THE RAVEN BANNER AND AMERICA
by Jan Oskar Engene

It is frequently assumed that the first flag to fly in America was the Raven banner of the Vikings, the first Europeans to discover and settle (though not permanently) in North America. In the preface to the first volume of NAVA's journal Raven, the name of the journal is explained. Of the first flag in America it is said: "... it seems probable that this first flag was the most common Norse flag, known as 'Raven, Terror of the Land', or more simply 'Raven'." The Norse discoverers of America are presumed to have brought with them this flag on their journeys to North America. To support this assumption, it is pointed to the Lothbroc legend and to coins depicting a raven found in England and Ireland.

This line of reasoning is based on the assumption that the most common Norse flag, the one we hear most frequently of, was the flag that was commonly used by Norse seafarers, and so was also used by Leif Ericsson when he discovered America in AD 1000/1001. This assumption is difficult to support.

The medieval sources attribute the Raven banner to a limited number of kings and warlords. Under the Raven banner, these men are almost exclusively operating in the British Isles. Hallvard Trætteberg, the leading Norwegian authority on heraldry and flags, lists six instances where the sources mention the Raven banner: 2

* The sons of Ragnar Lothbroc carried a Raven banner, Leodbroga, when invading England, about AD 867. The banner had a raven that flapped its wings when signalling victory for the Danes. This is the famous Lothbroc legend.
* King Canute had a Raven banner made from white silk when he triumphed at Ashington in 1016. The Eroicitum Enraae, also known as Geasta Cruatoris Regis, says that the King had "...a banner which gave a wonderful omen. I am well aware that this may seem incredible to the reader, but nevertheless I insert it in my veracious work because it is true: This banner was woven of the cleanest and whitest silk and no picture of any figures was found on it. In case of war, however, a raven was always to be seen, as if it was woven into it. If the Danes were going to win the battle, the raven appeared, beak wide open, flapping its wings and restless on its feet. If they were going to be defeated, the raven did not stir at all, and its limbs hung motionless."
* Earl Sigurd of the Orkneys had a magical Raven banner made by his mother. She gave him the banner the day before an important battle, saying: "Take this sign, I have made it for you. It will bring victory to the man it precedes, but death to the man who carries it." The banner had a raven that seemed to rise when the wind blew into it. Sigurd then fought with the Scottish earl and won three battles. His standard bearers fell. Then, at the battle of Clontarf in Ireland, he had to carry the magical banner himself, and he fell. This was supposedly on Holy Friday in 1014.
* Earl Sigvard of Northumberland was given a banner he called Landeydan (Landwaster, or Terror of the Land) by a mysterious old man he met on a hill top when chasing a dragon. Sigvard died 1055.
* Harald Hardruler, King of Norway, had a sign called Landeydan (Landwaster). The King's saga, Saga of Harald Sigurtharson, tells of a quarrel between Harald and Svein, a Danish king: "Svein asked Harald what possessions of his he valued most highly. He answered his banner "Land-Destroyer." Thereupon Svein asked what virtue it had to be accounted so valuable. Harald replied that it was prophesied that victory would be his before whom this banner was borne; and added that this had been the case ever since he had obtained it." Then they started to quarrel over whether this could be true. Harold invaded England in 1066. He was victorious under the Landeydan at York, but was defeated at Stamford Bridge. There, the hardest battle was fought around the Raven banner.
William the Conqueror also had a Raven banner at Hastings, according to Tretteberg.

In addition to these descriptions in the literary sources, coins depicting Ravens have been found. Tretteberg mentions a bird on coins made in York, 926-27 and 937. The bird is eagle-like but possibly a raven. Another coin has a triangular banner fringed with bells or strips of some kind and with a rose shaped cross as charge. There is a similar banner in the London coin of Canute, but there is no emblem on this one.

The Raven banner seems to be well documented, both in written sources and on coins. It is mentioned in sources treating events from the mid 800s to 1066. In addition, it is well known that ravens occupied an important place in Norse mythology, the raven being the holy bird of Odin. However, with respect to the Raven banner and the Norse discovery of North America, there are some important misconceptions.

