

## 30 years together with the Component



Photo by Andrea Hohenforst

By Maureen Geraets-Head

*It is extremely noteworthy that there are civilians and a few military colleagues who have actually been employed by or assigned to the E-3A Component throughout its entire lifetime. Some were already here quite some time before the first E-3As arrived.*

*Therefore, a group photo was taken during the Component's anniversary year.*

*Personnel with 30 or more years of service at the E-3A Component gathered on 23 May at the flight line.*

*The long-term, dedicated contribution of a significant number of civilian*

*personnel to this unique NATO establishment, being involved in its growth and development and demonstrating extreme loyalty, has been of immense value and does not go unrecognized.*

*A total of 228 persons have spent most of their entire career here on base. The persons in the picture are employed*

*here either as a civilian, as a military, or started here as a military and were later than hired as a civilian. 118 of them are German, 86 are Dutch, 18 British, 4 Belgian and 2 have the Italian nationality.*

*In total there are nearly 800 civilians that have a job at the Component out of a total of 2,900 personnel.*

## Upgrade to self-protection system keeps AWACS safe

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

On a cool and cloudy morning, personnel from NAPMA, Force Command and the E-3A Component landed in Manching, Germany, for a ceremony in commemoration of the completion of the NATO E-3A Large Aircraft Infra-Red Counter Measures (LAIRCM) Retrofit Program.

The LAIRCM project to install a Northrop Grumman countermeasure system on the NATO E-3A AWACS started more than six years ago to upgrade the aircraft's self-protection system. With the last E-3A retrofitted with LAIRCM, the Component's entire fleet is now standardized to defend itself against man-portable air defense weapons such as stingers.

The June 5 ceremony started with speeches, followed by the official transfer of the aircraft to Maj. Gen. Stephen Schmidt, who declared this

LAIRCM fully operational. General Schmidt then handed NL-17 back to Col. Paul Bell, E-3A Component Logistics Wing commander. Now while it was a typical ceremony, the impact LAIRCM has is tremendous.

"This critical capability is what enables our NATO AWACS fleet to operate in combat operations today and LAIRCM will keep us safe for a long time to come," the general said.

LAIRCM, an autonomous defensive system, gives crews immediate situational awareness using an integrated display in the flight deck. "It gives us the real protection we need to operate in a tough combat environment," General Schmidt said. "It allows us to get the job done safely every day." With the protection that LAIRCM provides, the Component has been able to conduct more than 480 missions in support of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.



Photo by Andrea Hohenforst  
*Heiko Jurgens, the LAIRCM program manager for NAPMA, points out part of the NATO E-3A Large Aircraft Infra-Red Counter Measures upgrade to Karma Maurer.*

LAIRCM is the key enabler which gives the E-3A the ability to conduct out-of-area operations anywhere at anytime. "It is the reason we are the only AWACS based in Afghanistan

today," the general said. "We would not have been based there for the last year without the ability to protect our NATO aircraft and our aircrew from the enemy."

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# Commander discusses past and future with Component personnel



Photo by Andrea Hohenforst

*Brig. Gen. Burkhard Pototsky addresses a crowd of E-3A Component personnel during a commander's call June 4 at Hanger II.*

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

The E-3A Component commander met with base personnel June 4 in Hanger II at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen.

Brig. Gen. Burkhard Pototsky held a short commanders call to discuss how the Component has changed and its future for the years to come.

"From the time I took command of the Component three years ago, we have seen the evolution of the Component and a shift in our mission and our focus," he said. "Today, we are still engaged in operations and anticipate remaining in operations until the troop withdrawal in 2014."

The commander is referring to Operation Afghan Assist (OAA), the Component's role in Afghanistan under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

"If you look around you will see that some members of the Component are absent," he stated. "That is because more than one hundred of our comrades are currently deployed. We have had members of the Component continuously deployed now for over 15 months."

The commander added that many people have deployed "not just once but on multiple occasions" as the Component's support of ISAF has grown from the early stages of basing from Forward Operation Base Konya, Turkey, to the current basing inside Afghanistan. "With hard work and dedication, you have made the support of ISAF a total success," he expressed to the crowd. "As a team, we have achieved an unprecedented 95% success rate in theater."

