1977 Has a Very Special Meaning for America's Stars and Stripes:

THIS IS THE 200th BIRTHYEAR OF THE U.S. FLAG

Legend tells us that Betsy Ross taught the official visitors from the Continental Congress how to make a five-point star with a single snip of her scissors and that she arranged the stars into the familiar circle against the field of blue, sewed the field firmly to the thirteen red and white stripes and thereby created the "first" American flag, or at least adapted another design to please the assembled dignitaries in her sewing room.

The flag of the U.S. has been flown in many interesting designs. Finally deep in the 20th century, the American Congress did specify the exact format of the flag, the one which flies from millions of flagpoles, homes, businesses, schools, government buildings and outdoor areas of every kind.

On June 14, 1777, in order to establish an official flag for the new nation, the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act: "Resolved, That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

World travelers call those stars and stripes the most beautiful sight in the whole of the earth, more impressive than mountains and skiylines, than rich historical meccas and even the beauties of the world of Nature in all her glory. All of us at Dettra Flag Company take pride in our long record of producing this symbol of freedom. June 14 is Flag Day every year. But June 14, 1977 will surely be a date marked with exceptional celebrating as the birthday, the official 200th birthday, of the flag of the United States of America!
An Introduction to Vexillology

by Dr. Whitney Smith, Secretary General of the
International Federation of Vexillological Associations

Barely more than a decade ago vexillology did not exist. In the entire history of the world there had never been a conference or association or periodical devoted exclusively to the serious study of flag history and symbolism. Those who collected information on the subject had few contacts with others of similar interests and those who wrote books and articles on flags did so as often for entertaining or inspiring as for instruction. Even the word vexillology (coined about 1957 by this author) was unknown.

Since that time enormous strides have been taken, such that vexillology need make no apologies to those in the sister disciplines of heraldry and sphragistics. As the biennial International Congresses of Vexillology are the focus for much of this work, it seems appropriate on the occasion of the seventh such gathering to review briefly what has been accomplished.

The appearance in October 1961 of the Flag Bulletin (now officially recognized by FIAV as a journal for the publication of scholarly articles relating to vexillology) was an early and continuing stimulus to increased and more sophisticated flag work and to co-ordination between vexillologists. Its success has since been paralleled by a growing number of periodicals, including FLAGMASTER, VEXILLA HELVETICA, VEXILLA NOSTRA, and others which annually add to our permanent store of flag knowledge.

Formal institutions with collections of books, actual flags, notes, and other documentation now preserve and disseminate material that in the past was either lost or entrusted to the hands of private individuals. National societies to promote the study of flags, further contacts between those in the field, and enlarged public appreciation for such activities have also grown in many parts of the world. The Flag Research Center, dating from 1962, was the first institution; the Netherlands Society for Flag Study (1966) the first society. Among the achievements to the credit of such bodies are the publication of the first international flag bibliography (1965), flag description code (1965), and vexillological dictionary (1969).

Nowhere perhaps is the evidence of progress more evident than in the growing scope and depth of, and participation in, the International Congresses of Vexillology. From small beginnings in Muiderberg (the Netherlands) in 1965, these conferences have constantly augmented the fund of basic knowledge of flags through increments in their lectures, films, tours, exhibits, and literature. If the rate of improvement evidenced from Zurich to Boston to Turin to London to Amsterdam continues unabated from Washington, D.C. on, the promise for the future is great indeed.

Overseeing these Congresses and insuring co-operation among the numerous countries represented is the International Federation of Vexillological Associations (FIAV). Founded in 1967, FIAV has
been responsible for the remarkable amity existing between 16 mem-
bers of diverse size and character, a condition which in turn has
helped them set new vexillological milestones. The degree of har-
mony has tended to obscure the fundamental principle guaranteeing
this success - respect for the autonomy of each FIAV member by all
the others and by the Federation itself.

Like the two interlaced halyards on the FIAV flag, there are
two interwoven threads in the various events and institutions cited
above, fellowship and scholarship. These are the lifeblood of
vexillology: scholarship is its purpose, fellowship its method. So
long as they mutually infuse the activities of vexillologists the
men and women who claim that title will have reason to do so with
pride.

But does vexillology have any meaning for those not directly
participating in its conferences, organizations, and publications?
Of the fact that flags themselves are of profound psychological
significance to all peoples there can be no doubt. The debate in
1964 in Canada over the selection of a new national flag and the
worldwide phenomenon of the display of the Viet Cong flag are only
two of the more dramatic instances of the role played by flags in
contemporary society.