The most important misconception is that the Raven has come to be regarded as the emblem of the Vikings. As a result of this misconception, the banner with magical properties used by kings and warlords is seen as the emblem that any Viking would use to identify himself. In fact, little is known about the use of banners or standards among the Norse. Even though banners or standards are frequently mentioned in sources such as Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla: The History of the Kings of Norway, we are, with a couple of exceptions, never told what they looked like. It could be that Snorri assumed such banners to be commonly known to his readers. However, it could also be that the banners usually carried only a signalling function in war and had no symbolic value.

Further, there seems to be an assumption that the Norse discoverers used flags in much the same way as discoverers centuries later. Note for instance the words used by Smith and Taylor (1946) who says of Leif Ericsson in Vinland: "He is supposed to have planted there the banner of the Vikings, a white flag containing a raven with wings spread." Here it seems as if the Raven banner is treated as a modern (national) flag. The Norse knew no common emblem or symbols, as far as we know. Kings and warlords carried signs or banners, especially in war, but we are not told that these signs represented symbolically a territory or a community. Objections should also be raised to the word 'plant', because it seems to reflect the much later practice of colonization and claiming land for a king or a country by planting their flag in new lands. It is not known that the Norse used to do this when taking new land. It is also not known that the Norse used flags on their ships, though we know they used vanes.

It does not seem correct to regard the Raven banner as the common symbol of the Vikings (or as the flag the Vikings would normally carry). The Raven banner is attributed in the sources to a few kings and warlords. We cannot assume that the men participating in the peaceful settlement of the lands in the North Atlantic also carried such banners. These settlers and discoverers set out on their own initiative and were not subject to any king. What we know from the sources is that the Raven banner was primarily used in campaigns in the British Isles. Because of its magic qualities, it was a prized possession. Had such a banner been in the possession of Leif Ericsson, we could expect the Sagas to mention it.

The Raven banner was believed to have magical qualities: It transformed itself in times of war to predict victory for those who carried it. On its way to America, the Raven banner has undergone a second magical transformation, that from a banner of kings and warriors, to the emblem of all Vikings and thus also of a seafarer like Leif Ericsson out on a private mission to find more land suitable for the families of himself and his crew.

Notes


2. The list is based on Hallvard Tretteberg's article 'Merke og fløy' in Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder, Vol. XI, Oslo, 1966, columns 549-555. For more instances of the raven motive - with and without the banner - see note 3.


4. Quoted from translation of Orkneyinga Saga in Lukman, p. 149.


4" x 6" CORNER

Many members have asked how they can contact other members who collect table flags. One way is to review your 1995 NAVA Handbook. Every member which has a I listed under their interest, collects table flags. Space does not permit the listing of all the names and addresses here.

There are some new flags on the market. Available from:

The Flag Shop
508 Rideau St.
Ottawa, ON
Canada, KIN 5Z6
Tel: (613) 789-5456
FAX: (613) 789-5244

1.) Canary Islands
2.) Gibraltar
3.) Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland)

(Other rare table flags previously featured in this column are also available.)

The cost is $5.50 Canadian per flag, with $2.00 Canadian for each order for the shipping and handling charge.
At the First International Congress of Vexillology, held in the Netherlands in 1965, it was decided to create an International Federation of Vexillological Associations (FIAV). FIAV was founded to unite these associations throughout the world whose object is to work and research about flags. The International Congress of Vexillology is held every two years under its auspices. The following article presents for the first time, the number, site, date, host association(s), symbolism of the congress flag, proportions and designer of each of the flags of the International Congresses of Vexillology. Moreover, all 16 flags are illustrated in color and in correct proportions.

The FIAV flag displays in gold on a dark blue field, two halyards interlaced. The halyards represent flags and their intertwining symbolizes the friendship of vexillologists in all parts of the world. This symbolism is also signified by the blue, found in the flags of many international organizations. The ends of the halyards are invisible beyond the ends of the hoist and fly, expressing the limitless reach of vexillological studies in all times and parts of the world.