As the Component nears its 500th mission in the Afghanistan theater, the commander explained AWACS personnel have shown "flexibility, imagination, and a 'can do' attitude" from the very beginning.

General Pototsky made it clear that this great performance has not only been displayed in ISAF, but also last year during Operation Unified Protector.

"Just as we were getting comfortable with our new role in OAA, NATO called upon us to support no-fly-zone operations off the coast of Libya as the coalition began to put pressure on the oppressive Gadaffi regime," he said. "In short order, those no-fly-zone operations turned into combat operations as the UN authorized military strikes in support of the Libyan population."

The Component was responsible for more than 1,500 hours of Command and Control, supporting about 700 humanitarian relief missions, and nearly 800 air-to-ground missions.

"In the end, NATO support helped stop the oppression and free the Libyan population," the general declared. "The success in Libya was a direct result of tireless and selfless service by the Component. And again we answered the call as a very strong team."

Even with two major operations dominating the Component's time over the past year and a half, it has continued to support Operation Active Endeavor, about five missions per month. With the use of the Automatic ID System for ships, AWACS brings an entirely new surveillance capability to navy and joint commanders. "We have seen an increase of requests for our unique maritime capabilities and will

continue to be tasked in the future," the commander explained.

The Component has also provided support for "High Visibility Events" all over Europe. "Whether it is providing surveillance at the soccer World Cup or European championship or protecting our national leaders at the G-8 and G-20 Summits, we have always been an important part of the safety and security of NATO, its member nations and its leaders."

A testament to the Component's ability to respond at any moment was recently made evident when one of its crews was deployed in support of an exercise and had to quickly switch its attention to a real world incident. The crew was involved with search and rescue mission after the unfortunate crash of a Norwegian C-130. In addition, the crew on station was tasked to launch additional aircraft to assist in the recovery operations.

"Our ability to support this request allowed for the aircraft to be found and recovered much quicker than without our assistance," the commander said. "The recovery operation showed the ability of our crews to adapt and operate, yet again, in a dynamic environment."

With the hectic flight schedule and constant deployments, the Component has developed best trained aircrews, maintainers and support personnel within the worldwide AWACS community.

"This Component has a well deserved reputation as being able to answer the call whenever and wherever we are needed," General Pototsky said. "However, this is not limited to just combat operations."

He continued on to discuss the Components ability to provide humanitarian relief all over the globe, but specifically its delivery of tons of supplies to Hungary, Haiti and Pakistan. "These supplies saved countless lives and eased the suffering of many who were affected by natural and manmade disasters," he expressed. "This relief was only possible because of the expertise of everyone here and your ability to quickly and effectively do your job when called on short order."

The bottom line is that the Component has been involved with countless deployments and operations all over the world throughout the last three years. "We've talked a lot about flying operations because that is what the Component is here for," he said. "However, none of this would be possible without the support here at Geilenkirchen. Without the excellent support and assistance provided here none of what the aircrews do would be possible."

After discussing the Component's recent history, the commander shared a few thoughts on the way ahead. "As many of you might have heard, our nations have approved the new Alliance Ground Surveillance System (AGS)," he stated. "NATO continues to show a commitment to the collective security and safety of all of our nations. The integration of AGS with our capabilities will prepare us for the challenges of the future."

The commander added, while we might expect others changes in the future, the Component needs to remain focused on becoming more effective and more efficient as we "compensate for the withdrawal of our Canadian friends." When mentioning slight reductions in PE and budget, the commander stressed "we should not be afraid."

"We all know NATO," General Pototsky said. "Nothing will happen over night. Our nations will need time to discuss any changes and we will have the time to provide recommendations. I expect that nobody will lose his job in the near future!"

The commander's call ended with the general expressing his thanks for everyone's individual contributions and hard work. "As your commander, it has been my sincere honor to lead you and see the evolution of this Component," he said sincerely. "I am immensely proud and humbled by the professionalism and dedication from each member of this base. Seeing so many people from so many diverse backgrounds and countries come together and accomplish the mission on a daily basis is amazing. Again, thank you for the chance to be your commander and I wish you all the best in the future."



