Armorial Banners for U.S. States: A Proposal for Flag Designs

By STEVEN A. KNOWLTON and LAUREEN P. CANTWELL

Among the most common motifs in U.S. state flag design is the placement of a state seal or achievement of arms on an undivided field. Despite its prevalence, this style of design has proven dissatisfactory to flag enthusiasts—in the Association’s 2001 poll of state and provincial flags, the highest ranked achieved by any such flag was New Jersey’s at 46, although flags incorporating seals in larger designs (Wyoming, 26; Florida, 34) or using only parts of seals or arms (Rhode Island, 28; Louisiana, 36; Massachusetts, 38) fared better (Kaye 4-5).

Semiotically, these seal- or arms-based designs have a significance that has been explored by Whitney Smith and Perry Dane. Briefly, Smith points out that American states rejected heraldic convention in favor of popular, locally-inspired designs, while Dane argues that the use of seals on state flags should be recognized as a genre of flag design in which the creators seek to “convey a sense of specific legal authority” (Smith 41-53; Dane 48).

Vexillographically speaking, however, sigillary flags fail the tests of distinctiveness and visibility. (For a fascinating demonstration of the importance of distinct designs for flags, see the experiments performed by Okkerse (1-2).) Despite that failure, such designs remain politically difficult to amend: a 2012 effort to provide a new flag for South Dakota was defeated in the state legislature in the face of a poll showing that 85 percent of residents favored keeping the flag with the state seal (“Long May State Flag Wave”). Future flag reforms may, however, find more acceptance for new designs if they bear a resemblance to familiar state symbols—as shown by the 2004 referendum approving a new flag for Georgia that features the same state seal used on state flags since 1879 (Martinez 200-228).

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Vexillographically speaking, flags with seals in what Smith (45) calls the “revolutionary mode” (round seals unrelated to European heraldic style) would require significant revision to produce a distinct, visible design. However, seventeen states have seals of which the main feature is an achievement of arms, five other states or
Letters

Sir: Congratulations on the start of a significant new publication. I wish you much success, and was particularly pleased with the visual presentation of Xing Fei’s piece spanning several centuries of Chinese flag imagery.

I wished to briefly speak to the way Prof. Brady summarized my introduction to the proceedings of the most recent ICV in his mission statement essay, “Bold Beginnings.” Someone reading his essay and not reading that introduction might assume that I simply see moving the study of flags into other areas beyond history as an end goal in and of itself, with no attention to the type or level of scholarship involved necessary. A more careful reading of my introduction, and an acknowledgement of arguments I have been making for the last twenty-five years, (some of them summarized at length in Peter Orenski’s *Quo Vadimus*, which Brady also cites) will convey that I, too, very much support Whitney Smith’s “Fundamental Theses of Vexillology” (which I have assigned as required reading in class whenever I have taught a seminar on vexillology). In that introduction I was using quantitative data to demonstrate a growth in spreading across the ten categories of Smith’s classification system in collecting information over time (something else Dr. Smith said we needed to do, by the way) and qualitative appraisal based on my attendance at all the ICVs in question.

I stand by my appraisal that growth in “the depth of what could be learned, and the level of sophistication with which the research was done, the new knowledge that the scholarship conveyed” was not illusionary. I say this with complete understanding of Bloom’s taxonomy, and I noted in my introduction awareness of distinctions between “research into” and “analysis of” flag usage. Some of the papers given that led me to my belief in the growth of meaningful analysis helping us “to understand more accurately and more completely the nature of human society” (as Smith put it in his “Fundamental Theses”) were Annie Platoff’s contribution on how conspiracy theories can affect flag perceptions, Jos Poel’s appraisal on the shifting semiotic significance of an orange pennant, and Kenneth Hartvigsen’s deconstruction of sheet music imagery, among others. Yes, we can and should do more and get better, but I was heartened by what I saw and heard at ICV 24, and I thought the scholarly quality of work at the last Association meeting in Columbus, Ohio, showed the same positive trend of some advancement clearly occurring. Maybe the glass of water doesn’t have a lot poured into it yet, but I see it as one-tenth full, not nine-tenths empty. I do share Prof. Brady’s hope that we will all go to the well to fetch more water more often, and bring it back more carefully, and I congratulate all of you on the creation of this new periodical and look forward to your hastening and improving our movement toward that goal.