Proportions: 2:3
Designers: Klaas Sierksma (modified version of his design), M. Muïlemann and Peter Krog

IICV
Muiderburg, Noord-Holland, The Netherlands
4th, 5th September 1965
Stitching voor Banistiek en Heraldiek (Foundation for Banneristics and Heraldry)
No flag was designed for this Congress.

IIICV
Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
1st-3rd September 1967
Societe Suisse de Vexillologie (Swiss Vexillological Society) and Gilde der Zurich Heraldiker.
The flag of the IIICV is divided diagonally, white over light blue, and bears a white cross and light blue armillary sphere. The design represents the site of the Congress in its colors, which are derived from the Zurich flag, and the cross for Switzerland. The armillary sphere gives a suggestion of the oceans on which the first flags were raised, as well as the international character of the Congress.

Proportions: 1:1
Designers: M. Muïlemann and Peter Krog

IIIICV
Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America
5th-7th September 1969
Flag Research Center, Heraldry Society of Canada, North American Vexillological Association and United States Flag Foundation.
The Congress flag is white with a triangle of royal blue whose apex is at the center of the fly and whose base is along the hoist. There are three gold crowns set one over another at the hoist. The colors recall the blue and white banner of the Zurich Congress and the blue and gold flag of the International Federation of Vexillological Associations (FIAV). The colors are also those of the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and appear in the flags of some of the sponsors, such as the Flag Research Center and the North American Vexillological Association.
The three crowns symbolize that this will be the third vexillological congress. In addition the three crowns are characteristic of Boston, since they appear in many local coats of arms, including those of Boston University, the Episcopal bishopric, and the lawyer's association. Ultimately they derive from the arms of Boston, England, thus emphasizing the close historical ties between symbolism in the Old World and the New. The triangle is a spearhead to new achievements in the field of flag research which the Congress promoted.

Proportions: 1:2
Designer: Whitney Smith

IVICV
Turin, Piedmont, Italy
24th-27th June 1971
Sezione Vossillologica Accademia di San Marciino
The flag has a vertical stripe at the hoist and a reversed chevron, both in yellow on a dark blue field. These two figures together represent the Roman numeral "IV" for the Fourth International Congress of Vexillology and the initials "IVC" for international vexillology. The colors are taken from the flag of the host city of Turin, which has a golden "rampant" bull on a blue field, the FIAV flag, and the colors of the host association, the Accademia di San Marciino.

Although not illustrated on the IV Congress flag on the accompanying page, the flag was attached to the pole with a blue sleeve, in the ancient tradition of Piedmontese military banners. The spearhead is replaced by a finial emblematic of Turin. Just like the eagle of Napoleon, the emerald bull of Turin is of gilded bronze on a base of 8x4x3 cm ornamented towards the top of a platform. A rosette is placed at the base of the finial and above the flag are two cravats* with two cords and tassels. One cravat gives the name of the host city, Turin, and the date of the Congress, 24-27 June 1971; while the second cravat states the "4th International Congress of Vexillology," all in Italian.

Proportions: 2:3
Designer: Aldo Ziggiotti
* Note: A cravat is a scarf tied to a staff below the finial, usually used with military flags.

VICV
London, United Kingdom
13th-18th September 1973
The Flag Institute
The flag has a white field with a red chevron interlaced with a blue inverted chevron. The colors represent the host nation, the United Kingdom, while the chevron signifies this is the 5th International Congress of Vexillology and represents a "V" for "Vexillology."

Proportions: 2:3
Designer: Jack Verhoeven
XI ICV - 1985 - Madrid, Spain
XII ICV - 1987 - San Francisco, USA
XIII ICV - 1989 - Melbourne, Australia
XIV ICV -- 1991 -- Barcelona, Spain
XV ICV - 1993 - Zurich, Switzerland
XVI ICV - 1995 - Warsaw, Poland
XVII ICV - 1997 - Cape Town, South Africa
VI ICV
Isselmeer (Zuider Zee), The Netherlands (Held aboard the ship M.S. Princess Christina)
16th-20th April 1975
Stitching voor Banistiek en Heraldisch (Foundation for Banneristics and Heraldry)
The Congress flag’s design is based on the Dutch model: 12 stripes in the alternating series of colors of red, white and blue, the colors of The Netherlands national flag. Placed one-third the distance from the hoist along the width of the six interior stripes, is a white square bearing a red “W” over a light blue “V,” with a white “C” and “G” outlined in black each interlacing an “arm” of the “V.” Together the initials represent “6th Wereld-Congress Voor Vlaggenkunde” or 6th World Congress for Flag Study.
Proportions: 2:3
Designer: Klaas Sierksma

