

# Vexillum

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## The History of Flags in 14 Antarctica



## White Flags of the World 10 Surrender None of Their Artistic, Political, or Vexillological Clout

## Molossia: Micronation's Flag Has 6 Maximum Effect on His Excellency



**Right:** Antarctic Iceberg Portraits.  
Source: Flickr.com/river4999

**Inset:** Flying an Antarctica Flag.  
Source: Flickr.com/river4999

## Editor's Note

What's in a name? Would the North American Flag Studies Association sound as sweet?

Sometimes I wonder if potential members of NAVA are put off by the word “vexillological”—it certainly sounds daunting. I remember that when I first learned about NAVA twenty years ago, I didn't think I would be qualified to join, not being an “ologist” of any kind. Fortunately, I had further encounters with the organization which showed me that, far from being an exclusive group, NAVA welcomes all with an interest in flags.

While certain “ologies” do require advanced degrees, board certification, and licensure (I'm glad my cardiologist isn't just a heart health enthusiast), others are open to anyone with an interest in the topic and the willingness to engage with the literature, their own observations, and primary sources. “Ology” is simply the study of a subject—no institutional affiliation required. The field of vexillology is wide open to all who study flags. We stand in a long tradition of the pursuit of knowledge by volunteers (Nicolaus Copernicus was a bureaucrat; Charles Lyell was a lawyer; George Preble was a naval officer).

But “ology” carries a further connotation: a branch of knowledge, pursued by a community that shares the knowledge through conferences and publications. For that reason, I'm personally glad we're a *vexillological* association, as opposed to any other name. While it might give a misimpression to some, it confirms that we are building and sharing information and analysis about flags and the people who interact with them. And from the evidence I've seen in the last ten years, people with all kinds of backgrounds do so with excellent results.

The contents of this issue of *Vexillum* are proof enough. As a start, we share an interesting exchange between Anthony Luciano and Morgan Paris about the interpretation of evidence regarding the flag of the Culpeper Minutemen. Shedding further light on that intellectual process, John Andrews makes a valuable contribution by demystifying the process of visiting archives for vexillological research. This type of work is also highlighted in Laura Scofield's review of a fascinating new book that examines the archives of the European Union for evidence on the origins of the European flag.

Other contributors show that vexillology can be combined with other interests. Evan Townsend, an Antarctic researcher, looks into the flags that have flown over our coldest continent. Carter Herron and Erik Herron demonstrate the intersection of fine art and flags with their profile of artist Aaron Fein's work *White Flags*, and artist Jay Bright shares some of his work which explores the visual spaces that flags occupy. Meanwhile, Greg Nedved shows how flags are used in the hobby-cum-protest practice of administering micronations, specifically Molossia. And Peter Lichtgarn finds a central point in the art/protest/vexillology triad with his reporting on a protest flag developed by a Hong Kong artist.

Vexillology keeps finding its way into the lives of our members in ways beyond research. Tyler Amick tells the story of how his use of vexillology in the classroom created a new flag for Lyle, Minnesota, and Xinfeng Zhao shares his experience teaching flag-raising protocol to students in Wuhan.

We're also inaugurating what I hope will become regular features. Carmen Barcena invites all readers with knowledge of new flag specifications to use *Vexillum* as an information clearinghouse, and Logan Neboska hopes to learn how each of us became interested in vexillology. These points of connection between our members will, one hopes, reinforce all the ways that our “ology” helps researchers exchange knowledge and research techniques—as do the events in our new series of Interest Area Meetings, which we profile in this issue.

No matter your background, your profession, or your resources, if you study flags you are a vexillologist. You have a place in NAVA, and your work has a place in the pages of *Vexillum*.

Steve Knowlton, Editor, *Vexillum*

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# Vexillum

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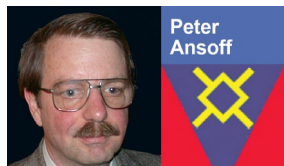
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# From the President

Dear fellow NAVA members,

## Responses to Our Previous Issue

Predictably, our material in *Vexillum* 13 about the storming of the US Capitol provoked a few critical comments from readers.



One challenged our characterization of the event, and insisted that it was not an attempt to overthrow the US government (which we never said it was). The reader also took us

to task for inaccuracies, particularly our statement that a police officer was killed by the rioters, and accused us of promoting a political agenda. Our article reported the facts as we knew them when the article was written in mid-January, based on then-current information. Some of the details, like the killing of the police officer, have subsequently proven to be incorrect. However, I believe our overall characterization of the event was accurate: a violent mob forced its way into the U.S. Capitol, ostensibly to prevent certification of a lawful presidential election. That's a fact, not a political statement.

Having said that, however, I think we might have done better job of focusing the article on the flags, which was of course its purpose. I'm not sure how much the extended quotes from the two senators contributed that topic, and Senator Booker's comparison of President Trump to King George III was questionable at best. The article could have used a bit more fact-checking—for example, the Pine Tree flag was not actually used by the Continental Navy during the American revolution as far as we know. Also, the article did not make any attempt to categorize or analyze the flags used by the mob, although that may not have been appropriate in a "breaking news" piece like this one.

We also received some critical comments on the piece by Maya Grace Misra about white supremacist symbols. Unlike the "Capitol Invasion" article, this was clearly labeled as opinion, and was even printed on colored paper to differentiate it. However, we have not printed many opinion pieces in *Vexillum*, and in retrospect we should have emphasized that the views it expressed were Ms. Misra's, not NAVA's. Readers may disagree with Ms. Misra's opinions, but I think we can agree that she raises some interesting points about the relationship between vexillology and society. We've received one letter to the editor (see p. 9) about it which is included in this issue. I expect (and hope!) that we'll get more.

## NAVA 55

As I'm writing this, final preparations for NAVA's 55th annual meeting in June are well in hand. This year's presentations will cover a particularly diverse spread of flag-related topics, and we have some interesting special events planned along with the usual vexe-bits, toasts, etc.

## Flag Institute's Golden Jubilee

On a slightly related note, our counterparts at the Flag Institute (FI) in the U.K. organized a splendid special program on April 23 (St. George's Day!) to celebrate the FI's 50th anniversary. When I was a junior naval officer back in 1976, our admiral received a message from his counterpart in the British Royal Navy that said something like, "Congratulations on your country's 200th birthday. We've found that the first 200 are the most difficult." In that spirit, I congratulate the Flag Institute on their 50th birthday, and note that, in NAVA's experience, things get better after the first 50 years!

Flagilly,

Peter Ansoff

President, NAVA [pres@nava.org](mailto:pres@nava.org)

## NAVA Membership Anniversaries

NAVA celebrates its members' anniversaries

### 1981 (40 years)

Gail N. Lee  
Robert M. Wasserman

### 1991 (30 years)

Arthur W. Hand  
David J. McKnight  
Paul Rich

### 1996 (25 years)

The Flag Shop (Susan Braverman)  
Jan Oskar Engene  
John Niggley

### 2001 (20 years)

Daniel R. Broh-Kahn  
Perry Dane

Zachary K. Harden  
Wayne J. Lovett  
Frederic L. Magee III  
Dipesh Navsaria  
Father Bill O'Brien

### 2006 (15 years)

Jeff R. Bridgman Antiques (Jeff R. Bridgman)

Robert W. Byrne  
Kenneth W. Reynolds

### 2011 (10 years)

Jason Bates  
Tiago Jose Berg  
Tony Burton  
Ben Cahoon  
John Caskey  
Barry Cosgriff  
Patrick Genna  
Deborah K. Halver-Hanson  
Lawrence W. Hay  
David R. Koski  
Stanley M. Max

John McCarter  
Dabney Oakley  
Michael Peter Riedel  
Todd Sentell  
Clyde Simpson  
Gwen Spicer  
Howard Wilk

### 2016 (5 years)

Punctilious Vexillological Ventures  
(Stratis Andreadis)  
Henry Beckwith  
Ian Binnie  
Gabriel Bird  
Avanti Borucki  
Hipólito Rafael Chacón  
Thomas Cipolla  
Alan Cooper  
Charles C. Daschbach  
Scott Giltner  
Jeremy Goh  
Flags For Good (Michael and  
Cassie Green)  
Ronda Herzog

Maurice Kellogg  
Gedi Kiflezgi  
Benjamin Lacher  
Ron Lancaster  
Jack Martin  
A Complete Flag Source (Brenda  
B. McIntyre)  
Maya Grace Misra  
Ashley Pedretti  
Bob Pritchett  
Chase Quarterman  
Robert Sarwark  
Jacob Schanzenbach  
Martha Stennis  
Kurt Stutt  
Dennis B. Swaney  
Tyler Tallent  
Joseph Vittorelli  
Edward George White  
Dennis P. Wood  
Caleb Yount

We are pleased to honor our members' anniversaries, and apologize for any inadvertent omissions.



## Book Reviews

Jonas von Lenthe, *Rejected: Designs for the European Flag* (Wirklichkeit Books, 2020; 188 pages; €16)  
ISBN: 9783948200039

Reviewed by Laura Scofield

Between 1949 and 1955, people from across the globe sent in more than 150 unsolicited flag designs for the Council of Europe, an international organization founded in 1949 with the goal of ensuring a hopeful future and pursuing international justice. The council had not announced a design contest nor an open call. Proposals, born out of shared enthusiasm for a symbol of a better future, began flooding in as people heard of the need for a flag in the news.

In 1955, the Council of Europe adopted a 12-starred blue flag; later it was chosen to also represent the European Parliament and the European Union, bodies which are related to but distinct from the Council of Europe. Due to its multiple symbolic referents, it is often called the “flag of Europe”.

What is it about the design of flags that continues to inspire, ignite, and unite people? A flag is a matter of design. It is through a combination of shapes and colors—design’s most basic graphic elements—that complex ideas are translated. Beyond representing places and territories, we design flags because of their ability to render mental images and feelings into graphic symbolism we can hold on to.

Even the designs that didn’t make the cut in 1949 are crucial in our understanding of culture and people’s beliefs at a certain moment in time. The majority of the designs were meant to represent a vision of unity and hope for Europe. Luckily, these discarded designs from the EU entries were archived and have recently made a comeback in *Rejected: Designs for the European Flag*, by researcher and designer Jonas von Lenthe.

Flipping through the book and discovering the designs feels like learning secrets that Lenthe is revealing to the reader. The design proposals transport us to the past and open up infinite possibilities to interpret and analyze the graphic elements used.

These design gems include everything from the use of abstract shapes, to typographic designs, to child-like illustrations. As mentioned by Lenthe in the foreword, the proposals came from all over the world, mostly by men from West Germany and France.

Some people chose to reference the Swiss flag, “Switzerland serving as a model for Europe due to its peaceful multilingualism”, while others chose to reference the Strasbourg civic arms as a symbol of “Franco-German reconciliation and European post-war achievements”. Strasbourg, in eastern France on the German border, has always been the seat of the Council of Europe.

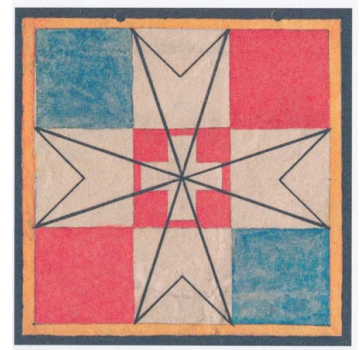
Among the abstract submissions were a map diagram which was “an attempt to situate Europe territorially” and an illustration of friendly shaking hands.

*Rejected* showcases the 150 flags, divided by thematic chapters according to graphic motifs: Colors and Fields, E/EU/ Europe/Europa, The Sun, The Strasbourg Coat of Arms, Proposals by Alvin Mondon, Individual Ideas, Stars, The Question of Authorship, and Proposals by Arsène Heitz. According to Lenthe these designs “highlight the ideas and trends circulating at the time”, and the captions under the submissions are excerpts from the letters that accompanied the proposals. They’re an extraordinary resource and provide insight into the vexillographers’ backgrounds.

The first chapter, Colors and Fields, starts with abstract designs and delves into submissions where the color palette plays the main role. For example, August Vincent’s flag design depicts a white cross “to emphasise the fact that Europe is a Christian continent”, and notes that “the colors red, blue, green and orange are to be found in most European flags”.

The following chapter then lists the many submissions which focus on typographical designs, with drawings of the letter “E” or Eu, Europe, or Europa.

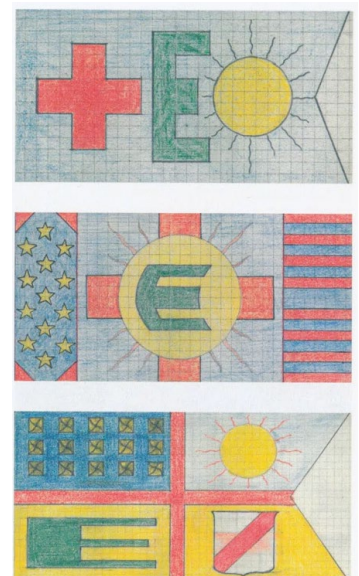
Moving to “The Sun” chapter, one particular submission expresses people’s enthusiasm for a flag which could represent Europe’s brighter times: a design draft submitted by J. E. Dynan in the name of his mother. “We have another Betsy Ross in the family. My mother saw my story in the *Kansas City Times*, and promptly sat down and sketched her suggestion.” wrote Dynan to the Council.



**Figure 1.** A proposal referencing the Swiss flag (and including a Maltese cross).



**Figure 2.** August Vincent’s proposal.



**Figure 3.** Proposals with “E” designs. The bottom fly end of the third proposal shows the arms of Strasbourg.

A whole chapter is dedicated to Alvin Mondon from Bad Godesberg, Germany, who submitted twelve design proposals alongside a letter addressed to the Secretary-General. Each design showcases different shapes and symbols such as triangles, a laurel wreath, and fleurs-de-lis. “The enemy should be confronted with a special cultural symbol, preferably the cultural triangle, or the heraldic fleur-de-lis—both could only ever be appropriate for Europe,” declared Mondon.

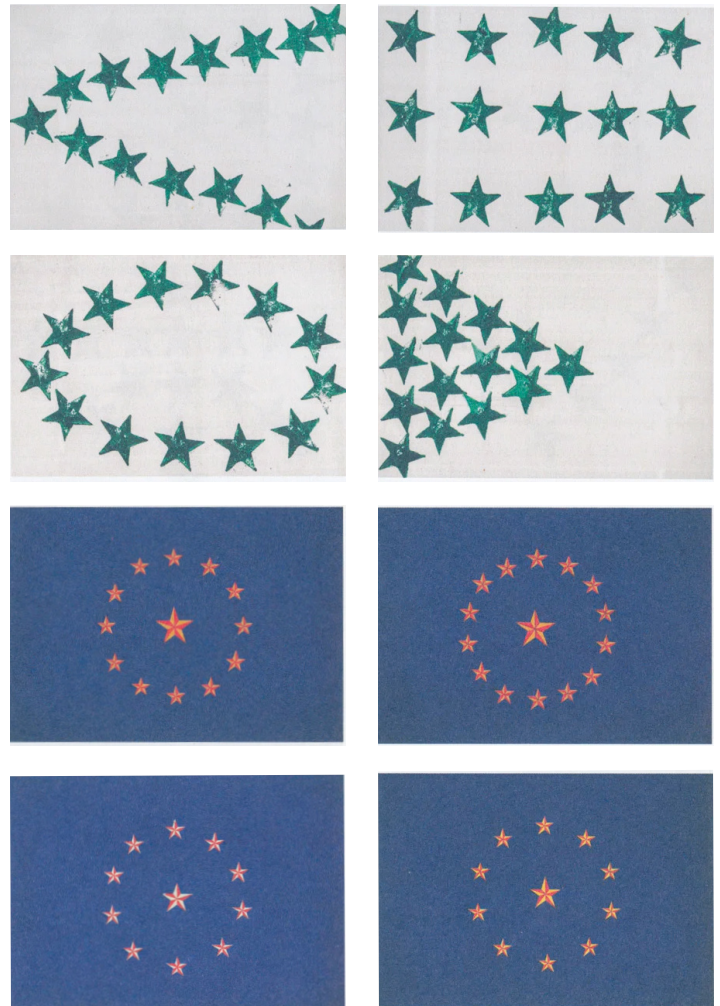
*Rejected's* final chapters focus on a range of star-themed designs, conducting us to the final choice of what is currently the EU flag. Lenthe showcases more than 30 designs featuring a variety of star compositions, ranging from circular to linear. These similarities led Lenthe (and this reader) to question the identity of the designer of the adopted flag. As described in the introduction, the chosen design is attributed to Arsène Heitz but many other creators credited themselves as well. They included Paul M. G. Levy, then-director of the Press of the Council of Europe, who claimed that the circle of stars was his idea. Yellow stars on a blue background are also presented by the Spanish writer Salvador de Madariaga, in a design that uses stars to depict the locations of European capitals.

