

Vexillum

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Right: Department of Infectious Disease and Febrile Conditions of Celje General Hospital, (recently renamed the COVID Department) celebrates new coronavirus flag design from Heraldica Slovenica, the Heraldry Society of Slovenia, in support of all medical staff in their efforts. Source: Andrej Strahovnik, 2 April 2020

Editor's Note

Greetings from my house, where I, like many of you, have been ensconced since early March. Aside from the cashier at the grocery store, my wife and children are the only people I have spoken with face-to-face in the month of April. While we willingly endure the stay-at-home order to protect our fellow Americans from infection with COVID-19, one does miss certain things about going out on the town. For example, my neighborhood is not a flag-flying community, so the snap of banners in the wind is mostly a memory now.

For the readers of *Vexillum*, we hope that vexillology can provide some distraction and respite from the hardships of the pandemic. Perhaps this will be the time that you commit to writing down your hard-earned knowledge about flags, or begin a new research project. Vexillographers may plunge into designing new flags. As long as e-commerce is available, collectors may find this a propitious time to add to their flag treasuries. At the very least, flag spotters will see unfamiliar flags or novel methods of flag display in the news. Beyond mere amusement, however, this crisis offers us the opportunity to see how powerfully flags function symbolically, as people of all nationalities and political persuasions embrace the use of flags to express determination to work together to overcome a common threat.

To the end of allowing vexillology to make the days of isolation pass more easily, this issue offers several features to inform and entertain. Dave Martucci shares a lifetime's worth of knowledge about antique U.S. flags to help collectors better understand items on offer. Ted Kaye gives a behind-the-scenes glimpse at the production of the flag design pamphlet "Good" Flag, "Bad" Flag, in time for the publication of an updated edition (distributed with this issue). Bea Jones reminds us of the importance of the "Garvey flag" on the occasion of its centennial, and Dale Grimes shares his recent exhibition of flags commemorating the anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima. We learn about the new flag of Columbia, South Carolina, and take a look at how residents of Washington, D.C., have incorporated their city's flag into tattoos. Finally, in a special feature prepared for this issue, we see how the COVID-19 crisis has brought flags to our attention in ways seldom seen.

Everyone at *Vexillum* and NAVA wishes you continued good health and safety. As always, we love to hear your thoughts about flags in general, this publication, and especially how flags are being used to express our fellow-feeling in the face of a global health emergency. Please write to us at VexillumEditor@nava.org.

Steve Knowlton
Editor, *Vexillum*



Left: In front of the Chicago Art Institute, Chicago, IL. Source: <https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/museums/ct-viz-art-institute-lion-masks-photos-20200430-q2qimdtosjam7pseg63islrhv4-photogallery.html> **Right:** Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot shows her message to fellow Chicagoans on a flag-inspired mask. See pages 21–22 for more examples how flags are being used to help express viewpoints on the coronavirus pandemic. Source: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/as-illinois-facial-covering-requirement-nears-lightfoot-and-opponents-put-forward-dueling-plans-to-distribute-masks-in-chicago/ar-BB13ki22>

June 2020
Number 10

Vexillum

Research and news of the
North American Vexillological Association
Published quarterly.

Please submit correspondence and
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President's Column

Dear fellow NAVA members,

“Yet let's be content, and the times lament, you see the world turn'd upside down.” The events of the last few weeks have certainly given new meaning to the words of that 17th-century English ballad. As you know, we had to postpone our long-planned annual meeting in St. Augustine until next year because of the coronavirus. Rather than being content to lament the times, however, the executive board decided to attempt something that NAVA has never done before: an abbreviated but activity-filled annual meeting in cyberspace. We are still in the planning stages as I write this, and nobody knows for sure how the experiment will turn out. However, we do know that it will offer one great benefit: NAVA members all over the world will be able to see, hear, and participate in the meeting activities in real time. I certainly hope that you'll be able to “attend”. (I apologize in advance to our non-North American members for the less convenient time schedule. We're hoping that we can record at least parts of the proceedings for your later viewing.)



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In other coronavirus-related news, our colleagues in the Heraldry Society of Slovenia have proposed a flag design to symbolize the victory of health care over the epidemic. You can see it and read about the symbolism on page 23. It's a splendid, powerful design and I hope we'll soon see lots of them flying around the world. This is a great example of how vexillology can inspire and give hope to society in a time of crisis.