VII ICV
Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America
10th-14th June 1977
Flag Research Center and North American Vexillological Association
The Congress flag has a dark blue field with a red abstract “77,” fimbriated white, incorporated into its design. This figure has several symbolic references. First, one “77” signifies this is the Seventh International Congress of Vexillology. The double “77” represents the year of the Congress-1977. Finally, the figure symbolizes the reason the Congress was held in Washington, D.C., the national capital of the United States—to commemorate the bicentennial of the adoption by the Continental Congress of the national flag on June 14, 1777.
The colors, red, white and blue, are found in the flags of the host nation, the United States, and the host vexillological association, the North American Vexillological Association
Proportions: 2:3
Designer: Steven Stringfellow

VIII ICV
Vienna, Austria
26th-29th June 1979
Gesellschaft für Österreichische Heereskunde (Society for Austrian Army Studies)
The Congress flag is designed to indicate the locale of the Congress and its number. A silhouette of St. Stephen’s Cathedral in Vienna is displayed in which the Roman numeral VIII is incorporated. The symbol is in red on a white background, the colors are not only of Austria but of Vienna. The edges of the flag show red and white triangles, a traditional design element in Austrian military flags emphasizing the links between military history and flags.
Proportions: 1:1
Designer: Herbert Breiteneder

IX ICV
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
24th-27th August 1981
Heraldry Society of Canada and North American Vexillological Association
The flag displays the premier symbol of Canada, the red maple leaf. Superimposed on the maple leaf in white is the Peace Tower of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, which has become a symbol of its parliamentary traditions for this nation. The combination of these two symbols in Canada’s national colors of red and white, identify the nation of Canada and its capital—Ottawa—as host to the 9th International Congress of Vexillology. These two symbols are placed in a white “V” to signify the study of vexillology. The square banner is a reminder of Canada’s heraldic customs.
Proportions: 1:1
Designer: Whitney Smith

X ICV
Oxford, Oxfordshire, United Kingdom
25th-30th September 1983
The Flag Institute and Heraldry Society
The flag consists of two horizontal stripes of blue over red, the colors of the Heraldry Society, with the badge of the society in yellow near the hoist. A yellow saltire in the fly, which is swallowtailed, stands for the Roman numeral X to signify the Tenth Congress.
Proportions: 1:1.8
Designer: J.P. Brooke-Little

XI ICV
Madrid, Spain
26th-31st May 1985
Sociedad Española de Vexillología (Vexillological Society of Spain)
The flag of the Congress displays the Roman numeral XI on a field of white. The “X” is composed of a yellow cross with a red raguly border, recalling the colors of the Spanish national flag and the traditional Cross of Burgundy symbol. The “1” is formed by one of the “Pillars of Hercules” from the coat of arms of Spain. It is silver with a metallic gold capital and pedestal and bears the words PLUS ULTRA (“there is something beyond”) in gold letters on a red ribbon. Above is a royal crown in gold and red, below wavy blue and white stripes.
Proportions: 2:3
Designer: A.M. Lahoz

XII ICV
San Francisco, California, United States of America
12th-16th August 1988
Flag Research Center and North American Vexillological Association
The Congress flag places the black and gold phoenix from the original San Francisco flag on a V-shaped white field between red and blue triangles, thus combining the colors of the host city, state and country with those of FIAV and NAVA. The 12 outside wing-feathers signify the XII ICV, and along with the 9 flame points, represent NAVA 21.
Proportions: 1:1.7
Designer: Jim Ferrigan, Whitney Smith and Jim Croft

