

# The Flag's Own Right: Right, Wrong, or Sinister Conspiracy?

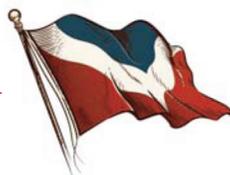
By JOHN M. HARTVIGSEN\*

The U.S. Flag Code is a “codification of existing rules and customs pertaining to the display and use of the flag of the United States . . .” It was “established for the use of such civilians . . . as may not be required to conform with regulations . . . [of the U.S. Military or other] executive departments of the United States.”<sup>1</sup> It is not a statute in the sense that it does not command or prohibit actions enforced by punitive measures. In short, there are no penalties, other than the disapproval of others, imposed for failure to comply with the Code’s provisions. There are numerous books, articles, booklets, pamphlets, and flyers that seek to clarify the Code’s fifty-odd rules and it is generally believed that the Code addresses all questions of flag display. There are also “rules” believed to be included, though not actually present in the Code, and practices now popular that were not envisioned when the code was written. While this article will examine in particular the concept of displaying the flag vertically with the stars on “the flag’s own right,” a brief historical sketch of other display conventions and the origins of the Flag Code itself will situate flag display rightly as a malleable set of conventions and traditions, not an immutable body of legally binding rules.

The distinctive triangular fold, for example, is believed by many to be required to correctly honor the flag, but folding the flag in this way is found in military regulations and not the Flag Code. Even military regulations often give little information regarding the folding of the United State flag. U.S. Army Regulation 840-10, for example, reads only “The flag should be folded in the triangular shape of a cocked hat.”<sup>2</sup> The reader is then referred to an illustration. The flag-folding ceremony performed at military funerals has caught the imagination of the public, and recent embellishments have added names and meanings for each of the thirteen folds used to produce a triangular package where the flag becomes its own envelope.<sup>3</sup> However, the thirteen named folds are not mentioned in military regulations.

Destroying worn-out flags by burning is suggested in the Flag Code, but the elaborate ceremonies performed to “retire” flags are another recent embellishment. In 1923 it made sense to destroy worn-out flags by burning as this prevented flags being

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## Editor's Note / Note de la rédaction

AS THE SECOND VOLUME OF FLAG RESEARCH QUARTERLY COMMENCES, it seems appropriate to acknowledge to you, or readers and contributors, that starting this new publication has not always been easy. It is no secret that not all the issues have arrived on time, but I believe the Association's publications will be judged by their content, not their timeliness, and that FRQ will enrich the vexillological dialog for years to come.

FRQ was founded to provide another space for discussing flag history and culture, to give voice to thoughtful vexillological questions and criticisms. Not only has this come to fruition, demonstrated by the quality and the diverse subject matter of the articles we have chosen for publication, but the fine presentations delivered at NAVA 47 in Salt Lake City demonstrate that we are enjoying an exciting moment for flag studies. The publications committee is proud to play its part in giving you an opportunity to bring your research to the world.

The article in this issue, one of the presentations from the Salt Lake City meeting, not only attests to the strength of our current membership and the research you are conducting, but anticipates the exciting arguments we will no doubt hear in New Orleans at NAVA 48. Our meetings and publications are evidence of a thriving community of flag enthusiasts and scholars, who, while often engaged with matters of the past, keep a unified focus on great things to come.

KENNETH J. HARTVIGSEN, Ph.D.

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## Hartvigsen: The Flag's Own Right. Right, Wrong, or Sinister Conspiracy?

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Fig. 1. John Trumbull's painting "The Declaration of Independence."

tossed on garbage heaps or being cut up for rags. However, modern "all weather" flag fabrics such as nylon and polyester melt before they burn and give off noxious smoke when burning. All this notwithstanding, elaborate ceremonies have developed to "retire" old flags.<sup>4</sup>

Where did these extraneous "rules and customs" originate? Are they appropriate in modern flag usage? For many, it is as if the goddess Columbia descended from the mount to reveal immutable, irrevocable, and eternal laws for flag usage. While some flag traditions do have roots in the distance past, others are of recent origin. Some are supported by clear logic, but others merely create uniformity. Yet, the U.S. Flag Code is not ancient in origin and reaches back less than a century, the first version being drafted in 1923 by the National Flag Conference. In 1942 Congress adopted an amended version. In 1976 the Code was further updated. How does this recent and malleable set of suggestions relate to historical flag usage, especially in the United States?

