



# MOUNTAINEERS ARE ALWAYS FREE



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST VIRGINIA SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION

That's a wrap! November is here, which means it's time for a recap of the 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Point Pleasant. The November 2024 edition of Mountaineers are Always Free highlights the commemoration and other recent events, books you should read, and more events coming up this year.

## A COMMEMORATION TO REMEMBER

Between October 9 and October 11, 2024, the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture, and History partnered with communities across the Mountain State and higher education institutions to hold a conference in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Point Pleasant and West Virginia's role in the coming of the American Revolution.

The conference kicked off the evening of October 9, with a lecture by Dr. Max Flomen, Assistant Professor of History at West Virginia University. Dr. Flomen's presentation focused on how West Virginia contributed to the American Revolution, with a large crowd including members of the West Virginia Semiquincentennial Commission, Marshall University staff, and students from both Marshall and WVU in attendance.

OCTOBER 9, 2024

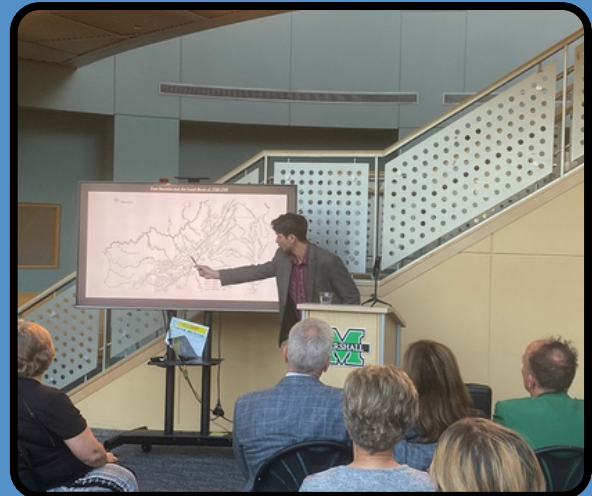


Photo credit: WVU Professor Max Flomen presents a lecture on how West Virginia contributed to the American Revolution at Marshall University's Drinko Library, October 9, 2024, photograph by Aaron Parsons

## A COMMEMORATION TO REMEMBER



Top: Wreaths laid at the Magazine monument in Tu-Endie-Wei State Park to commemorate the Battle of Point Pleasant, October 10, 2024, photograph by Aaron Parsons

Bottom: U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito (center) with representatives of the Sons of the American Revolution, including commission member Jay Frey (far right) during the Battle Days 250th event, October 10, 2024, photograph by Aaron Parsons



## OCTOBER 10, 2024



Photo credit: Aaron Parsons and Ella Preece from the West Virginia State Archives present the winning student essays from the Battle of Point Pleasant essay competition, Smith Recital Hall, Marshall University, October 10, 2024, photograph by Zac Northup

The second day of the conference saw attendees travel to Point Pleasant for the 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Point Pleasant Memorial Service. Approximately 400 people were in attendance at these event, including U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito, who sits on the West Virginia Semiquincentennial Commission and the National America 250 Commission.

After the memorial service in Point Pleasant, attendees returned to Marshall University, where an awards ceremony was held to recognize the winners of the Point Pleasant Commemoration Student Contests. The top essays from the 9th-12th grade essay contest were presented in the absence of the two student winners, one arguing that the Battle of Point Pleasant should be recognized as the first battle of the American Revolution while the other argued against this.

Following the reading of the papers and a brief debate of the students' arguments, a recital was held, featuring performances by students from Wayne Elementary School and the Marshall University Symphony.

## A COMMEMORATION TO REMEMBER

OCTOBER 11, 2024



Photo credit: Panel members Dr. Kevin Barksdale (moderator, Marshall University), Dr. Chris Chaney (WVU), Dr. Charles Keeney (SWVCTC), and Dr. Benjamin Bankhurst (Shepherd University), Marshall Health Arena, Huntington, WV, October 11, 2024, photograph by Aaron Parsons

The conference concluded on the morning of October 11, with a panel discussion including Dr. Kevin Barksdale (moderator, Marshall University), Dr. Chris Chaney (West Virginia University), Dr. Charles Keeney (Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College), and Dr. Benjamin Bankhurst (Shepherd University). The panel members discussed Appalachia and its Influence on the American Revolution, focusing on industry, agriculture, transportation, and people.