XIII ICV
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
24th-29th September 1989
Flag Society of Australia
The flag displays two kangaroos shown in profile; the first is in white and the second in bright red. Australia is the host nation for this Congress as signified by the kangaroos. Within the second kangaroo is a motif in bright gold representing a stylized Roman “XII” (13), symbolizing this is the 13th International Congress of Vexillology. This symbol also doubles as an entwined stylized letter “M” for Melbourne—the Congress venue. The human figure “X” holds in its right hand a long streamer, also in gold, flying out to the fly edge. The banner represents the subject of this Congress and that it is about people and humanity learning to live in harmony under many banners. The hoist side color is United Nations blue, signifying that this is an international congress, while the bright red fly side represents the “Red Earth” of central Australia.
Proportions: 2:3
Designer: Antony C. Burton

XIV ICV
Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain
30th-5th July 1991
Catalan Association of Vexillology
The Congress flag is based on the civic flag of Barcelona, the host city of the Congress. The Barcelona flag is quartered: the 1st and 4th quarters bear the cross of St. George, a red cross on a white field, as this is the patron saint of the city. The yellow field with vertical red stripes of the second and third quarters recall the regional flag of Catalonia.
Like the civic flag, the Congress flag is quartered. Each quarter bears a red numeral “14” for the 14th International Congress of Vexillology. The cross of Barcelona and the bars of the Catalonia flag are reflected in the “14”. The 1st and 4th quarters of the flag are white and the 2nd and 3rd are yellow. Together, the red, white and yellow colors are those found in the Barcelona flag.
Proportions: 2:3
Designer: A. Sanchez
XV ICV
Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
23rd-27th August, 1993

The Congress flag is based on the traditional blue and white flags of
Zurich dating from the 14th century. The FIAV emblem, two halyards
interlaced, is displayed in these countercharged colors. A red "schwenkel,"
or a single long tail extending from the upper fly corner of the flag, bears
the symbol "ZV" in white, replacing the traditional Swiss cross. The Roman
numeral for 15 signifies the number of this International Congress of
Vexillology.

Proportions: 5:8
Designers: Emil Dreyer and Peter Mader

XVI ICV
Warsaw, Poland
1st-5th July 1995

The Polish Vexillological Society

The colors of the Congress flag are white and red, the national colors of
Poland, the host nation of the Congress. The white eagle has been a Polish
eagle emblem since 1295 when Przemyslaw II was crowned King of Poland. It is
placed between a "V" signifying vexillology. The Roman numeral for 16, the
number of the Congress, along with the year—"1995," flank the initials
"ICV" placed vertically for International Congress of Vexillology.

Proportions: 2:3
Designers: Alfred Znamierowski and Jan Sarnecki

XVII ICV
Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
10th-16th August 1997

Southern African Vexillological Association

The flag contains a blue field with a yellow central horizontal stripe in
the form of a stylized representation of Table Mountain. This mountain rises
above Cape Town and is the most prominent geographical landmark on the
Cape Peninsula. The five stars conjoined in a cross, the three blue ones on
the upper fly corner of the flag, bears the symbol "Australis" in white, replacing the traditional South African cross. The Roman
numeral for 15 signifies the number of this International Congress of
Vexillology.

Proportions: 2:3
Designer: Frederick Brownell

I would like to thank Mr. Peter Orenski for producing the color artwork
and Dr. Whitney Smith for providing much of the data for this article.
Without the efforts of these two individuals, this article would not have been
possible. I would also like to thank Charles Spain Jr., Alex Brocek, Emil
Dreyer, Aldo Ziggio, Muller Harald, Jos Poels, Bruce Barry, and William
Crampton for assisting in the collection of this data.

There are three main sources of information for this article. The majority
of the data comes from various issues of the Flag Bulletin, and
material distributed at the various congresses. Information was also
obtained from Ralph Bartlett's article, "25 Years of World Vexillology," in
Celtic Australs (the Journal of the Flag Society of Australia, Volume IV,
No. 1/17, January 1988).

The material for this article was compiled by James Croft.