During the American Revolution flags were not displayed as we see them today. John Trumbull's painting "The Declaration of Independence" does show Congress in a room with a display of flags on the back wall (Fig. 1). However, it was painted in 1817, a few decades after the Revolution, and historian David McCullough, when considering the accuracy of the painting, noted, "The decorative display of military trophies and banners on the back wall, is purely Trumbull's way of dressing the set."<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that John Trumbull served during the Revolution as a military aide to General George Washington and as a Deputy Adjutant General under General Horatio Gates. He was a first-hand witness to the Revolution, so his depiction of flag display should not be casually dismissed. In fact, Trumbull's design of flags in the painting somewhat resembles the War Department Seal created in 1778.



Fig. 2. The Seal of the War Department, circa 1778.



Fig. 3. "U.S. Army Plaque," circa 1974.

The Seal of the War Department<sup>6</sup> in turn appears patterned after a *trophaeum*, a Roman victory monument made with the armor and weapons of a defeated enemy (Fig. 2). Of particular interest is that the U.S. flag in the War Office seal is not shown on the "flag's own right" as we know it today. This was "corrected" in 1974 when the Army adopted a color version of the old seal as the "U.S. Army Plaque." It moved the U.S. flag to the "correct" side and replaced the blank flag shown on the original seal with the U.S. Army Flag which itself depicts the emblem from the War Department Seal in the field of the second flag (Fig. 3). If the flag is described as a "living symbol" with its own left and right, then the U.S. Army has not helped the flag keep its left and right straight.

In the mid-nineteen century, flags began to be used as room decorations for balls and celebrations. Period illustrations show flags covering ceilings, draped on walls, and wrapped around pillars. One illustration of an 1860 ball held in New York's Tammany Hall depicts flags used as so much crepe paper (Fig. 4). Some are displayed flat while other are tied back in drapes, as the U.S. flag at the back of the room takes the sinister side, giving the dexter position to the British Red Ensign. This might seem odd in that the ball celebrated the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, an American victory over the British in the last battle of the War of 1812.

For the 1868 Democratic National Convention, Tammany Hall was decked out with draping flags and flags arranged in fans encircling the room (Fig. 5). This reflects a common practice in the last half of the nineteenth century of placing two U.S. flags with their unions touching and the flags drawn back like window curtains in a book-matched symmetry. Extravagant displays of the U.S. flag continued and increased after the Civil War and through the celebration of the nation's centennial in 1876. As the end of the century approached, many began to voice concern about proper display of the flag.

A thirty-two page pamphlet published by Society of Colonial Wars of the State of Illinois in 1895 noted:

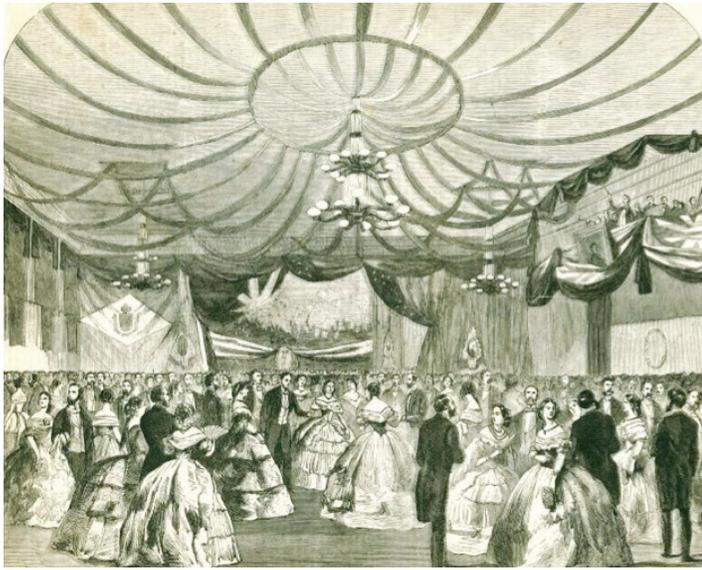


Fig. 4. Illustration of an 1860 ball held in New York's Tammany Hall.



Fig. 5. Tammany Hall decked out for the 1868 Democratic National Convention.

