A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT
...NICHOLAS ARTIMOVIICH

This is the first issue of NAVA News prepared by our new Editor-in-Chief, James Croft. I am sure Jim will be eager to receive your thoughts and comments on how he can serve you best through his stewardship of this newsletter. He also looks forward to receiving articles or papers you have written for publication. Jim thinks it is time that NAVA News evolve into a more scholarly publication. I agree that our newsletter should grow, but its future depends on the quantity and quality of the material that you and I can provide. We can also help if we see articles of interest about flags in periodicals and send them to our new Vexi-Bits editor, Dave Pawson.

At our Annual Business Meeting last October in Covington much debate surrounded the question of whether the North American Vexillological Association should represent all the countries north of Panama, or just Canada and the U.S. It was not simply a debate over geography or the name of the organization; rather, it affects our links to the international vexillological community.

When NAVA became a founding member of FIAV (French acronym for the International Federation of Vexillological Associations) our bylaws stated that our active membership was limited to citizens of the United States and Canada. At that time we did not claim to represent vexillologists from Mexico and Central America. Some members saw an inconsistency in our name since most people consider the continent of North America to be the land mass that includes Canada, the U.S., Mexico, and the Central American nations. That’s how I learned it as a child, and indeed our NAVA seal includes a portion of the globe highlighting the North American continent. A change to the NAVA bylaws was subsequently approved to include residents of all those countries as eligible for “Active Member” status.

We now need to consider whether that was the right thing to do. One of the most important aspects of vexillology around the world is the FIAV International Congress of Vexillology, held every two years. The FIAV bylaws prohibit other “international” meetings of vexillologists, thereby hoping to discourage people from holding regional meetings that would draw support away from the ICV. Most FIAV member organizations operate within the boundaries of one country. NAVA, representing Canada and the U.S., and the Scandinavian vexillological association are exceptions in that they include vexillologists from more than one country. NAVA was not discouraged from holding periodic meetings as we were founded as a bi-national organization, and our meetings were not seen as threats to the ICV. Indeed, NAVA has been among the staunchest supporters of the International Congresses with numerous members from both the U.S. and Canada attending.

Now that our bylaws state that NAVA represents Canada, the U.S., Mexico, the seven Central American countries, and numerous Caribbean nations, territories, and colonies, [CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]
A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

FIAV may consider our annual meetings as “international meetings” which are not permitted under their bylaws. Now you might ask, “So what? Why should we care what they do?” This could be a problem if NAVA were to host an ICV, as we hope to do in 1999. If some group of FIAV members in Europe, for example, decides that the U.S. or Canada is too far to travel, they may want to hold their own “international meeting” in 1999. This could severely impact attendance at our officially sanctioned ICV, and dilute the quality of vexillological knowledge that is revealed. By limiting NAVA to include only Canada and the U.S., we would be returning to the status quo when FIAV was first formed. Our annual meetings would not be in violation of the FIAV bylaws, and other “international” meetings which might compete with an ICV would be uniformly discouraged.

When I first joined NAVA I, like many others, assumed the organization would include members from the Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico. The reality is that we have had very few “active” members other than U.S. or Canadian citizens. According to Harry Oswald, he was paying dues for one of our Mexican members, and the other one was an expatriate U.S. citizen. That leads me to believe that NAVA is a bi-national organization, and that there is no need to try to include vexillologists from the Latin-speaking countries. There is even some merit to the idea that they should be encouraged to form their own vexillological organizations.

We plan to bring the question to a vote again when we meet in Sacramento in October. I encourage a free and open debate on this subject. Please write the Editor with your opinion on the question of whether NAVA should represent only the U.S. and Canada, or should we retain the broader definition now contained in the bylaws. If we do change, do we need to change the name of the organization? Can we construe the term “North America” to mean only the U.S. and Canada? Or should we just ignore the slight discrepancy between our name and what some people think it should mean?

As a final note, I wish to thank Grace Cooper for her great efforts in advancing NAVA News to become the respected publication that it is, and I wish Jim Croft good luck in furthering its development in 1996.

REFLAGGING THE U.S. ARMY

by John H. Gómez

The July 3, 1995 issue of the Army Times reports that 172 Army units are to be deactivated, reactivated, or reorganized. Two related articles explain why.

In “More force cuts? Read the signs,” staff writer Patrick Pexton explains why the first general drawdown in forces was necessary and why a second drawdown is in the works.

Basically, maintaining air, land, and sea forces at Reagan era levels is costly. With the collapse of the Soviet Union the need for large standing forces has been deemed unnecessary.

The Gulf War showed that small, well trained, highly motivated forces armed with the latest high tech weapons can demolish an army and obliterate a landscape with greater efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Units affected by the reflagging plan range from divisions down to the company level. As part of the move to reduce the Army from a 12 division force to a 10 division force the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) will be inactivated and reflagged as the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized). The 2nd Armored Division will be inactivated then reflagged as the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized).

Of special historic interest is the reactivation of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Division and its flag. This particular unit can trace its lineage back to the Minute Men at Lexington. Its flag is decorated with streamers for all U.S. wars through Vietnam.