The conclusion of *Rejected* features an essay by the poet and writer Marie Rotkopf, who addresses the European Union's neoliberal political cynicism. Rotkopf confronts pan-European idealism by declaring this nostalgic-heraldic encyclopedia to be the “book of failed Europe”: “The federalism of the European Union does not lead to solidarity between states, instead it is authoritarian and punitive [...] that has nothing to do with true federalism.”

The text is in English, French, and German. The book is an exquisite ode to vexillography that brings the spirit of that time back to life. “I could really feel the experience of war that all of the designers have in common. They say so much about the beginning of the European unification process but on a visual and very accessible level,” writes Lenthe. This was certainly the birth of a larger branding project, one which is still underway today: the idea of a united, consolidated continent that can be distinguished by its visual identity.

*Rejected: Designs for the European Flag* can be ordered from Wirklichkeit Books, <http://wirklichkeitbooks.com>

Laura Scofield is a Brazilian-born, New York-based multidisciplinary designer. She holds an MA in design criticism from the School of Visual Arts in New York City and joined NAVA in 2018. Laura is currently working on a book exploring flag design and gathers her visual research on Instagram—@Vexillogues.



**Figure 4.** Proposals with star-themed designs. The proposals with blue fields are by Arsène Heitz.

### Vexillum Submission Deadlines

For items of current interest (including letters to the editor), please submit material to the editor at [VexillumEditor@nava.org](mailto:VexillumEditor@nava.org) by the following deadlines:

**July 20 • October 20 • January 20 • April 20**

Longer pieces or items with less urgency will be worked into the publication queue as space and time permit.



# Molossia: Micronation's Flag Has Maximum Effect on His Excellency

By Greg Nedved

Come with me on a little journey to a little county—a micronation, to be precise. I'm taking you to the Republic of Molossia. The tour will be quick. The whole country comprises just about 11 acres of Nevada and California desert.

Let me give you some context before the tour begins. A micronation is a political entity whose members claim that they belong to an independent nation or sovereign state lacking legal recognition by world governments or major international organizations.<sup>1</sup> Most are geographically miniscule—as small as a single square foot.

Here's a quick overview of the standard facts and statistics about our destination. Molossia has two provinces and one colony, all governed by the head of state, His Excellency President Grand Admiral Colonel Doctor Kevin Baugh, President and Rals of Molossia, Protector of the Nation and Guardian of the People. The capital is Baughston—get it?—located near Dayton, Nevada. Baughston is the residence of the Baugh family, and the two provinces are tracts of unoccupied land in the desert of Storey County, Nevada, and San Bernardino County, California. Aside from the Baughs, the population of 35 Molossians resides outside of the territory. Molossia is a titular republic, although in practice it is a dictatorship. Its official languages are English, Esperanto, and Spanish. Its currency is the valora, the value of which is based on cookie dough.<sup>2</sup> Get it again? Puns and light humor are certainly baked into the Molossian national character.

Interesting, but vexillologists want to focus on the flag of this micronation. Researching the Molossian flag online yielded little useful information so I decided to go to the source. Baugh granted me an interview in July 2020 during which we spoke at length about his country's flag, which is known as the Grand Triune. Here are excerpts of my flag-centric talk with President Baugh.

## Nedved: When was your flag created?

His Excellency: Molossia's flag was adopted on September 9, 1998.

## Q: Why did you pick the colors, the arrangement, and dimensions you chose?

A: I chose the colors of our flag for pragmatic reasons. Custom-made flags can be expensive and our goal was always to fly Molossia's flag every day. The winds here in our nation are very strong and can destroy a flag in a matter of months. It would be costly to keep replacing a custom flag. For those financial and environmental reasons, I decided to adopt a commercially available flag, the flag of an existing country; in this case, the nation of Sierra Leone turned upside down. There are a couple of established nations that use a similar design and a few micronations do as well. But then, when looking at arrangements of colors in flags, a certain amount of duplication is inevitable.

The decision to use an altered existing flag has worked out well over the subsequent 22 years that the flag has flown over our

nation. After adopting the flag, it was easy to adapt the meaning of the colors of the stripes to suit Molossia.

The blue stripe stands for the sky, the white stripe for the mountains, and the green stripe for the desert in which Molossia lies.

Since adoption, our flag has become an integral part of our nation and the colors blue, white, and green can be found all over Molossia. Those colors were even used in the presidential wedding which took place in 2011.

In addition, many Molossians display the flag on stickers on their cars, reflecting their national pride. We here in Molossia are very proud of our flag. I personally never tire of seeing the flag flying over Republic Square in front of Government House every day.

## Q: Where is the flag of Molossia available commercially?

A: Because it's the flag of Sierra Leone turned upside down, the Molossian flag is available commercially through many flag vendors.

## Q: How many people were involved in designing your flag? Was it selected by a committee?

A: Just me.

## Q: Did you consult flag-design books? Did you follow flag-design etiquette?

A: No, I did not consult flag-design books or other resources. However, our flag follows flag-designing etiquette because, again, it is adopted from an existing flag.

## Q: Where is your flag flown? Do you follow formal flag-use protocol?

A: Molossia's flag is flown every day from the flagpole in front of Government House. As the flagpole is not lighted, the flag is only flown during daylight hours. It is also flown in other locations throughout our nation including the Post Office, my office, and



**Figure 1.** His Excellency, President Kevin Baugh, salutes the Grand Triune flag, flying over the Republic of Molossia in the Nevada desert. Source: <http://www.molossia.org/president.html>



**Figure 2.** Flag of Molossia. Source: Flickr/Republic of Molossia.

the Constabulary, during our monthly tourist visits. Again, this is only during daylight hours.

**Q: What is the reaction to your flag?**

A: I don't think that there has been much reaction to our flag. Molossian citizens simply accept it as a normal part of everyday life in our nation. I, of course, am very proud of our flag.

**Q: Have changes ever been suggested for the flag?**

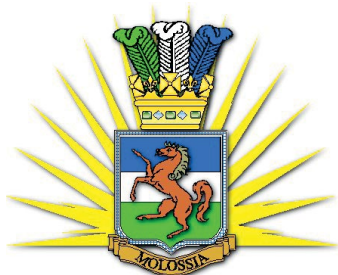
A: There has never been a suggestion to change the flag.

**Q: How important do you think a flag is to a country's identity, especially now when some flag designs are criticized?**

A: I think that a flag can be, and often is, a representation of a nation. For example, when one sees the United States flag, it evokes the thought of a wide variety of concepts, ideas, and even cultural aspects. I would like to think that this also applies to the Molossian flag. It is well-known throughout the micronational world, and it certainly represents who we are and what we stand for.

Molossia is one of the better known of the micronations. CNN's *Great Big Story* once did a feature on it. On April 16, 2016, Baugh hosted a tour of Molossia, sponsored by the adventure website *Atlas Obscura*; tours of the nation take place monthly, April through October. It might be on some NAVA member's bucket list to see a Molossian flag flying in Molossia. His Excellency President Kevin Baugh will even stand next to the flag for you.

NAVA member Greg Nedved launched a project that created the world's only International Flag of Language, now the logo for the National Museum of Language. He recently purchased a Molossian flag.



**Figure 4.** The Molossian Greater National Arms. Source: [www.molossia.org/symbols.html](http://www.molossia.org/symbols.html)



**Figure 5.** The Molossian Lesser National Arms. Source: [www.molossia.org/symbols.html](http://www.molossia.org/symbols.html)



**Figure 3.** Flag of Sierra Leone. Source: [Flickr.com/U.S. Department of Defense](https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdoe/).

# Flag Specifications Update

From time to time, the official specifications (proportions, design details, colors, etc.) of flags are updated by the nations or organizations represented by the flags.


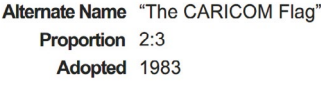


Carmen Barcena is Head of Ceremonial and Protocol Services for the Government of Canada. Among her duties is the maintenance of a collection of the most current flags, used when dignitaries visit Canada in an official capacity and for international conferences and ceremonies.

She hopes to use *Vexillum* as a clearinghouse for flag specifications updates. If you have information about new flag specifications, please write to her at [carmen.barcena@pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:carmen.barcena@pwgsc.gc.ca). She will share any news our readers offer, as well as news she and her staff learn.

The most recent flag specifications update available is for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), an organization of 15 nations and dependencies that works to promote economic integration and cooperation and to coordinate foreign policy.

To demonstrate the challenges of her work maintaining correct flag specifications, Carmen notes that for the CARICOM flag, her office had a flag specification published by the Flag Research Center (which ceased its commercial operations over a decade ago), a few flags in inventory, and several different specifications found online. The shades of blue and green varied greatly. New flags had to be ordered so her office needed to ensure it had the correct design and colors. Ultimately, she reached out to CARICOM itself, which was able to provide the detailed information needed. The specifications were last updated in November of 2014.

Below are the most current specifications for the CARICOM flag.

	Colour	
	HEX	#66CCFF
	RGB	102/204/255
	CMYK	60/0/3/0
	PANTONE	2985 C
	Alternate Name "The CARICOM Flag"	
	Proportion	2:3
	Adopted	1983
	HEX	#FFCC00
	RGB	255/204/0
	COATED YELLOW C	
	HEX	#003399
	RGB	0/51/153
	CMYK	100/98/0/0
	PANTONE	2746 C
	COATED 7739 C	
	HEX	#339933
	RGB	51/153/51
	CMYK	80/14/100/2
	PANTONE	7739 C

<sup>1</sup> "What is a Micronation?", *World Atlas*, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-is-a-micronation.html>; "Micronation", *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micronation>

<sup>2</sup> *The Official Website of the Republic of Molossia*, <http://www.molossia.org>

# How I Became Interested in Vexillology

By Logan Neboska

How did I become interested in vexillology? Would you believe it all started with a made-up game of world domination? Here is my origin story.

As I think back to my beginnings in vexillology, I realize I became interested through a random course of events. When I was about 12, I started using an online map-making site to reimagine country borders or create scenarios of the distant future. (You know, what all 12-year-olds do for fun).

My maps eventually morphed into a game my friends and I created. We would start by printing out blank world maps, and then color them in to create new borders. The result was an alternative world map with countries we had created and could “govern”. Each person in the game controlled one country that he had created, and we made up other random countries to fill in the rest of the map.

Playing the game involved rolling a single die to “invade” other areas and the number we rolled would determine the outcome of that “battle”. For example, we might say a one, two, or three was a victory, and a four, five, or six would be a loss. Thinking about it now, we were a bit lax on the actual rules of this game. Also, it sounds a lot like the game of Risk, except that we created the world.

I remember my country was called “Arctura” and consisted of land in current-day Scandinavia and other northern parts of the world. Having created a country, I decided it would be cool to have a unique flag to represent it, and a vexillologist was born.

*Editor's Note: Vexillum is interested to learn how our readers became interested in flags. Logan Neboska has offered to collect your stories and edit a recurring feature, and is kind enough to inaugurate the series with his own story. Share your experience by writing to [logan.vexillology@gmail.com](mailto:logan.vexillology@gmail.com)*

I started messing around on my computer designing flags for Arctura. I put together some different flag designs. The only one I remember was a black and white Nordic cross on a navy blue field. I do not remember if I ever made it the official flag of my country in the game, but that is what really got me into flags.

Eventually my friends and I dropped our game, but my interest in flags continued. I started to design flags for pretty much anything that I could. I designed flags to represent friends and members of my family. I redesigned existing state and country flags.

I designed “friendship flags” by merging two countries’ current flags. I had a blast. I started finding flags I really liked, not just because of the design, but because of their history and their significance. I even began to build a collection of flags.

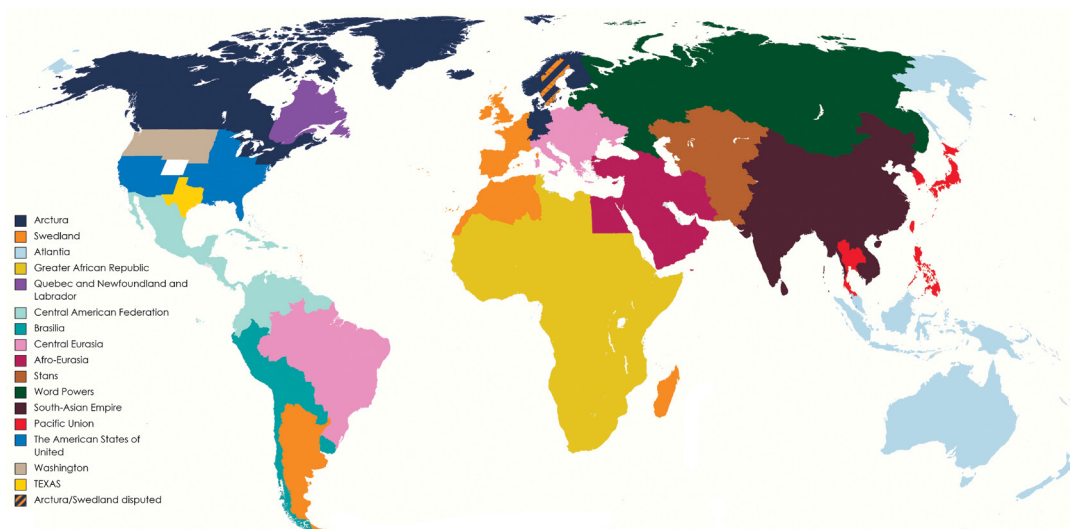
Then, I joined NAVA, which was a great decision. Now, I spend a lot of my free time researching different flag designs and their histories. It is super interesting to learn about the meanings behind flags and how they came to be. For example, did you know that each star on Chicago’s flag represents something from the city’s history? I sure did not! I only become more enthralled with flags as time progresses.

My journey in vexillology has been very exciting and I am looking forward to the future of it!

*Logan Neboska is a student and flag enthusiast from the Chicago area. He joined NAVA in 2020.*



**Figure 2.** A “friendship flag” combining the flags of Brazil and Argentina.



**Figure 1.** An image from Logan Neboska’s online game.



# Letter to the Editor

May 5, 2021

First off let me say that I do not, whatsoever, condone or defend the events that happened on January 6. If we are to have a cohesive peaceful nation where justice is upheld, then it is obvious that such destabilizing and unlawful acts such as laying siege to or breaching buildings cannot be allowed or condoned.