If anyone had told George Washington or Abraham Lincoln that patterns of the national flag would be seized upon for purely commercial, or theatrical, or partisan purposes, the assertion would have been received with incredulity.<sup>8</sup>

The booklet then presented examples of misuse. A keg of whiskey wrapped in the Stars and Stripes, a flag hung as an awning over the entrance to a piano store, and a driver of a horse-drawn cab seated on an American flag were only three of the offenses pictured

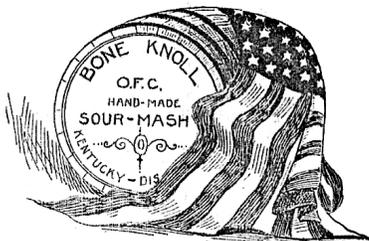


Figure 6. Stars and Stripes wrapped around a keg of whiskey, a misuse of the flag as depicted in booklet from 1895.

(Fig. 6). It was the purpose of the pamphlet “to secure the passage of a bill by the Fifty-fourth Congress, to prevent the use of our nation’s flag and its patterns for other than legitimate and patriotic purposes.” However, the publication did not give rules for appropriate flag display.

Yet, the need to protect the U.S. flag by legislation did not meet with universal agreement. In 1897 *The New York Times* reported:

The Empire State Sons of the American Revolution considered a report backing proposed legislation to prohibit the use of the U.S. flag in advertising or politics. Members expressed “strong opposition.”

The Rev. Dr. A. E. Kittredge was on his feet and had this to say: “This society would belittle itself by passing any such resolution. . . . Put the flag in advertisements. It may elevate the advertisement but it doesn’t degrade the flag. “You cannot hurt our flag,” exclaimed Dr. Kittredge. “Do not say ‘don’t do this or don’t do that with it.’ What is the flag for? To be put in a box and sat on? Or is it to be displayed and the more the better? Let us look to large interests and stop this picayune business.” . . .

It remained for the Secretary, W. S. Kenley to move diplomatically that “the society simply receive the report and refer it to the committee of thirteen that would be appointed under the resolution already passed.”<sup>9</sup>

Efforts to pass legislation protecting the U.S. flag continued through the twentieth century, and although the Supreme Court struck down laws prohibiting acts of flag desecration, there are still cries to protect the flag. The Republican National Platform in 2012 included:

The symbol of our Constitutional unity, to which we all pledge allegiance, is the flag. By whatever legislative method is most feasible, Old Glory should be given the legal protection against desecration. We condemn decisions by activist judges to deny children the opportunity to say the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools and encourage States to promote the pledge.

Legislation to give “legal protection against desecration” has sought to prohibit what is seen as inappropriate flag use, and rules of flag display have provided guidance for those who wish to honor the flag. Where then did these practices of honoring the flag begin?

George Henry Preble’s *Our Flag*, first published in 1872, relates incidents such as Confederates dancing on floors carpeted with U.S. flags.<sup>10</sup> He also tells the story of a school girl, Miss Emma Latimer, found guilty by a military court of disloyalty:

. . . the specifications being that, on the 4th of July 1865, she did tear down and trample under her fee, with intent to express contempt for the same, the America flag which had been put up in honor of the anniversary of the independence of the United States, at the house of A. R. Latimer in Edgefield, Tenn., and did threaten if it was put up a second time she would tear it down and burn it up.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, even the simple description of displaying a flag at half-mast is not mentioned by Preble. It would appear that Admiral Preble was little concerned with the flag's own right or rules of flag display.

The Spanish-American War and World War I occasioned an increase of flag display in the United States. While some questions concerning flag display were decided by common sense, other issues produced varying opinions resulting in different patriotic groups pronouncing conflicting rules of flag display. In the years following the adoption of the U.S. Flag Code, those concerned with flag display were indoctrinated in the proper way to display the U.S. flag when hung vertically on a wall. Nevertheless, there was no unquestioned rule before the National Flag Code Convention adopted the first draft of the Flag Code in 1923.