According to the article “All said and done: New flags for 172 units” by Jim Tice, some of the reflagging will involve the moving of existing flags to their new headquarters. In many cases the redesignation of brigades and companies may require the creation of new flags and guidons. Campaign streamers are usually “inherited” and will in all likelihood be passed on to the newly organized units. A unit’s old designation will become a part of its lineage.

The force realignment will also affect the Army’s regional system. A regiment is a non-tactical subdivision (i.e. not organized for battle). It is a grouping of similar organizations such as infantry companies and usually assigned to a specific geographic region. The regiments colors are kept at a home base. This is usually the location of the headquarters company. Efforts are being made to spare the oldest, and therefore the most historic, regiments from the budget ax.

The article is accompanied by six pages of charts detailing scores of Army units, their locations, and possible future dispositions.

Realignment and reflagging is scheduled for completion by May of 1996.

BOOK REVIEW:

Flags of Louisiana

Written by Jeanne Frois; illustrated by Larry Pardue; (1995) Pelican Publishing Company, Gretna, LA [(800) 843-1724; $15.95 US, ISBN 1-56554-047-6; 96pp.; hardcover; 5½ x 8½ (15 x 22½ cm); 20 color flag illustrations (each = 2 5/8 x 4½)].

In 1989, Pelican Publishing reprinted with new artwork (46 illus.) and other changes, Charles E. Gilbert, Jr.'s Flags of Texas (see review FB No. 134, 1990). Then in 1990, Pelican published Flags of Tennessee by Devereaux D. Cannon, Jr. in a similar hardcover format, with 49 illustrations. Flags of Louisiana is third in what has become almost a series of books on the flags of southern states from Pelican. Pelican's catalogue reflects some focus on works of "southern orientation."

This new work is directed to the general reading audience, not vexillologists or historians. While well-written and informative, like the other flag books, the lack of bibliography and footnotes gives the simulated reader no place to turn for further information on Louisiana's flags. Flags of Louisiana is divided into 2 parts—Historic Flags and Flag's of Louisiana's Parishes and Cities, with 11 chapters in the first and 2 chapters, one each on Parishes and Cities, in the second. It also contains "An Essay on the Designing of Flags," by Devereaux Cannon, excerpted from the earlier Flags of Tennessee, a one-page "The Art of Flag Making," and a 3 page "Glossary."

Part II is disappointing in that only 2 Parish and 3 City flags are discussed and illustrated. No details are given about whether these are the only municipality flags, just a selection, or even the number of Parishes and Cities. Two comments seem appropriate about the book's illustrations. The 20 illustrations are of a much higher quality than in the previous books, both in detail and in the printing. They are pleasant to view. Unfortunately, there are substantially fewer of the illustrations—20 instead of the 46 and 49 of the earlier publications.

No comment can be made on the accuracy of the book's contents. No design specifications are provided and the illustrations appear to be rendered in standard size, and likely not intended to reflect specific ratios, if any, for the flags. While criticisms can be made of this book, this reviewer is always pleased to find efforts being made to cover materials not readily available about a particular area of flag study. Positive efforts are made in this book to make information about the flags of Louisiana available to the reading public. Both the publisher and creators of this volume deserve credit for what they have provided.

William J. Trinkle
A NAVA RETROSPECTIVE
by Dr. Whitney Smith
(Part One of a Two Part Series)

The approaching 30th anniversary of the North American Vexillological Association in 1997 is an appropriate time to put in print a brief history of NAVA during its formative years. Aside from the interest this may have for new members and for the future, this can help—by putting in focus the original purposes and activities of NAVA—some of the guiding principles as those questions are again given consideration by members of the association.

To understand why and how NAVA was founded, it helps to go back to the late 1950s. It was an exciting era for flag changes around the world: for example, the Sudan and Ghana had come to independence, Egypt and Syria had joined to form the United Arab Republic, and the Hungarians unsuccessfully tried to throw off Communist rule. These and other events involved new flags, but there was no regular source of information on the subject. Often it was several years before encyclopedias—or even flag manufacturers—caught up with changes.

Many people were interested in flags, but they had little contact with one another. For some it was basically a job—to make and sell flags, to illustrate them for reference publications, or to deal with flags as museum artifacts. There were also flag hobbyists, but the lack of communication meant that each felt himself the only one in the world interested in the subject. In Europe flags were generally considered a minor subdivision of heraldry, scarcely worthy of separate notice. In the United States the flag (i.e. the Stars and Stripes) was a patriotic symbol which only occasionally got serious attention as part of the political history of the nation.

In Britain a small "Flag Circle" had existed briefly before the Second World War, but by the end of the 1940s it was dead. No regular meetings were ever held and the Flag Circle had no publications, bylaws, or outreach programs. So far as is known, no other association or conference relating to flags had ever been held in world history, aside from the various flag-waving groups in the United States like the U.S. Flag Association.

My personal interest in flags, going back at least to the age of six, was given a boost in 1950 when I wrote to Greenland. I couldn’t understand how a country so large—-in the Mercator projection, it ranks with Africa in size—could have no flag. I was thrilled to receive a response from the governor of Greenland himself, explaining that the flag of Denmark was the only one flown on the island. I then began writing around the world for documentation on flags of all kinds and, in the process, came into contact with other individuals interested in the subject.