IMPORTANT NAVA NOTES

There are several important items our members should take note of:

1.) Please note that all orders for items from the NAVA SHOPPER
should be sent to the NAVA TREASURER:

Mr. Charles Spain, Jr.
504 Branard Street
Houston, TX 77006-5018

The NAVA SHOPPER insert appeared in our last, July-August 1996
issue.

2.) VOLUNTEER JOB OPENING: Raven, a scholarly publication of
the North American Vexillological Association, is looking for a new
Managing Editor. Experience in small press publishing or knowledge
of computer software for layout and desktop publishing desirable.
Responsibilities include overseeing physical production, dissemination,
and finances of this annual journal. Interested? Send letter of
inquiry with summary of your relevant skills to Dr. Scot M. Guenter,
American Studies, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA 95192-0092.

3.) VOLUNTEER JOB OPENING: NAVA News is seeking a type­
setter for 1997. Should no one be able to do the typesetting, then we
would use someone who would be willing to type the issue on a
computer disk from which the printer could typeset. Please contact
the editor, whose name, address and phone number is listed on the
back page.

I would like to thank, on behalf of the NAVA membership,
Devereaux Canno for all the hard work he has done in typesetting
NAVA News during 1995. His efforts in undertaking this task saved
NAVA a considerable amount of money and he has done an excellent
job. Unfortunately, but understandably, Devereaux will not be able to
do the typesetting next year due to time constraints. He and his
wife, Nora, had a beautiful baby girl, Nancy Katherine, on August 10th,
1996. Congratulations to both of you on having "Kate!" (Ed.)

4.) The nominating committee has completed its search for a slate for
the executive board to be presented at the next NAVA Annual
Meeting in Sacramento, California in October 1996.

According to the Bylaws, Paragraph 6.02, we, Lee L. Herald,
Chair, Peter J. Edwards and John M. Purcell, have determined the
eligibility of these members and propose this slate to be sent with the
annual meeting notice and presented at the NAVA Annual Meeting as follows:

President — Charles "Kin" Spain, Jr.
Vice President — William Trinkle
Corresponding Secretary — David Breitenbach
Recording Secretary — Michael Halloran
Treasurer — Peter Orenski

The members of this slate have agreed to have their names placed
in nomination at the NAVA Annual Meeting. Others may be
nominated from the floor.

5.) TAX DEDUCTION FOR MEMBERSHIP DUES:
NAVA has been classified as a section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt
charitable, educational, and scientific organization by the United
States Internal Revenue Service. United States members of NAVA
can claim their membership dues and other contributions to NAVA as
a charitable deduction to the extent allowed by U.S. tax law.
Canadian members can likewise deduct their membership dues and
other contributions to the extent allowed by Canadian tax law based
on article XXI of the United States-Canada tax treaty. In 1995 each
member's dues included a US$9.00 subscription to Raven: A Journal
of Vexillology.

TEXAS STATE SEAL PAMPHLET

The Office of the Texas Secretary of State has placed NAVA member
Charles Spain's 1993 history of the Texas state seal on its home page. You
can view the pamphlet at:

### 1995-1996 NAVA BUDGET

All Amounts are in US dollars.

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| (2 issues)          |         |
| William Driver Award| 100.00  |
| **TOTAL INCOME**    | $10,550.00 |

| **Expenses**        |         |
| Bank service charge | $200.00 |
| Mail forwarding     | $275.00 |
| Miscellaneous expenses | 400.00 |
| Miscellaneous postage | 600.00 |
| Officer expenses    | 500.00  |
| **TOTAL EXPENSES**  |         |

**Publications**

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**TOTAL EXPENSES**  
$13,757.00

**TOTAL INCOME v. TOTAL EXPENSES**  
<-$2,825.00*5

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2. Donation from National Flag Foundation.
3. Annual mail box rental and fees for forwarding mail from Trenton, New Jersey address.
4. Annual corporate registration fee, calligraphy, copying and long distance telephone calls for committees other than publication committee, printing membership cards, et cetera.
5. Correspondence, membership renewal notices, forwarding of exchange publications, et cetera.
9. The deficit is due to the fact that Raven was not printed and mailed in the 1994-1995 fiscal year.