Before weighing the differing opinions about this rule of flag display as they existed before 1923, it is necessary to consider a basic concept concerning the design of the U.S. flag: the U.S. flag lacks symmetry. A flag which possesses horizontal symmetry cannot be displayed upside down. France and Norway are examples. The top half of these flags are symmetrical with the bottom half. Other flags are symmetrical along a vertical center line such as Canada and the Netherlands, and therefore cannot be displayed backwards. Still other flags have a quadrilateral symmetry, such as Japan and Switzerland, and they cannot be displayed upside down or backwards. The Union Flag of Great Britain is a rare circumstance, where the counterchanged crosses of St. Andrew and St. Patrick create a pinwheel design that lacks horizontal and vertical symmetry; however, the flag does have a rotational symmetry. Rotate the Union Flag 90°, 180°, and 270° and it appears the same and is not deemed to be upside down or backwards. Flip the flag over to show its back, and no matter how you turn it, it will be upside down or judged to be displayed backwards. The Union Flag can and often is displayed upside down and/or backwards, and most people are unable to see or understand the difference.

In addition to the flag of the United States, the flags of China, Greece, and Malaysia lack symmetry and can be displayed upside down as well as backwards. Another aspect of the lack of vexillological symmetry is that the backs of these flag are not identical with their fronts. The inclusion of letters or numbers in a flag's design renders a design asymmetrical and the letters or numbers appear backwards on the flag's reverse side. The backs of these flags are truly the reverse of the fronts. The asymmetry of the U.S. flag will become important as we consider displaying the Stars and Stripes with the stripes running vertically.

When displayed flat on a wall with only one side showing and with the stripes running vertically, how was the flag shown prior to the adoption of the Flag Code by the National

Flag Conference in 1923? This display was not as uniform as would be perhaps expected. In May 1917, for example, the *Deseret News* published a short article and picture under the title "HANG OLD GLORY RIGHT! Here is what Army Regulations Call For":

All citizens who love the dear old Stars and Stripes should be very careful when they are placed in position either on a pole or hung up without a staff that they hang as above. When the stripes are as in the top photo, see that the stars are in the upper left hand corner, while when the flag is hung with the stripes running as in the lower photo, the stars should be in the upper right hand corner.<sup>12</sup>

The photograph is credited to the American Press Corporation, so this appears to be a national story the *Deseret News* reran and not a local article that a reporter got wrong. In fact, many news clips in the early twentieth century give instruction on the correct way to hang the flag vertically, and they often do not agree. Some say the stars should be placed on the observer's left while others insist the stars belong on the viewer's right. Still others maintain that the flag should never be displayed unless affixed to a pole.

A flyer advertising a book by Harry E. Smith published in 1925<sup>13</sup> explains one logical reason for displaying the union of stars on the viewer's right. He points out that a heraldic shield, unlike a flag, has only one decorated side, and that flags and shields when rotated should always show their front side. A flag should be rotated from the horizontal to the vertical as if it were attached to a flagstaff with the staff being turned from straight up to horizontal. By this rotation, the union moves from the view's left side to the right.

The U.S. House of Representatives, before the spring of 1917,<sup>14</sup> displayed a U.S. flag vertically behind the Speaker's chair in the well of the House Chamber. Numerous photographs clearly show that representatives placed the union of stars to the viewer's right (Fig. 7). A famous photograph of Speaker Joseph Cannon clearly shows this as do numerous pictures of Congressional Joint Sessions in the House Chamber. As Congress would eventually pass the U.S. Flag Code in 1942, it should be obvious that Congress had authority before 1917 to decide on the correct display of the flag.

Did Congress turn the flag over in 1917 to place the stars on the flag's own right as would later be enunciated in the U.S. Flag Code? Probably not. In January

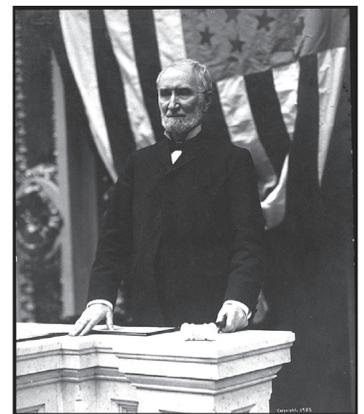


Fig. 7. Speaker Joseph Cannon in House of Representatives with flag placing union of stars to viewer's right.