My enthusiasm was further stimulated in 1957 when I graduated from high school. Courtesy of an aunt who taught school in Mt. Kisco, New York, I spent two weeks in New York City. To see the flags of the 60 members of the United Nations, flying outside its East River headquarters, was to feel oneself to be at the "flag capital" of the world. I was also privileged to have lunch with William Dwiggins, Sales Manager for Annin & Company, Rev. Darlington, President of the United States Flag Foundation, and Nathaniel Abelson, Map Librarian of the United Nations. These three men were involved on a daily basis—each from a different perspective—with flags. I told them about the word I had coined for the study of flags, vexillology, based on the Latin word vexillum, meaning flag.

Although I had been sending information for several years to *Compton’s Pictured Encyclopedia* on flag changes and although in 1958 UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund) accepted articles of mine for publication in a series of books, I felt frustrated that there were so few flag-related activities. While an undergraduate at Harvard College, I began to think about publishing a series of pamphlets which would present articles on different flag topics. These could be distributed to vexillologists around the world who might in turn write articles for future pamphlets.

The usefulness of this became particularly evident in 1959, the *annus mirabilis* of new flags. There were 22 new national flags that year around the world. Many were from emerging African countries undergoing transition from colonial status to independence, but other nations acquired new flags as well. South Arabia, East Germany, Cyprus, Suriname, the Netherlands Antilles—even the United States—hoisted new flags that year. Unfortunately, very few people had details on these changes. My own work at the time—articles published on "Mongolian Symbolology" in *The Coat of Arms* magazine and one on Arab flags in a journal edited in Lebanon—did little to improve the situation.

**ORIGINS OF THE FLAG RESEARCH CENTER**

Finally, a major turning point was reached in 1961 which forever changed the study of flags. That summer, just before entering graduate school, I spent a month as an intern at the United Nations in New York. Fortuitously, Nathaniel Abelson invited me to join him in an assignment he had just received—to write a booklet on the flags of the UN members which would be sold by the organization at its gift shop. That month I also had a chance to visit several times with Gerhard Grahl, a school teacher five years my senior who lived in The Bronx.

Gary employed flags in his classroom as a teaching device to give students an appreciation for foreign cultures and history. In addition to his genuine enthusiasm for flags, he had a very practical sense of how to go about getting things done. Although in later years his interest in vexillology decreased, I am still extremely grateful to Gary for the concrete solutions and the work which he contributed towards making *The Flag Bulletin*, the Flag Research Center, and NAVA successful.

In our discussions, I told Gary about my proposed series of pamphlets. Why not, he suggested, make it a magazine issued on a regular basis so that it wouldn’t be necessary to go looking for purchasers of each new “pamphlet.” He volunteered to run of the issues in his classroom on a spirit duplicator, which would keep costs to an absolute minimum. Readers would look forward to each issue and we could combine news of flag changes with book reviews, longer articles on flag history, flag-related events, and similar material. He insisted that we use a name everyone could understand, rather than *The Quarterly Journal of Vexillology*, which I favored. In this way *The Flag Bulletin* was born in October 1961.

We sent out the first issue to about 50 people around the world with whom we had been in correspondence, plus others I thought might be interested in our efforts. The response was very positive—so much so that Gary and I decided to establish the Flag Research Center as of the first of February 1962. In addition to publishing *The Flag Bulletin*, the objectives of the Center were to collect as much information as possible on flags of all kinds, including books and other publications, and to make this available to all interested persons. In 1964 *The Flag Bulletin* published a list of names and addresses of such people and the following year G.K. Hall published my bibliography of almost 4000 flag-related publications, a resource never before (or since) matched.

These clearly filled important needs because the response to each was immediate and positive. The casual contacts I had developed during the previous decade increased substantially, including book exchanges, notices of new flags, queries about sources of information, swapping of actual flags, etc. Nevertheless it also quickly became clear that we had by no means found the limits to the interest which existed among vexillologists. Another important step in vexillology was taken in 1965.

In anticipation of studies in Belgium (which were never realized) for my doctoral dissertation, I had been in correspondence with Klaes Sierksma of the Netherlands about a meeting of vexillologists in his
country. In September 1965 we were jointly able to realize the 1st International Congress of Vexillology. In the little town of Muiderberg 19 participants from Europe, plus myself and a man from South Africa, spent two days discussing flags and enjoying tours, films, lectures, and exhibits. After getting to know each other, on the second day we discussed the future development of our nascent "science of vexillology."

Everyone agreed that The Flag Bulletin was an important voice for vexillology, but that the proceedings of the congress should be published separately as a permanent contribution to knowledge, particularly for those unable to attend. Congresses should continue to be held on a regular basis for our mutual enrichment, moving from country to country both to encourage wide participation and to give us access to the vexillological treasures of diverse cultures. We also needed some kind of international association to coordinate our activities, especially the International Congresses. Responsibility for creating the association was placed in the hands of myself, Sierksma, and Louis Muhlemann, who was to organize the 2nd International Congress of Vexillology in Zurich in 1967.