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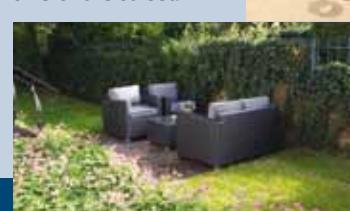


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Photo by Andrea Hohenforst

## Component 'wowed' by Royal Norwegian Forces Band

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

Immediately following a commander's call, E-3A Component personnel were treated to some entertainment provided by the Royal Norwegian Forces Band on the NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen flightline on June 4.

"I am excited to welcome some very special guests," said Brig. Gen. Burkhard Pototsky, Component commander. "Today we are in for a rare treat. I had the opportunity to watch this outstanding military band during the NATO Music festival at Mönchengladbach two days ago. And they were the best band that evening."

Otherwise known as "His Majesty the King's Guard and Drill Team," the band put on a 20-minute musical and drill performance, which continuously had the crowd of several hundred Component personnel clapping and cheering.

"I really liked them," said Janina Bien, E-3A Public Affairs Staff Assistant and one of the attendees at the show. "I was really impressed with the way marched, played the instruments and even the way they sang. I normally don't like these kinds of performances but this one was riveting. I was thrilled by the entire show and I was disappointed when it ended."

*The Royal Norwegian Forces Band, otherwise known as "His Majesty the King's Guard and Drill Team," performs for E-3A Component personnel June 4 on the NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen flightline.*



Photo by Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

## Force Command conducts SAV to help improve Component

A team from Force Command (FC) visited MOB Geilenkirchen to conduct a Staff Assist Visit (SAV) from May 29 to May 31. Unlike a Consolidated Inspection, where FC as our higher echelon acts in a supervisory role, a SAV is to support the Component through dialogue where we discuss areas of potential improvement together.

With this team work approach, it is easier to jointly find shortfalls, identify lessons learned during deployed and normal operations and look into documents, processes and procedures that are already in place. Most important, together with the Component team, the SAV team advises both Force and Component Commanders on priorities and the best and most practical way ahead for improvements. The SAV-Team consisted of nine people from FC, and was lead by Col. Boucher, Head of FC Plans, Performance and Support Division. His team's main objectives for this SAV were to discuss and review Component Operations Plans

and Readiness and improvements in the Force Safety System and the Force Quality Management Program.

Further the first stage of a new tracking system was implemented to better track issues, mostly found during SAVs, Consolidated Inspections and Technical Support Visits. The new system is called the Consolidated Issues Management system (CIM), replacing the previous Main Issues Management Program (MIMP) system. The new CIM is more user-friendly and has the potential to generate management data for different user levels in the Component and at Force Command.

The SAV team's findings and results were briefed to the Component Commander. The final report is still in the draft, but good dialog has been continued between the Component and Force Command. "The Team was immensely pleased by the support and cooperation displayed by Component personnel throughout the visit and is

confident that our combined efforts will lead to overall Force improvements," said Boucher. "The Staff Visit achieved its aim of greater understanding and renewed commitment for continuous improvement." The main subject that everybody agreed to, "it's important to capture all Lessons Identified and Lessons Learned during deployed operations, and use this information to improve Force Command and

Component plans, orders and checklists."

It's also important, close to main rotation period for many nations, to ensure that knowledge is not lost when personnel leave the Component/Force. There is already a new SAV scheduled, to take place in the timeframe November 19-23 to continue those efforts.



# Component reaches new OAA milestones

By OR-5 Kushtrim "Kushi" Krasniqi

During the last two months, the Operation Afghan Assist (OAA) Force Element at Mazar-e-Sharif (MeS) in Afghanistan has been challenged by preparing and executing the mission while implementing a new rotation system and flying schedule, to allow crews to stay for shorter periods.

Mother Nature tried to slow down the Force Elements success when two major floods of the base halted flying operations momentarily. The main runway, taxiways and parts of the ramp and hangar spaces were covered with water, however the host nation did a good job in getting it all cleaned up within a short time.