After each panelist gave a presentation, a brief Q&A session followed. Attendees, including several graduate students from Marshall and WVU, asked the panel questions regarding the movement of Native Americans from the area in the years following the Battle of Point Pleasant, what effects the Battle of Point Pleasant had on the people of Virginia at the time, and how family histories portray those who were involved in the Battle of Point Pleasant and other skirmishes on the frontier.

The panel discussion offered a wide variety of thoughts and perspectives on the Battle of Point Pleasant and the American Revolution, making it the perfect conclusion to the conference!







Photo credit: WV Semiquincentennial Commission Chair Randall Reid-Smith presents a commemorative lantern to members of the Raleigh County Commission at Beckley, October 9, 2024, Photograph by Zac Northup

## THE LANTERN CONVOY

Prior to the commemorative conference beginning on October 9, a lantern convoy traveled from the Greenbrier County Courthouse to Tu-Endie-Wei State Park in Point Pleasant. The lantern convoy made stops at:

8 a.m. Greenbrier County Courthouse

9:05 a.m. Summers County Courthouse

10 a.m. Raleigh County Courthouse

10:50 a.m. Fayette County Courthouse

12:30 p.m. Charleston State Capitol Building (Lincoln Plaza)

1:40 p.m. Putnam County Courthouse

2:45 p.m. Tu-Endie-Wei State Park





## THE LANTERN CONVOY

During the convoy's stops, a commemorative lantern was presented to each county commission, as well as certificates from the Governor and the state Semiquincentennial Commission.

At the State Capitol and Tu-Endie-Wei State Park, Liberty Trees were planted as a part of the convoy's voyage. The trees planted were Sugar Maples, the state tree of West Virginia. Additional Liberty Trees will be planted at each of the courthouses along the route in the spring.

Each stop along the route attracted many guests who came to honor and pay respect to those who participated in the Battle of Point Pleasant.

Top: WV Semiquincentennial Commission Chair Randall Reid-Smith presents a commemorative lantern to members of the Raleigh County Commission at Beckley, October 9, 2024, Photograph by Zac Northup

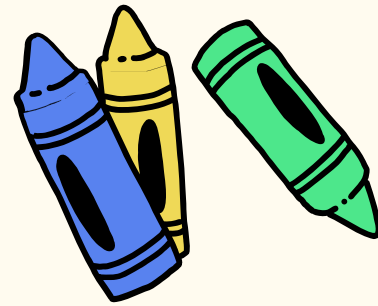
Bottom: Point Pleasant Mayor Amber Tatterson speaks during the commemorative lantern presentation, October 9, 2024, Photograph by Zac Northup





## POINT PLEASANT COMMEMORATION STUDENT CONTESTS

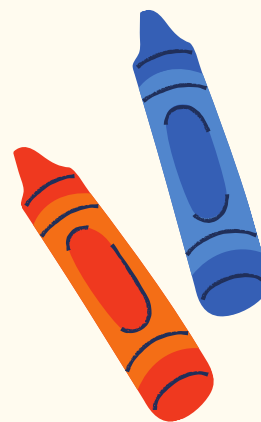
### PK-2ND GRADE COLORING CONTEST



Top: 1st place, Nolan Shinaberry,  
Greenbank Elementary School

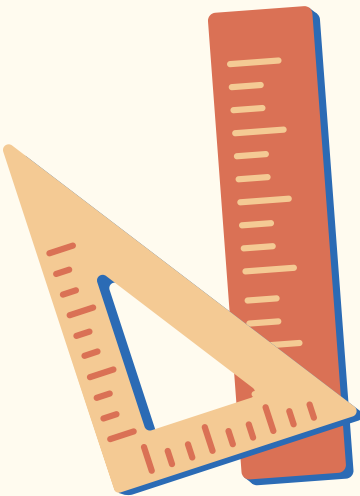
Middle: 2nd place, Paisley Blake, Point  
Pleasant Primary School