THE ORIGINS OF FIAV

During the course of correspondence between the three of us the present International Federation of Vexillological Associations (FIAV) was developed. We quickly recognized that the original concept of an "International League of Vexillologists" would present many difficulties due to the small number of individuals around the world interested in flags, the tremendous distances involved, and the fact that very few of us had any possibility of getting financial support for vexillology from our occupations. If the only gathering of vexillologists took place at the biennial congresses, decisions would be heavily weighted in favor of the natives of the host country. Moreover, those who for any reason could not attend might well find the possibility of meeting other vexillologists only once a decade or less often.

For these reasons it was decided that FIAV would be a federation linking associations and institutions, rather than individuals. The creation of associations would allow vexillologists in each country or region to organize themselves as they saw fit—with their own meetings, publications, and activities suited to local circumstances. This also eliminated the necessity of a budget for FIAV and the complications which might arise from trying to determine a fair assessment of money, proper control over its spending, and the uneven benefits that might result. For example, a small national association with fewer than a dozen members could pay only a small fraction of what the National Geographic Society with hundreds of thousands of members could afford if both were participants in FIAV, yet it would be unfair for each to have exactly the same vote in deciding FIAV affairs.

Thus it was decided that the core purpose of the new international organization would be to provide a forum every two years for member associations and institutions to meet and discuss mutual problems. When appropriate, this would result in internationally-binding decisions. In addition, sponsorship of the International Congresses of Vexillology would be an important ongoing responsibility for FIAV. While there have been objections to this system over the years, some people insisting that FIAV should have more power, my own feeling is that it has worked extremely well. We get the greatest possible benefit for vexillology at both the national and international level without the many complications that might have arisen under another system—particularly if FIAV had a regular budget and assessment of dues from its members.

While there was general agreement that national associations would provide the regular opportunities for individual vexillologists to meet, exchange information, publish, and develop their interests, in fact national associations did not exist in 1965. Thus the decision to constitute FIAV as a federation of vexillological associations was a prime factor leading to the creation of those associations. Things would have worked out very differently if the original concept of an International League of Vexillologists had been followed.

Sierksma was the head of the Foundation for Vexillology and Heraldry, while Gary and I ran the Flag Research Center. Lawrence Tower was president of the United States Flag Foundation, although this was not really a vexillological association since its only interest was in promoting the Stars and Stripes. Others belonged to heraldic associations where vexillological interests were definitely in the minority.

It is also important to keep in mind that in 1965 the Flag Research Center constituted a de facto association. The 200 people around the world who subscribed to its then quarterly Flag Bulletin frequently thought of themselves as members of a society with common objectives, communications, and leadership. Even though the Flag Research Center has always specifically disavowed the concept of membership, there are still people today who renew their subscriptions to The Flag Bulletin by sending what they refer to as "membership dues."

The Flag Research Center might have taken an aggressive approach to this issue, proclaiming itself the International Association of Vexillologists. This was not done for a number of reasons, but first and foremost Gary and I felt that it would be presumptuous of us to announce ourselves the leaders of such a society. Moreover, it would have been difficult for us to meet the real needs and interests of a membership-based organization of world scope.

In 1965 we were both employed full time, he as a school teacher and I as an instructor at Boston University, each of us had two small children. Neither of us had the time or financial resources to operate a worldwide membership organization properly. It would have been a reasonable expectation at the very least to hold one annual meeting, perhaps even several meetings a year, in different parts of the world. Members would rightly have expected to take an active role in running the organization and setting its policies, including The Flag Bulletin, the Flag Research Center library, research projects, etc.

Europeans of an older generation in particular might not have been comfortable with two Americans, aged 25 and 30, presuming to set the tone and pace for such an association and for the International Congresses of Vexillology. Therefore I believe that the decision Gary and I made to limit the Flag Research Center to an institution, rather than an association, and to encourage the development of FIAV and its separate national associations as independent groups was the correct choice for everyone concerned.

There was another factor involved, although at the time it was not of great significance. The Flag Research Center had (and has) legal status as an unincorporated business. Its assets, rather modest in 1965, were the personal possessions of Gary and myself. After I left Boston University as an assistant professor of political science in 1969, the growth of the Center led to commercial developments which would have been difficult to justify as part of a membership association with noncommercial gains.

The Netherlands Association of Vexillology (NVVV) was the first national association of vexillology, founded in 1966 by the Dutch. The French Association of International Vexillological Studies (no longer in existence) was the second organization formed, later that same year. NAVA, the third vexilliological association to be created, has always had the largest membership. These three joined the institutes headed by Sierksma and by Gary and myself—plus the United States Flag Foundation and five heraldic societies—when the provisional creation of FIAV was announced in September 1967 at the 2nd International Congress of Vexillology. FIAV currently (1996) has 21 vexillological associations and eight institutions, three heraldic associations, one army historical association, and two flag-waiving organizations as members in 26 countries.

[Part II, "The Origins of NAVA," will appear in the next issue.]
A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

flags were the originals made in England and had been on display since the Center’s opening over 20 years ago. The donated examples were flags that were replaced during a major flag maintenance effort in the early 1990’s. Any member who, for a modest donation, would like to obtain one of the few remaining rarities in our possession may write to me.