That being said, let me say that I was incredibly irritated and disappointed in the opinion piece by Maya Grace Misra regarding “The Vexillologist’s Duty to Face White Supremacist Symbols”, published in the March issue of *Vexillum*. It would be absurd to claim that the country of 330 million people (255 million adults over the age of 18) is completely free of white supremacists, but to suggest that the symbols Misra outlined, including flags for Trump, the Thin Blue Line Flag, and the Gadsden Flag, are symbols for white supremacy, or that they wittingly or unwittingly “normalize and uphold” white supremacy, is not only ridiculous, but it also speaks to a degree of either bigotry or ignorance/arrogance (or both) that is both offensive and grossly unprofessional.

The NAVA has 642 members within the United States, according to the list on page 9 of that same edition. Is Misra willing to say that 90% of them don’t identify at all with the symbols you laid out? I can tell you in no uncertain terms I identify with them; in fact, I have many of those same flags, and I am by no means a white supremacist. Nor do I see “equality for all to be a threat to my economic, political, or cultural authority” as she suggested those flag holders do. In fact, I, like many conservatives across the country, find such claims to be based either in complete ignorance or outright disdain/hatred, and without question I find them laughably false.

The vast majority of people who identify as conservative across the country believe in an absolute equality of opportunity for all. In fact, we believe so deeply that people should be given equal opportunity, that we are strongly opposed to any system that would disadvantage anyone just because of their skin tone or ancestral background/history. White supremacists, by definition, would not hold the same views. And simply being opposed to higher taxes or increases in welfare does not mean we see “equality for all to be a threat.”

To suggest that the Thin Blue Line flag “normalizes and reaffirms white supremacist values” suggests that the very idea of police is by nature white supremacist. To suggest that a Trump flag does the same suggests that Trump is a white supremacist. To suggest either of these things implies a wholesale political bias that simply accepts the Democrat-liberal viewpoint and narrative of a “white supremacist culture” as unquestionable fact. And that viewpoint is not at all unquestionable.

I am a passionate conservative American. I also am passionate about flags. I would have hoped that in joining the NAVA that I wouldn’t be subjected to seeing outright bold-faced political bias that suggests that the conservative viewpoint is completely wrong, and that those who follow it (and who may fly a Trump flag or a Gadsden Flag or a Thin Blue Line flag) are either racist in wittingly upholding white supremacy, or completely stupid by doing so unwittingly. To be blunt, I reject Misra’s claims and her analysis as false. The Thin Blue Line flag shows support for police, and support for the law and order that typically accompanies it. The Gadsden Flag shows support for the ideals of small government and a country that allows and respects freedom. And the Trump flag shows support for a president that got 47% of the votes cast in 2020, and who is arguably the most passionately conservative president we’ve had since Ronald Reagan. None of these ideas support or uphold white supremacy, and to suggest they do shows a bias that members of the NAVA should be ashamed of and appalled at.

I joined the NAVA because I’m passionate about flags. I’ll have to be watching the next several issues very closely. If the leadership and writers at the NAVA are so blatantly bigoted and disrespectful to conservatives, then I’ll have to reconsider my membership, and I doubt I’m alone.

Darrin Lunde  
Minneapolis, Minn.

*Editor’s note: The Vexillum piece referred to reflects the personal opinion of Maya Grace Misra, and does not reflect the official position of NAVA. Mr. Lunde’s letter was modified slightly, with his permission, to reflect this fact.*

# White Flags of the World Surrender None of Their Artistic, Political, or Vexillological Clout

By Carter Herron and Erik Herron

*Flags are an interesting and powerful language that bridges the worlds of politics and art.  
Not many other symbols can do that. — Artist Aaron Fein*

The 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City profoundly and viscerally affected artist and architect Aaron Fein. Following the tragic events, he found inspiration in flags and initiated a decade-long project to incorporate flag designs into his art. The result of his creativity, an installation titled *White Flags*, has been displayed across the country and abroad for several years. This particular work of Fein's is intrinsically interesting to vexillologists.

After 9/11, Fein began to notice American flags everywhere. He felt that they gave people a sense of belonging in a country stricken with fear and insecurity. He paid special attention to the American flag bumper stickers that proliferated on cars all over his community. As time went by, the bumper stickers began to fade because of their exposure to the elements; they became almost pure white. Seeing these once bright and colorful symbols of patriotism wash out and give way to the basic contours of the flag's constituent parts—thirteen stripes and a canton with fifty stars—inspired Fein to use flags as a medium for his art. Using the symbolism of the faded colors, he crafted an all-white cloth American flag. That initial flag was not enough to satisfy Fein's artistic sensibility. Rendering just the American flag in white left him with a feeling he described as "defeatist". So he decided to craft all the world's national flags in white. The *White Flags* project was born.



**Figures 1 & 2.** *White Flags* on exhibition. Photo by Printz Photography. Image courtesy of Aaron Fein.

Originally, Fein struggled to select the flags for his installation. He wanted to include as many national flags as possible because the overarching theme of his project was unity. Fein also felt compelled to adhere to a definitive, indisputable list of candidate flags. He decided to include countries recognized by the United Nations. That was just his first step before the creative process could begin.

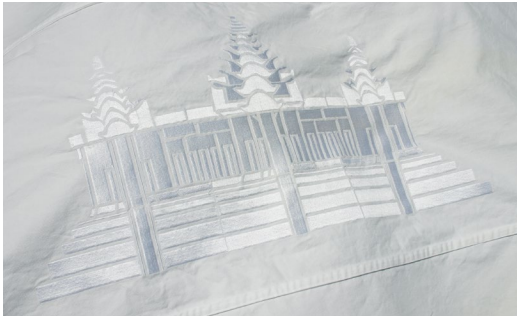
Fein relied on several sources for flag design features and details including the Flags of the World website and Alfred Znamierowski's well-known book, *The World Encyclopedia of Flags*.<sup>1</sup> He also decided to standardize his flags' dimensions at 3:5, based on the UN's practice of using 2:3 or 3:5 proportions for all flags.

All of Fein's flags are white. Only the stitching of seams and embroidery of images differ. That monochromatic presentation causes many of his flags, especially horizontal

tribars or those modeled after the French tricolor, to appear identical. For the artist, this design uniformity gave the flags an appearance of unity and displayed the insignificance of cultural differences.

Viewing *White Flags* at different angles presents different messages. In silhouette, the stitching is noticeable, but looking at the flags directly creates a simple, white, uniform display. These characteristics of Fein's flags are illustrated in his interpretation of the Cambodian flag.

Visitors to his displays have to approach and interact with the flags to differentiate them. While they appear uniform from afar, the use



**Figure 3.** Artist Aaron Fein's flag of Cambodia features the Angkor Wat temple rendered in white fabric. Photo by Aaron Fein.

of monochromatic fabric and thread also challenges visitors to adjust their expectations about familiar objects. For example, the Ugandan flag's repetitive black, yellow, and red horizontal stripes are reduced to six white stripes, a circle, and a gray crowned crane. The all-white Croatian flag also provides a contrast to the distinctive red-and-white checkerboard. In Fein's view, these transformations make the Ugandan and Croatian flags the most interesting.

Fein's work has generally been admired by the design community and the public. The Surface Design Association presented him with the Innovation in Technique Award in 2017.<sup>2</sup> However, Fein noted that some visitors from outside the United States have told him that the alteration of their home country's flag would not be well-received back home.

Officials and the public in the United States have been inconsistent in their attitudes about how the U.S. flag can and should be displayed. While altered U.S. flags signifying support for law enforcement, first responders, and politicians are widely displayed, the use of flags in art installations has been more controversial. "Dread" Scott Tyler's 1992 art display that incorporated an American flag placed on the floor and Josephine Meckseper's 2018 project involving an altered U.S. flag were met with hostility from some members of the public.<sup>3</sup>

Fein noted that "art is a kind of alchemy that generates unexpected relationships" between the viewer and the viewed. His *White Flags* installation exemplifies that phenomenon and amplifies the message of a universal struggle, especially in this pandemic era.

Visit Fein's website, [www.aaronfein.com](http://www.aaronfein.com), to explore all his flag-inspired work.

*Carter Herron is a sophomore at Morgantown (West Virginia) High School. Erik Herron, a NAVA member since 2017, is a professor of political science at West Virginia University. The authors thank Aaron Fein for the opportunity to interview him for this article and for the images of his artwork.*

<sup>1</sup> *Flags of the World*, <https://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags>; Alfred Znamierowski, *The World Encyclopedia of Flags: The Definitive Guide to International Flags, Banners, Standards and Ensigns* (London: Southwater, 2010)

<sup>2</sup> "Innovation in Technique Award", *Surface Design Journal* 41, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 18–21

<sup>3</sup> For details on the Tyler controversy, see Robert Justin Goldstein, "Whatever Happened to the Great 1989–90 American Flag Desecration Uproar?", *Raven* 2 (1995): 1–32; a discussion of the Meckseper controversy is found in Joanna Hlavacek, "KU takes down altered American flag art following safety concerns, criticism from governor", *Lawrence (Kansas) Journal-World*, July 11, 2018, <https://www2.ljworld.com/news/2018/jul/11/congressional-candidate-criticizes-public-art-display-on-ku-campus-as-defaced-american-flag>; Carita M. Culmer, "Trial by Jury in the Court of Public Opinion: Phoenix Reacts to Flag Art Exhibition Phoenix Art Museum, March 16–June 16, 1996", *Raven* 5 (1998): 5–15 discusses other controversies around the use of the American flag in art.

# Inside the Archive: Three Simple Steps for Optimizing Your Research Effort

By John Thomas Andrews

Flags keep their mouths shut. They do, however, have proxies. Myriad texts describe flag form and symbolism—these tomes are tantamount to a flag's voice. We call these secondary sources because they pull together information from other sources. But vexillologists will inevitably want to hear an unfiltered voice by conducting primary-source research as well. Primary sources are documents written directly by participants or witnesses to historical events, hopefully close in time to the event itself. Primary source research may take place using digital databases, but often requires visiting libraries or archives.

The COVID-19 pandemic has limited our ability to engage with physical documents indoors, but libraries and archives will soon reopen. Therefore, it is prudent to use this lull in research opportunities to introduce—or brush up on—productive archival practices.

For researchers unfamiliar with archives, the prospect of combing through cavernous libraries and bygone volumes can be intimidating. It needn't be. The search can also be exhilarating. I learned many lessons the hard way during the research phase of my graduate thesis on the Iraqi flag, making errors because of insufficient preparation and a general unfamiliarity with archival protocols. Let me help you avoid those errors.

## Three Elements of Successful Research

Archival research boils down to three main points: Do your homework, have a plan, and put in the hours.

### 1. Do Your Homework

An archive is a repository of historical documents managed by an institutional caretaker. Archives come in a variety of sizes. You could find yourself in a colossal facility like the National Archives at College Park,



**Figure 1.** National Archives Building at 700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. Source: <https://www.archives.gov/dc/researcher-info>



Maryland, with billions of records, or you might find an unexpected source in a modest collection with fewer than one million pieces.<sup>1</sup>

The correct archive for your research is not always what may seem obvious. Suppose you are researching Confederate battle flags. The vexillological researcher might undertake an impulsive journey to the American Civil War Museum in Richmond, Virginia, hoping to examine its hundreds of flags.<sup>2</sup> Is that the right venue? Find out before you leave your desk chair.

Before visiting physical archives, exhaust the digital resources at your disposal and determine which institutions carry the documents you want. Conduct an internet search of potential archival resources and consider the collections best suited for your project. For example, a researcher might avoid wasting precious hours reviewing physical documents by discovering that the Library of Congress has information readily available online. Without prior homework and coordination with the staff at a museum, archive, or library, your excursion could produce a handful of cellphone photographs and little else.

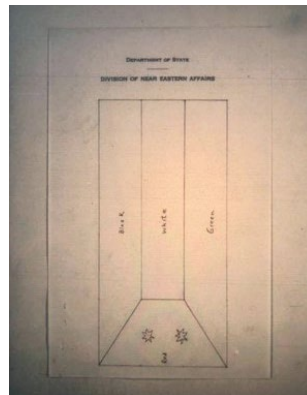
A case in point: rather than poking around a museum for Confederate battle flag details, a vexillologist might go online and consult *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Cornell University painstakingly digitized the 127-volume dispatch collection and made it available free of charge to anyone with an internet connection.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Have a Plan

Develop a comprehensive line of inquiry after selecting an appropriate archive. Consider the information you hope to extract. Are the facts you need general or specific in nature? The question, “Were wool flags more common than silk flags in the Army of Tennessee?” is broader than the more focused, “What became of the 19th Virginia Infantry’s flag after its capture during



**Figure 2.** Meet your research assistant. This microfilm reader is located in the National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Source: Photo by author.



**Figure 3.** State Department correspondence from the Kingdom of Iraq (c. 1925) stored on microfilm in the National Archives at College Park. Source: National Archives Microfilm 890g.015 (1910–1929), M722, roll 21.

Pickett’s Charge?”<sup>4</sup> The specificity of the research question will determine the documentary sources to prioritize. Prioritization includes considering the types of documents that intersect with your research question. Examining wartime topics might necessitate digging into Department of Defense documents, while international flags might require an investigation of State Department cables from the nation in question.<sup>5</sup>

After you conceptualize the expected documents, establish a rough search boundary. This might be a chronological range (say, 1930–39) or a geographical zone (perhaps Western Europe, excluding France).

Contact the archivist or librarian via phone or email after you consider your documents and establish your boundaries, but before you visit the facility. Be specific. Few archivists are vexillologists. A call or email will save everyone’s time. Research professionals are often inundated with in-person requests for assistance and appreciate the elbow room provided by an advance query.

Please keep in mind the “credentialing process”. At many archives, you will need credentials to conduct research; this does not mean an advanced degree or a job as a researcher. Rather, it is the word used to mean “permission to visit the archive”. It is usually an identification card issued by the institution, often after you have reviewed the protocols and procedures of the archive and agreed to abide by them. Make sure you understand the facility’s security protocols before you visit—you may be required to bring some proof of identity.

After you arrive, the archivist will help you navigate the facility’s filing system and procure your documents.

Finally, be polite and establish a good relationship. You will spend a tremendous amount of time around these folks and will certainly need their help more than once.

## 3. Put in the Hours

If all goes well, your new friend will facilitate a “pull from the stacks”. This is the process of locating and extracting documents from the archive. Large facilities may designate pull hours (for example, 9 a.m., 11 a.m., etc.); small libraries may not.

Typically, an assistant will place your requested documents on a cart in cataloged boxes and give you custodial control. Wheel your cart to a reading room or a dedicated research space and prepare to dig in.

You will need means to record your research such as



**Figure 4.** State Department cable from Baghdad (ca. 1933), Iraq, stored on microfilm in the National Archives at College Park. Source: National Archives Microfilm 890g.015 (1910–1929), M722, roll 21.

a digital camera or portable scanner. Make sure you understand the facility's security procedures. Many institutions have rules prohibiting outside writing materials and will provide you pencils and index cards.

### The Discovery Zone

Sort through as much material as your eyes can handle, establish a rhythm, and read for about 30 minutes before taking a break. Researchers and scholars yearn to understand as they witness the past unfolding in the documents before their eyes. After some hours, you may begin to be pulled in, and feel as though you are living through the events you are reading about. This is natural. While ancillary but interesting discoveries might slow your pace, they are delightful distractions. Enjoy them.

On occasion, there are chilling discoveries. I will never forget a dispatch I uncovered researching U.S. diplomatic documents from Baghdad during the mid-1920s. In one instance, an Assyrian cleric warned the U.S. consul of looming violence between his community, located in Northern Iraq, and Iraqi Muslims. It was a forecast which proved accurate in 1933 when Iraqi security forces killed hundreds of Assyrian Christians in the Siemle Massacre.