Bottom: 3rd place, Aria Baldwin,  
Greenbank Elementary School



## POINT PLEASANT COMMEMORATION STUDENT CONTESTS

### 3RD-5TH GRADE DRAWING CONTEST



Top: 1st place, Allie Casto, Leon Elementary School

Bottom: 2nd place, Elijah Thaxton, Leon Middle School



## POINT PLEASANT COMMEMORATION STUDENT CONTESTS

### 9TH-12TH GRADE ESSAY CONTEST



#### **“Sowing the Seeds of War” by Cameron Fullerton, Wheeling Park High School**

If you've ever picked up a history book, you'll know the American Revolutionary War started when the first shots were fired in Lexington on April 19th, 1775. But, was it the actual start? Although not well known, the Battle of Point Pleasant, WV occurred over a year before the conflict in Lexington. Chronologically shouldn't that be the actual start of the war? In a simplified answer, yes.

The battle of Point Pleasant should be considered the first battle of the American Revolutionary War. According to Britannica, the Battle of Point Pleasant took place at two converging rivers where General Andrew Lewis and Virginian Frontiersmen fought and defeated Native Americans allied under Shawnee leader Chief Cornstalk. The main argument of those who believe this was the first battle of the Revolution is that the Natives were enticed by the British to fight the Americans. To support this theory we first need to look into John Murray, the 4th Earl of Dunmore. Murray was a British officer, who raised and led an army of 2,700 militia men to drive out the Natives in Point Pleasant that he saw as a threat. This was the Battle of Point Pleasant, the single major battle of Lord Dunmore's War. This battle was an attack on Shawnee Natives who wanted to protect their families and tribes. The result of this battle was the Treaty of Camp

Charlotte, in which Shawnee Chiefs relinquished their hunting grounds to the white settlers. On the surface, the battle of Point Pleasant was fought because of land, but digging deeper you'll find rich waters of conspiracies and cover-ups. Historians claim that Dunmore started the conflict with natives to divert Virginians from differences they may have had with the royal administration of the colony.

Few records remain from this time not only because it was so long ago, but also because it wasn't seen as an issue for papers to write about. One of the only known published accounts of the conflict is from the Virginia Gazette, with only a few preserved copies. One bound record was examined by Dr. John P. Hale, and as one of the only people to see this record, he fully believes it was the start of the Revolution. If we trust the minuscule information or few and far second-hand accounts, this seems to remain true.

Dunmore villainized the natives in order to get the Virginians to fight them, a distraction from the rising conflict and issues with the British government. Dunmore supposedly had met with the Shawnee chiefs before and after the battle of Point Pleasant, a highly suspicious fact. According to Dr. Hale, there were “not only suspicious but grave charges that Governor Dunmore acted a double part and that he was untrue and treacherous to the interest of the colony he governed”. But Lord Dunmore didn't work alone. Of course, he would have been doing this for the British government, but he had allies in America who shared the same ulterior motives. The main figure was John Connally, an American lieutenant born in PA. He was Dunmore's right-hand man since meeting him during Dunmore's “pleasure trip” to Fort Pitt. We know the two had a close relationship due to a letter Connally wrote to George Washington detailing how Dunmore had promised to grant him 2,000 acres of land. Now, there's two ways Connally has been perceived by historians. Either he is a babbling buffoon who is incompetent enough to start conflicts or the more likely and less preferable option; Connally was malicious and calculated. Connally went around starting the conflict between settlers, sowing “trouble and ill feeling between the colonies” and even being arrested for it. What would be stopping him from doing this same thing with Natives, especially if he's bigoted towards them? This isn't unheard of, in 1883 Virgil A. Lewis stated, “It is a well-known fact that emissaries of Great Britain were then inciting the Indians to hostilities against the frontier for the purpose of distracting attention”. Connally has been recorded claiming land for Lord Dunmore and even remaining from Fort Pitt to Fort Dunmore. Connally also wrote letters claiming the Shawnee tribe was on a war path, enticing fear. However, the most condemning piece of evidence of Connally's malicious actions is the Natives' reactions to his imprisonment. After his arrest, it was stated