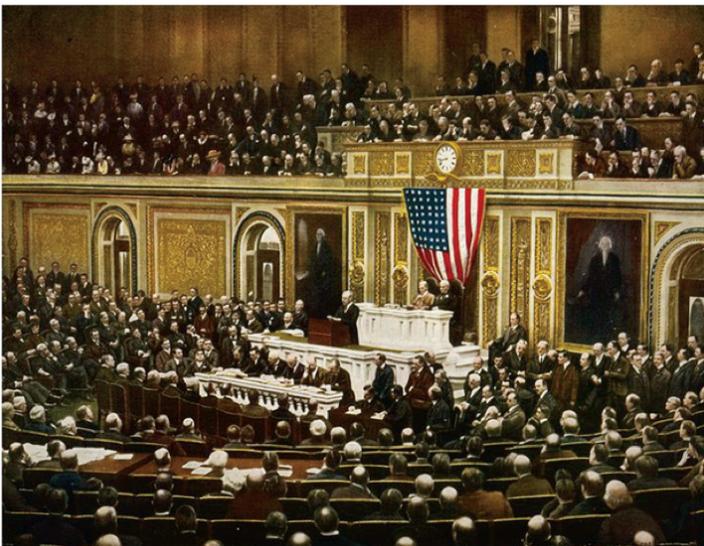


Fig. 8. Flag turned over so stars are to the viewer's left places the stars to the east side of the U.S. House Chamber, as suggested in a War Department Circular.

1917, the Army's Adjutant General issued a War Department Circular, later published in the *Official Bulletin* of July 2, 1917,<sup>14</sup> explaining that while flag display in the military was governed by regulations, he had no authority over civilian flag display. Nevertheless, having received many requests for clarification concerning rules of flag display, he detailed some guidelines based on military traditions.

It has been suggested that as far as possible the hanging of the flag should be restricted to suspending it from a flag pole, in the regular way, and not displaying it otherwise. . . . If it is nevertheless the desire to use the flag for decorative purposes it should be always be hung flat whether on the inside or the outside of buildings, with the union to the north or east, so that there will be general uniformity in the in the position of the union of each flag displayed. . . .

When the flag behind the Speaker's chair had the union of stars on the viewer's right, the stars were on the west side of the House Chamber. Turning the flag over and moving the stars to the viewer's left places the stars to the east as suggested in the War Department Circular (Fig. 8).

Where then did the National Flag Conference get the dictum that the union of stars must always be placed in the upper left-hand corner as seen by the observer? Although opinion had been previously divided on the question, it is due largely to the passion of one man, Gridley Adams, that we have the rule that the stars must always be displayed in the upper left-hand corner, the "flag's own right." Columnist E. J. Kahn wrote a profile of Adams for the July 5, 1952 issue of *The New Yorker*. While most profiles in the magazine were only a few columns in length, this spread over twenty-one pages.<sup>15</sup> Since both Kahn and Adams were long-time New York residents, it is certain that the article resulted from a

lengthy personal interview. Kahn summed up Adams with the following observation:

[I]n the course of proclaiming his ardor for the flag Gridley Adams gives the impression that he regards it as his truest love but also regards himself as its only true lover.

The National Flag Conference of 1923 was convened in Washington, D.C. by the American Legion at the urging of Garland W. Powell, its National Director of Americanism,<sup>16</sup> with representatives from seventy-one patriotic societies<sup>17</sup> that had the charge to prepare uniform rules of flag display for civilian use. Although Adams showed up in Washington representing only himself, he made an impression on the delegates by attacking one of the conference speakers, Samuel Gompers, the head of the American Federation of Labor. Adams charged Gompers with desecrating the flag when he stood on a table that had been covered with the Stars and Stripes. Demonstrating forcefulness and convictions in matters of flag display, Gridley Adams was chosen first as a member of the committee to prepare the list of flag rules and then as the Chairman of the National Flag Conference. The Conference met only in 1923 and a year later in 1924, but Adams retained and used the title for the rest of his life.

Adams is perhaps best known for changes he had made in the Pledge of Allegiance, which by today's standards may seem xenophobic or outright racist. In 1923, he insisted that the words "my flag" used in the original pledge be replaced with the words, "flag of the United States," explaining:

I didn't like the words 'my flag,' believing that any alien or Hottentot could, and with all sincerity, pledge allegiance to whatever National emblem he held in his mind's eye. I wanted the pledge to be specifically American.<sup>18</sup>

When others pointed out to Adams that there is a United States of Mexico and a United States of Brazil, he insisted the wording be again amended to read United States of America.