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**NAVA XXX NOTES**

1.) There will be a trip to Sonoma on Friday leaving about noon and returning about 5:00 p.m., for a fee of $10.00 per person.

   Please contact:
   Rich Kenny
   4412 Masterson St.
   Oakland, CA 94619
   (510) 531-5170

2.) Martin Francis will have a U.S. Historical Flag exhibit on the second floor of the California State Capitol Building in Sacramento, California from October 7th to the 15th. He cordially invites all members to view the exhibit while attending NAVA XXX.

3.) Participants attending NAVA XXX in Sacramento are invited to display their personal flags at the banquet. Time permitting each individual will be allotted a minute or two to explain the symbolism of their flag.

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**NAVA NEWS**

**VEXI-BITS**

Edited by David Pawson

*Time Magazine*, 12 Feb. 1996. “Brinkmen on the Rocks.” Greek and Turkish troops seem headed for war over a pair of Aegean islets known as Imia to the Greeks, Kardak to the Turks. On 26 December a Turkish freighter ran aground on one of the islands, having refused the assistance of a Greek tug: the skipper claimed the islets were in Turkish waters. A mayor of the nearby island of Kalymnos soon went to Imia and planted a Greek flag there in the company of several journalists. Not to be outdone, some Turkish journalists traveled to Kardak, where they hauled down the Greek flag, and hoisted the Turkish flag. Greek commandos followed with their flag, themselves followed by Turkish commandos. American officials were able to negotiate a truce before full-fledged war could break out. (submitted by Peter Edwards)

*New York Times*, 12 March 1996. “The Cuervo Republic will have a constitution but no 18th Amendment.” Heublein, in an elaborate promotion for Cuervo Gold tequila, is establishing a 'country' for the brand, the Republic of Cuervo Gold, on a tiny Caribbean island. The promotion includes a national flag.” So states the photo caption. The flag depicts three upraised arms (one pointing, two reaching) of unspecified colors against an apparently white background at the hoist, with a main field in the (unspecified) Cuervo label colors bearing inscriptions of “Republic of Cuervo Gold” and “Nation of Untamed Spirits.” The actual location of the “Republic” is the eight-acre British Virgin Islands resort island of Marina Cay. The promotion includes a sweepstakes to attend a concert on the island, mock petition for UN admission, and a drive to send a volleyball team to the '96 Olympics, among others. The national bird is the crow (English for cuervo). (submitted by Don Healy)

_The Arizona Republic_, Phoenix, AZ, 17 March 1996. “Red, white and misconstrued,” and “Old Glory art strives to provoke.” The Phoenix Art Museum salutes the conflicting meanings and politics of the American flag through June 16 in its show entitled “Old Glory: The American Flag in Contemporary Art.” The reviewer calls the show brilliant and says it “takes us on a harrowing trip through the conflicting cultural meanings of the flag and all the politics that have gone along for the ride. In the process, there is probably something to offend everyone. The flag has been used to justify every political opinion, hatred and ideal. It is an icon, a shorthand for complex ideas, a shortcut to meaning.” Further along we are advised that “This is not a show to warm a patriot’s heart... but... shows how the flag has been used polemically in the last half century.” (submitted by Harry Oswald)

**AROUND THE PUBLICATIONS**

Edited by David Pawson

**ITALY:**

_Vexilla Italica_, Centro Italiano di Studi Vessillologici, No. 2, XXII. Emblems and banners of the Ligure Republic (1797-1805); Report on 16 ICV in Warsaw; reports on other vexillological associations and their flags: German Vexillological Society, flag is N/R/Y triangles (a la Flag Institute) with FIAV knot running down the hoist, Russian Center for Vexillology and Heraldry, flag is R/B/W/B/R rays emanating from the lower hoist, and Polish Vexillological Society, flag consists of two white triangles on red (forming a "W" for vexillology); notice of new publications; flags in the news.

* This is Dave Pawson’s final installment of “Vexi-bits” and “Around the Publications.”