Speaking of flag design: along with this issue of *Vexillum*, you're receiving a new, revised edition of NAVA's signature publication, “Good” Flag, “Bad” Flag. Also, an interview with *GFBF* compiler Ted Kaye appears on page 19. *GFBF* has been enormously influential in the world of flag design since its original publication in 2006, but has also been controversial for a number of reasons. The new edition addresses some of the concerns with the original. One of the significant issues that arose during revision discussions was the title, particularly because of the word “bad”. As I noted in my column in *Vexillum* 4, “Flags are touchstones of respect and pride, and referring to one as ‘bad’ can be offensive and counterproductive.” However, the majority view of the board was that the name recognition of the title was important and should be retained. The compromise was to add quote marks to the title words “good” and “bad” to suggest that they were not value judgements, but evaluations of how well designs conformed to the criteria suggested by the publication. The emphasis on symbolism was also strengthened while making explicit that the suggested criteria are guidelines rather than directives from on high. The new *GFBF* is a reasonable compromise and I hope it will continue to contribute to flag design projects and conversations.

Stay well, and keep your flags flying!

Peter Ansoff
President, NAVA
pres@nava.org

NAVA Membership Anniversaries

50-Year Member—Since 1970

Michael L. Larsen

35-Year Members—Since 1985

Scot Guenter
John E. Guichard
Kevin Harrington
Edward B. (Ted) Kaye
Gary F. Randall
Gilbert Vegas

30-Year Members—Since 1990

Roberto Bicci
Emil Dreyer

Elton L. Fewell
Lee Kennedy
David A. Maggi
US Flag Service (Hugh Warner)

25-Year Members—Since 1995

Henry McGuire Gardner
Zvi Ruder
Craig L. Williams

20-Year Members—Since 2000

José Carlos Alegría Diaz
Regal Flags and Poles (Trish Dale)
Carl S. Gurtman
Robert A. Jungst
Charles L. Kissel
Maine Flag & Banner
(Valerie M. R. Strout)
Judith Zaffirini

15-Year Members—Since 2005

William M. Belanich
David-Roger Gagnon
Francisco Gregoric
Brian John Haas
Thomas R. Osborne
Grahame P. Richards

10-Year Members—Since 2010

Christopher Curtis
Mickey Dennis
Leslie Fife
Norris Nagao
Chris Tait

5-Year Members—Since 2015

Amber Atteberry
Barry Biediger
Jason Currie

Winston Gould
Scott Hellings
Jesús Licón
James Lyons
Edward A. McNabb
Carlos Alberto Morales Ramírez
McQuillin D. Murphy
Gary Picou
Chris Pinette
Tadd Pinkston
Daniel Purdom
Blaine Shaffer
Elijah T. Snow-Rackley
Cristina Victor
Scott Warren
Zacary Wilson-Fetrow

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

New Flag: Columbia, S.C.

The capital city of South Carolina has a new flag, over 100 years after adopting its first flag; its adoption culminated a four-year-long change effort punctuated with delays.

On February 4, 2020, the Columbia City Council concluded a rambling process of selecting a new city flag to replace the “antiquated corn-and-cotton festooned banner” that had flown over the city since 1912.



Figure 1. The flag of Columbia, South Carolina, adopted February, 2020.
Source: <https://www.flagofcolumbia.com>

The 1912 seal-on-a-bedsheet flag placed the city’s seal in the center of a blue field. Flanking the seal were a spray of cotton and a stalk of corn with full ears and a tasseled top, evoking the leading crops of the area then. A local teacher, Kate Manning Magoffin, won \$100 in a contest sponsored by the city and *The State* newspaper for her winning design.

Figures 2a (right) The 1912–2020 flag of Columbia, South Carolina and **2b** (below) in City Council chambers.
Source: <https://www.flagofcolumbia.com>



By 2016 the flag was only flown at a few places in the city, such as City Hall and the main fire station; its color varied significantly—light blue outside City Hall, dark blue within. “There are probably not 10 people in the City of Columbia who know what’s on it”, City Council member Howard Duvall said when the flag-change effort began. “The only reason I know is because we looked at it during a meeting.”

The Half and Half, a combination design studio and print shop, designed the new flag. It features a deep blue field, with two lighter shades of blue and a streak of white (all fimbriated in black) flowing diagonally across the flag, with a six-pointed star in the left corner.