With luck, your research will bear fruit. This is when the magic happens. Archival documents may have a thematic feel to them because the collection was likely grouped together for a specific purpose. After hours of turning pages, scanning microfilm and assiduously recording your findings, you may stumble upon the document that changes everything. If approached with humility and common sense, your microfilm viewer will deliver the "Eureka" moment every researcher hopes for.

Whatever the outcome, you made this happen. Do your best to contain yourself and ensure you record your research. Return your documents in an orderly manner and *thank your archivist on the way out!*

*John Thomas Andrews is a historian and vexillologist specializing in the modern Middle East. He is a retired senior non-commissioned officer and served three tours during the Iraq War in the United States Army. He joined NAVA in 2019.*

<sup>1</sup> "About the National Archives", <https://www.archives.gov/publications/general-info-leaflets/1-about-archives.html>

<sup>2</sup> Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Even as Museum Piece, Confederate Flag Is in Dispute", *New York Times*, July 6, 2015

<sup>3</sup> *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, [http://collections.library.cornell.edu/moa\\_new/warof.html](http://collections.library.cornell.edu/moa_new/warof.html)

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopedia Virginia*, s.v. "19th Virginia Infantry Flag", [https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/media\\_player?mets\\_filename=evm00002760mets.xml](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/media_player?mets_filename=evm00002760mets.xml)

<sup>5</sup> My thesis research hinged on a handful of notes from the Baghdad consulate during the 1920s preserved on microfilm.

## ICV 29 Re-scheduled to July 2022 in Slovenia

*Editor's note: The Fédération internationale des associations vexillologiques (FIAV) has asked NAVA to share details about the upcoming International Congress of Vexillology (ICV).*

Taking into consideration the effect of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the Board and Hosts of the 29th International Congress of Vexillology have taken the decision to postpone ICV 29 to July 11–15, 2022. It will be held in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The decision to postpone the ICV until 2022 was taken with due consideration being given to: 1) the safety and well-being of attendees; 2) the ability to hold a physical, in-person conference; and 3) the time needed for the current travel and quarantine restrictions to be relaxed, thereby enabling delegates from as many countries as possible to attend.

The Board has also decided that future ICVs will continue to be held every two years after 2022 but now on successive even-dated years, maintaining the one-year gap when there is no ICV. Further details on the progress and arrangements for ICV 29 will be announced later in this year. Your understanding during these trying times is appreciated and we look forward to holding a successful congress in 2022.

Kindest regards,  
Bruce Berry  
Secretary-General

Image: Ljubljana Castle  
above downtown  
Ljubljana.





# The History of Flags in Antarctica

By Evan Townsend

On January 26, 1820, the crews of a pair of Russian sloops commanded by Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen discovered Antarctica.<sup>1</sup> The Russian expedition shared Antarctic waters with ships from Great Britain and the United States, and nearly every vessel in the Southern Ocean would have flown an ensign. In a way, flags in Antarctica have changed little since that day in 1820—most flags in Antarctica are still used to signal the national affiliation of a vessel, station, or expedition, much as Bellingshausen would have used his flag. In many other ways, though, flag use in Antarctica has changed dramatically, fueled mostly by humanity's evolving relationship with the continent. While it is by no means exhaustive, the following account attempts to trace the use of flags in Antarctica and the contexts in which they appeared during different periods of Antarctic history.

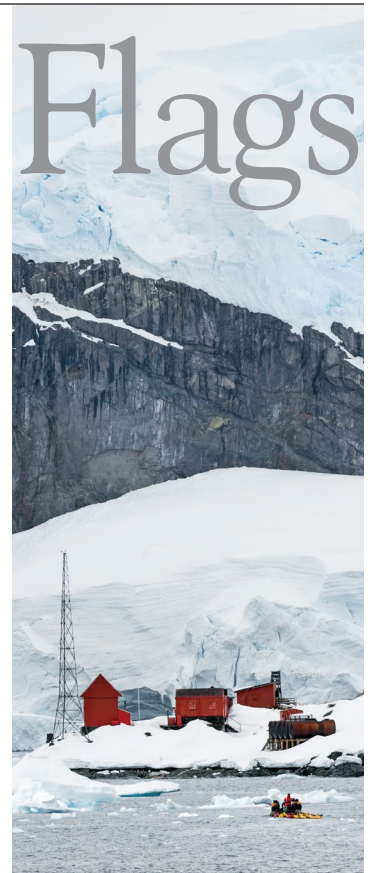
## Expedition Flags (Early 20th Century to Present)

After early sailing expeditions in the nineteenth century discovered that Antarctica was a barren polar desert and not the lush *Terra Australis Incognita* hypothesized in antiquity, Antarctic travel experienced a lull in which little exploration occurred. Technological advancements at the turn of the twentieth century enabled a new generation of explorers to begin seeking scientific discoveries and personal glory during the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration (1897–1922). A few of the teams during this period

designed and flew unique flags to represent their expeditions, which were used in addition to national flags or ensigns. These flags were not universally carried among these early explorers, and when they were used they were nearly always accompanied by the national flag of the expedition.

One of the earliest examples of this type of flag belonged to the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition (1902–1904). Jessie Bruce, the wife of expedition leader William Bruce, sewed the expedition's initials onto the Scottish saltire to form their expedition flag (figs. 1 and 3). More than 50 years later, Sir Vivian Fuchs flew the same flag on the first overland crossing of Antarctica.<sup>2</sup>

Another expedition flag to come from the Heroic Age was the flag of the Japanese Antarctic Expedition (1910–1912). The blue flag of the privately-funded expedition featured white stars of the Southern Cross connected by diagonal lines forming a diamond, with a central cross (fig. 4). The Shirase Antarctic Expedition Memorial Museum houses two variants of the flag—one in which the edges and cross are red, and one in which they are orange-yellow (fig. 5). This flag also served briefly



**Figure 2.** Research station in Antarctica. Source: <https://flickr.com/photos/57489148@N07/39224157541/in/album-72157663870443458>



**Figure 3.** Flag of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition (1902–1904). Source: [https://sites.scran.ac.uk/voyage\\_of\\_the\\_scotia/scotia/vsobj-006.htm](https://sites.scran.ac.uk/voyage_of_the_scotia/scotia/vsobj-006.htm)



**Figure 4.** Children fly the Japanese Antarctic Expedition (1910–1912) flag while walking in a Shirase Nobu memorial event. Source: [https://scontent-bos3-1.xx.fbcdn.net/v/t31.0-8/16300078\\_1134538056659127\\_2670727554655041179\\_o.jpg?\\_nc\\_cat=105&ccb=2&\\_nc\\_sid=730e14&\\_nc\\_ohc=uHmgeDNKus8AX8oqHNA&\\_nc\\_ht=scontent-bos3-1.xx&oh=722d406fd3a6f8aee8286fa46f252fb&oe=5FB822BE](https://scontent-bos3-1.xx.fbcdn.net/v/t31.0-8/16300078_1134538056659127_2670727554655041179_o.jpg?_nc_cat=105&ccb=2&_nc_sid=730e14&_nc_ohc=uHmgeDNKus8AX8oqHNA&_nc_ht=scontent-bos3-1.xx&oh=722d406fd3a6f8aee8286fa46f252fb&oe=5FB822BE)



**Figure 1.** Members of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition (1902–1904) pose with the Union Jack and their expedition flag at Coats Land. Source: [https://sites.scran.ac.uk/voyage\\_of\\_the\\_scotia/scotia/vs037-038.htm](https://sites.scran.ac.uk/voyage_of_the_scotia/scotia/vs037-038.htm)



as the flag of Yamato Yukihiro, a region claimed for Japan by expedition leader Shirase Nobu. The claim wasn't taken seriously even by the Japanese government, however, so the flag is remembered now as an expedition flag rather than a territorial flag.<sup>3</sup>

The use of expedition flags continued over several decades. American explorer Admiral Richard Byrd flew an expedition flag over the Little America basecamp from 1933 to 1935 (fig. 5).<sup>4</sup> The Ronne Antarctic Research Expedition (1947–1948) considered an expedition flag so important that, when the members forgot to pack the original in their rush, locals at their port of departure made them a new flag.<sup>5</sup> Theirs was a white flag charged with a black lozenge that had the name of the expedition embroidered in orange (fig. 7). Georges Prosper Remi ("Hergé"), creator of *The Adventures of Tintin*, designed a logo for the Belgian Antarctic Expedition (1957–1958) that was printed on flags and pennants as well as on heavy equipment and vehicles (fig. 8).<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 6.** A Byrd Expedition (1933–1935) flag serves as the backdrop in the radio shack while expedition members record a radio broadcast. The background, plane, and text were navy blue, the stripe through the center was yellow, and the circle was likely light blue with white ice. Source: The Ohio State University Archives, Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center Archival Program.

With more and more permanent stations and a dwindling amount of unexplored land, the number of Antarctic expeditions began to drop off in the second half of the twentieth century. Accordingly, only a few expedition flags have appeared in the last few decades, often accompanied by the flags or banners of the expeditions' private sponsors. Members of the Transglobe Expedition (1979–1982) brought a flag with them on their uninterrupted circumnavigation of the globe via the North and South Poles (fig. 9). One of the most recent examples



**Figure 5.** Alternate rendering of the Japanese Antarctic Expedition (1910–1912) flag with the charges in orange-yellow. Source: [https://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/jp\\_antex.html](https://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/jp_antex.html)



**Figure 7.** Flag of the Ronne Antarctic Research Expedition (1947–1948). Source: [https://photos.smugmug.com/Antarctic/Flags/i-PHhRchSz/0/cb2c5552/X2/13988015\\_10210056302627540\\_2700266838909792105\\_o-X2.jpg](https://photos.smugmug.com/Antarctic/Flags/i-PHhRchSz/0/cb2c5552/X2/13988015_10210056302627540_2700266838909792105_o-X2.jpg)



**Figure 8.** A pennant featuring Hergé's logo and other memorabilia from the Belgian Antarctic Program (1957–1958). Source: <https://www.auction.fr/fr/lot/expedition-antarctique-belge-1957-58-3552257>

is the flag of the Mount Vaughan Antarctic Expedition (1994), an expedition in which Norman Vaughan, an 88-year-old Byrd Expedition member, summited a mountain named after him (figs. 10 and 11).<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 9.** The Transglobe Expedition (1979–1982) flag. Source: Transglobe Expedition Trust.

## Sledge Flags (Early 20th Century)

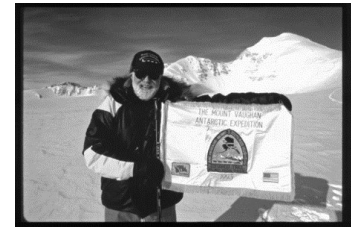
Like expedition flags, sledge flags were born during the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration (fig. 12). Unlike expedition flags, they didn't outlive it. Sledges are essentially sleds designed to carry cargo and personnel over the snow; they were hauled by dogs, ponies, or men during the Heroic Age. Flags flew from the rear of the sledges, often attached to small poles. They were also often used as indoor decoration during special occasions like Midwinter Day (fig. 12).

Nearly exclusively a British custom, sledge flags were first used on an Arctic expedition in 1850. The expedition was mounted by the Royal Navy and crewed by seamen, so it was with naval tradition in mind that expedition members gave each of their sledges a flag as well as a name and motto. This custom soon arrived at the opposite pole where many of the most prominent Antarctic explorers (such as Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton) began using flags on their own man-hauling vehicles (fig. 14).<sup>8</sup>

Because each sledge had its own flag, many still survive today. They have also been the subject of previous research by other vexillologists.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 12.** Three sledge flags illustrated by E. A. Wilson for *The South Polar Times*. Photo by the author.



**Figure 10.** Norman Vaughan poses with his expedition flag in Antarctica (1994, flag dated 1993). Source: <https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/norman-vaughn-antarctic-expedition-flag-49-c-e44470db54>



**Figure 11.** Details of the Vaughan Expedition (1994) flag. Source: <https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/norman-vaughn-antarctic-expedition-flag-49-c-e44470db54>



**Figure 13.** The crew of the Terra Nova expedition celebrate Midwinter Day 1911 surrounded by sledge flags. Source: [http://public.media.smithsonianmag.com/legacy\\_blog/Scott-midwinter-1911.jpg](http://public.media.smithsonianmag.com/legacy_blog/Scott-midwinter-1911.jpg)



**Figure 14.** Sledge flags used by Antarctic explorers Robert Falcon Scott and Eric Marshall. Source: <https://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/212309.html>; <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/25106/lot/196>



## Territorial Flags (Mid-Twentieth Century to Present)

The Heroic Age of Exploration took place amid, and was indeed partly motivated by, territorial claims and disputes in Antarctica. Seven countries made claims to Antarctica in the 20 years after the end of the Heroic Age, 1923 to 1943. During this time, national flags represented their territorial claims. The race to gain any military and political advantage Antarctica had to offer gained new urgency during World War II, and national flags on the continent took on new significance. Argentina, Chile, the United Kingdom, and Germany used flags and other national symbols (such as post offices, plaques, and even swastika-emblazoned daggers) to signal clearly their intent to maintain their claim to the territories.<sup>10 11</sup> In 1942, British personnel on a covert mission to the uninhabited Deception Island, an island in both the Argentine and British Antarctic claims, removed Argentine flags and replaced them with the Union Jack. A month later, Argentinians switched them back.<sup>12</sup>

After its defeat in World War II, Germany relinquished its claim in Antarctica but seven other countries retained theirs. The use of national symbols continued to be a way for these countries to maintain symbolic connection to their claim. In 1952, the U.K. became the first country to grant a coat of arms for its claimed territory. Later the same decade, France and Argentina followed suit.<sup>13</sup> During this period, mounting U.S. and Soviet interests in the region and a growing number of warships in the Southern Ocean led governments to seek out a diplomatic resolution to competing claims. Over the course of the 1950s, several attempts at multilateral solutions faltered but in 1959 twelve countries—including the seven with territorial claims to the continent—signed the Antarctic Treaty. The flags of these twelve countries now fly over the ceremonial South Pole, although the flag of the USSR has since been replaced by the Russian tricolor. The treaty neither denounces nor recognizes the existing claims, but it does stipulate there can be no new claims. Each year, the member nations hold the Antarctic Treaty Committee Meetings (ATCM) to discuss the treaty and other matters of common interest. The ATCM is the primary decision-making body in the overall Antarctic Treaty apparatus. In 2003, a secretariat was established to manage the work of the ATCM.

The Treaty did not end countries' efforts to assert territorial claims through flags and symbols, though. Of the eight existing territorial claims, half now use subnational flags: the British Antarctic Territory, Chilean Antarctic Territory, Argentine Antarctica, and Adélie Land (the French Antarctic claim).

The British Antarctic Territory flag was created in 1963 and features the arms of the territory, introduced in 1952 (fig. 15). Both Chile and Argentina's Antarctic claims fall under the administration of the countries' southernmost provinces and are represented by provincial flags, adopted in 1997 and 1999 respectively (fig. 16 and 17).<sup>14</sup> Adélie Land uses the flag of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands (Terres australes et antarctiques françaises), which includes the Antarctic claim as well as a handful of islands in the Indian Ocean (fig. 18). The flag had been used for the High Commissioner of the Territory since 1958, but France didn't adopt it as a territorial flag until 2007.<sup>15</sup>



**Figure 15.** Flag of the British Antarctic Territory. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



**Figure 16.** The flag of the Magallanes and Chilean Antarctic Region flies alongside a national flag in Magallanes, Chile. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



**Figure 17.** The national flag of Argentina and the flag of Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica, and Islands of the South Atlantic. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



**Figure 18.** Flag of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands (Terres australes et antarctiques françaises). Source: <https://www.amazon.com/AZ-FLAG-French-Southern-Antarctic/dp/B013KD1YB2>



## Continental Flags (Late 20th Century to Present)

With the exception of an improvised, all-white courtesy flag flown in 1929 by the British, Australian, and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition, flags for the entire continent are a relatively recent phenomenon.<sup>16</sup> After the promulgation of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959, to take effect in 1961, Antarctica was increasingly considered a single entity politically and culturally as well as physiographically, motivating the need for a single Antarctic symbol.