Although he did have a thorough understanding of the rules contained in the original Flag Code, Adams also had bizarre ideas that went considerably further than the rules adopted by the National Flag Conference. For example, he insisted that the lyric for the song "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean" gave the incorrect order for the colors of the U.S. flag. Rather than "three cheers for the red, white, and blue," it should be "three cheers for the blue, white, and red." When one woman wore a red, white, and blue sash with red on the top, Adams castigated her. He also insisted that it was improper to display or illustrate two U.S. flag with crossed staffs. "To do so," he reasoned, "makes one of them point to its left, or 'sinister'—traditionally the 'cowardly direction.'"<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps most famously, Adams, who said he had two bottles on his desk, one for ink and the other for venom, wrote Franklin D. Roosevelt to chide him for the flag's display at the president's Fourth Inauguration. FDR, too ill to go to the Capitol for a traditional inaugural ceremony, was administered

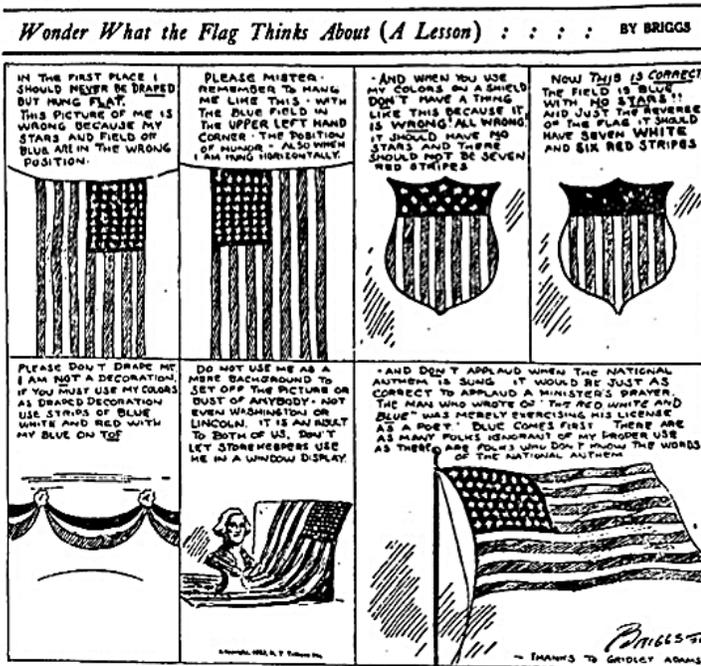


Fig. 9. In 1922, cartoonist Clare A. Briggs declared it wrong to display the flag vertically with the union in the right-hand corner.

the oath of office while standing on a porch at the White House, where a flag was attached to the railing in front of the podium. Adams insisted that the president dishonored the flag, as it should be displayed higher than the heads of all present.

With all his peculiarities, Adams was most obsessed with one rule of flag display. Having studied heraldry early in the 1920s, he interpreted the heraldic terms dexter and sinister to define an extreme literalism. Anything shown on the dexter side, the observer's left, was shown honor. Likewise, anything shown on the sinister side, the observer's right, was not honored. Certainly, the word sinister says it all: evil, menacing, threatening, and ominous. Of course, if that were true, the charge in the second half or quarter of any shield would be shown dishonored. If that were true, the flag of an allied nation—when displayed on crossed flags with that of the United States—would be insulted.

This insistence that the "canton" belonged in the upper dexter corner was explained in a newspaper cartoon published by popular syndicated newspaper cartoonist Clare A. Briggs on Flag Day in 1922.<sup>20</sup> Following Adams's instructions, Briggs declared it wrong to display the flag vertically with the union in the right-hand corner (Fig. 9). The caption, uttered in the flag's own voice, reads: "Please mister, remember to hang me like this — with the blue field in the upper left hand corner, the position of honor." The cartoon panel then advises against showing stars in the chief of the U.S. shield since none are seen on the one in the Great Seal of the United States. Of course, if reproducing the Great Seal, the shield displayed on

the bald eagle's breast should be depicted sans stars. However, there is a long tradition of depicting stars in the blue chief of national shields shown separated from the national arms. After recommending the use of bunting for patriotic decorations and advising against using the flag as a table covering, the text accompanying the final drawing addresses the issue of blue, white, and red as opposed to red, white, and blue.