“It speaks to, I believe, not only who we are, but who we hope to be as a city”, said Mayor Steve Benjamin. It symbolizes the rich land that exists at the corner of the connection of the Saluda and Broad Rivers, which form the Congaree and laid the foundation for Columbia. The star references not only [being] the capital, but I think it also references, in a positive way, the resilience of this place after [the burning of the city] in 1865. In a way that’s positive, it hearkens back to our past.”

City describes the meaning of the new flag in detail

Colors: Navy blue is a trustworthy color, and visually connects the city flag to the flag of the State of South Carolina. It is often associated with knowledge and integrity. Light blue represents freedom, innovation, and tranquility. Together, these evoke a sense of hospitality and stability.

The Symbols: A simple bold abstract wing set against a navy-blue field. The star represents Columbia as a capital city. The six points represent resilience, as Columbia has faced many challenges in its history. The three sections of the wing represent the three rivers, all converging together in Columbia and a vital part of the unique identity of the City.

The Wings of Columbia: When Columbia was founded in 1786 as a new planned city to house the South Carolina’s state government, Senator John Lewis Gervais proclaimed that the city would be a place where residents would “find refuge under the wings of Columbia”, referring to a personified Columbia [the spirit of the American continent or of the United States], often depicted as a goddess-like female figure. Since then, wings have continued to be a recurring identifying symbol of the City of Columbia. Wings were represented as part of the city’s “rise from the ashes”



Figure 3. Mayor Benjamin and City Council members showing off the new flag, February 2020. Source: <https://www.flagofcolumbia.com>

following the burning of the city in February 1865 and the Columbia Phoenix, a newspaper that was established in the period following. And, wings continue to be a representative image to this day in connections like the [minor league baseball team] Columbia Fireflies, which are named for the synchronous fireflies in the nearby Congaree Swamp National Park. The wing on the flag demonstrates that important role in the City's history and present. The wing and the flag of the city offers refuge for all those that choose to live, work, and visit Columbia, South Carolina.

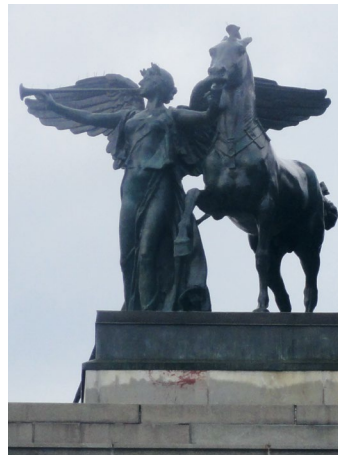


Figure 4. *The Triumphal Progress of Columbia*, by Frederick William MacMonnies, 1898. (Example of a winged Columbia.)

Path to a new city flag took a circuitous route

In 2016 Lee Snelgrove, executive director of One Columbia for Arts and History (the city's arts commission), and a leader in the Columbia Design League (an affiliate group of the Columbia Museum of Art), launched an effort to update the flag. He secured support from the city council, created a website, and invited NAVA member Ted Kaye to address the Design League as the kickoff speaker of its 2016–17 events season and to hold a workshop with key community leaders about flag design. The resulting competition opened in early 2017, offering

design guidance on its website (referring to NAVA's *Good Flag, Bad Flag*) and offering a \$2,000 prize (funded by One Columbia and Columbia Flag and Sign Company). It received 547 submissions by April, 2017, and asked for help from NAVA members to narrow the field.



Figure 5. Finalists in the 2017 Columbia, South Carolina, design competition. Source: <https://www.flagofcolumbia.com>

That team of NAVA judges (Bill Belanich, Tony Burton, Michael Green, Ted Kaye, Will Levin, Clay Moss, Chase Quarterman, Elijah Snow-Rackley, and Cindy Williams) provided numerical ratings for every single submission, with comments and suggested improvements. They identified 18 finalist designs.

The public was invited to comment on that group of 18 designs, and more than 7,000 people participated. The *Free Times* newspaper editorialized: "The online reaction to the finalists has been largely negative. And it's been wrong. Some of the complaints are about the simplistic nature of the flag designs. And they are simplistic. That's what you want in a flag: something recognizable at a distance, something basic and iconic... But honestly, many of the complaints seem to be just knee-jerk grumbling."

However, City Council didn't take action after that initial process and, as noted by the Design League, eventually "determined that additional design criteria should be considered, with the hope of arriving at finalist designs that most accurately reflect Columbia's history and spirit".