The ATCM was the first international body to attempt to create such a symbol. As early as 1968, ATCM had used an unofficial emblem depicting a white outline of Antarctica overlaid with latitude and longitude lines (fig. 19).<sup>17</sup> The emblem appeared on signage, emails, and stationary for most of the ATCM's history, but it wasn't until 2002 that the ATCM formally adopted the emblem. When the emblem appears on flags, as it now sometimes does, it is the only Antarctic flag internationally recognized as "official" (fig. 20). However, as the resolution to adopt it clearly states, it is the emblem of the Antarctic Treaty, not of Antarctica. The decision also specifies that it may be used only by the ATCM and its Secretariat, or those operating with their authority.<sup>18</sup>



**Figure 19.** Stamps issued by the United States in 1971 on the tenth anniversary of the treaty featuring the Antarctic Treaty emblem. The emblem appears in a 1:1 ratio except when flown as a flag. Source: <https://www.hipstamp.com/listing/scott-1431-us-1971-antarctic-treaty-plate-block-of-4-mnh-og/20401067>

That leaves the continent of Antarctica with no official flag to this day, a fact which has inspired amateur and professional vexillographers. An exhaustive survey of proposals is all but impossible. (A search for "Antarctica" on the vexillology subreddit, for example, returns hundreds of results.) However, only a few of these proposals have ever been manufactured or flown.

It was NAVA's founding president, Whitney Smith, who proposed what can be considered the first modern Antarctic flag in 1978—an orange flag with a white emblem in the hoist. Smith incorporated the letter A for Antarctica, a semi-sphere to represent the latitudes below the Antarctic circle, and two hands below it to represent the protection of the environment (fig. 21).<sup>19</sup> Although this flag was acknowledged in a few publications and can now be found in many places around the internet, Smith's flag never enjoyed much use on or off the continent.



**Figure 21.** Whitney Smith's 1978 proposal for the flag of Antarctica. Source: <https://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/aq/smith.html>



**Figure 22.** Graham Bartram's 1995 proposal for the flag of Antarctica. Source: <https://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/aq/1.html>

In 1995, vexillologist Graham Bartram designed a new Antarctic flag while working on a digital atlas for a multimedia company. The program used flags to represent each national and subnational entity. Bartram created his design to serve as the atlas's symbol for the continent (fig. 22).<sup>20</sup> According to Bartram, "It's very simple—just an

outline of the continent on a United Nations blue background."<sup>21</sup> The 3D atlas sold more than two million copies, quickly making Bartram's design the most widely distributed Antarctic flag. In 2002 NAVA member Ted Kaye added to the flag's recognition when he took 24 such flags on an expedition cruise to Antarctica and photographed the flag flying for the first time on the continent (fig. 23). He displayed it at several locations, including as a ship's ensign at sea. At his behest it was even raised on the flagpoles at a Brazilian research station and a British historical site.<sup>22</sup> There isn't much evidence to suggest Bartram's flag is widely used in Antarctica. However, the design is still widely distributed in the form of an emoji. In 2015, the Unicode Consortium added 🇦🇶 to its emoji keyboard, which is now represented by Bartram's design on all supported platforms.<sup>23</sup>

Given the amount and rate of change in the world's understanding of Antarctica, it's no surprise that the continent has seen so many flags in the short time since its discovery. What's more surprising is how little movement there has been on the topic in the last few decades while humans' relationship with the continent has undergone some of its biggest changes. Human activity is at an all-time high, the continent is more vulnerable to climate change than ever, and countries' current commitments to the Antarctic Treaty only extend for the next 27 years. Even the outlines of the continent shown on Bartram's flag and the Antarctic Treaty emblem have changed due to large portions of ice sheets breaking off.

Each of these changes represent imminent threats to the continent, making it necessary to use every available tool to protect it. A flag is no exception. As every vexillologist knows, flags can be powerful. They can shape discourse, influence policy, and change public opinion. As valuable and vulnerable as it is, Antarctica deserves a flag which can make a material difference in the welfare of the continent.



**Figure 23.** Ted Kaye flying the Bartram flag over Antarctica in 2002. Source: Edward B. Kaye, "Flags over Antarctica", in *Proceedings of the XX International Congress of Vexillology, Stockholm, 27th July to 1st August 2003* (Bergen: Nordic Flag Society, 2004), 395.



**Figure 20.** The Emblem of the Antarctic Treaty on a flag and on signage at the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat offices in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Source: <https://twitter.com/AntarcticTreaty/status/1035919817600131073>



Evan Townsend, an education and communication professional based in Boston, has worked as a researcher in Antarctica. A recent member of NAVA, he received the Antarctic Service Medal for valuable contributions to exploration and scientific achievement under the U.S. Antarctic Program.

<sup>1</sup> Terence Armstrong, "Bellingshausen and the Discovery of Antarctica", *Polar Record* 15, no. 99 (1971): 887–89, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247400062112>

<sup>2</sup> Glasgow Digital Library, "Voyage of the Scotia 1902–04", n.d., [https://sites.scran.ac.uk/voyage\\_of\\_the\\_scotia/scotia/vsobj-006.htm](https://sites.scran.ac.uk/voyage_of_the_scotia/scotia/vsobj-006.htm)

<sup>3</sup> "Shirase Antarctic Expedition Memorial Museum", <http://shirase-kinenkan.jp>

<sup>4</sup> Personal communication from Laura Kissel, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Karen Ronne Tupek, "Ronne Antarctic Research Expedition", [http://www.ronneantarcticexplorers.com/ronne\\_antarctic\\_research\\_expedition.htm](http://www.ronneantarcticexplorers.com/ronne_antarctic_research_expedition.htm)

<sup>6</sup> François Braibant, "Nous Avons Retrouvé Les Sno-Cats Des Expéditions Antarctiques Belges", *RTBF Info*, February 16, 2018, [https://www.rtbf.be/info/societe/detail\\_nous-avons-retrouve-les-sno-cats-des-expeditions-antarctiques-belges?id=9842232](https://www.rtbf.be/info/societe/detail_nous-avons-retrouve-les-sno-cats-des-expeditions-antarctiques-belges?id=9842232)

<sup>7</sup> "Norman Vaughn Antarctic Expedition Flag", [invaluable.com](https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/norman-vaughn-antarctic-expedition-flag-49-c-e44470db54), <https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/norman-vaughn-antarctic-expedition-flag-49-c-e44470db54>. While the flag reads "1993", Vaughn submitted his eponymous mountain three days before his 89th birthday in December 1994. <https://www.normanvaughan.com>

<sup>8</sup> Barbara Tomlinson, "Chivalry at the Poles: British Sledge Flags", in *Proceedings of the XIX International Congress of Vexillology*, York, 23–27 July 2001 (London: The Flag Institute, 2001), 215–21, <https://doi.org/http://www.flaginstitute.org/pdfs/Barbara%20Tomlinson.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> See H. G. Carr, "Sledge-Flags: Their Origin and Development", *The Mariner's Mirror* 27, no. 1 (1941): 5–13; and Tomlinson, "Chivalry at the Poles".

<sup>10</sup> David McGonigal and Lynn Woodworth, eds., *Antarctica and the Arctic: The Complete Encyclopedia* (Willowdale, Ont.: Firefly Books, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> David Day, "Swastikas on the Ice: The Race for Control of the Antarctic", Western Australian Museum, <http://museum.wa.gov.au/whats-on/swastikas-on-ice-race-control-antarctic>

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Haddelsey and Alan Carroll, *Operation Tabarin: Britain's Secret Wartime Expedition to Antarctica, 1944–46* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, England: The History Press, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Roman Klimeš, "Symbols of Antarctica", in *Flags in Southern Africa and the World: Proceedings of the XVII International Congress of Vexillology* (Pinegowrie, South Africa: Southern African Vexillological Association, 1999), 232–37, <http://internationalcongressesofvexillology-proceedingsandreports.yolasite.com/resources/17th/Klimes-SymbolsOfAntarctica.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Republic of Chile, "Resolución 42: Promulga Reglamento De Símbolos Expresivos De Identidad Regional", <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=60733>; Concejo Deliberante del Municipio de Río Grande, "Bandera Provincial", [https://www.concejo-riogrande.gov.ar/?page\\_id=16](https://www.concejo-riogrande.gov.ar/?page_id=16)

<sup>15</sup> Klimeš, "Symbols of Antarctica"; French Republic, "Arrêté n° 2007-18 du 23 Février 2007 relatif à l'officialisation de l'emblème des Terres australes et antarctiques françaises", [http://emblem.free.fr/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=184:arrete-nd-2007-18-du-23-fevrier-2007-relatif-a-l-officialisation-de-lembleme-des-terres-australes-et-antarctiques-francaises&catid=137:taaf-embleme&Itemid=154](http://emblem.free.fr/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=184:arrete-nd-2007-18-du-23-fevrier-2007-relatif-a-l-officialisation-de-lembleme-des-terres-australes-et-antarctiques-francaises&catid=137:taaf-embleme&Itemid=154)

<sup>16</sup> "White Flag of Antarctica", Royal Museums Greenwich, <https://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/895.html>

<sup>17</sup> "Postage Stamp Issues to Commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty, 1961." *Polar Record* 16, no. 100 (1972), 104–105, doi:10.1017/S0032247400062677

<sup>18</sup> Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty, "Decision 2 (2002) - ATCM XXV - CEP V, Warsaw", *Antarctic Treaty Database*, <https://ats.aq/devAS/Meetings/Measure/289>

<sup>19</sup> Edward B. Kaye, "Flags over Antarctica," in *Proceedings of the XX International Congress of Vexillology*, Stockholm, 27th July to 1st August 2003 (Bergen: Nordic Flag Society, 2004), 389–400, <http://internationalcongressesofvexillology-proceedingsandreports.yolasite.com/resources/20th-Stockholm/ICV20%20Kaye-E-.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Kaye, "Flags over Antarctica".

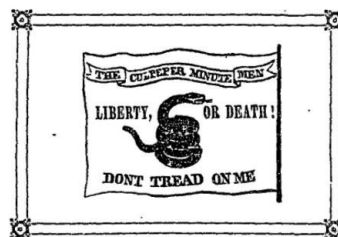
<sup>21</sup> "Antarctica—Flag Proposals", *FOTW: Flags of the World*, <https://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/aq!.html>

<sup>22</sup> Kaye, "Flags over Antarctica". Staff at the Comandante Ferraz Base (Brazil) and Base A—Port Lockroy (U.K.) raised the Bartram flag.

<sup>23</sup> "Flag for Antarctica Emoji", *Emojipedia*, <https://emojipedia.org/flag-antarctica>

# Did the flag of the Culpeper Minutemen ever actually exist? A reader responds.

*Editor's Note: We share this condensed exchange between reader Anthony Luciano and author Morgan Paris, whose article titled "Did the Flag of the Culpeper Minutemen Ever Actually Exist?" appeared in Vexillum 13. For reference, we reproduce the original drawing of the flag as it appeared in 1844, and a modern reproduction widely available from flag vendors.*



April 2, 2020

In Morgan Paris's article, he says there is no "contemporary evidence" of the flag's existence. But there is a mention of Philip Slaughter's 1775 diary entry, in Eugene M. Scheel's book *Culpeper: A Virginia County's History Through 1920*. [Slaughter] literally described the flag the author claims didn't exist.

Anthony Luciano  
Taunton, Mass.

*Morgan Paris replies:*

The diary was not a contemporaneous account of events; it had been written as a memoir by Captain Philip Slaughter in 1849 when he was 91 years old. He had in fact kept a diary during the years he served in the war, but that diary was "lost in the wreck of so many libraries in the late war"; presumably the Civil War.

Slaughter's recollections were first published in a book titled *A History of Saint Mark's Parish* published in 1877. Ten years later, his son gave an address which included the fictitious Culpeper flag that he had probably read about in Henry Howe's erroneous book *Historical Collections of Virginia*. A book published in 1900 titled *Genealogical and Historical Notes On Culpeper County, Virginia* contained that address, and the source that you cite was likely based upon information contained in that book.

Incidentally, I was not aware that the Culpeper Minutemen ever had a flag with their name inscribed on it, but a member of the *Vexillum* Editorial Board presented me a description of the initial newspaper announcement from September 1775. I was both surprised and delighted that they did in fact once fly a flag of their own, given the short time they existed.

April 4, 2020

I'm still unclear on one thing. I understand that some information may not have been completely accurate in Howe's 1844 book, but what did you find in your research to suggest Howe's depiction of the flag was also incorrect?

Anthony Luciano

*Paris replies again:*

The flag that first appeared in Henry Howe's book was completely fictitious for these reasons:

1. No revolutionary flag had two mottoes inscribed on it.
2. There are several representations of a flag having a rattlesnake depicted on it from the time of the American Revolution and all of them have the snake depicted in the same exact manner, one that differs markedly from Howe's depiction in which the snake looks more like a boa constrictor. The rattlesnake and its motto originated with the Associators of Pennsylvania at approximately the same time the real Culpeper flag was first flown.
3. Finally, there are no authentic contemporaneous descriptions of any militia unit ever having the word "minutemen" present on their flag. The fact that it is now known—that the Culpeper Minutemen did actually fly a flag which had their name present on it—should put to permanent rest the question of authenticity regarding the other flag that never existed.

*On April 9, Luciano prepared this statement for Vexillum:*

Paris concluded that the Culpeper Minutemen flag never existed. From a detailed announcement written in September 1775, Paris was able to reconstruct the

flag that he believes flew with the Culpeper Minutemen. While I agree with Paris' findings, I believe the Culpeper Minutemen flag flew right along with the flag he describes. The assertion by Paris that Henry Howe's 1844 book *Historical Collections of Virginia* is "completely fictitious" requires stronger evidence than he provides. I assume that Howe's book accurately conveys what he was told by Slaughter.

If we are to believe the rattlesnake flag never existed, we have to ask how the rumor of the Culpeper flag began. The actual drawing of the Culpeper flag appears on page 238 of Howe's book. The original drawing had twelve rattles. To assume Howe fabricated this detail or confused it with Ben Franklin's rattlesnake from twenty years earlier is quite a stretch, especially considering Franklin's rattlesnake was eight pieces with one rattle, not twelve or thirteen.

Paris also argues that the word "minutemen" was never used on a flag. The term "minutemen" had existed for more than 100 years, originating in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It is not unreasonable to think that the Culpeper Minutemen flag would say precisely who they were to ease the minds of the local folks they encountered.

Paris asserts that two mottos never existed on a flag before. The "Liberty, or Death!" motto comes from Patrick Henry's speech at the Second Virginia Convention in March 1775. This speech motivated Virginians to support the rebel cause and is most likely what motivated the Culpeper Minutemen to form in the first place. It is unclear when the second motto "Don't Tread on Me" began, but it became associated with Franklin's rattlesnake sometime between 1754 and 1775. Considering the flag used Franklin's rattlesnake, it's reasonable to assume that "Don't Tread on Me" would be used as well.

