Mungai
6363 Flat Rock Rd. # 376
Columbus, GA 31907
A CO 1 BN
Nov 2010 – Present

Angel M. Ortiz
223 Austin LP
Fort Benning, GA 31905
HHC 1 BN
Apr 2011 – Present

Melvin E. Sanders
105 Richard Ave.
Troy, AL 36081
HHC 1 BN
Oct 2009 – Present

Crystal A. Thompson
3911 Steam Mill Rd. L-3
Columbus, GA 31907
F CO 1 BN
Oct 2006 – Present

Juan A. Torres
5 D Yano Court
Fort Benning, GA 31905
D CO 1 BN
Aug 2008 – Present

Phillip D. Whittington
1004 Silverlake
Columbus, GA 31904
A CO 1 BN
Feb 2011 – Present

Melvin L. Leydecker
10842 Hillhaven Ave.
Tujunga, CA 91042-1416
F CO 2 BN
Oct 1952 – July 1953

Plaque Dedication in Nuernberg Highlights Delegation Visit to Germany and France

By Tim Stoy

NUERNBERG, GERMANY - An eight-person delegation comprised of two WWII 3rd Infantry Division veterans, four Soldiers representing the Commanding General of the 3rd Infantry Division and two Society members from Outpost Europe participated in a plaque dedication ceremony in Nuernberg on May 31, 2011.

Colonel retired William E. Ryan Jr., who was a Lieutenant with the 15th Infantry and Mr. John J. Miller II, who served with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry, represented all the WWI veterans of the 3rd Infantry Division. LTC Todd Kelly and CSM Cedric Burns of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry along with two of their Soldiers represented Major General Abrams and Command Sergeant Major Watson of the 3rd Infantry Division.

CSM Burns served with the 1st Battalion as Operations Sergeant Major for the Iraq Surge under LTC Marr. Monika and Tim Stoy of Outpost Europe organized the trip and coordinated participation in this and several other highly symbolic events.

The plaque dedication in Nuernberg was the result of four years of determined effort to convince the city it would be the appropriate way of honoring the Soldiers who freed the city from Nazi oppression after four days of intense combat between April 17 to 20, 1945. Lord Mayor Ulrich May of Nuernberg only recently decided to dedicate the plaque and have it emplaced on perhaps the most symbolic location in the city, the Tribune of Zeppelin Field, from which Hitler harangued the party masses during the Nazi Party rallies in the 1930s. This was also the place where five Marne Soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor April 22, 1945, among them were LTC Keith L. Ware and LT John Tominac of our Regiment.

At the solemn ceremony held under gray and threatening sky, Lord Mayor Maly expressed the city's gratitude to their liberators of long ago as well as declaring the city's determination to fulfill its historic duty of educating future generations of Germans and all other world citizens of the evils and dangers of Nazism and Fascism. Monika thanked the Lord Mayor and the city for the honor they paid our veterans and those of the 45th Infantry Division who fought so hard to expel the Nazis from Nuernberg. She also quoted German educator Wilhelm von Humboldt saying "only those who remember the past have a future". She also endorsed the educational intent of the memorial plaque which is prominently mounted on the side of the tribune.

Along with Lord Mayor Maly, Colonel Ryan, Mr. Miller, LTC Kelly, CSM Burns and Monika placed wreaths at the base of the plaque remembering the sacrifice of those who fought and those who suffered in the Nuernberg fighting.

Three Can Do Soldiers received the Medal of honor for their actions in the fighting in and around Nuernberg: PVT Joseph Merrell, LT Frank Burke and LT Mike Daly. Anti-tank company, fighting as Infantry, earned the Presidential Unit Citation for its role at Nurenberg.

The delegation also visited Lorraine American Cemetery and Memorial while in Europe and while there paid respects at the grave of CPT Paul Harris, B Company commander in the Vosges and Colmar Pocket. In Don Champagne's Dogface Soldiers, CPT Harris is portrayed as an outstanding commander and leader. I am sure our surviving B Company veterans have memories of him they can share with us.



Nuernberg Plaque



A final salute to honor the Soldiers



Zeppelin Field Tribune on April 22, 1945



Zeppelin Field Tribune, May 2011

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Members of the delegation pose for a picture during the Plaque dedication in Nuernberg honoring Soldiers who freed the city from Nazi oppression in April, 1945

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