Even with these minor set backs, the Force Element at MeS reached several milestones during this time, such as the first successful turn around of the TNT 757 Cargo and Passenger Aircraft on April 25. The Force Element also supported multiple VIP and visitor groups at MeS including the Force commander, E-3A Component commander, the Logistics Wing commander and the

Information Technology Wing deputy commander.

The most recent milestone occurred when Lt. Col. Helmut Diwo handed over command of the Force Element to Lt. Col. Kees Pauw on June 2. This opportunity also served as the official opening of the new MWA facility for the E-3A Component in Camp Marmal.

For quite some time our aircrew, maintenance and support teams had a very small tent available to spend their time to relax a little bit, watch TV, read books or play games. Only recently Internet services became available and TV connectors were installed into the accommodation.

During the last four weeks, plans to improve the MWA complex were put in effect. After the host nation construction office had prepared a piece of land, members of the Force Element erected a nice white tent bought by NATO. Immediately crews came up with good ideas and built a wooden terrace, wooden walk ways and a solid stone made BBQ place. With the help of the host nation tent



A picture of the new E-3A Component MWA area at MeS.



Courtesy photos

*Lt. Col. Helmut Diwo and Lt. Col. Kees Pauw address the men and women of the Operation Afghan Assist (OAA) Force Element during a change-of-command ceremony June 5 at Mazar-e-Sharif (MeS) in Afghanistan.*

master and some local workers, a second tent was erected and handed over to the force element. Also shading for the terrace was made available.

The handicraft skills of the crew, and especially the members of the fire brigade, lead to self made chairs, tables and volleyball playground. Even some small palm trees and flowers were planted by the base farmer. He also offered to install a little stone yard. The team had fun painting a replica of the runway and quickly a model ATC tower was built too. The German CH53 Helicopter Unit provided a self made "Hollywood" type swing. Now the

Force Element has two TV rooms, a place to play games, a smokers' corner and a nicely shaded terrace.

The next steps will include the installation of a bar counter to serve soft drinks in style. Once the end state is reached, our Force Element will have its own access gate, designated parking area and a safety fence around the MWA facility. Also in order to have better noise and force protection a concrete wall surrounds the dorms.

Now the Force Element has a place to recover from long flights and extended shift work, even during the very hot days at Camp Marmal.



A picture of the flooded flightline at MeS.

## New MOU outlines airworthiness and responsibilities of the E-3A

Story and photo from NAPMA

On June 4, the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control (NAEW&C) Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Schmidt, and the NAEW&C Programme Management Agency (NAPMA) General Manager, Brig. Gen. Ludwig Leinhos, signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the NAEW&C Programme Management Organisation (NAPMO) and Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE).

The new MOU outlined airworthiness and configuration management responsibilities for the NATO E-3A aircraft.

In accordance with NAPMO's airworthiness policy, this MOU formally establishes the NAPMA general manager as the technical airworthiness authority for the NATO E-3A fleet while responsibility for operational airworthiness remains with the Force Commander. The MOUs implementing agreement identifies the system baseline configuration which will be the starting point for airworthiness certification of the fleet.

In support of the technical airworthiness authority at NAPMA, the new chief engineer's office has already been stood up and the current logistics planning



and configuration management branch staff has been augmented

with additional configuration management experts.

# AWACS rocks new paint job

By Janina Bien

On February 24, 1982, the first E-3A AWACS aircraft landed at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, marking the start of a new era in airspace surveillance. Since that time, these aircraft with their distinctive radar dish have flown countless missions from the base.

Workers recently completed painting AWACS tail number LX-N 90445 with the E-3A Component's 30 Year Anniversary design to commemorate this celebration. The design was created by André Joosten from the Visual Media Services Cell in cooperation with the Chairman of the 30 Years Jubilee Lt. Col. Raimond Schulz. The design is made up of more than 100 stickers on both

aircraft sides, including the 17 flags from each of the E-3A Component's participating nations.

Another important stakeholder in this special project is the Corrosion Shop on base. Since the start of the planning phase of the huge 30 Years Jubilee event, it was the team around Sgt. Norman Harriet, Dietmar Bougie, Marcel Plum, Eric Ross and Dieter 'Schmaggi' Schmaglowski, who also prepared and designed all security and safety signs and banners on base.