In late 2019 five designers—Samuel Choate, John Gehringer, Daniel Jones, Nick Julian, and The Half and Half—were asked to enter the final phase of the flag saga. They had submitted designs in the initial process and were selected for the extended process based on public comment, input from NAVA members, and a jury review process. The Design League and city told the finalists that their designs "should incorporate colors and/or symbols that represent contemporary Columbia and the diversity of people that live and work in the city" and include "shapes or symbols that signify wings".

The designers were given six weeks to produce updated designs reflecting the expanded design criteria. Their 61 new submissions were presented in a blind review (without designers' names disclosed), to Columbia's mayor and City Council, which chose the final design in early 2020.

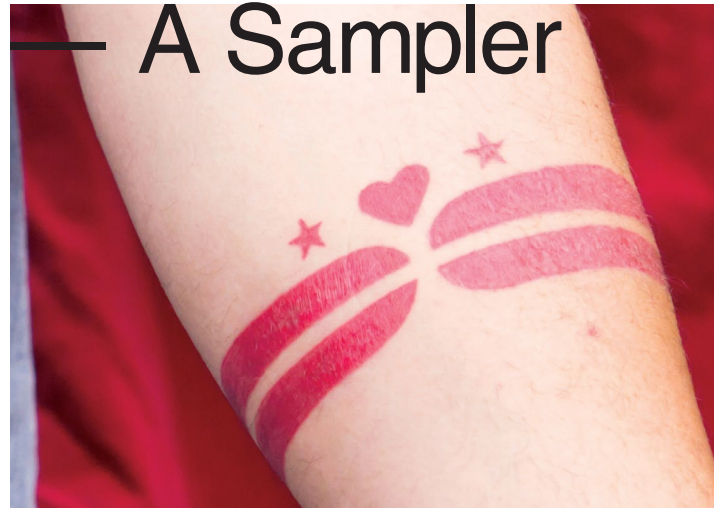
"I think it's been about as inclusive a process as you could ever have", said Mayor Benjamin as the design was adopted. "It also took into account a good amount of approval and dissent, all in the proper spirit that we've been trying to achieve here."



D.C. Flag Tattoos



A Sampler



Denizens of the nation's capital are known for sporting flag-themed tattoos. The practice apparently started among habitués of the punk-rock demimonde in the early 1990s. Many punk bands from Washington used the D.C. flag on album covers and posters, and the design then passed into the skin of musicians and fans. As Scot Guenter notes, tattoos are an especially effective way to mark one's affiliation with a social group, and punk rockers were proud to associate themselves with a city that, in the 1980s and 1990s, was shown little respect by outsiders.

As tattoos became more popular generally in the 1990s, the D.C. flag design expanded from musical circles to those in politics; in particular, advocates of statehood or some other form of voting rights for D.C. residents began sporting the tattoo. Starting in 2011, four annual festivals called "Flag Day in the Flesh" saw D.C. statehood advocates gathering to display their tattoos—some permanent, some temporary—and make the case for voting rights.

However, by the fall of 2015 tastemakers were declaring that the D.C. flag tattoo "is over" as a trend, noting that such unhip characters as National Public Radio hosts and members of the Washington City Council had gotten tattoos. Nonetheless, tattoo shops continue to report that the D.C. flag is a popular motif—both for its political resonance and the simplicity of its design, which makes it an easy and relatively inexpensive option for tattoo artists to execute. Featured on these pages are numerous variations on the D.C. flag tattoo, showing the remarkable creativity that tattoo artists and their patrons employ.



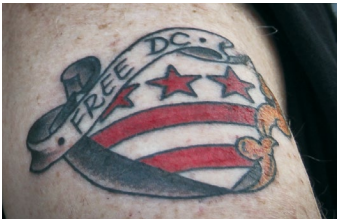
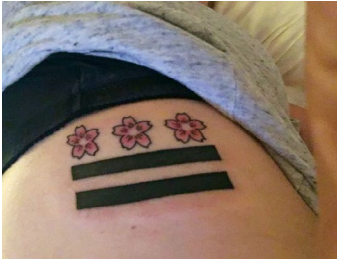
Sources:

Benjamin Freed, "The DC Flag Tattoo Is Over", *Washingtonian*, November 24, 2015, <https://www.washingtonian.com/2015/11/24/dc-flag-tattoos-arent-cool-anymore-tom-sherwood-kojo-nnamdi>

Scot M. Guenter, "Flag Tattoos: Markers of Class and Sexuality", in *Proceedings of the XIX International Congress of Vexillology, York, 23–27 July 2001* (London: The Flag Institute, 2009), 205–14.