If you were among those who were eligible for the drawing, I thank you for returning your membership renewal on time. You saved NAVA a significant amount of money that would otherwise be spent on follow-up letters and phone calls. For the rest of you, especially those who have not renewed, what’s wrong? Did the blizzard of ’96 keep you from getting to the post office? Have you just put it off until convenient? If that’s the case, we certainly do not want to lose you as a member, and I urge you to respond soon and continue your association with us. If you have decided not to join us again, why not? Is there something missing? Are you no longer interested in flags? (Is that possible?) Can we do things to make NAVA better somehow? Please let me know how we can make this organization more responsive to your needs.

On another subject, but one that comes back to membership: I have been “surfing the net” for a couple of months now since my office computer network has been linked to the Internet (I’m sorry, but there aren’t many “hits” when I search for “guardrail”, but there’s plenty of information on flags). I’m a relative neophyte to cyberspace, but it is fascinating how much information is out there. Most of it is not of the depth of scholarship that NAVA members are used to, but sometimes the information is quite interesting and detailed. I bring up this topic because a number of you are also Internet-literate, and I think that this is a good forum for letting people know about NAVA. I recall that the subject of a NAVA “web site” has been discussed in the past. I would like to look into the possibility of instituting this and learn what is involved. If any of you would like to help in this venture, please contact me at “artimovich@intergate.dot.gov”.

1896 FLAG OF NEW YORK CITY STREET CLEANERS

By William J. Trinkle

NEW YORK’S UNIFORMED STREET CLEANERS

A Summer 1896 San Francisco Chronicle newspaper article reported on New York City’s actions in uniforming and subjecting to a quasi-military discipline the city’s street cleaners. Accompanying the article is a drawing of a parade of the street cleaners, on march, as if in a parade. At the lead of the unit is a flag bearer, carrying the colors of the “2nd District DSC.” (See Illustration.) From the copy of the black and white drawing, it is impossible to tell the coloration of the flag. The ratio of the flag is very roughly 4:7 (or 1:1.77), with an estimated size of 20” x 35”. Although not stated in the accompanying article, it is believed the “DSC” initials on the flag stand for “Department of Street Cleaning (or Cleaners).” The drawing bears the caption “NEW YORK’S UNIFORMED STREET CLEANERS.”

"U IS FOR USSR"

By Nicholas Artimovich

In the July-August 1989 issue of NAVA News I began a Collector’s Corner series beginning with "A is for Afghanistan." The intent of this series was to outline the changes in national flags that have taken place over the last one hundred years or so. This information would be useful to vexillologists and vexillophilia alike who are trying to identify and date an old flag. The series ground to a halt in 1992 at the letter T, because the next installment, "U is for USSR", had to include all the changes in the flags of the former Soviet Union that had taken place since I began the series.

The former Soviet republics have, by in large, resurrected flags that they used before being "invited" to join the USSR. A few of them had not yet adopted their own individual post-communist designs upon admission to the United Nations, as was evidenced in the Page 2 photo in the May/June 1992 issue of NAVA News. In this column I will cover all of the former soviet republics with the exception of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania which gained independence earlier and were already included in previous columns. Since it has been a while since the last appearance of this column, let me repeat the color code: R/red, Y/yellow, B/blue, N/black, V/green, W/white, O/orange.

Any member may receive a copy of all previous articles by sending me US$3.00 in stamps (a check is OK, too). I will also include a copy of my list of duplicate flags (mostly obsolete 4" x 6") and flag books (both U.S. and flags of the world) that I have available for sale or trade.

UGANDA

1965-date Horizontal stripes of N,Y,R,N,Y,R with W disc in center with crested crane.

U.S.S.R.

Pre-1917—(See "Russia" below)

1918—Flag of Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic: R field with Y text spelling out the name in the Cyrillic alphabet.

1918-1920—RSFSR flag modified to permit use of initials instead of full name.

1920-1954—RSFSR flag modified by establishing design of initials RSFSR and placing them within a Y bordered R canton.

1923—RSFSR unites with other Soviet Socialist Republics under flag of USSR: R field with state arms.

1923-1955—R field with Y hammer, sickle, and R star fimbriated Y, all in upper hoist corner.

1955-1980—Minor artistic revisions made to hammer and sickle designs.

1980-1991—Specifications issued which required hammer, sickle, and star only on front of flag. Reverse was plain R. (It appears that this was, in effect, an option as official flags were produced with the emblem on one or both sides.)

FLAGS OF FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS

(Many nations adopted flags upon independence after WW I, but lost independent status when compelled to join the USSR.)

Armenia—1918-1921—Horizontal Stripes of R, B, O.
December

Lieutenant before inserting told of was amsted
was clean dipstick referew:e to state, local, or minor government official.

of "signifying or violence." (1IIIbmiUod by Jama Croft)

47% "strongly passing constitutional amendment of 600 Mass. voters shows support amendment to..."