"It only took a day to completely 'redesign' the jubilee AWACS," says Sgt. Harriet. "It was not only challenging to have all decals in line, but also that they are measured



Photo by André Joosten

correctly as well as equally and proportionally put on for the eyes. Furthermore the decals were especially designed and measured to be proportionally to the aircraft"

The Corrosion Shop is part of the Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, but it

is the Aircraft Servicing and Inspection Branch that did all the printings on a special 'Vinyl Film' material used for the jubilee aircraft.

In total the Corrosion Shop team printed out more than 45 meters of this material for the stickers.

# IT Wing personnel presented with NATO medal

By Maj. Rudy H. Melters

Col. Rafael Sahagun officiated a ceremony to honor members of the Information Technology Wing June 5 in the E-3A Club on NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany. The IT Wing commander presented the Non-

Article 5 NATO Medal to several IT Wing personnel for their service with NATO in relation to ISAF Operations.

Those awarded the medal are listed here in alphabetical order: OR-9 Marcello Altomare, OR-7 Adam Apfeld, OR-6 Dirk Geernaert, OR-6



Alex Gieswein, OR-6 Jean Paul Keymis, OF-2 Zbigniew Marchlik, OR-5 John Maris, OR-7 Ralf Schaefer, OF-2 Dirk Schmid, OR-7 Eric Schueren, OF-2 Tobias Sonnernburg, OF-2 Jorg Steinbacher, OR-7 Christoph Vossenkaul and OR-6 Elmer Wilburn.

The decorated IT Wing personnel served at Mazar-e Sharif (MeS) from the setup phase in January 2011 until the present day. They provided the full spectrum of Computer Information System (CIS) support for the operation. The IT Wing personal combined the NATO CIS infrastructure at MeS with the German National provided CIS and the organic CIS capabilities from Geilenkirchen. The deployed CIS flight, which normally

consisted of a CISO, ADP technician, MEDIA support tech and COMSEC/Crypto technician, installed a general CIS for MWA purposes.

Due to installation of an E-3A Component dedicated 2 MB reach back from MeS into Geilenkirchen, the IT Wing managed to reduce the normal CIS footprint with one DMSS/ICC technician, who would fly for two to three days per month for maintenance of the DMSS system. The day-to-day system administrative maintenance is done over the reach back.

Additionally, the IT Wing deployed a COMMs technician several times, for one or two weeks in support of the operation.

# FOB Trapani – Disconnected

By Maj. Steeve Lavoie

Twelve people from NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen headed for Forward Operating Base (FOB) Trapani, Italy, on May 11.

The team's mission was to remove all communication systems from the Combined Facility located on the FOB in order to prepare the building for the upcoming renovations.

The team arrived in Trapani at noon and by 1 p.m. they were already discussing the future of the Combined Facility with the contractor and the FOB commander. The team wanted to ensure they understood what was required in order to rebuild the Combined Facility once the renovations were over. Both parties agreed that lots of coordination would need to take place during the project to allow them to reinstall all of the systems without too much difficulty.

By 8 a.m. the next day, the team was ready to start cutting over the circuits that were until then providing

the life lines to the FOB from simple phone services to secret network and all necessary communication systems in between required to handle its NATO mission.

The Bandwidth Management Equipment (BME) was disconnected at 9 a.m. after the power was cut off, and put in a large box shortly after and each of the systems and circuits were disconnected and packed one at a time.

The team was made up of personnel from BwDLZ, Operations Wing HF/Ground Radio Maintenance Section, and IT Wing. Everyone knew what they had to do, which made it easy for the team lead to direct the efforts. When a team was done with their task, they quickly helped others and together the whole team managed to accomplish our goal within the assigned timelines.

Our FOB counterparts were very helpful and accommodating as usual and supported our work both throughout the weekend and during our entire stay. Special thanks go out to Chief Master Sgt. Angelo Ferlito



for his outstanding support looking after our transportation and dinner arrangements.