Emily Heil, "Thanks to Kojo Nnamdi and Tom Sherwood, the D.C. Flag Tattoo is No Longer Cool", *Washington Post* blog, November 23, 2015.

Tommy Nguyen, "The District Flexes Its Political Muscle, One Tattoo at a Time", *Washington Post*, June 24, 2004.



Antique U.S. Flag Assessment Guidelines

By David B. Martucci

Editor's note: Many flags are offered for sale with the claim that they are from the 18th or 19th centuries. In an attempt to help potential bidders understand whether the flag on offer is likely to date from the period its seller claims, former NAVA president David Martucci has prepared this guide to the characteristics of antique United States flags, meaning those manufactured before the 50-star flag was adopted in 1960. It is reprinted with his permission from the website: <http://www.vexman.net>.

Physical Characteristics of Antique Flags

Size, Appearance, & Display

There were no standard flag sizes before 1912. Stars-and-stripes flags under 5 feet long were less common prior to the end of the 19th century, as most flags were used on ships or on public or commercial buildings. Flags ten to twenty feet long were the norm; however, unless you lived near a seaport you would not see flags on a daily basis. Flags were not displayed by businesses until the Civil War nor by individuals at their homes until the late 19th century.

It was also not uncommon for a manufacturer to leave extra space on the canton for the consumer to be able to add new stars as necessary. The American people adopted the Stars and Stripes as a popular expression of the American spirit in the 19th century and countless variations of design existed. No official specifications were issued outside of the U.S. Navy until 1912.



Figure 1. Nineteenth-century flags with stars in various patterns. Source: Jeff Bridgman Antiques.

Design

Stars

Stars in a strict geometric order with all of the top points up was the *rarest* form of design prior to about 1900. Only flags made for the U.S. Navy would have closely approached that description. Stars were found in rows, ovals, double rings, open boxes, great

star pattern, flower patterns, etc. (fig. 1). Star points often radiated from the center towards the edge. Stars were made whatever size the maker wished. Some made smaller stars so they could fit in stars for new states, others made the stars large enough to nearly touch each other, filling the canton. Some had a large central star with smaller ones surrounding it, and some had large stars in the corner with smaller ones inside (fig. 2).



Figure 2. Nineteenth-century flags showing stars in a variety of orientations and number of points; see Figure 1 for further examples of variety of orientation. Source: Jeff Bridgman Antiques; Zaricor Flag Collection.

Stars Applied to the Flag

Typically the blue canton (see below) was one thickness of bunting, with either two sets of stars applied (fig. 3), one to each side, or, especially for larger flags, one set of stars would be sewn on the front and the blue bunting would be cut out from the back of the star and the raw blue edge hemmed (fig. 4). And of course there was no standardization as to which side of the flag was the “front”.

Later, becoming common about the time of the Centennial (although there are some examples from the Civil War), the star fields were often printed on less expensive flags. By the early 20th century, the complete flag might be printed (fig. 5).

Figure 3. Hand-appliquéd stars on a nineteenth-century flag. Photo by the author.



Figure 4. A hand-sewn star on a nineteenth-century flag (top) with the blue fabric cut away on the reverse (bottom). Photos by the author.



Points

Prior to about 1845, it was not uncommon for U.S. flags to have stars with 6, 7, 8, or more points as well as the more popular 5-pointed variety. Even into the 20th century there are known examples with other than 5-pointed stars. In the 18th century, it was not uncommon for the stars on a single flag to vary in the number of points they had.



Figure 5. A printed nineteenth-century flag. Source: Jeff R. Bridgman Antiques.

Number

The number of stars varied depending on the number of states in the union, the intent and opinions of the maker, or the whim of the customer. Thirteen-star flags have always been popular (see below) and have always been available. During the Civil War, some flag makers only included the number of stars to represent the states which had not seceded (“exclusionary flags”, although this was officially frowned on by the government). Some flags had the stars form shapes or words, and these often required a number different from the number of states then in the Union.

Canton

The proportions of the canton were not specified until 1912. Only a good aesthetic sense of proportion was needed by the maker. The canton would tend to be rectangular if the maker wanted stars in rows or in an elliptical pattern, and roughly square if the star pattern were to be circular. The canton usually was seven stripes deep, resting on a white stripe, although cantons six or eight stripes deep were not unknown in the early 19th century (fig. 6).