Most cordially,

Scot Guenter
San José State University

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Territories have coats of arms related to their seals, and two other states have coats of arms unrelated to their seals.¹

For heraldic-style seals, there is a simple alternative to the current state flags: the armorial banner. The heraldic tradition for representing arms on a flag has been to strip away crests, mantling, supporters, compartments and mottos, and to reproduce the design of the shield on cloth; a recent discussion is found in van Westerhoven (996-1013).

To be most correct, such an armorial banner should be square.² Several Canadian provinces, the state of Maryland, and the nations of Switzerland and Kiribati use armorial banners, although only Switzerland’s is square. The District of Columbia flies a banner of the personal arms of George Washington, although his arms do not appear in the district’s seal.

As an exercise in flag design that may prove both vexillologically and heraldically sound, as well as more politically palatable than a de novo design, we present the designs for armorial banners of U.S. states – both in square form and in the 2:3 ratio likely to be used if a state were to adopt an armorial banner as its state flag.

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Knowlton & Cantwell: “Vexillologically and heraldically sound designs”

¹ Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Wisconsin have coats of arms. Connecticut, Mississippi, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia and Puerto Rico have coats of arms which replicate the design of the seal in the shape of an escutcheon; Alabama and North Dakota have coats of arms not related to their seals.

² Authorities differ on the correct shape for an armorial banner. An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Heraldry calls for the banner to be “roughly square” (Franklyn & Tanner 24), while Boutell’s Heraldry prefers “square or oblong (the depth greater than the breadth)” (Boutell & Brooke-Little 250). A Complete Guide to Heraldry contradicts itself: the text says “a private flag should be double its height in length,” while the note declares, “The proper shape for an heraldic banner is square or even slightly deeper than it is wide” (Fox-Davies & Brooke-Little 362). All are in agreement that “exterior decorations are not included” (Franklyn & Tanner 24).

Bibliography/Works Cited


Knowlton & Cantwell: Armorial Banners and Flags for U.S. States

FROM TOP LEFT: Proposed designs for the armorial banners (1:1) and the armorial banners as state flags (2:3) for Delaware; Idaho, and Maine. COURTESY OF THE AUTHORS.
Knowlton & Cantwell: Armorial Banners and Flags for U.S. States (con’t)

FROM TOP LEFT: Proposed designs for the armorial banners (1:1) and the armorial banners as state flags (2:3) for Massachusetts; Michigan, and New Jersey. COURTESY OF THE AUTHORS.
Knowlton & Cantwell: Armorial Banners and Flags for U.S. States (con’t)

FROM TOP LEFT: Proposed designs for the armorial banners (1:1) and the armorial banners as state flags (2:3) for New York; North Dakota; and Pennsylvania. COURTESY OF THE AUTHORS.
Knowlton & Cantwell: Armorial Banners and Flags for U.S. States (con’t)

FROM TOP LEFT: Proposed designs for the armorial banners (1:1) and the armorial banners as state flags (2:3) for Utah; Vermont; and Wisconsin. COURTESY OF THE AUTHORS.
ITALY has a diverse, complicated and fluid system of political parties, due to a number of developments after the older, more stable (but already diverse) system collapsed in the early 1990s. One major factor is the electoral system favoring electoral alliances instead of single consolidated parties, so that a large number of small parties can gain seats under the umbrella of the alliance.

Italian parties make widespread use of flags. In the majority of cases, the flag shows the party symbol on a unicolored field, but other configurations like “banners-of-arms” do occur as well. I am working on a comprehensive publication about Italian party flags, covering the last 25 years; this will be partly based on my collection of currently 254 Italian political flags. Here I want to show those parties or alliances participating in the February 2013 elections. The figure shows 60 flags; I do not know the flags, if they exist, for the remaining 24 parties, which are mostly very minor.

Flag usage by the parties is basically restricted to two instances: they are flown from party headquarters and offices of local branches, sometimes together with other organizational flags, rarely with the national flag. The main instance of individual use is at party rallies where the supporters in the crowd wave dozens or hundreds of flags; this is particularly the case with outdoor rallies whereas during indoor events (rallies or conventions) there are usually only a few party flags on the dais. Particularly flag-crazy is the Lega Nord: at their demonstrations you often see dozens of different flag variants (from regional and local branches), but certainly no single Italian tricolour. The electoral alliances that have formed over the last 20 years are especially interested in flag usage; the displays of constituent parties and the alliance flag at political rallies are an impressive sight.

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“Pace da tutti i balconi” (Peace from all balconies) may be seen.