Hays, Kansas fire Globe Newsweek, Daily just an costitutiooal amendment of

The lowering from away. The American law to protect the flag to clean the dipstick (D-MA)

to protect..." reports OIl..."Alamo banner isn't flagging."h

no more than one 2600 registered voters on Aug. 22 and 23 indicates that: 60% “said passing a law to protect the flag... does not limit free speech rights,” 47% “strongly favor the proposed amendment,” and 64% “favor some constitutional amendment to protect the flag." (submitted by James Croft)

Daily Hampshire Gazette, Northampton MA, 26 July 1995. “Flags to serve as beacons for children in trouble.” Reports the introduction of a flag designed to indicate to children where they may go if they need help while away from home. Blue flags depicting a kitchen and Dalmatian puppy and bearing the inscription “Kids Need Hugs, Not Drugs” will hang from numerous homes in Easthampton “signifying that their doors are open to children threatened by drugs or violence." (submitted by James Croft)

The Boston Globe, Boston, MA, 16 Aug. 1995. “Flag lowering on the rise: Tradition becoming trivialized, some say.” Reports on a flag developing over the practice of lowering the flag to half staff for every state, local, or minor government official, sports star, victims of acts of terrorism, and others who have passed away. The claim is made that in some areas (presumably Boston) the flag has spent as many as 200 days a year at half staff. Fred Rivo, director of Gloucester’s veteran’s service is quoted as saying, “It diminishes the meaning. They should fly low for real heroes — those that helped the country, not media heroes or anyone else.” NAVA’s own Whitney Smith is stated to have suggested the lowering of the county, city, state or corporate flag, as appropriate, for lives honored by those entities, saving the American flag for national mourning. There is also reference to an abuse of the custom — in the 1930s “Maine Governor Percival Baxter ordered all American flags lowered in front of state buildings” when his dog died. (submitted by James Croft)

The Spokesman-Review, Spokane, WA, 20 Sep. 1995. “Teen can clean dipstick with flag.” An unidentified Oklahoma City area youth was arrested after using an American flag to clean the dipstick of his car. Prosecutors declined to press charges, citing the Supreme Court’s decision that such action constitutes free speech. (submitted by James White)

Newswear. (Quotes column/Briefs), 2 Oct., 1995. “It was like it was just an old rag to him... There has got to be a way to protect this symbol.” Army veteran Terry Boaz, on a teenager he reported to police for cleaning a dipstick with the U.S. flag. Prosecutors declined to charge the youth. (submitted by Peter Edwards)

Globe and Mail, Toronto, Ontario, 27 Sep. 1995. “Court-martial told of cigar tube assault.” The relevant parts: A general court-martial hearing in Halifax was told that, during an early morning party in December 1991 aboard the Canadian Navy submarine Ojibwa, the Lieutenant Commander who captained the vessel used a marker to “paint a French flag” on the hip of an unconscious Lieutenant just before inserting a 6” cigar tube into the victim’s anus. [Ed. Note: No reason was given for the choice of colors.] (submitted by James White)

The Spokesman-Review, Spokane, WA, 28 Sep. 1995. “Flag-burning foes turn up heat.” The Citizens Flag Alliance, veterans organizations, the Grange, and other backers are attempting to commit their senators, Patty Murray (D-WA) and Slade Gordon (R-WA) to the flag protection amendment. They claim that 59% of the people they polled support the amendment. (submitted by James White)

The Spokesman-Review, Spokane, WA, 2 Oct. 1995, “Ferry County faces unflagging criticism.” AND THE Standard Examiner [what an appropriate name!], Odgen, UT, 12 Oct., 1995, “Flag flap brings unflagging criticism.” Details the efforts of one Ralph Westlake to remove fringed flags, supposedly representative of martial law, from Ferry County and other Washington State courthouses. County Commissioner Jim Hall said he was convinced by an (unnamed) government pamphlet that fringed flags were inappropriate for courtroom use. Other local officials continue the debate. (submitted by James White and Gregg Hansen)

Dallas Morning News, Dallas, TX, 12 Nov. 1995. “Quest to find missing Alamo banner isn’t flagging.” Reports on continuing efforts of Governor George W. Bush and other Texas officials to persuade the Mexican government to locate the flag of the New Orleans Grays, captured from the Alamo in 1836, which is missing somewhere in Mexico City’s National Museum system. The flag was last displayed at the Museum of Foreign Interventions in the mid-80s. Texas would like to arrange a loan or exchange of flags captured by each side in the war for independence. (submitted by Dave Pawson)

AROUND THE PUBLICATIONS

Edited by David Pawson

Crux Australis, Flag Society of Australia, 10/4, Oct./Dec. 1994, reports on the Society’s affairs and efforts. Articles include “Indiginality and Australian Vexillography,” about the Aboriginal people and their symbols; “A Tale of Two Flags,” about Australian sprinter Cathy Freeman, who carried both Aboriginal and Australian flags on her victory laps at the Commonwealth Games in Victoria, BC, in August 1994, and the ensuing clash of opinions regarding that action; and “Eureka Anniversary,” which recap the history of the flag of the Eureka Stockade. Also includes an index to volume 10.

Nordisk Flagkontakt, Nordisk Flaggselskap No. 21, 1995, [Denmark], reports on the new flags of Belarus and the Comoros, as well as the national seals of Kirgizia, Tadjikistan, Montenegro, the Bosnian Serbs, and Norway. Describes the flags of Iceland’s president and prime minister (?) [rísksforstander = reich’s foremost]. Also articles on Finnish and Norwegian regional/city/ethnic flags and banners, as well as one on Nordic church flags.