Is there a smoking gun? The answer was in *Vexillum* 13 all along. On September 21, 1775, "According to public store records, Colonel Taliaferro bought a stand of colors, along with one drum and two fifes. On the same day, eight yards of white shalloon were received for camp colors." Colonel Taliaferro was appointed colonel of the Culpeper battalion earlier that summer and eight yards of white fabric is more than enough to create two white flags!

What are the odds that a flag depicted in 1844, based on testimony from the mouth of a soldier who was in the Culpeper Minutemen in 1775, who had first-hand knowledge of this flag, actually existed, especially when we know that the battalion was issued ample white fabric? In my opinion, this is a no-brainer. The Culpeper Minutemen Flag we know and love did indeed exist in 1775!



# Students Learn Flag-Raising Protocols at Chinese Camp

By Zhou Xinfeng

In 2019, I was responsible for planning the flag-raising ceremonies for the 7th World Military Games, held in Wuhan, People's Republic of China. (The World Military Games is a quadrennial competition for athletes who are enlisted in the armed forces of nations around the world; they are sponsored by the International Military Sports Council, also known as the Conseil International du Sport Militaire). I also trained a team of flag-raisers which was made up of 288 military school students.

Zhang Huijun, in charge of the Wuhan Military Games awards ceremony and Deputy Director of the Jiangnan District Education Bureau, believed that the training given to the flag-raisers at the Military Games could also be provided to those responsible for primary and middle school's flag-raising ceremonies.

As a result, I was invited to the Jiangnan district of Wuhan from September 28 to October 1, 2020, to lead training sessions for those who conduct flag-raising ceremonies for schools. In attendance were 184 student flag-raisers and 31 teachers from 31 primary and middle schools in the district. This activity was praised by the principal, teachers, students, and parents.

*NAVA member Zhao Xinfeng retired as former leader of The Beijing Garrison Honor Guard in 1993. In 2001, he founded the Beijing Xingfeng Flag Center and engaged in flag culture research and education training. He designed the flag raising ceremony for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and was appointed as the training expert for its participants. In 2019, he coordinated the bid of the Vexillological Research Center of China to host the 23rd International Congress of Vexillology in Beijing in 2023 (now 2024).*

[A version of this item first appeared in the Portland Flag Association's *Vexilloid Tabloid*, #86 (February 2021)]



**Figure 1.** Six of the 288 soldiers trained to raise the flag for the 7th World Military Games at Wuhan flank their trainer, author Zhao Xinfeng (center).



**Figure 3.** More than 185 primary and middle school flag-raisers in Jiangnan District, Wuhan, People's Republic of China, participated in the flag-raising camp closing ceremony on October 1, 2020.



**Figure 2.** Zhao Xinfeng demonstrates the proper approach to the flagpole.



**Figure 4.** Zhao Xinfeng (right) corrects students' flag-holding posture.



**Figure 5.** Closing ceremony of the first flag-raising camp for elementary and middle schools in Jiangnan District, Wuhan, People's Republic of China.



# Colorful Office Supply Notepads Inspire One of Hong Kong's Pro-Democracy Flags

By Peter Lichtgarn and Eve Allen

Political and social movements are frequently symbolized by unassuming, workaday tools and trappings. Voters proudly displaying an index finger stained with purple ink signaled their participation in the free elections of Iraq in 2005 and Afghanistan in 2016. Marchers wearing pink knit “pussyhats” announced the power of women’s voices in Washington, D.C., in 2017. Protesters donning yellow safety vests displayed their solidarity with the working class during street demonstrations in France in 2018.

Although these images were laden with message and were highly visible, they did not manifest themselves on the most symbolic tool of all—a flag. However, in Hong Kong, a flag has been inspired from the political employment of perhaps the humblest of office supplies: Post-It Notes.

In 2020, various public spaces in Hong Kong were wallpapered in colorful Post-It Notes with hand-written memos supporting the pro-democracy movement in opposition to the government imposed on Hong Kong by mainland China (fig. 1). A Chinese-born Australian artist named Badiuca has designed a flag in a stylized depiction of these civic bulletin boards in the hope it becomes “a new symbol for Hong Kong’s freedom and resistance.”



**Figure 1.** A detail from Hong Kong's Lennon Wall covered in Post-It Notes containing messages of support for the local pro-democracy movement. Source: <https://doesthatelp.wordpress.com/2014/10/17/the-lennon-wall-hong-kong>

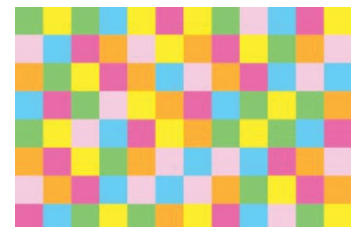


**Figure 2.** The Lennon Wall in Prague. Source: Flickr.com/bat7000

The artist refers to his creation as the Lennon Wall Flag. This is in homage to the original Lennon Wall located in Prague, Czechia (fig. 2). Since the 1960s, this has been a place for dissidents (first against the communist regime, and later against the democratically elected government) to write anti-authority slogans, to the chagrin of the ruling government. When John Lennon was killed in 1980, his image was spray-painted on the wall in tribute to his free spirit. Ever since, various Beatles’ lyrics have continued to pop up as graffiti along with assorted politically progressive exhortations.

The first Lennon Wall in Hong Kong appeared during the Umbrella Movement street protests in 2014. Anti-government protesters carried umbrellas to shield themselves from pepper spray used to disperse demonstrations against the city’s administration. Hong Kong’s Lennon Wall was not quite as unruly as Prague’s spray-painted collective moral; it utilized removable Post-It Notes instead. What it might have lacked in grittiness, it made up for in volume; the wall was estimated to host as many as 10,000 individual paper pieces.

Artist Badiuca’s flag consists of 96 randomly allocated color squares replicating the mosaic effect of the Lennon Wall (figs. 3 and 4). “Every color on the flag is a different voice,” states the artist, “and every individual voice deserves its place in Hong Kong.” The significance of the



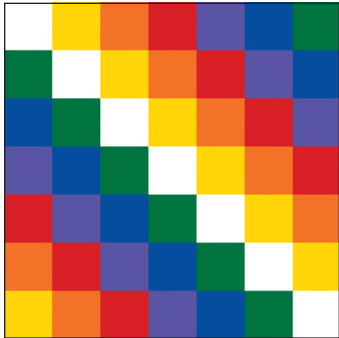
**Figure 3.** Badiuca’s Lennon Wall flag. Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lennon\\_Wall\\_Flag.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lennon_Wall_Flag.png)



**Figure 4.** Badiuca displays his Lennon Wall flag based on the Post-It Notes left on the Hong Kong Lennon Wall. Photo courtesy of the artist, <https://www.badiuca.com/lennon-wall-for-hk>

number 96 is historic; 1996 was the final year of British colonial sovereignty before the handover of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China in 1997.

It is not known if Badiucao is aware of the design similarities between his Lennon Wall Flag and the Wiphala representing the indigenous peoples of the Andes (including Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia) which has been officially adopted as the dual flag of Bolivia since 2009 (figs. 5 and 6). However, Badiucao is well aware of a popular pro-democracy flag in widespread use throughout Hong Kong that pre-dates the Lennon Wall Flag. The alternate *bauhinia* flower flag is a version of Hong Kong's flag, rendered with a field of protest black in place of the official red (figs. 7 and 8). It is a "courageous, rebellious and powerful icon" which serves to challenge the oppression of the Beijing government and "summarizes the heavy and critical atmosphere in Hong Kong at the moment", according to the artist. He feels his Lennon Wall flag can serve a complementary purpose to the black *bauhinia* flag. "However, in my opinion, a successful political movement needs help from the power of rebellion as well as hope. A more colorful and delightful visual icon can accumulate the hope much more effectively. My biggest dream is to see this flag flying everywhere in Hong Kong for the fight of freedom."



**Figure 5.** The Wiphala Flag. Source: [https://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/bo\\_w.html](https://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/bo_w.html), Image: Kjell Røll Elgsaas and Antonio Martins.

The artist aspires to an even larger audience. Intending for his "universal design with abstract colors" to be recognized and appreciated by people with different cultural backgrounds, Badiucao says, "I hope this flag will not just represent Hong Kong's fight for freedom of speech and other rights, but also become an inspirational icon for people all around the world. The Lennon Wall Flag shall be a bridge linking Hong Kong's fight with the world."



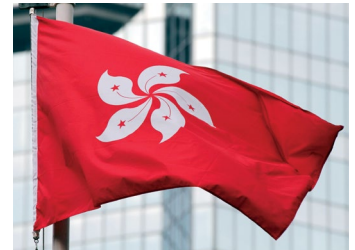
**Figure 6.** A woman holds a Wiphala flag in La Paz, Bolivia. Photo: Marco Bello, Reuters.



**Figure 7.** Black Hong Kong protest flag. Photo: Anthony Kwan/Getty Images Source: <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2019/07/hong-kong-protest-art.html>

*Peter Lichtgarn has been a member of NAVA since 1998. He created the See Who Salutes website ([seewhosalutes.com](http://seewhosalutes.com)) which focuses on the interaction of flags with current events, social movements, celebrations, protests, and popular culture.*

*Eve Allen is a litigation attorney, researcher, and writer.*



**Figure 8.** Hong Kong flag. Source: [flickr.com/Neerav Bhatt.](https://www.flickr.com/photos/NeeravBhatt/)

## Q: Does NAVA Answer Flag Questions?

## A: Yes!

By Jim Ferrigan and Stan Contrades

One of NAVA's most popular support services is answering flag-related questions for members and nonmembers interested in flags. NAVA mobilizes its body of volunteer researchers who tap into the association's collective vexillological knowledge base and retrieve answers to vexatious flag questions. The results of NAVA's investigations and research often end up on the *Flag Questions and Answers* page in the *About Flags* section of our website. Go to <https://nava.org/flag-faq> and check it out.

### NAVA's Q&A Protocol

NAVA's flag query process is simple and effective. It begins after a visitor to NAVA's website sends a request for assistance via email to the NAVA secretary. The secretary reaches out to appropriate subject matter experts among our members who have expressed their willingness to answer inquiries.

The research phase is correspondingly efficient, if less structured. The amount of time required to deliver an answer is directly proportional to our organization's collective knowledge and the degree of mysteriousness of the flag in question. Here's how our process worked recently.

### NAVA Receives a Query

An individual interested in purchasing a specific flag contacted NAVA asking for help to confirm the identification of a guidon he found on a manufacturer's website (fig. 1).

*NAVA Answers Flag Questions...continued on page 31*



# New Flag: Lyle, Minnesota

By Tyler Amick

Lyle, Minnesota, with a population of 557 (as of 2018), now flies a flag designed by Emma Wilde, a local high school student. The flag stemmed from a semester-long elective course offered to high school students at Lyle Public School that was simply named “Flags”. I organized the curriculum of the class to consist of three units designed to build up student knowledge on flag design and uses of flags. The curriculum would culminate in a flag design project that would integrate the lessons learned over the semester.

Just a few months before the course kicked off, I still had not figured out what that capstone project would be. I sought the advice of my principal, who referred me to the then-mayor of Lyle, Gary Harrison (also, coincidentally, a bus driver for Lyle Public School). Upon discussing the class and the project, Mayor Harrison was excited, to put it mildly, about the prospect of students designing a flag for Lyle. With the city’s 150th anniversary celebration planned for June 2020, he envisioned the unveiling of a new flag as a cornerstone for the event.

The course itself largely went smoothly. Students were interested and engaged in the content, and things were steadily progressing towards the final project. COVID-19 interjected itself into the smooth progress, however. With students then learning remotely and access to graphic design programs scarce (many students only had access to the internet through their school-issued iPads, onto which we were unable to download new apps), the final project had to be retooled from a class-wide requirement to an optional assignment. When completing this project, students were still asked to consider what they had learned during the course, especially from NAVA’s publication “Good” Flag, “Bad” Flag. I did not, however, mandate any expectations for their designs other than a 3:5 ratio because I did not want to infringe upon their artistic license to create authentic designs. Due to the circumstances, less than half the class ended up submitting designs. Of those submitted, the students chose the top five designs to be presented to the City Council.



**Figure 1.** Emma Wilde’s original design, favored over other student submissions by the Lyle City Council.



**Figure 2.** The original design modified by Wilde and the author to appear less dark.

The adoption of the flag took part over the course of three monthly council meetings from May through July 2020, during which council members requested several changes to Wilde’s original design (fig. 1). Council members initially wanted to add white text reading “Lyle, MN Est. 1870” to the upper hoist side of the black field, but after protests

from both Emma and me those additions were tabled. Other concerns came up about how dark the original design was, so Emma and I provided a few variations of the design with white and gold fimbriations of various thicknesses (the variation that was adopted is shown in fig. 2). Council members at this point still felt text was a necessary addition; considering the flag was being adopted for the city’s sesquicentennial, the founding date (1870) was added in gold. The final amended design (fig. 3) was approved and adopted at the July meeting of the city council.

Mayor Harrison commented, “The only thing that we kind of talked about and changed her design just a touch is somewhere we wanted 1870 on there to let them know when Lyle originated and our 150th. She had a beautiful flag designed.”

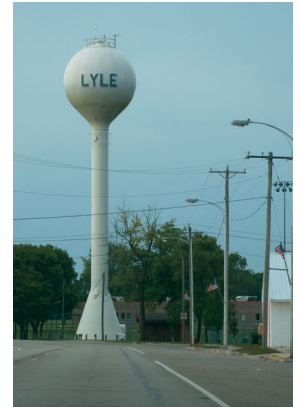
As for the design itself, the flag features a L-shaped partial border that recalls the name of the town. The blue and white coloration is drawn from the school colors of Lyle Public School. The gold star in the upper fly, as Emma explains,

“show[s] that Lyle has a bright future”. The black field represents unity, but also functions as a night-sky backdrop for the star. 1870 represents the founding date of Lyle.

Wilde found that the process of designing a flag and interacting with the city council encouraged her to be involved in civic activities. “If I were a younger kid and I saw Lyle had a flag and a high school class made that, I would feel like the younger generation has a lot to say and they can do a lot”, she said.

The production of the flag was facilitated by NAVA organizational member Herold Flags of Rochester, Minnesota.

*Tyler Amick teaches middle school geography and language arts for Austin (Minnesota) Public Schools. He formerly taught high school language arts at Lyle Public School and joined NAVA in 2012.*



Lyle, Minnesota. Source: Flickr/Eric



**Figure 3.** The final design, adopted by the Lyle City Council.

# New Flag: Utah's Commemorative Flag

## Legislature Also Approves State Flag Task Force

Utah now has a flag to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the state. The bill creating a flag to honor the quasiquicentennial of the 1896 admission of Utah to the union became law earlier this year.

The field is divided per saltire, with blue on top, red on the bottom, and the sides being white. In the center is a blue circle, bordered in a double ring of gold, enclosing a gold beehive. A small white star is below the beehive within the circle.

According to the flag's designer, Jonathan Martin, the division of the field symbolizes Utah's status as the "Crossroads



**Figure 1.** The Commemorative Flag of Utah. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

of the West", where the two branches of the first transcontinental railroad were linked in 1896. The beehive is a prominent symbol of Utah—it is the main charge of the state flag—and stands for industriousness, as in the saying "busy as a bee". The white star is taken from the United States flag, on which each star symbolizes a state, and serves to represent the political status being commemorated. The five areas of the field—four quadrants plus the circle—honor the five Native American tribes of Utah: the Ute, Paiute, Shoshone, Navajo, and Goshute peoples. The meanings of the colors are: red—the red rocks and national parks of southern Utah; blue—the traditions of Utah and the Great Salt Lake; and white—the snow-covered peaks of the Rocky Mountains, renowned for the quality of the snow for skiing.