Adjacent to the party names appear the number of seats gained in the 2013 elections; “C” indicates the lower house (Camera dei Deputati, 630 seats), “S” the upper house (Senato, 315 seats).

The center-left alliance was led by the Partito Democratico (Democratic Party) (C 297, S 111). The flag (Fig. 1) is a banner-of-arms, showing the party abbreviation PD in the Italian colours, and usually the whole party name and an olive twig (as reference to its predecessor, the Ulivo alliance). SEL (C 37, S 7) is a left-socialist party with a red flag (Fig. 2) containing a circular logo with the party name (Sinistra Ecologia Libertà=Left Ecology Freedom) and the name of the leader.

The center-right coalition was again led by Silvio Berlusconi’s party, Popolo della Libertà (PDL = People of Freedom) (C 98, S 98). The flag (Fig. 6) is a simple white logo flag, the logo containing the party’s and leader’s names. Fratelli d’Italia (Brothers of Italy; the name refers to the national anthem) (C 9, S 0) is a recent split from PDL, aimed at more conservative voters; one version of the flag (Fig. 7) is brown with a logo combining a ribbon in the national colours with the blue-white of the earlier Alleanza Nazionale. The autonomist-to-separatist Lega Nord (Northern League) (C 18, S 18) is only active in the northern half of Italy ("Padania") and uses a lot of flags: one is a white logo flag (Fig. 8) with Alberto da Giussano (a legendary 18th century hero in Lombardy) and the green wheel-like Sun of the Alps. The corresponding parties in the southern half of the country are Grande Sud (Great South) (C 0, S 1) and MPA (Movimento per le Autonomie=Movement for Autonomy). The MPA flag (Fig. 9) is white with the logo that shows a flying seagull; the GS flag (Fig. 10) shows a colourful rendition of the party name on white. Their joint list for the lower house combines both logos into a new one that also appears on white (Fig. 11). The
right-wing La Destra (The Right) uses a torch emblem derived from the neofascist youth organization and recently added the leader’s name; the flag (Fig. 12) is white with the emblem. Three smaller parties also use white logo flags (Figs. 13-15): PID (I Popolari di Italia Domani=The Populars of Italy Tomorrow), MIR (Moderati in Rivoluzione=Moderates in Revolution) and Intesa Popolare (Popular Agreement), with all their logos containing a reference to the national colours. The Partito Pensionati (Pensioners’ Party) is fighting for pensioners’ rights and has a logo that only contains the party abbreviation; the (unusually vertical) flag (Fig. 16) is blue with the logo and the full party name.

The Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S=Five Star Movement) (C 109, S 54) is a recent populist anti-system movement inspired and created by actor/comedian Beppe Grillo. The name as well as the five yellow stars in the symbol refer to the five original points of the party platform. The flag (Fig. 17) is white with the logo; there are also many local versions used.

Incumbent prime minister Mario Monti leads a centrist alliance (C 2, S 19) consisting, among others, of his own new party (Scelta Civica=Civic Choice) (C 37); the flag (Fig. 18) is only vaguely derived from the logo, showing party and leader name on white and blue, combined with the national colours. The UDC (Unione di Centro=Union of the Center) (C 8) uses a white logo flag (Fig. 19), the main symbol being the scudo crociato (white shield with a red cross) and inscription LIBERTAS traditionally used by Christian-Democratic parties in Italy. Futuro e Libertà (FLI=Future and Freedom) is another centrist party that uses a white logo flag (Fig. 20); the logo shows party and leader name and the national colours.

Several leftist parties contested the elections under a joint symbol, Riveluzione Civile (Civil Revolution). The flag (Fig. 21) is surprisingly white, not red, with the logo, which is a stylization of the famous painting Quarto Stato (Fourth State) by Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo. All the major partners of this list (Rifondazione Comunista; Partito dei Comunisti Italiani; Italia dei Valori; Verdi) have their own flags.

Several smaller communist parties were running alone; all of them use the traditional hammer & sickle symbol and the red colour for their flags. The PdAC (Partito di Alternativa Comunista=Communist Alternative Party) is Trotskyist and thus contains the number “4” in its logo as reference to the Fourth International (Fig. 22). Also the PCL (Partito Comunista dei Lavoratori=Workers’ Communist Party) spells this allegiance out in its flag (Fig. 23). The PCIM-L (Partito Comunista Italiano Marxista-Leninista=Marxist-Leninist Italian Communist Party) belongs to the Stalinist-Maoist variety and uses a flag reminiscent of the Soviet one, but including

Communist parties still use the Soviet-style hammer and sickle and the colour red; liberal parties use the color yellow, which is used internationally by the liberal left. White is a common background for many flags.
the whole party name (Fig. 24). The CSP (Comunisti—Sinistra Popolare=Communists—Popular Left) now running as Partito Comunista is a more mainstream communist party having a square red flag with a large hammer and sickle (Fig. 25).