Kleebatt, Heraldischer Verein zum Kleebatt, No. 3/95, [Germany], contains articles on an excursion by members into the region of Schaumburg; the discovery of a gravestone dating to the late middle ages, which bears a farmer’s coat of arms; a tax levied on Turks during the late 1400s; Lower Saxony and its arms; the letter “W” in Breslau’s arms; the foundation of the German Vexillological Society; postal commemoration of German artist Albrecht Duerer; and new borough arms in Berlin.

*The 3rd German Vexillological Conference was held on February 4, 1995 in Achim. The 20 participants, from Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, Munich and elsewhere founded the “German Society for Flag Studies.” Joel Karaschewski is president and treasurer; Andreas Herzfeld is vice-president; Juergen Rimann is secretary.

To contact this new organization, write to:

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Flaggenkunde
Postfach 11 18
28817 Achim
Germany

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FLAGS IN PUBLIC ART: AN AREA FOR EXPLORATION
by Scott Guenter

There are many occasions when the study of art history and vexillology overlap, and in such situations we can learn from drawing on the knowledge of art scholars while sharing our insights gleaned from the study of flags. Beyond an art historian praising Jasper Johns’ “Flags” (1958) as a fine example of image elaboration as a visual cliché to reassess its meaning, we might connect it to Eisenhower’s amendment of the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954 or analyses of flag usage in the Cold War era. The controversy incited by “What Is the Proper Way To Display a U.S. Flag?” , “Dread” Scott T. Miller’s mixed media installation at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1989 (an installation that required standing on a flag on the floor to sign or read the guest ledger) can be explained by an art historian as an example of the evolution of interactive encounters in museum presentations in the past twenty years while vexillologists can bring knowledge to bear on the development of flag usage as a free speech issue in the second half of the twentieth century. They can teach us, we can teach them—both will benefit.

Recently, the study of public art has garnered more attention in academic circles. It can sometimes benefit from vexillological input. Calls for multicultural sensitivity have triggered “culture wars” in American society and, I would argue, albeit in a different fashion, in Canadian society as well. As long as flags continue to be easily recognized symbols, powerful conveyors of great semiotic significance, they will turn up in public art, memorials and commemorative displays designed for community consumption and appreciation. It is when such works send messages that anger or disturb the intended audience because of the power and meaning of flags and flag-related symbolism that vexillologists should join the analysis.

Consider, for example, Barbara Kruger’s 1989 outdoor mural for the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art’s “Temporary Contemporary” building. She planned a 29 by 219 foot mural to cover a wall of the building—a wall that faced Los Angeles’s Little Tokyo neighborhood. Kruger proposed a giant modification of the Pledge of Allegiance bumper stickers she had displayed in a Museum of Contemporary Art exhibition earlier that year. Using the colors red, white, and blue, invoking the design layout of the flag of the United States, her bumper sticker bordered the pledge with these provocative questions: “Who is bought and sold? Who is beyond the law? Who is free to choose? Who follows orders? Who salutes longest? Who prays loudest? Who dies first? Who laughs last? Who does time?”

In the high art world of the museum, the juxtaposition of the flag imagery, the pledge, and these questions powerfully conveyed the artist’s point. However, planned for a wall facing a Japanese American community, it was perceived as an insult, questioning the allegiance of citizens of non-European descent. A community advocacy group, representing Japanese Americans, expressed concern and anger. Why the Pledge this way? Why in Little Tokyo in 1989? (Recall how Japan bashing was one of the trendier expressions of xenophobia in this period.) Many of those who felt threatened by this mural could easily recall experiences of internment under Executive Order 9066 during World War II.

To encourage goodwill and avoid a growing conflict, the museum and the city used a process of community participation in the creation of the mural. After many meetings and revised proposals, when Kruger actually put up the mural from June 1990 through July 1992, it retained the questions in red, white, and blue, but it deleted the pledge entirely. More important, diverse members of Los Angeles’s multicultural community had been given the opportunity to express their opinions and concerns regarding public art.

In 1990, in northern California, Mayor Thomas McEnery of San Jose, an amateur historian, pushed through city government a plan to erect a statue to Thomas Fallon, to immortalize the first raising of the flag of the United States over the Mexican Pueblo de San Jose. In the month following the Bear Flag Revolt (which you’ll hear about in great detail at the next NAVA meeting in Sacramento), as the acquisition of California by the United States developed, Fallon, currently in San Jose, had written to U.S. Commodore Sloat in Monterey requesting a flag to raise over the pueblo. He received such a flag on 13 July 1846 and hoisted it the next day, with little notice or opposition. Fallon would go on to later serve as mayor of San Jose, and his journal would be edited and published by McEnery in 1978.

Under direction from Mayor McEnery and the City Council, sculptor Robert Glenn created a larger than life bronze equestrian statue: actually, it was two figures on horses, Fallon in the front, raising the standard as he rides. Mayor McEnery and the city planned to install the statue on a traffic island in the heart of downtown San Jose, so drivers could see the flag-raiser as they approached Plaza Park, the landscaped heart of the city.

When the Hispanic community learned about this, they organized quickly and effectively. San Jose is a city with no ethnic majority, and the Hispanic population numbers approximately 27% and is growing. From their perspective, why should Fallon’s flag raising be celebrated in public art? Voices of cultural democracy encouraged and increasingly demand that the consensus history of the dominant culture epitomized in such a statue not be the only version of San Jose’s past that the city should recognize.