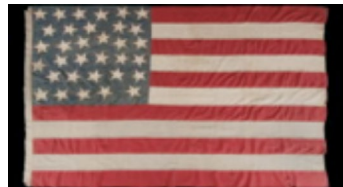
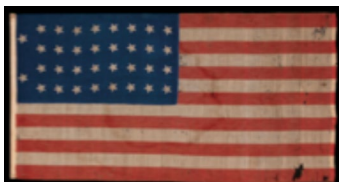


Figure 6. Nineteenth-century flags showing cantons of various proportions. Source: Jeff R. Bridgman Antiques.

Stripes

The length of the stripes was not specified before 1912. Ship’s flags tended to be made “longer”, with a ratio approximating 1 by 2, as they were subject to excessive wear at sea and were trimmed and re-hemmed numerous times until they were nearly square or until the hoist end deteriorated beyond repair.



Orientation

The Flag Act of 1818 was the first to specify that the stripes should be horizontal. A number of flags before that are known with vertical stripes, and some after that date.

Colors

In the early days of the republic, it was not uncommon to have stripes of red, white, and blue (fig. 7). Although the official description never included blue stripes, Benjamin Franklin described the flag with the three colors of stripes when he was involved in diplomatic missions in Europe. John Paul Jones and other naval captains also are known to have used flags with stripes in the three colors. In addition, the official descriptions of the flag did not specify if there were to be more red stripes or more white ones until 1912.



Figure 7. Nineteenth-century flag with red, white, and blue stripes. Source: Jeff R. Bridgman Antiques.

Other emblems

Besides stars, early U.S. flags sometimes included other emblems. For ceremonial or military use on



land, the U.S. seal with the eagle was frequently painted or embroidered into the canton along with the stars. Words sometimes appeared; slogans, mottoes, campaign statements, etc. can all be found on early U.S. flags (fig. 8).

Construction and Materials
Construction techniques

Flag construction techniques consisted of hand-sewing and possibly painting from the beginning to about the mid-to late-1840s (fig. 9) when machine stitching began to be introduced (the sewing machine was invented in 1841). Until the early 20th century, the stripes were often sewn by machine and the stars by hand (fig. 10). Mechanized stitching of stars began in the very late 19th century and became common by the 1920s (fig. 11). Keep in mind that crafters still hand-sew today and machine-sewing is only a limiting factor, giving a “no earlier than” date. My mother hand-sewed a 13-star flag for me in 1976!



Figure 8. Nineteenth-century flags with inscriptions and images in the canton. Source: Heritage Auctions; Jeff R. Bridgman Antiques.

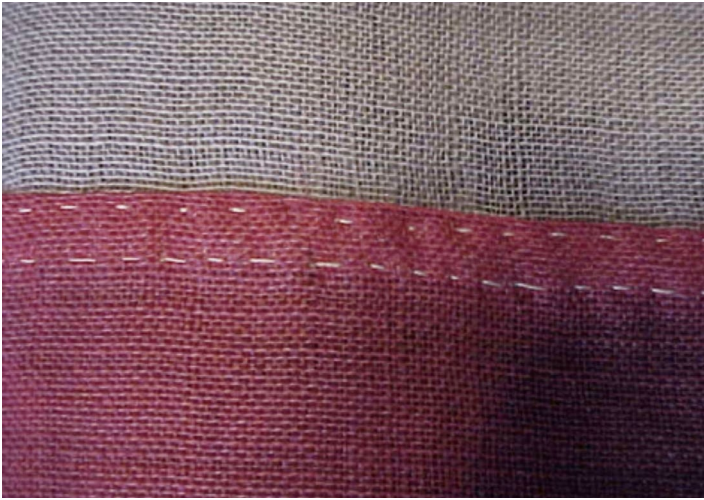


Figure 9. A hand-stitched seam on a nineteenth-century flag. Photo by the author.



Figure 10. A machine-stitched seam on an antique flag. Photo by the author.