Among the liberal parties, the (re-vived) PLI (Partito Liberale Italiano=Italian Liberal Party) has always prominently shown the national colours; only recently the field of the flag has become yellow (Fig. 26), the colour used internationally by several liberal parties. The left-liberal Radicali Italiani (Italian Radicals) also use a yellow flag, with inscriptions and the traditional socialist red rose (Fig. 27). Fermare il Declino (Stop the Decline) is a new libertarian movement surprisingly using red flags, with an upward white arrow (Fig. 28). The left-liberal PRI (Partito Repubblicano Italiano=Italian Republican Party) has always, since its foundation in 1895, used an ivy leaf as symbol, also on flags, which are usually red (Fig. 29). The recently founded liberal-socialist Riformisti Italiani (Italian Reformers) use a cockade in the national colours as their symbol (Fig. 30).

A few of the Christian-Democratic parties which are in alliances have been mentioned; others were running alone, like the Popolari Uniti (United Populars) that are only active in the Basilicata region; the logo used on white flags (Fig. 31) combines national colours with yellow stars. Another one in the Christian-Democratic tradition is the Unione Popolare (Popular Union) using white flags with the logo and one of several mottos, like “Io divento Futuro” (I become future) (Fig. 32). Prominently displaying a golden cross on the national flag (Fig. 33) is Io amo l’Italia (I love Italy) led by Magdi Cristiano Allam, an Egyptian-Italian immigrant converted from Islam to Catholicism.

Several of the neofascist parties use a version of the tricolour flame symbol of the old MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano=Italian Social Movement). The first even calls itself Fiamma Tricolore, and shows the logo on green, blue (Fig. 34), white or black flags. Others like the MIS (Movimento Idea Sociale=Social Idea Movement) (Fig. 35) or the Progetto Nazionale (National Project) (Fig. 36) show other stylizations of the flame on white or blue flags, respectively. More extreme are the Forza Nuova (New Force) using bold letters on black (Fig. 37) or CasaPound, a neofascist youth movement, combining a red field with a black-on-white turtle symbol, reminiscent of Nazi flags (Fig. 38).

A number of parties do not easily fit in the main categories, e.g., the recent, international phenomenon of Pirate Parties advocating internet rights. In Italy there are at least two of them struggling over the use of the main symbols; only the smaller one (I Pirati=The Pirates) contested the elections, using a banner-of-arms (Fig. 39), i.e., white skull and bones on an orange field, at the bottom is the old internet address; the main symbol of the Pirate Parties (the black stylized sail) appears only as a small part. The logo and flag of DA (Democrazia Atea=Atheistic Democracy) consists of party name and abbreviation, all in white and light blue (Fig. 40). Another party using this colour combination is PPA (Movimento Politico Pensiero e Azione=Political Movement, Thought, and Action) (Fig. 41).
MNI (Movimento Naturalista Italiano=Italian Naturalist Movement) is a conservative-environmentalist party using a distinctive flag with the logo, but also the Italian colours and a reference to the European Union flag (Fig. 42). Finally, Tutti Insieme per l’Italia (All Together for Italy) seems to be mainly concerned with cultural values, thus the musical clef in the logo that is also used on white flags (Fig. 43).

Regional parties, including secessionist ones, have a long tradition in many parts of Italy; their symbols frequently refer to historical regional symbols. In mainly German-speaking South Tyrol vertical flags of the “German” type are preferred: SVP (Südtiroler Volkspartei=South Tyrolean People’s Party) (C 0, S 1), in government for a long time, uses the Tyrolean colours with its edelweiss logo (Fig. 44), whereas the more right-wing Die Freiheitlichen (The Libertarians) refer to yellow and blue as widely used liberal colours (Fig. 45). The regional Greens (Verdi/Grüne/Vërc) have a green flag with a white dove (Fig. 46).