Briggs's Flag Day offering was "followed by a flood of letters to the Tribune upholding and dissenting from Briggs views."<sup>21</sup> The article continues to quote from a newly issued War Department flag circular containing the same instruction as the Adjutant General's Circular of 1917:

... whether on the inside or the outside of buildings, with the union to the north or east, so that there will be general uniformity in the position of the union of each flag displayed . . .

In a letter to the editor two days later, W.H.P. Purdon finds that Briggs and Adams were both wrong:<sup>22</sup>

The first two drawings, intended to depict the right way to hang the flag vertically, in reality give the wrong position. As given—it is incorrect in that, when the flag is displayed in a vertical position with but one side visible, the blue field should be at the onlooker's upper right—not the upper left, as shown.

Purdon's view of the flag's own right also differed with Adams:

In heraldry the devices are always described as if they were being worn on the breast of the describer, i.e., the heraldic dexter is the side toward the wearer's right, the same as the military right is on the marcher's right.

All of this notwithstanding, a year later Gridley Adams convinced the National Flag Conference that his views on the subject were the only correct ones.

However, Gridley Adams's application of the heraldic terms dexter and sinister in defining the proper mode of flag display is problematic for various reasons, especially as the U.S. flag is not a heraldic banner. Beginning with the Flag Resolution of 1777 and continuing with current legal description, the U.S. flag is described as stars (not estoile or mullet), stripes (not bars or palets), and a union (not canton). The colors are red, white, and blue (not gules, argent, and azure). Vexillology is not a subcategory of heraldry, and flag design is not bound by all heraldic rules and conventions. Some flag-design principles are rooted in traditions of heraldry. Nevertheless, flags can and do violate rules of heraldry.

As noted above, only one side of a shield is decorated; the back of a shield has hardware used to carry the shield. Flags generally have a back side that is the reverse image of the front. When a heraldic flag is depicted, the front side is always shown. The back of a heraldic flag with a reverse image is not the equivalent of the shield's design, but rather its reverse. This is the reason the union of the U.S. flag is placed over the

deceased's heart when draping a casket. This shows the front of the flag, which for the U.S. flag may not be critical, but it is critical for heraldic flags such as the British Royal Standard, the first quarter of which must be placed over the heart of the deceased in order to show the front side of the flag.

Following Gridley Adams's interpretation of heraldry, the U.S. Flag Code as adopted in 1923 read, "When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be uppermost and to the Flag's own right, i.e., to the observer's left."<sup>23</sup> The current version of the U.S. Flag Code still reads virtually the same, "When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be uppermost and to the flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left."<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, a review of heraldry and tradition does not support this as the only conclusion.

The National Flag Conference could have adopted either the viewer's left or right to establish a uniformity of display. Nonetheless, there is a more pertinent issue than simply providing for uniformity of display. Does the current U.S. Flag Code rule providing for the display of the U.S. flag when hung on a wall with the stripes running vertically interface well with display of other flags? Although the U.S. Flag Code really only addresses correct display of the United States flag, its provisions are generally stretched to include the display of national flags, state flags, local flags, and other flags. In fact, other flags are only mentioned in their relationship to the display of the U.S. flag. That is usually to emphasize that other flags are not to be placed in a position of prominence with regard to the U.S. flag.

Still, when the flag is hung vertically with the stars in the upper-left corner, the flag's reverse is displayed. For national flags such as the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran, this is unacceptable. For the rotationally reflective Union Flag, the front of the flag must always be shown. For Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran, the inclusion of wording reading "God is Great" or "Allah Akbar" on their flags cannot be shown backwards or it is an insult to God. The issue, of course, is more complex for Saudi Arabia in that double-sided flags are required and the phrase "Allah Akbar" cannot even be rotated a quarter turn to display the Saudi flag vertically. Turning state flags over is a problem for those showing letters or numbers. While inclusion of these figures is exactly the reason that good flag-design principles would dictate that numbers and letters not be part of a flag's design, the fact is that numerous flags do exist in which letters and/or numbers are part of their design. While the U.S. Flag Code does not require that state and local flags displayed vertically have their upper hoist in the upper left-hand corner, the effort is often made to do this, resulting in words and numbers that are backwards. The POW/MIA flag presents an especially obvious problem when the flag is turned over to show the reverse side. The reverse of the capital letters appear to read AIM WOꞑ with the final backwards letter P looking something like a lower case "q." For this reason, POW/MIA flags are often made double sided to read correctly on both sides.