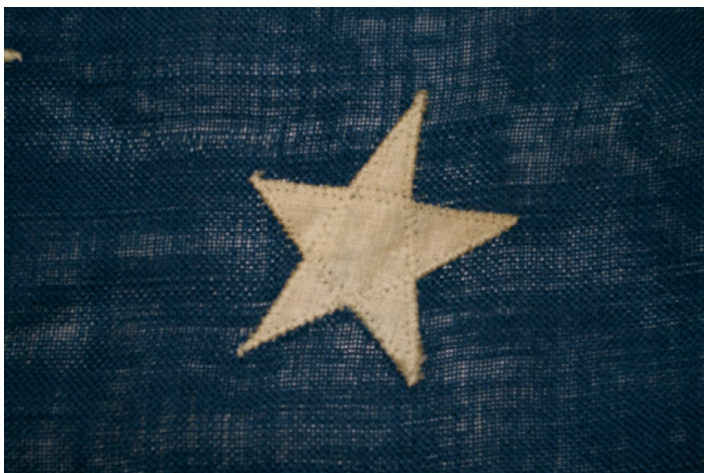


Figure 11. A machine-appliqued star on a nineteenth-century flag. Photo by the author.

Some ceremonial and military flags bore complex designs, usually hand-painted until the 20th century (although the earliest known example of mass-produced multi-color printed flags date from 1822 in Maine!) after which screen printing and other techniques became available for the production of such designs (fig. 12).



Figure 12. An antique flag with a painted canton. Source: eBay.

Fabrics

In the 18th and 19th century, flags were usually made of one of three fabrics: wool, linen, or silk, although a home-made flag could be made out of anything at hand. Later, around the time of the Civil War, cotton became available in weights and finishes suitable for flags. Woolen bunting, usually imported from England in the first few decades of independence, is a lightweight, thin fabric prized for nautical use because of its flyability and resistance to rot from exposure to seawater. Linen was often used for the header and stars on such flags. Linen was also used for some “service” flags because of its inexpensive nature (in the late 18th century and early 19th century, it was the most common homespun fabric). Silk was expensive and used for military and ceremonial flags. These often bore complicated allegorical or heraldic images painted on by master artists, perhaps with different designs on each side.

In 1866, the American Bunting Company of Lowell, Massachusetts, began production of American-made bunting. They trademarked the brands “U.S. Army”, “U.S. Navy”, and “Standard”, which are stamped on many late-19th-century flags. Other brands are also found and probably the most common is “Bulldog”. This was first used by the Dettra Flag Company after about 1925 (Dettra is now a brand owned by Annin & Co., the world’s largest manufacturer). Cotton bunting was introduced in the late 19th century and was in heavy use until about 20 years ago. After World War II, nylon became a common fabric and today most flags are made of nylon, rayon (cellulose fiber), or polyester.

Threads

Flags in the 18th and 19th century were stitched with different kinds of threads, mainly linen thread to begin with but gradually changing to cotton thread by the early 19th century. The exact twist of the threads and their uniformity can often determine their age and make.



Figure 13. Nineteenth-century flag with a rope sewn into the header. Source: Zaricor Flag Collection.

Finishing

Header & Grommets; Rope & Sleeves

A flag’s header varied from non-existent to a couple of inches wide. Early flags had a rope sewn to the bunting with no heading; some had a canvas heading with the rope sewn in (fig. 13), and others had hand-worked grommets like buttonholes (fig. 14).

These hand-worked grommets might resemble buttonholes or they might have a metal or leather piece under the stitching. The metal pieces were called “thimbles”. Military flags might have a sleeve through which the pole passed or they might have a series of hand-worked buttonholes that were then lashed individually to the pole.

Metal grommets were first introduced during the Civil War, but did not become common until about the Centennial (1876). Early metal grommets were made of steel but by 1880 or so, brass was much more common. Except for during World War II, when there was a shortage of brass, almost all metal grommets on flags after about 1890 were brass. Metal grommets sometimes have either a number or an anchor stamped into them. The number indicates the size of the grommet (usually between 2 and 4) and the anchor indicates grommets made to U.S. Navy specifications (they are not necessarily only found on Navy flags, due to surplus grommets being sold into the civilian market) (fig. 15).

Fringe

Flags had no fringe unless they were silk military colors. Some military colors of the Revolution had fringe but it was usually made from the body of the flag, with the warp of the fabric pulled to fringe the woof. More elaborate fringe came into use during the middle of the nineteenth century (fig. 16).

Maker's Marks and Inscriptions

Some manufacturers in the 19th century marked their flags with their name, logo, or mark. The U.S. Navy stamped on the header an abbreviation of the name of the navy yard, such as BR for Brooklyn. Not until the 20th century, however, were names and trademarks commonly stamped or stenciled on flags. On early flags, one can sometimes find an inscription or signature that would possibly identify the maker or owner of the flag. Sometimes naval flags have the name of the ship written on them.