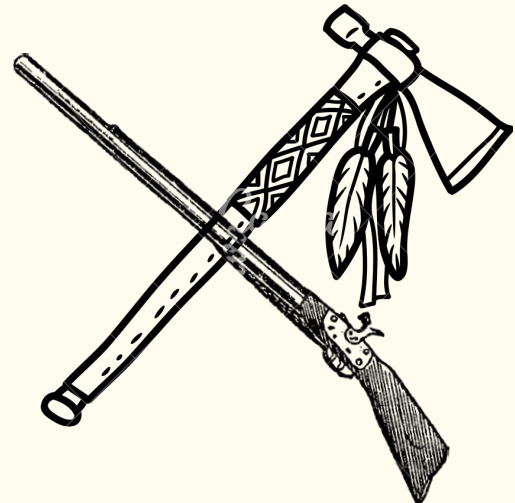
## POINT PLEASANT COMMEMORATION STUDENT CONTESTS

### 9TH-12TH GRADE ESSAY CONTEST

that the tribes were “highly excited and united in a strong confederacy and threatening war”. If Connally had been unjustly starting conflict with these Native Americans of course they would be overjoyed once he was arrested. If we really think about it, this battle wasn’t from land. At the time boundary lines were not well defined. Settlers, natives, and even the royals in Britain all had different perceptions of their land boundaries. Even the settlers in Virginia and Pennsylvania had different ideas of their own boundaries, which caused conflict. Taking this into account, this militia had no reason to fight and take land from the Natives they thought they already owned. Furthermore, if we look at the members of Dunmore’s militia there’s substantial evidence that they were racist towards Natives. Colonel Andrew Lewis’s brother, Charles, was a member of the militia. He was well known for his experience fighting Native Americans, even cited as having “pursued, overtook, and defeated” a Native raiding party. Not only are these men likely bigoted and ready to fight any Native they see, but also they weren’t a group of random men. This militia that Dunmore gathered consisted of sons and fathers, friends of friends, likely sharing the same ideologies.

Getting back to Lord Dunmore, there is a lot of evidence further suggesting Dunmore’s malicious intentions. Dunmore had undoubtedly met up with the Natives before and after the battle. Andrew Lewis’s son stated that it was a “well-known fact” that Blue Jacket, a Shawnee chief had visited Dunmore’s camp on the day before the battle. On his way to the battle, Andrew Lewis was sent a messenger twice in one day from Dunmore, ordering him to stop and retrace his steps. It was clear that Dunmore didn’t want Lewis at this negotiation. He refused to allow his participation. This is highly suspicious. After the battle, when the Natives had surrendered and retreated, Dunmore and the Natives once again had negotiation talks. Some of the natives went “to confer with Dunmore immediately after the battle”. But, once again Lewis was not allowed to attend. Dunmore clearly had malicious intentions to hide facts of the negotiation from Lewis, even being quoted saying “Lewis is probably having a hot work about this time”. In retrospect, it is clear that Dunmore did not reveal his true intentions. It was well known that Lord Dunmore was an enemy of the colonists. Historians go as far as saying, “Lord Dunmore having no doubt planned the attack by the Indians to discourage the Americans from further agitation of

the then pending demand for fair treatment of the American Colonies at the hands of Great Britain”. The little evidence that remains only suggests this. Assuming this theory is the truth, it gives clear reason that the Battle of Point Pleasant was the first in the Revolution. This was the first battle fought due to British attempts to control American settlers. To take the heat off of the issues and rising conflict, the British targeted the mostly innocent Native Americans. Ultimately it comes down to what we define as the cause of the Revolutionary War. Nonetheless, the Battle of Point Pleasant was undeniably the first hidden spark that would lead to the eruption of the Revolution.



## POINT PLEASANT COMMEMORATION STUDENT CONTESTS

### 9TH-12TH GRADE ESSAY CONTEST

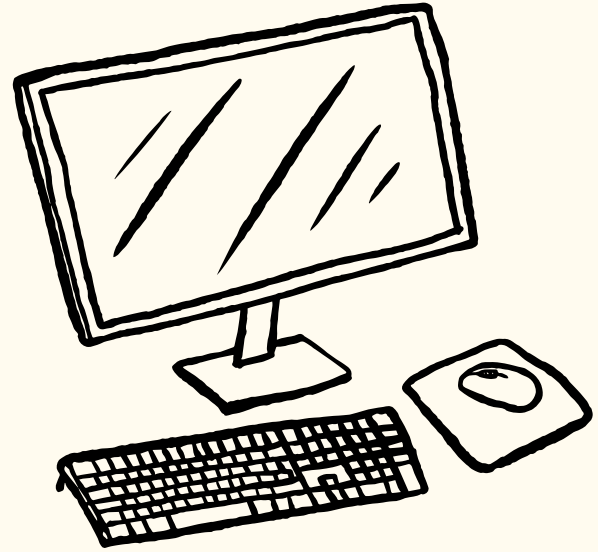
#### **“Fighting for Freedom” by Ava Norman, Wheeling Park High School**