A few days later, the team was working on the pallets to return to GK and, on May 15, they came back with all the equipment on board. Everyone enjoyed their week in Trapani and I was happy that we had successfully executed our mission.

The next phase – installing all communication equipments and

electrical lines – will be more complex and will require more planning and coordination but with what I saw on this trip I am confident that we will be up for the challenge.

FOB Trapani will be limited operational for E-3A P-sorties only, till the end of restoration works (December 2012). Telephone lines, connections and different e-mail addresses for Operations and FOB personnel have been submitted to the Wings.

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## International Board of Auditors for NATO visits E-3A Component

Photo by Andrea Hohenforst

Helen Feetenby, a member of the International Board of Auditors for NATO, signs the E-3A Component's guestbook during a visit to NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen on May 31.

Feetenby toured the base to familiarize herself with the Component and discuss financial issues with the Finance Division A8. IBAN is the independent, external audit body of NATO.

Its main mandate is to provide the North Atlantic Council and the governments of NATO member countries with assurance that common funds have been properly used for the settlement of authorized expenditure.

## New commander on top of the Aircrew Training Squadron

Capt. Jesse McGrath

On May 31, a change-of-command ceremony for the Aircrew Training Squadron (ATS) was held at the E-3A Club on NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen.

Lt. Col. Ryan Johnson relinquished command to the Training Wing Commander, Col. Marco D'Asta, who in turn awarded the ATS Commander position to Lt. Col. James Kinnear.

The ceremony was attended by the Component Commander and Deputy Commander, Brig. Gen. Burkhard Pototsky and Col. Ton van Happen respectively.

Many invited guests and family members were also in the audience along with all available members of Training Wing and Canadian Contingent Operations Element personnel.

The ceremony coincided with a change-of-command within the Canadian Contingent. Col. John Backstrom, Operations Wing commander and Canadian senior national representative, presided over the transferred command of the Canadian Contingent Operations Element from Johnson to Kinnear.

Kinnear, former Squadron 1 Chief Flight Deck, looks forward to the

challenges ahead in guiding the ATS through the changes and evolution of the NATO E-3A Component training program.

Johnson was thanked for his efforts and dedication in leading the ATS through an unprecedented period of operational tempo, training aid upgrades, and course syllabus overhauls. Johnson is posted to Ottawa, Canada, for second language training.



*From left to right, Lt. Col. Ryan Johnson, Col. Marco D'Asta and Lt. Col. James Kinnear sign certificates as part of a change-of-command ceremony May 31 at the E-3A Club on NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen.*

### In Memory of Adrian Hendriks

The NATO E-3A Rod & Gun Club regret to announce the loss of one of its founding members. Adrian Hendriks, of the NATO E-3A Rod & Gun Club, passed away on May 9 after a long battle with cancer.

Adrian was a Component member for many years and helped to establish our club in 1985 and was one of the most active club members since then. For many years he was the vice president and later nominated as the shooting commissioner of the pistol section.

Due to his significant contributions and commitment over the years, the E-3A NATO Rod & Gun Club benefited tremendously. In recognition of his unique achievements, Adrian will remain an honorary member of the club.



### In Memory of Brian Barrett

It is with sadness that we have learned of the death of one of our former NATO Civilian colleagues, Mr Brian Barrett, who passed away

peacefully in his sleep on 9 June 2012. Brian served with the British Royal Air Force and settled in Germany in 1977 after his military service but took the opportunity to 'return to his original trade' when he joined the E-3A Component in 1981 as a NATO International Civilian. He left the Component in 2001 after more than 20 years of loyal and dedicated

employment, primarily in the Wheel and Tyre Shop/Pneudraulic Systems Section of the Logistics Wing, Field (now Aircraft) Maintenance Squadron. After his retirement he remained in the local area and maintained contact with the E-3A Component community. He will be missed, but at the same time fondly remembered, by those who knew him.

Our thoughts go out to his family, particularly his two daughters Helen and Julianne, who wish to share the following words. 'Being allowed to fall asleep when the body is weak was your way to find your peace.'

In loving memory  
Helen, Scott, Jesse, Dylan and Sarah, Julianne, Tim, Maddox and Nova

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