Gridley Adams's concept of always showing a flag so that the "canton" is in the uppermost dexter corner has complicated flag display. His self-taught mastery of heraldry is actually less than mastery, and his method of displaying the U.S. flag on a wall vertically has not historically been the traditional way or the only way it has always been done. Nevertheless, the current rule as contained in the U.S. Flag Code is so ingrained in U.S. citizens who concern themselves about such questions that there is no likelihood of change.

Vexillology's task is to discover the reality behind the way flags are used and displayed. While this research concerns only one rule of flag display, I expect there is even more information on this one rule than I have thus far been able to uncover. What else is there waiting to be discovered about the myriad of other rules of flag display? Even the U.S. Flag Code does not begin to cover the subject of flag display in other nations and cultures. This one rule contained in the Flag Code about the vertical display of the U.S. flag is ample proof that there is often more to the story that we have known or imagined.

#### Notes

\* B.A., Brigham Young University (1971).

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Code tit. 4, § 5.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Regulation 840-10: Heraldic Activities: Flags, Guidons, Streamers, Tabards, and Automobile and Aircraft Plates* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1998), 6, at para. 2-4(1).

<sup>3</sup> USHistory.org, "Flag Folding Ceremony," <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/more/folds.htm> (accessed August 29, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Scot M. Guenter, "Revitalized Flag Magic: Flag Retirement Rituals and the Power of Talismans," paper delivered at NAVA 47 (Oct. 2013).

<sup>5</sup> David McCullough, "The Course of Human Events," National Endowment of the Arts, 2013 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities, <http://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/david-mccullough-lecture> (accessed 13 Aug. 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1860), 661-62.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Army Quartermaster Foundation, *Department of the Army Seal*, [http://www.qmfound.com/department\\_of\\_the\\_army\\_seal.htm](http://www.qmfound.com/department_of_the_army_seal.htm) (accessed 13 Aug. 2013).

<sup>8</sup> *The Misuse of the National Flag of the United States of America: Proceedings of the National Flag Committee of the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Illinois, An Appeal to the Fifty-Fourth Congress of the United States* (Chicago: Society of the Society of Colonial Wars of the State of Illinois, 1895), 1.

<sup>9</sup> "Degrading of the Flag," *New York Times*, 18 Mar. 1897.

<sup>10</sup> George Henry Preble, *Our Flag* (Albany: George Munsell, 1872), 373.

<sup>11</sup> Preble, 376.

<sup>12</sup> "Hang Old Glory Right!", *Deseret Evening News*, 24 May 1917.

<sup>13</sup> Harry E. Smith, *The Flag of the United States of America* (Oakland, Calif.: The International Press, 1925).

<sup>14</sup> "Proper Method of Displaying, Hanging, and Saluting the American Flag Dealt with in Circular Issued by the Adjutant General," *Official Bulletin*, 2 July 1917, 8.

<sup>15</sup> E. J. Kahn, "Profiles: Three Cheers for the Blue, White and Red," *New Yorker*, 5 July 1952, 29-40.

<sup>16</sup> Garland W. Powell, *Service for God and Country* (Indianapolis: American Legion, undated), 45.

<sup>17</sup> Harrison S. Kerrick, *The Flag of the United State: Your Flag and Mine* (Columbus, Ohio: American Legion, 1925), 45.

<sup>18</sup> Jeffrey Owen Jones and Peter Meyer, *The Pledge: A History of the Pledge of Allegiance* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press, 2010), 91.

<sup>19</sup> Gridley Adams, "Honor Your Flag," *Readers Digest*, Aug. 1942, 113.

<sup>20</sup> Clare A. Briggs, "Wonder What the Flag Thinks About (A Lesson)," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 14 June 1922.

<sup>21</sup> "Proper Use of American Flag Described by War Department," *New York Tribune*, 17 June 1922.

<sup>22</sup> W. H. P. Purdon, "Flag Etiquette," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 June 1922.

<sup>23</sup> Kerrick, 48.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Code tit. 4, § 7(l).