As John Dickinson states, “United We Stand, Divided We Fall.” This country has been divided between whether or not The Battle of Point Pleasant was the first battle of the American Revolution. Although Point Pleasant was a significant battle, it was not the first. Many historians and I agree that the Lexington and Concord battles were the first battles of the American Revolution. Between the history of the Point Pleasant battle and the Lexington and Concord battles, it is clear that Lexington and Concord marked the beginning of the American Revolution.

The Battle of Point Pleasant was fought on October 10, 1774, between the Virginia militia and the Shawnee and Mingo tribes. The battle occurred at the junction of the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers, now known as Point Pleasant, West Virginia. The brawl was a part of Lord Dunmore’s war which pursued to assert colonial control and dominance over the Ohio Valley. The battle was gruesome because both sides endured multiple casualties. The Virginia militia eventually was victorious, leading the Shawnee and Mingo tribes to retreat and in time sign a

peace treaty. The victory of Virginia not only secured the land for settlers but also mapped out more westward expansion. While this can remain a testament to the violent path of freedom, the Battle of Point Pleasant was simply not the first battle to start the American Revolution.

The Battles of Lexington and Concord were on April 19, 1775, fought between British regulars and American provincials. Tensions between American colonies and British rule had been rising for years because of new British laws that imposed taxes without colonial representation in Parliament. Additionally, the colonies were furious that British troops were there to watch them on American soil. After fueling their anger for years, British General Thomas Gage dispatched a force to lead into Concord that would seize colonial weapons and arrest key leaders of the new resistance. However, colonial intelligence found out about this plan, and Revere and Dawes set out at midnight to warn the militias. Local militia gathered on the Lexington Green to overpower the British soldiers.



British militia won this battle and set off to Concord where they were taken down by a much larger colonial force. The British were hit with 200 casualties while the American colonies were hit with 100 casualties, marking this an American victory.

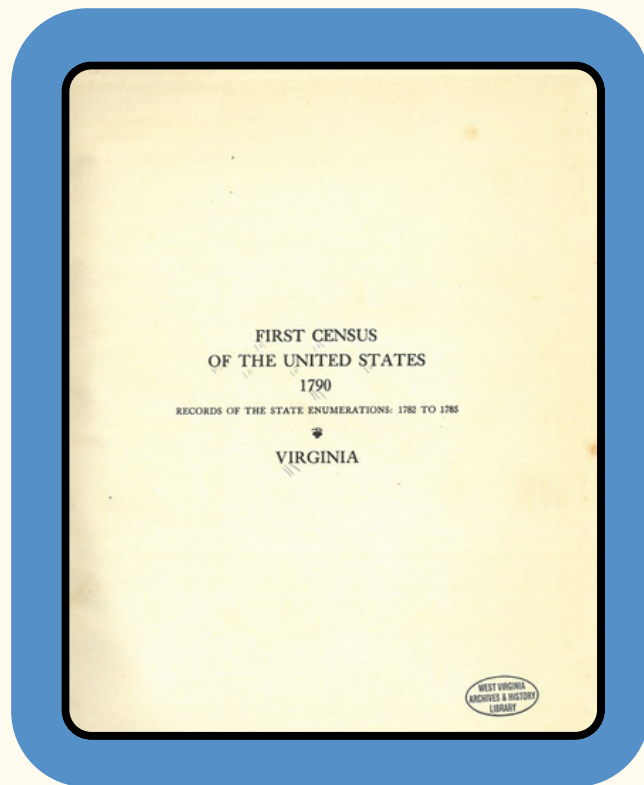
The Battles of Lexington and Concord were the first battles of the American Revolution because it marked the beginning of open armed conflict between the British and the American colonies. These battles were directly caused by the rising tensions between the British and U.S. colonies because they wanted their independence. In contrast, the Battle of Point Pleasant was a conflict between colonial Virginia and the Shawnee and Mingo tribes. While it was a significant altercation, it should not be directly related to the American independence movement, nor should it be considered the first battle of the American Revolution. In conclusion, Lexington and Concord should be considered the first battles of the American Revolution because it initiated the struggle for independence from British rule.