On the other hand, we must admit that vexillology, as distinct
from the flags it studies, has so far only made a slight impact on
the world. Its principal accomplishment so far (one not to be
underrated) is in making the world aware that it exists. Utilizing
the same resources, vexillologists must now strive for greater re-
spect for the potentialities of this science-in-the-making, parti-
cularly in our better understanding of the motivations of man as a
political animal. If the first stage was marked by the inclusion
of the word "vexillology" in dictionaries, so we look in this stage
for the day when vexillological studies shall be accorded formal
academic status at major universities.

If vexillology today may still fairly be said to be in its in-
fancy, nevertheless it is a robust infant with a good augur for the
future. Largely free of the prejudices, petty rivalries, and
fetters of tradition which plague many disciplines, it bids fair to
overcome the challenges it does face - chauvinism, commercialism,
and amateurism. In that undertaking the efforts of the individual
vexillologist will continue, despite the growth of institutions,
to be a decisive factor.

WASHINGTON, D.C.
10-14 June 1977

7TH
INTERNATIONAL
CONGRESS OF
VEXILLOLOGY
FOUR FLAGS OVER THE U.S. CAPITOL - Two U.S. flags fly 24 hours a day over the U.S. Capitol, one in front and one in the rear. When Congress is in session, however, two additional flags are flown, one over the Senate side when the Senate is meeting and another on the House side when the House is deliberating. -V.F.W. Magazine, January 1977

AUSSIE SEPARATISTS - The latest issue of pseudo-coins to make an appeal for the collector's dollar comes from a small area of western Australia known as Hutt River Province.

The 22,900-acre tract with a total population of 35 seceded from Australia in April, 1970, in retaliation for wheat quotas imposed by the Australian government. The quotas would have restricted harvests to 11 per cent of the crops.

The straw that broke the kangaroo's back came when Australia denied the right of local farmers to appeal the quotas.

The residents then served secession documents on the Australian government, chose a flag and elected landowner Leonard Casley and his wife, Shirley, prince and princess of the secessionist province.

The matter may be appealed to the United Nations or the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

In order to assert its independence, the infant principality last year came out with an issue of 40,000 proof sets of its first "legal tender" currency.

- The Toronto Star, May 21, 1977

LEGION OPPOSES SIGN CARRYING QUEBEC FLAG - Branch 23 of the Royal Canadian Legion has objected to the design of a billboard at an intersection in the city of North Bay.

The billboard, sponsored by a Sudbury television station, depicts the Quebec fleur-de-lis superimposed over the Canadian flag.

In a letter to city council, branch president Albert Lucenti said that any distortion to the Canadian flag is wrong, "whether it be by superimposing a provincial symbol or by any other means." He said the legion would object if any other province's symbol was placed on the flag.

-The Globe & Mail, May 18, 1977

MASSACHUSETTS COURT BARS FLAG PLEDGE BILL - The Massachusetts Supreme Court says that a bill requiring public school students to pledge allegiance to the flag every morning before class is unconstitutional.


WHITE HOUSE FLIES FLAG OF MINUTEMAN - A special flag depicting a Minuteman flew over the White House on May 25th in recognition of its employees' contributions to the Government's savings bond drive.


MASSACHUSETTS ISLES WANT OUT - Officials from the resort islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, equipped with a national flag and anthem, signed a Declaration of Independence and filed a bill to secede from Massachusetts on May 22nd.

The local leaders are angry over legislative redistricting plan that would put them in with a Cape Cod district and end centuries old island representation in the Massachusetts House.

-Democrat & Chronicle (Rochester, N.Y.)
March 23, 1977
Hitler believed in wooing the masses not only with political ideas, but with symbols, color, pageantry (not to mention shows of force). A National Socialist party flag was an important part of all that, needed to stir the hearts of the faithful, and to impress those not yet converted. During the summer of 1920, long before his party had achieved any sort of power, Hitler studied designs submitted to him by party members, many of which included swastikas. He finally accepted his own - a black swastika on a white disc on a red background.

Hitler had been familiar with the hooked cross since childhood - the ancient symbol was part of the coat of arms, and also carved into the pulpit of Lambach Monastery, where he went to school. He'd doodled them in his school notebooks. And he must have seen the swastika used in the emblems of anti-Semitic parties in Austria just after the First World War. Undoubtedly, for Hitler, the swastika was some sort of symbol of Aryan supremacy, but his rhetoric in Mein Kampf doesn't yield solid reasons: "...in the hooked cross (we see) the mission of the fight for victory of the Aryan man and, at the same time, the victory of the idea of creative work which itself was eternally anti-Semitic and will be anti-Semitic."