The commemorative flag was an idea of the Organization for a New Utah Flag (ONUF). The group, formed in 2018 by businessperson and aspirant politician Richard Martin along with his son, filmmaker Jonathan Martin, initially aimed to replace the state flag.

Their first step was to commission a team of designers, under the leadership of Jonathan Martin, to develop ideas. After reviewing numerous drafts, the leadership of ONUF settled on a design, and persuaded State Representative Keven Stratton to sponsor legislation to make it the new state flag during the 2019 session of the state legislature. The 2019 design had a different arrangement of colors and included the numerals "18" and "47" to represent the



**Figure 2.** The flag proposal introduced by Keven Stratton in 2019.

year that the first white settlers, associated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and some African Americans they had enslaved, arrived in Utah. Stratton's bill died in the legislature.

Following the 2019 legislative session, ONUF organized a survey to ascertain public opinion about the Utah state flag and proposed designs. While the methodology was not published, it appears to have been a Web survey open to anyone, within Utah or elsewhere. Among the questions on the survey was, "Do you approve of the potential idea of the proposed flag to be a special commemorative flag, beginning in 2021, to celebrate the 125th anniversary of Utah's statehood?"

Using information gleaned from the survey and some feedback received during the 2019 legislative session, ONUF redesigned the flag, choosing a different arrangement of colors and eliminating the numerals. In January 2021, State Senator Daniel McCay sponsored a bill (S.B. 48) to make the new design the state's commemorative flag, and at the same time establish a State Flag Task Force to review the status of the current flag. After it passed in the state senate, State Representative Stephen Handy shepherded it through the state house of representatives, and it was signed by Governor Spencer Cox on March 16. The law calls for the commemorative flag to be displayed on halyards directly below the state flag.

NAVA's correspondents in Utah report that the commemorative flag is seldom flown and flag dealers are not selling many. It is not even displayed at the state capitol.

The State Flag Task Force will begin work in June and no later than September 15 will present to the legislature a list of up to 10 design proposals for consideration. The legislature is under no obligation to adopt any of them as a new state flag.



**Figure 3.** Utah state legislators display the proposed flag during debate. Source: <https://www.sltrib.com/news/politics/2021/03/04/push-redesign-utah-flag>



**Figure 4.** The commemorative flag of Utah outside the headquarters of the Organization for a New Utah Flag. Source: <https://twitter.com/NewUtahFlag/status/1374778748776579077/photo/1>



# NAVA Interest Area Meetings

By Stan Contrades

Interest Area Meetings represent an exciting new way for members to connect with NAVA and with each other through specific flag-related topics.

## Started in 2020

NAVA instituted Interest Area Meetings (IAMs) following the popularity of NAVA 54, our first virtual annual meeting, and the very positive responses to last year's member survey showing significant interest in virtual events. With members all over North America and around the world, IAMs now enable collaboration and mutual support across the wide range of NAVA members' vexillological interests—without the constraints of geography.

To host the meetings, NAVA obtained a Zoom account able to handle large groups as needed. As many of us are aware due to current social distancing limitations, Zoom allows members to communicate “face-to-face” as well as share their screens to display everything from documents to presentations. The meetings are member-driven initiatives, organized by those interested in specific areas, not by NAVA leadership.

NAVA members have already held several IAMs, starting in November of 2020, on Historical Flags, Fictitious Flags, Flag Design, and the “Flag Design Gauntlet”. Some IAMs meet on a recurring, even monthly basis. Up to 40 NAVA members have participated in each meeting.

## Members May Organize Meetings

Potential IAM topics (as expressed in the survey) include state/provincial flags, city flags, flags of a specific geographic area, heraldry, flag protocol, Revolutionary War-era flags, research methods, antique flags, teaching with flags, military flags, flag conservation, collecting 4”x6” flags, library matters, flag merchandising, meetings for kids, flags on stamps, nautical/maritime flags, political/social movement flags, tribal flags, controversial flags, flag art, flag adoption, vexillology as a discipline, and “one-off” meetings as required or desired.

Any NAVA member may schedule an IAM on any vexillological topic. Meetings range from one to three hours in duration and might include presentations, “show and tell”, panels, workshops, tours, or simply general sharing of information.

The IAM may cover several topics or focus on a specific topic of interest. The member scheduling the IAM may act as the moderator and meetings are recorded. Any NAVA member may participate (no RSVP is necessary) and actively join in discussions, ask questions, or just listen in.

To start, plan, and schedule an IAM, members can contact Amber Atteberry through [nava-meetings@nava.org](mailto:nava-meetings@nava.org). She and her team will coordinate the scheduling, Zoom calendaring, membership messaging, and website posting. The Interest Area page of NAVA's website (<https://nava.org/interest-areas>) provides a basic idea of the topic and timeframe. The Interest Areas forum in the Members-Only area of NAVA's website lists the Zoom “Meeting ID” and password for each event (members should not share the password with non-members). NAVA membership is notified of IAMs through *Semaphore* and *Vexi-News*.

## Ongoing Meetings

Current IAMs being held usually include the following:

- **Flag Design Gauntlet** (Joe Gorman, coordinator)—First Wednesday of each month. Get feedback on your flag design efforts and provide it to others. Typically held at 5:30 p.m. Pacific Time/8:30 p.m. Eastern Time.
- **Flags in Fiction** (Jon Meade, coordinator)—Often on Saturdays at 10 a.m. Pacific Time/1 p.m. Eastern Time, but may not be every month. Discuss flags in books, film, or videogames.
- **Historical Flags** (Ted Kaye, coordinator)—Most often on a Saturday, but may not be every month.

(Check NAVA's website for particulars and specific scheduling: <https://nava.org/interest-areas>)

## Learn More or Get Involved

With the upgraded NAVA website coming soon, members will be able to note the interest areas for which they want to receive communications, and a calendar feature will make finding and tracking meetings very easy.

Members can direct questions about IAMs to [nava-meetings@nava.org](mailto:nava-meetings@nava.org).

To support IAMs and members wanting to use the capability, NAVA seeks volunteers to serve in a variety of capacities such as Interest Area Meeting Planner and Interest Area Coordinators. Please see the Interest Area Meeting section on the Forums page of NAVA's website for further opportunities and details.

*Stan Contrades is Second Vice President of NAVA and chair of the Program Committee.*



# Regional Flag Group Reports

## Portland Flag Association

Ted Kaye, reporter (see [portlandflag.org](http://portlandflag.org) for full details)

In our **November 12, 2020**, meeting, we enjoyed, among many other topics, a Jessie Spillers-led discussion of the American Thin Blue Line Flag, probing the concept of flags that are differenced and become new flags, and flags whose meaning (or users) change significantly (e.g., the Gadsden Flag).

Kyle Smith spurred an interesting extension of the discussion of re-use of flag designs and the shifting meanings of colors associated with genders over time. For example, the modern pink-for-girls/blue-for-boys convention apparently is a twentieth-century stereotype that was completely reversed in the previous century and before (perhaps because blue was the color associated with the Virgin Mary).

Phil Allen pulled out small flags he'd collected in Europe, some from the *contrade* of Siena, Italy. William Gifford answered the question posed by Kate Cushman at our last meeting about folding the flag of the Republic of Ireland. Alden Jencks described his time in Germany in Zweibrücken ("Two bridges"), whence came troops who formed Rochambeau's expedition corps, the "Royal Deux-Ponts", in the American Revolutionary War's 1781 Battle of Yorktown, and his viewing of a replica of the corps' flag at Yorktown (fig. 1).

Ralph Bartlett exhibited a handkerchief honoring the planned (but cancelled) 1949 royal tour of Australia by George VI (fig. 2). It was framed for Ralph by his father and shows an Australian Red Ensign.

Michael Orelove, an Alaska resident 1973–2006, showed three flags for Alaska: a 49-star U.S. flag from 1959, an Alaska state

flag (with the Big Dipper and the North Star), and his own Alaska variant with a doubled star (representing Mizar and Alcor, the double stars in the Big Dipper's handle—he is an amateur astronomer). Ted Kaye shared replica flags from the era of Spanish maritime exploration (1492–1785). David Koski ruminated on flags or flag elements whose tainted use has made them "verboden" (e.g., the swastika or the Confederate Battle Flag), wondering if they could ever be reclaimed, then discussed the design concept of "tiling" of elements, noting how they can inform flag designs.

Scott Mainwaring discussed the recent display of more than 228,000 small white flags in Washington, D.C., memorializing the U.S. deaths to date due to COVID-19 (fig. 3), then led a discussion of the unprecedented level of use of flags by a U.S. presidential campaign, that of Donald Trump. The use of color in U.S. politics and flags is interesting—especially red and blue and their surprising reversals (starting in 1976 NBC used blue for Republicans and red for Democrats on its electoral map; in 1984 CBS reversed the colors; only in 2000 did the media converge on the current usage).

In our **January 14, 2021**, meeting we shared a number of flags and conversations. Michael Orelove described his flag for Mars, intended as an improvement over the red-green-blue vertical tribar inspired by Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars trilogy (fig. 4). Alex Zimmerman displayed a large flag he thought was the flag of Norrland (the northern area of Sweden), but the yellow and blue are transposed. It won a design contest in 1992. John Niggley showed several flags that he has made and flown, and told how he honored his late father with displays of flags recalling his military service, NASA career, and fondness for emojis.

Alden Jencks used the German Democratic Republic flag to help illustrate his presentation on the meaning of the Black-Red-Gold flag through history, enlivened by stories of his time living in Germany.

Max Liberman gave a brief presentation on the history of flags in the nation of Georgia—the red crosses on the current flag derive from a fifth-century church inscription. Kate Cushman described the kind and helpful advice she had received from Rachel Phelan, textile conservator in Dublin, about caring for her grandfather's burial flag (an Irish tricolor honoring his military service at age 16 in 1921).

Al Cavalari presented a mystery flag, which he then



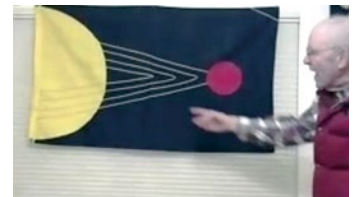
**Figure 3.** White flags memorializing deaths from COVID-19.



**Figure 1.** Replica of the flag of the "Royal Deux-Ponts" regiment.



**Figure 2.** Handkerchief souvenir of the planned royal tour of Australia in 1949.



**Figure 4.** Michael Orelove with one of his flags.



revealed as a manufacturer's variant of the Washington's Life Guard flag (due to his sending the printer the wrong artwork), then related its history in detail. Phil Allen uncovered his work from the 1980s, "First Vexillary", where he used flag stickers to organize national and state flags by design concepts and geography, rather than by alphabetical order (fig. 5). Ralph Bartlett described his woodshop projects, done at age 12, to create the coats of arms of Australia and the U.S. (fig. 6).

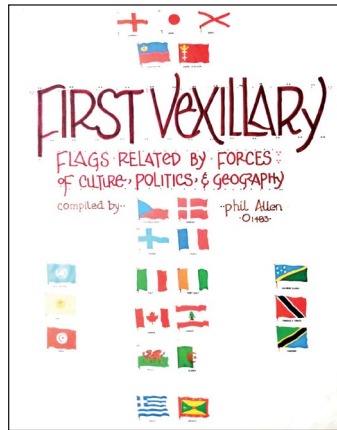


Figure 5. Phil Allen's "First Vexillary".



Figure 8. Alex Zimmerman with a Swedish-Finnish flag and the Norrland flag.



Figure 9. The Chabad Lubavitch flag.

the varying meanings of the stripes on the country's flag.

Bard Cosman gave an intriguing presentation on the Chabad Lubavitch flag, its meaning, symbolism, variants, and memes (fig. 9). Al Cavalari displayed a variant flag of Virginia in red, ordered by a politically-active customer hoping to show it as a "red" state (fig. 10). Alden Jencks flew the flag of Côte d'Ivoire in recognition of his 1960s Peace Corps service there, pointing out that hung vertically it is a "geographic flag", with orange representing the Sahara or Sahel, white the lakes of the central region, and green the forests of the south. Graham Houser discussed the "True South Flag" (fig. 11), proposed by Antarctica hand and NAVA member Evan Townsend (see article on p. 14) and related how he flies flags daily with explanations for passersby.



Figure 10. The Virginia flag, rendered with a red field.



Figure 11. The "True South Flag".



Figure 12. The "Progress Pride Flag". Source: Taste of General Mills.



Figure 6. Ralph Bartlett's wooden carvings of the arms of the United States & Australia.



Joyce Gifford shared the challenge she has faced in deciding which historical flags to remove from sale following the attack on the U.S. Capitol the previous week. She specifically asked of the Gadsden Flag, the Betsy Ross variant, and the First Navy Jack, to what extent are they "tainted" by their recent use by the mob? She also wondered if the rioters had mistakenly waved the flag of the country of Georgia in place of the flag of the state of Georgia.

Ken Dale reported that he's ironed 2,000 veterans' flags from Lincoln Memorial Park, and has 2,000 more to go before Memorial Day. Scott Mainwaring led a discussion about "hijacked" flags (e.g., the Gadsden Flag by the Tea Party) and wondered whether any flag has been redeemed from that fate—a topic for more research.

In our **March 11, 2021 meeting**, Michael Orelove took participants on a tour of the solar system through flags—starting with flags showing the Sun and Moon and proceeding from Mercury to Pluto (fig. 7).

Alex Zimmerman resolved the mystery posed in our last meeting, distinguishing between the real 1992 Norrland flag and his mislabeled Swedish-Finnish flag (a blue Nordic cross fimbriated in yellow, on white—used unofficially by Finnish-speaking people living in Sweden) (fig. 8). He got the information and the flag from the manufacturer! Max Liberman commemorated Independence Day in Mauritius (time zone-adjusted) with a talk focused on



Figure 7. Michael Orelove with his design for a flag of Venus.

## Chesapeake Bay Flag Association

Tom Carrier, reporter (see [cbfa.vexillology.info](http://cbfa.vexillology.info) for full details)

At our **January 24, 2021 meeting**, we heard the following presentations.

Stan Contrades spoke on U.S. military streamers. A version of his talk appeared in *Vexillum* 13. Arthur Etchells presented on his interest in historical flags. World, European, and military history has always been a hobby for him, and flags and heraldry in uniform are considered "nonverbal identification". He showed samples from his collections, which include miniatures and models carrying flags and a full library of books at home.

John Andrews talked about the U.S. Space Force flag (fig. 13). The unit flag for the new Space Force came into being on December 20, 2019, as a very dark blue (almost black) field for space, a delta wing as the prominent device with an elliptical symbol surrounding it, a white Polaris and two sets of star fields (oddly similar, it was suggested, to the seal of the United Confederation of Planets in the *Star Trek* TV series). Al Cavaleri asked why, if the Space Force is so recent, that the flag is placed in a priority over the Coast Guard flag when the Coast Guard was founded much earlier. Stan Contrades suggested that the Coast Guard is not a military defense service, whereas the Space Force would be if it were armed.

Greg Nedved presented the tricolor flag of the Republic of Molossia. Please see his article in this issue of *Vexillum*. Chris Maddish showed his proposal of a design for the disputed territory of Machias Seal Island. Off the coast of Nova Scotia, Canada, it is a 20-acre island with only a lighthouse and a few outbuildings whose ownership has been disputed by the U.S. and Britain (later Canada) since the Revolution. The flag Chris proposes would be like the 1931 proposed flag design, replacing the shield with a red maple leaf and a yellow star on the fields of blue.