In adjacent Trentino there is the governing centrist Unione per il Trentino (Union for Trentino) (C 0, S 1) that has a white flag (Fig. 47) with a logo containing a flower—a reference to the earlier Civica Margherita party. The smaller PATT (Partito Autonomista Trentino Tirolese=Trentino Tyrolean Autonomist Party) (C 0, S 1) is allied with the SVP and thus shows a logo with two edelweiss flowers on a red-white field (Fig. 48).

The main party in the French-speaking semi-autonomous region of Aosta Valley, the Union Valdôtaine (Valdostan Union) (C 1, S 1) uses the black and red colours of the regional flag as well as the lion from the regional arms (Fig. 49). A more left-wing list is ALPE (Autonomie, Liberté, Participation, Écologie=Autonomy, Liberty, Participation, Ecology), also showing the regional colours, this time as a black cockerel combined with some red (Fig. 50).

The Unione Padana (Padanian Union) is one of several splits from the Lega Nord, mainly active in Lombardy, thus the Lombardian cross in the logo (Fig. 51).

In Veneto, there are several parties advocating the independence of the region, and of course showing the Venetian lion as their symbol. The Liga Veneta Repubblica (Venetian Republic League) uses the traditional flag of Venice (Fig. 52), whereas Indipendenza Veneta (Venetian Independence) shows a more aggressive golden lion on blue (Fig. 53). A recent split from the latter, Veneto Stato (Veneto State) combines a rather small lion in a heart with the ornaments from the traditional flag, all on a blue (Fig. 54) or white field.

Active only in Molise is Costruire Democrazia (Constructing Democracy) that has a white flag with a rather contemplative flower logo (Fig. 55). The fleur-de-lis in the emblem and flag (Fig. 56) of the Partito del Sud (Party of the South) refers to the former kingdom of Naples.

Of the many regional parties in Sardegna, only two contested these elections: the venerable PSD’Az (Partito Sardo d’Azione=Sardinian Action Party) that uses a version of the traditional regional flag with the four Moors’ heads (Fig. 57); and the recent Indipendenza per
la Sardegna (Independence for Sardinia) with a very unimaginative logo showing the map outline of the island (Fig. 58).

Over the last several years a few parties have emerged aimed at Italian voters in the Overseas Constituency (Circoscrizione Estero) who are entitled to elect 2 percent of the parliamentary seats. The most successful is MAIE (Movimento Associativo Italiani all’Estero=Associative Movement of Italians Abroad) (C 2, S 1), active in South America: the flag (Fig. 59) is white with the logo showing a map of South America in the Italian colours. Recently founded for North America is Insieme per gli Italiani (Together for the Italians) that has a flag showing the logo on a colour gradient from green to red (Fig. 60).

All figures are from the author’s collection and are reprinted through his courtesy.
Fig. 39

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Vexillology has a long heritage within the Canadian military, whether as part of the identification of the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army, and Royal Canadian Air Force in former years, or the current unified Canadian Armed Forces. Colors, flags, pennants, and banners all have had a role to play in unit and formation identification and pride. That is still true even if very few Canadians in uniform would recognize the word vexillology itself.

Part of my work with the Department of National Defence involves research and writing on military vexillology and, in a small way, contributing to the design and production of vexillological products for use within the Canadian military. The Directorate of History and Heritage where I work strives to preserve Canada’s military heritage through research and writing on numerous subjects, including vexillology. The directorate is also responsible for coordinating the design and production of modern unit Colours, camp flags, and various other flags for use by the Canadian Armed Forces.

Have you seen this flag? [Fig. 1]. This is one of the full-sized World War II-era Canadian Army battle flags produced during the Second World War on display in the Military Communications and Electronics Museum in Kingston, Ontario. This flag was the creation of the Director of the Army Historical Section, Colonel Archer Fortescue Duguid who saw it not only as the battle flag of the Canadian Army but also as a potential Canadian national flag. This was the trigger for my involvement in vexillology research and writing.

Fig. 1: Full-size World War II-era Canadian Army battle flag, Military Communications and Electronics Museum, Kingston, Ont. AUTHOR’S COLLECTION.
for my research into this piece of Canadian vexillological history presented as “To make the unmistakable signal ‘CANADA’: The Canadian Army’s “Battle Flag” during the Second World War” at NAVA 40 (2006) (published in Raven 14).

I continue to keep an eye out for representations of the battle flag and, on occasion, it appears as part of a wartime rank poster or public relations material. However, not too long ago I discovered an auction on E-Bay of a wartime postcard depicting the battle flag – an interesting addendum to my earlier research. I won the auction and include a scan of the postcard [Fig. 2].