Perhaps, in his choice, Hitler was also relying on the drawing power of a symbol very close to the Christian cross. In the end, if his National Reich Church had been established, the swastika would have replaced the cross. Point 30 of the proposed National Reich Church's 30-point program, drawn up during the war, read: "On the day of its foundation, the Christian cross must be removed from all churches, cathedrals and chapels .... and it must be superseded by the only unconquerable symbol, the swastika."

from: THE CANADIAN
The Toronto Star
April 30, 1977
"THE SOILING OF OLD GLORY" by Herald American Photographer, Stanley Forman

Stanley Forman of the Boston Herald American is the only news photographer ever to win back-to-back Pulitzer prizes.

The above photograph, of interest to vexillologists, was made April 6, 1976, caught in a moment of raw racism at Boston City Hall during an antibusing demonstration by white students. It was titled "The Soiling of Old Glory."

His Pulitzer Prize the previous year was for two photos that showed a woman and a child plunging five stories to the ground from a collapsing fire escape.

From the island's arms, which, as people who like corny humor love to point out, are legs.

In proper heraldic language the shield is described as "gules, three legs armed, conjoined in fesse at the thighs, flexed in triangle, proper booted and spurred, or."

Translated, that means, three legs in armor, bent at the knee and joined at the thigh, ornamented in gold on a red background.

The "three legs" of Man first appeared sometime during the 14th century on the village cross of Kirk Maughold, then, in 1395, on the shield of Sir William le Scrope, king of Man, but no one is sure of its origin. One old saying — another bad joke — is based on the Isle of Man's location: If you imagined the shield stuck on a map over the island, you'd know why people say that "the Isle of Man kneels to England, kicks at Scotland, and spurns Ireland."

THE CANADIAN
The Toronto Star
March 26, 1977
NAVA MEMBER RESEARCHES HISTORIC 46-STAR FLAG MADE IN OKLAHOMA

from the April 10, 1977 issue of The Guthrie Daily Leader

Florence Dressel Hutchison, Jacksonville, Illinois, who was reared in the Guthrie area, was back here this week to see the 46th star flag at the Territorial Museum, and doing some research at the State Historical Building in Oklahoma City.

For the past 20 years, she has been involved in researching flags, and found the flag, on display at the Museum, in Independence Hall in 1965, where it had been sent after being stitched in Guthrie by the Betsy Ross Association.

Two flags were made in Guthrie in June of 1908 to be ready for flying on July 4, 1908, the first Independence Day after the admission of Oklahoma as the 46th state of the United States, November 16, 1907.

Mrs. Hutchison disagrees with the often-told story that one of the flags went down with the U.S.S. Oklahoma at Pearl Harbor. It is her contention that the flag on the Oklahoma was the first manufactured flag with 46 stars - not the hand made one.

Mrs. Hutchison graduated from Guthrie High School in 1930, attended Oklahoma State University, majoring in home economics, and taught in Missouri and Illinois for 10 years. She and her husband have lived in Illinois for the past 20 years, and in Jacksonville for the past six. They have five children and eight grandchildren.

She is shown above along with the photograph of the Betsy Ross Association at a reunion held at the Carnegie Library where the flag was made.
WE ARE SAD TO REPORT THE DEATH OF MRS. VIVIAN LEHMAN, philanthropist and creator of the Flag Plaza near the Civic Arena in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Lehman was awarded the first honorary membership by the North American Vexillological Association in 1970.

The Reverend D. Ralph Spence is the Rector of St. John the Evangelist Church in Thorold, Ontario. He is currently the Vice-president of NAVA. Upon submitting the above for publication in NAVA NEWS, he said: "Enclosed are a picture of my flag and a book-plate. The heraldic description is as follows: Or a lion rampant Gules, within a bordure Vert, over all a bend nebuly Sable in dexter chief a canton voided of the second." Court Lord Lyon - September 24, 1973.

The flag to the left is but one of many fascinating illustrations in a booklet entitled "NEW GLORY" - Part II: New Designs for Flags.

The flag project was undertaken by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State St., Santa Barbara, California 93101.

NAVA member, Paul C. Mills, is intricately involved in the project. This booklet should be in every vexillologist's library.

Moon Residents' Flag, by Albert Notarbartolo, New York City