We also enjoyed a round of VexiBits, which are quick chats about interesting flags. Ted Dahlberg displayed the flag of Corsica, first adopted in 1755 (fig. 14). It shows a silhouette of a Moor facing the hoist on a white field with a white bandana around the forehead. Originally it was a blindfold.

Al Cavaleri showed the flag of the Commander-in-Chief's Guard (Company A of the Third U.S. Infantry Regiment). The Commander-in-Chief's Guard is a successor to the unit that served as security for George Washington's headquarters in the Revolutionary War. Their flag is a light blue field (sometimes called George Washington blue or United Nations blue) with a circle of 13 six-pointed stars in a circle. It is a modified version of Washington's personal flag as commander-in-chief of Continental forces during the Revolutionary War.

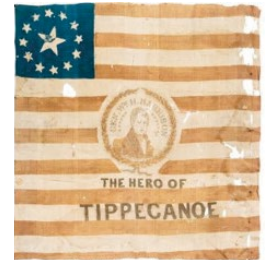
Connor Wright redesigns flags into different versions based on the style of other flags. He showed his skill to the members by redesigning the Maryland state flag under different forms of governments (socialist, monarchist, etc.) using Adobe software.



**Figure 13.** Flag of the U.S. Space Force. Source: Quartz magazine.

Other presentations included Anthony Iasso on the mystery of the 12-star flag. A most unusual flag in his personal collection of early American flags has 12 stars rather than the expected 13. The flag has stars of single-appliqued linen and stripes of wool bunting; the hand sewn stripes and whipstitched grommets appear to be of the Revolutionary era. A possible answer for the number of stars is that Rhode Island did not send a delegate to the Constitutional Convention nor sign the final document in 1788. Flag makers assumed that there were only twelve states instead of the thirteen and so made a flag of only twelve stars.

Nick Artimovich spoke on the U.S. president and the American flag in the 1800s. The use of the American flag has been associated with presidents since the early republic. The display of flags on the U.S. Capitol at the recent inauguration, for example, continues the tradition begun during presidential campaigns beginning with William Henry Harrison in 1840 (fig. 15). The use of the flag with presidential campaigns and in product advertisement without approval of the president led in the 1920s to the first Flag Code that provided the proper etiquette for the use of the national flag.



**Figure 15.** A U.S. flag used to promote the 1840 campaign of President William Henry Harrison. Source: Heritage Auctions.

John Riley spoke about the Freedom Flag Foundation, which sponsors the Freedom Flag created by Richard Mileto to honor the nearly 3,000 who lost their lives during the attacks of September 11, 2001. Schools, groups, and government offices were particularly encouraged to remember the deaths by adopting and flying the red/white/blue Freedom Flag. All states and territories have adopted the use of the flag (except South Dakota, which is expected to do so soon).

VexiBits continued with Betty Brown, who was fascinated by a pamphlet that she bought at an estate sale. Published by Pacombo's Pharmacy in 1973, it shows the story of the U.S. flag and includes references to both Betsy Ross and Francis Hopkinson. Especially during the U.S. Bicentennial, many groups, businesses, and local governments produced pamphlets about the history and the guidelines regarding flag etiquette and usage of the flag of the United States as a marketing device. They are routinely available on eBay and other sites for a few dollars. Al Cavaleri mentioned that the New York State flag is to change its motto to include "E Pluribus Unum". This complies with a change to the state seal proposed by Governor Andrew Cuomo and approved in April 2020.



**Figure 14.** Flag of Corsica. Source: Flickr.com/Jérôme Boivin.



# Art and the Flag

By Jay Bright

*Editor's Note: Jay Bright is an artist who appreciates flags. He has shown paintings at galleries in New Haven, Connecticut. Bright shares some of his paintings and his thoughts on his work with the readers of Vexillum.*

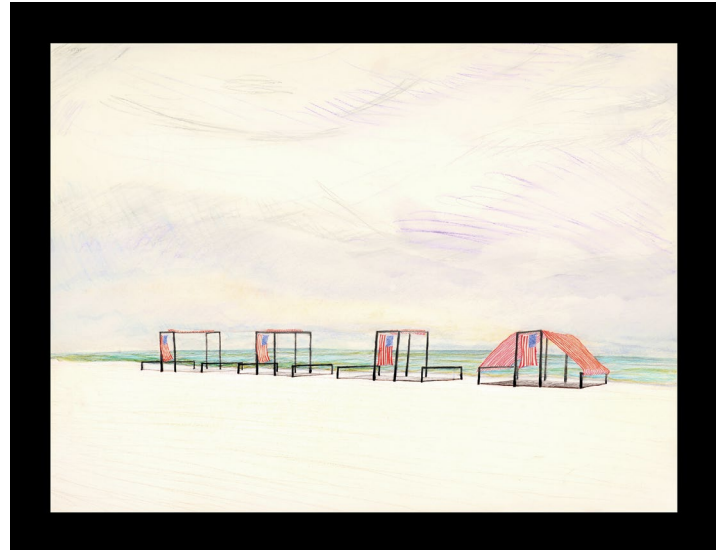
The American flag has inspired my art, a body of work that includes graphite and colored pencil drawings, watercolors, pastels, and prints of actual flags that shouted out to me—sometimes humorous, beautiful, tortured, or banal.

My first flag painting was done on Memorial Day more than two decades ago. I began the flag studies as an annual meditation on my late father who served in an Army bomb disposal unit in the Pacific and then worked as a civilian for the Army for the rest of his working life.



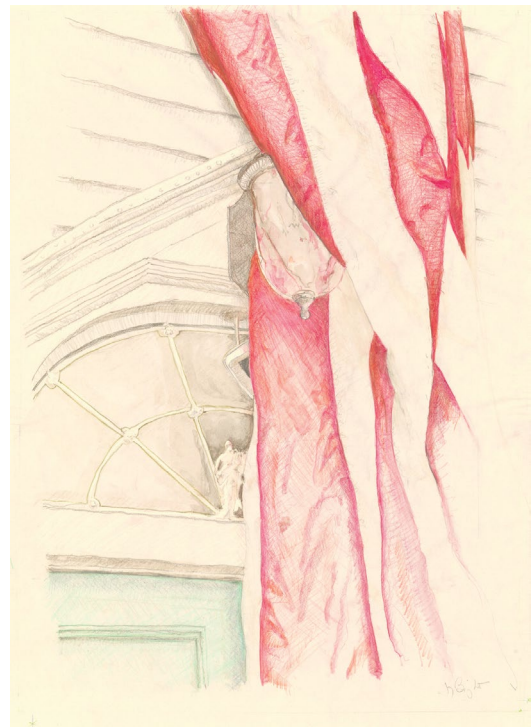
**Figure 1.** *Detroit Station Flags—Night* (2020).

Later, 9/11 inspired work on some flags in the Vermont landscape amid fall colors. More recently, seeing the flag wakes me up to my surroundings like a Zen gong. Often, I find astonishing settings for one or several flags to celebrate light, weather, or a bold graphic. Sometimes I trace the best features of the photo or draw them freehand on larger paper or foam core. Other times, I make larger, more abstract images. I don't feel any need to do all variations on each image because the next flag is already calling to me to begin. Now friends and strangers email flags that they have found compelling.



**Figure 2.** *Cape May Beach Flags* (2018).

Initially, I was fascinated by the graphic design of stars folding and stripes merging when the flags were caught by the wind or by flags as a symbol of a holiday or triumph. I like the ambiguous nature of flag images. The viewer brings a different set of memories and opinions. In the past five years, I have focused on tangled, torn, rusty, and distressed flags.



**Figure 3.** *Madison Flag* (2018).

First, I take photos at different times of day or night. Then I make a pencil summary of the interaction of stripes and folds or trace with water-soluble colored pencils onto

graph paper or directly onto foam core or watercolor paper. I intensify colors by wetting selected areas and enjoy the distortions of puckered paper.

I often get to a point where I have an archival print made so I can explore variations on the prints or push the original farther. I celebrate the slight translucencies and gorgeous color blends of sunlight shining through red and blue projected onto nearer white stripes. There is a point at which some voice tells me to stop, sometimes leaving large areas of white.



**Figure 4.** *Menemsha Flags* (2016).

Making these images is my way of tuning into the compact energy of our flag, in motion or still, while expressing something about our country. I look forward to continuing this work through the years.

You can also see more flags and other subjects on Bright's website, [www.jaybrightart.com](http://www.jaybrightart.com). Readers may send images of their favorite flags to [jaybright33@gmail.com](mailto:jaybright33@gmail.com).



**Figure 5.** *Office Flags* (2018).



**Figure 6.** *Pottsville Flag #7 aka Old Folks @ Home* (2016).



**Figure 7.** *Guilford Flag #2* (2016).



**Figure 8.** *Bensalem Flag #2 aka Black Jeep Flag* based on a photo by H. Warren Gans, (2018).



## NAVA Answers Flag Questions...*continued from page 22*

The flag was presented as a U.S. Army guidon (a small unit flag with a forked or swallow-tailed fly), purportedly used by Army “attack aviation” units (aircraft used to deliver airstrikes with more precision but less explosive power than traditional bombers). Its field was split horizontally from the fork of the fly. The top half was black, the bottom half white.

NAVA knows that horizontal red-over-white bi-color guidons of this type are exclusively utilized by cavalry units (fig. 2), including air cavalry (armed helicopters used for reconnaissance and patrol purposes). So, the attack aviation label was a clue to the flag's identity. Further, the unit designations were countercharged—meaning they appear in the opposite color of the part of the field to which they were applied—and represented aviation units, reportedly rotary wing (i.e., helicopters).

### The Search Begins

NAVA's secretary forwarded the research request to selected association members with military flag backgrounds. None of them, it turned out, were familiar with the specific type of guidon described. The hunt was on.

The quest continued with a review of applicable U.S. Army regulations. No luck was to be had there; there was no authorized guidon matching the one from the manufacturer's website.

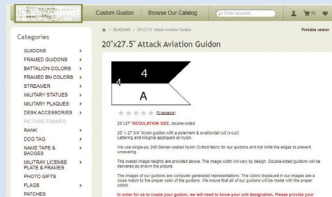
The next step was to call the manufacturer. This produced another strike-out. The company was unable to provide any authoritative source, facts, or background data for the guidon other than “someone from a military unit ordered it”.

### Analysis, Posits and Speculation

Deductive reasoning suggested that the guidon could have been obtained for non-military use, perhaps by a police department or military academy. Sadly, that train of thought was unfruitful.

Another possibility was that an error was made by a previous customer who ordered a guidon and accidentally merged elements of different military specifications. That train of thought was unfruitful as well.

NAVA's experts developed another hypothesis. They know that military units occasionally sidestep official procurement procedures because of time constraints and utilize unofficial flags—like this particular guidon—to fill exigent needs. These “field expedient” flags often appear when units are rapidly deployed or “new” units are created for a particular



**Figure 1.** This detail from a manufacturer's website became the basis for a prospective buyer's flag information request to NAVA.



**Figure 2.** Guidon of Company A, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. Source: Flickr.com/3rd Bridge Combat Team.

operation before unit flags can be designed, authorized, and manufactured.

### Eureka!

After consulting NAVA members with attack aviation backgrounds, the lead researcher learned that the black-and-white color scheme had a long history with the “aviation attack” military specialty. A call to the curator of the U.S. Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker, Alabama, confirmed an unofficial late-1970s or early-1980s origin for the black-and-white color combination. The answer to the request for information was becoming clearer.

Additional web searches for examples of the guidon finally revealed the design in question was in active use with at least one Army aviation unit preparing for deployment (fig. 3). It was successfully confirmed that this design is informally used for Army aviation units in the attack aviation specialty.

The guidon indeed exists, in practice if not officially. At least one unit uses an unofficial design; in this case it is a combination of the black-and-white colors associated with “air attack” units and the style of the venerable cavalry guidon used since 1833. The prospective buyer's question about the origin of the manufacturer's guidon was answered. Persistence paid off in this instance.

Members of NAVA exchanged information, opinions, expertise, and hypotheses through more than a dozen group messages, dug into arcane information sources, called or emailed contacts, and were able to deliver a definitive answer to the originator of the query within 48 hours.

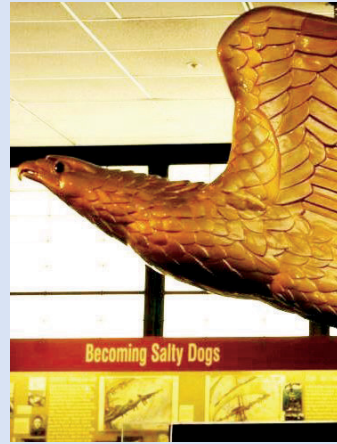
NAVA's swift and engaged response resulted in a two-tiered benefit. First, the individual seeking information about a unique flag received a well-considered and thoroughly researched answer. Additionally, and equally important, NAVA expanded the body of vexillological knowledge and made the details available to anyone interested.

*Jim Ferrigan is NAVA's treasurer and protocol officer. He lives in Reno, Nevada, where he curates the Zaricor Flag Collection.*

*Stan Contrades is NAVA's second vice president. He retired from the U.S. Air Force as a colonel and regularly volunteers at the U.S. Coast Guard Heritage Asset Collection of Art and Artifacts in Forestville, Maryland.*



**Figure 3.** Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division stand in formation during a color-casing ceremony at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, on June 1, 2018. Source: [https://www.army.mil/article/206306/1st\\_battalion\\_25th\\_aviation\\_regiment\\_cases\\_colors\\_for\\_korea\\_rotation](https://www.army.mil/article/206306/1st_battalion_25th_aviation_regiment_cases_colors_for_korea_rotation)



# NAVA 55 • Cyberspace • June 12, 2021

**J**oin your fellow members in cyberspace for the 55th annual meeting of the North American Vexillological Association! NAVA's second virtual meeting will take place Saturday, June 12, noon to 8 pm EDT (9 am to 5 pm PDT).

Full program and schedule information is posted on the meeting web page accessed on [nava.org](http://nava.org). (The NAVA annual meeting in St. Augustine has been rescheduled to June, 2022, as NAVA 56.)

## Program

The meeting will include the opening ceremony, scholarly presentations, the "State of NAVA" discussion, Vexi-Bits, messages from commercial members, the Driver Award, and a closing ceremony. Special features will include a panel, Inside The Mississippi Flag Change, with NAVA members and others who played important roles in the 2020 effort; a virtual tour of the Coast Guard Exhibit Center in Forestville, Maryland; and a keynote presentation on the 2021 National Mall Inauguration Day Flag Display, by key staffers of the contractor, C3 Presents of Austin, Texas.

The program will be held via Zoom, allowing participants to join each other in cyberspace. The platform will allow member interaction—such as the question-and-answer

period following each presentation and during the business meeting. Presentations will be recorded for later public viewing.

No advance registration is required; Zoom login information will appear in the member area of [nava.org](http://nava.org) and in *Semaphore* and *Vexi-News*.

## NAVA 55 Flag

The NAVA 55 flag, designed by Joshua Hodges of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, references NAVA's flag with the top turned to the hoist. The gold triangle and trapezoid represent a camera, a common icon of teleconferencing apps.



## Sponsors

The event is free to attend, but holding it is not without costs. Sponsors help with those expenses. Traditionally, the \$25 "sponsor" category provides those who cannot attend in person with all the materials distributed at the meeting. This year a "sponsor" provides financial support to the meeting, and in return will receive a 4"x6" meeting flag, pin, and other materials from NAVA 55. Purchase your sponsorship in the NAVA shop at [nava.org](http://nava.org), or send \$25 to NAVA via PayPal to [treas@nava.org](mailto:treas@nava.org) or via check to P.O. Box 55071 #58049, Boston, MA 02205-5071.