The postcard—produced by the Canadian Print. & Litho. Company, Montréal—depicts a generic Canadian sailor, soldier, and airman superimposed on the battle flag. A narrative written on the back of the card begins with a propagandistic account of Canada’s military contribution to the war, then explains: Canada’s battle flag, authorized by a Royal Proclamation of George V in 1921, combines the basic device – three Maple Leaves of natural shape and colour on one stem in a white field expressing in heraldic terms the relation of Canada to the Crown and the British Commonwealth of Nations. The Union Jack appears in the corner next to the staff and in the upper right opposite are displayed in a circle three golden fleurs de lys on a blue background expressing in heraldic terms an ancient and honorable connection. For the record, the three maple leaf device was authorized by the 1921 Royal Proclamation—not the battle flag.

There’s obviously been a lot of vexillological history within the Canadian military since that time and I hope to be able to present bits and pieces here and there to a NAVA audience. However, another recent example of my directorate’s vexillological innovation is worth mention.

The commemoration of the War of 1812 as a part of Canadian and American heritage has been underway for some time. Books, documentaries, museum exhibits, etc., have covered numerous aspects of the conflict, be they military, social, economic, or aboriginal.

The Government of Canada has taken a prominent role in commemorating the bicentennial of the war and its role in defining the Canadian identity. At least one part of that remembrance has been vexillological. On 20 October 2011, having been approved by the Governor General of Canada and Commander-in-Chief of Canada, His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, the Canadian Forces War of 1812 Commemorative Banner was signed off by the Chief Herald of Canada and the Inspector of Canadian Forces Colours and Badges (Director of History and Heritage, 1812 Commemorative Banner).

The Minister of National Defence, Peter MacKay, called the banner [Fig. 3] “an important way to recognize and celebrate the role played by Canada’s citizen soldiers, as well as to commemorate the contribution made by regular and militia soldiers, provincial marine and the aboriginal allies who participated in the War of 1812” (Department of National Defence, Minister McKay Announces).

The banner was unveiled to the public on 22 May 2012 as part of the “1812 Commemorative Military Muster” held at the Fort York Armoury in Toronto, Ontario, during the royal tour of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales. During the ceremony [Fig. 4], the first banner was presented by the Prince of Wales to the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Walter Natynczyk (Canadian Army).

The banner is being distributed to all Canadian Forces “units, forma-
tions, and establishments whose heritage embraces service in the defence of Canada” during the War of 1812. The goal is for the banner to be “carried, flown, or displayed” during the commemorative period then, following that, to be paraded on anniversaries of the war of particular relevance to individual units, formations, or establishments. In addition to distribution to the military, the banner is intended for “those First Nations and Métis communities wanting to recognize and commemorate” the contribution of their communities to the defence of Canada during the war (Department of National Defence, Marking the 200th Anniversary of the War of 1812).

The original concept for the banner came from staff at the Directorate of History and Heritage, Department of National Defence. The basis for the banner is the Canadian National Flag, more or less in the form utilized by Regimental Colours in order to make it recognizable to a Canadian military audience. It was further refined and painted by heralds at the Canadian Heraldic Authority before approval by the Governor General. (In years past, the Canadian Armed Forces had its own artists but, more recently, the Canadian Heraldic Authority was brought onboard to provide artists and heraldic expertise for the design of military flags, badges, and insignia). Officially, the design is described in the following heraldic language: “Gules on a Canadian pale Argent two swords in saltire proper, hilted and pommelled Gules, surmounted by an anchor Or fouled Gules and flanked by two tomahawks addorsed, the whole ensigned by the Royal Crown proper and above two scrolls Or edged Gules and inscribed 1812-1815 and DEFENCE OF CANADA—Défense du Canada in letters Sable.” The formal symbolism for the banner is as follows: “The banner honours those who defended British North America during the War of 1812; the Royal Navy and Provincial Marine, the British Army and colonial militias, and their First Nations allies. The three fighting elements are represented by the anchor, the swords and the tomahawks respectively” (Direcroy of History and Heritage, 1812 Commemorative Banner).

Military vexillology is alive and well within the Canadian Armed Forces. A new Canadian Naval Ensign (the former naval jack) was recently announced, my directorate continues to work on various Colour and camp flags, and research continues into the rich vexillological heritage of the Canadian military.

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