## REVOLUTIONARY READINGS

Do you have an ancestor who was one of the first settlers of what is now West Virginia? You may be interested in looking through the 1790 Virginia census, the first census ever taken in the state.

Though West Virginia was not yet its own state, you will recognize some familiar county names as you peruse through the first Virginia census, including Monongalia County, Hampshire County, Berkeley County, Hardy County, Greenbrier County, Ohio County, Pendleton County, Harrison County, and Randolph County.

Be sure to stop by the State Archives to take a look through the 1790 census. You never know what ancestors you might find!







**West Virginia Landscapes**  
 Nov 27 2023 - Jan 05 2024  
 accepting submissions  
 Feb 16 2024  
 accepted artwork delivery (in-person or postmark) deadline  
 Mar 3 2024, 2pm  
 opening reception, the Culture Center  
 MOUNTAIN FALLS  
 KELSEY MURPHY AND ROBERT P. BOMKAMP

**West Virginia Historic Buildings and Structures**  
 Apr 08 2024 - May 24 2024  
 accepting submissions  
 Jul 02 2024  
 accepted artwork delivery (in-person or postmark) deadline  
 Jul 28 2024, 2pm  
 opening reception, the Culture Center  
 BAPTIST STEEPLE II  
 GEORGE HARPER

**West Virginia Wildlife**  
 Sep 20 2024 - Nov 08 2024  
 accepting submissions  
 Dec 20 2024  
 accepted artwork delivery (in-person or postmark) deadline  
 Jan 12 2025, 2pm  
 opening reception, the Culture Center  
 A THIN BLADE  
 BARRIE KAUFMAN

**West Virginia Historic Figures**  
 Feb 10 2025 - Mar 25 2025  
 accepting submissions  
 May 09 2025  
 accepted artwork delivery (in-person or postmark) deadline  
 June 01 2025, 2pm  
 opening reception, the Culture Center  
 DEVILANSE  
 STEVE BRIGHTWELL

**IMPORTANT DATES!**

## THE INSPIRED SERIES

Don't forget that the deadline for submissions to enter the "West Virginia Wildlife" INSPIRED Series is November 8, 2024. All submissions should be delivered to the Culture Center at the State Capitol Complex in Charleston.

Submissions for "West Virginia Historic Figures," the final exhibit of the INSPIRED Series, will open on February 10, 2025. More information on the INSPIRED Series can be found at: <https://wvculture.org/agencies/museums/>

Questions regarding the INSPIRED Series should be directed to State Museum Exhibits Coordinator Sidney Duncan ([Sidney.L.Duncan@wv.gov](mailto:Sidney.L.Duncan@wv.gov)).

## OLD TIME COUNTRY COOKIN'

### Raised Buckwheat Cakes

**Ingredients** - 1 cup boiling water, 1/4 cup lukewarm water, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1 cup buckwheat flour, 1 tablespoon molasses, 1/4 cup white flour, 1/2 yeast cake, 1/2 teaspoon baking soda

**Preparation** - Mix boiling water, salt and molasses, and when lukewarm, add yeast dissolved in lukewarm water; add gradually to flour and beat well; let rise overnight, add baking soda, beat well, and cook on a hot griddle. The cakes should be small and should be served hot with butter and syrup.

Original recipe can be found in: *Twentieth Century Cook Book and Home Candy Making*, The Geographical Publishing Co., Chicago, IL, 1921



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

November 8, 2024

“Celebration of West Virginia Veterans,”  
Hosted by West Virginia Archives & History  
11:00 AM – 3:00 PM,  
The Culture Center  
Charleston, WV

November 8, 2024

Submission deadline for:

“West Virginia Wildlife” INSPIRED Series  
The Culture Center  
Charleston, WV

April 22-23, 2025

National America 250 Commission Meeting  
The Culture Center, State Capitol Complex  
Charleston, WV



**Website:**

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