After four months of media hype and unrelenting complaints, the City Council had the Arts Commission assemble a Historic Art Advisory Committee. This group decided to put the Fallon statue in storage, it set up a process for selecting and approving multicultural public art commemorations for the city, and it designated four other works to be established and displayed before the Fallon statue is brought out of storage and displayed in a less significant location.

As 1996 begins, the Fallon statue remains secreted away in storage in Oakland, California, reported to have already cost more than half a million dollars. A process of cultural democracy and community participation has been established to pursue the other four works, and in each case traditional statutory has been studiously avoided. One more interesting footnote: the park where the statue was originally to be located has since been renamed “Plaza de Cesar Chavez.”

These examples are suggestive of the power and function of flags and their symbolic referents in public art. How are flags used in the public art in your community? Can you see symbolic differentiations or parallels in how they were used in memorials established in the past and how they are used in commemorations currently being created? As citizens you might have aesthetic opinions of the artwork; as vexillologists, you should be assessing and evaluating how the artists use flags and how the community responds.


5 For the journal entries by Fallon that record his role see Thomas McEnery, California Cavalier: The Journal of Captain Thomas Fallon (San Jose, Calif.: San Jose Historical Museum Association, 1978; 2nd printing 1987).


8 Marilyn Wyman, Art, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA 95192. Personal interview 13 November 1995.
LETTERS . . .

To the editor of NAVA News,

It has come to my attention recently that there is some discussion within NAVA regarding the territorial coverage of NAVA. As a former member (whose sole reason for not continuing is financial), from "the early days," I feel it is important that I comment. Many of you know that I designed the official seal of NAVA in 1968. I feel the symbolism of that device says everything necessary about the territory covered by the organization: a globe tilted to give prominence to North America. You can check any encyclopedia or atlas; North America includes everything from Greenland to Panama. The seal design purposely includes these territories on the globe.

If the idea is to limit membership to only US and Canadian members, then perhaps the correct action to take it to rename the organization to some other name that does not include the other territories, the NORTHERN AMERICA VEXILLOGICAL ASSOCIATION? Think about it.

Sincerely,

Dave Martucci
RR1, Box 334 Calderwood Road
Washington, Maine 04574-9715

Our sympathy is extended to the family of
Mr. William C. Jacobson
a NAVA member since 1990
who passed away on 3 August 1995.

Our sympathy is also extended to:
Martin Francis,
a long time member, whose daughter recently passed away
and
Robert Kidd,
another member, whose father died on 18 September 1995.

PLEASE NOTE: All address corrections should be sent to:
Charles "Kin" Spain, Jr.
2030 North Boulevard No. 6
Houston, Texas 77098-5357

WELCOME...

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EDITOR'S NOTES

I would like to thank Nick Artimovich, President of NAVA, and the members of the NAVA Executive Board, for appointing me as NAVA News Editor for 1996. I look forward to working with Dave Pawson, Vexi-Bits Editor, and Deversux Cannon, who will be doing most of the typesetting for this journal. With their assistance and that of the other members of NAVA, I will to the best of my ability fulfill the three main requirements for producing NAVA News: to produce a scholarly newsletter; to publish it on a timely basis; and to do so within the allotted budget. As has been mentioned several times by previous editors, this is your newsletter—please contribute. The old saying, "many hands make light work," has a lot of significance here. What I am in most need of are scholarly essays on various vexillological topics. Hopefully in the coming 1996 issues there will be a mixture of articles on ecclesiastical, military, civic and other types of flags; especially those that either were or are now used in the United States and Canada. In so doing most readers will find something of note relating to his or her interest in vexillology. A special "thank you" goes to Whitney Smith, Scot Guenter, John Gámez, and Bill Trinkle, for providing articles on such short notice for this issue.

If for some reason you are unable to write an article, please take a minute to send in vexillological news clippings to Dave Pawson, Vexi-Bits Editor. All it takes is a minute to clip an article out of a magazine or newspaper, making sure it is dated and sourced as to its publication, and then sending it along to Dave. This would be a great help and I thank all of you who have done so in the past.

NAVA members should carefully read Nick Artimovich's "Note From the President..." The issue he discusses is of major importance to NAVA and to the future of international vexillological congresses.

It should not be taken lightly. Hopefully a suitable compromise can be found to satisfy all by the 1996 NAVA meeting in Sacramento. There should be several letters to the editor, along with other information appearing in upcoming issues of NAVA News, debating this matter. By reading and studying this material, one should be better able to decide on how to vote on this issue in Sacramento next autumn.

Finally, for their past efforts and on behalf of all the members of NAVA, I would like to thank Grace Cooper for her editorial work, Don Healy as Vexi-Bits Editor, and Carita Culmer for assisting in type setting. Special kudos to you, Grace, for eight years of producing this newsletter—I hope I can do as outstanding a job as you have done—MANY THANKS!!!

Please feel free to send your comments to me about NAVA News.

NOTE: The deadline for the March/April issue is February 1st.

Jim Croft

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Articles can be sent on 5.0 or 5.1 WordPerfect on either 3.5-in or 5.25-in disks, but the hard copy must accompany the disk.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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