Figure 14. A hand-whipped buttonhole grommet on an antique flag. Photo by author.



Figure 15. A brass U.S. Navy grommet stamped with date and size. Photo by author.



Figure 16. A mid-19th century New York militia flag with fringe. Source: ZariCor Flag Collection.

Availability and Value of Antique American Flags

In general, antique American flags are fairly commonly found in almost all communities of the country. One often finds such items in second-hand stores, antique stores, and auctions of all types. However, obviously some are rarer than others and therefore more valuable.

13-Star Flags

Surprisingly to most people, the 13-star flag is possibly the most common. Having been made continuously since 1777, and indeed, still available today commercially in several different specifications, the 13-star flag is by far the most popular of all U.S. flag designs. Because it is also a design favored by crafters, finding a completely hand-sewn 13 star flag that dates from the middle of the 20th century is not uncommon. Further, the U.S. Navy officially used the 13-star flag until 1916. The greatest numbers of these flags were made during the Centennial, Bicentennial, and Civil War eras. Few, if any, survive from the Revolutionary War era. Value varies greatly depending on age, design, size, and condition.

45-, 46-, and 48-Star Flags

After the 13-star flag, the 48-star flag is probably the most common, followed by the 45- and 46-star variations. The 48-star version is so common that unless a flag can be demonstrated to have been closely associated with a famous event or person, it is unlikely to have much value. The 45-star flag is probably the next most common and then the 46, with slightly higher value for each gradation of rarity.

49- and 50-Star Flags

Although only official for one year, the 49-star flag was made in large numbers and so is still fairly easy to find on the market (in fact, it can be bought new today). Unless you find a U.S. Navy-made flag, their value is fairly low. The 50-star flag is the current design, so is not considered an antique.

38-, 39-, 42-, and 44-Star Flags (also the 43-Star Flag)

These four patterns are fairly common and have only a moderate value. Note that 39- and 42-star flags were never official. By law (since 1818) the star representing a new state is added to the flag on the 4th of July following admission. However, the 39- and 42-star flags are more common than the 43-star flag that became official on July 4th, 1890. This is due to the uncertainty of how many states Congress would admit before Independence Day, and a desire of manufacturers to be the “first” with the new flag. Also, Congress “pulled a fast one” by admitting Idaho on July 3rd! By contrast, the 43-star flag is very rare and has a high value.

34-, 35- and 36-Star Flags

The U.S. Civil War spawned an explosion of U.S. flags in the north, so they are not as rare as one might think. For the most part, non-military flags have a moderate to high value depending on size, condition, and star pattern. Military flags usually have a very high value to collectors.

Other American Flags

Most of the other patterns are quite rare and have a higher value.

Care of Antique Flags

Antique flags do not have to have expensive storage treatment. For flags that are not in the highest category of historical importance, the simplest, most effective method is box storage. If you have the space or the flag is small, flat storage is best. Go to a good stationery, framing, or museum supply store and get an archival quality (“acid-free”) box large enough to fit the flag without folding (it may have to be custom-made if the flag is large), and some acid-free tissue paper. Lay the flag flat between the acid-free tissue paper.

For larger flags, acquire a box that can accommodate the flag with the fewest folds necessary. Wad some of the tissue loosely and place it in the center of the laid-out flag. Loosely fold the flag around the tissue, trying to avoid creases. Add more tissue wads as needed. Place the flag in the box with tissue around it.

No matter what size box you use, don’t forget to tape an envelope on the top containing copies of all the pertinent documents, including your own recollection of acquiring the flag and what you think of it. Be sure to date and sign everything.

Keep your flag in a dry, dark, cool space. Most closets are pretty decent places. Don’t take it out too often, but do enjoy it.

For more important flags, or for display, you should have the flag professionally mounted and framed using archival materials. Some framing companies can do this or you can go to experts in the field. NAVA has many flag conservation experts among its members; don’t hesitate to reach out to the association, and they can put you in touch with a knowledgeable professional.

Whatever you do, here’s what you should *not* do:

- Don’t wash the flag. Admire the historic patina of your flag. If a cleaning is absolutely needed, then contact a textile conservation professional (not a dry cleaner) for a safe cleaning job.
- Don’t stitch the flag to a backing. Every stitch perforates the flag, weakening the fabric even further. Also leave the tears alone.
- Don’t fly it outside. Antique flags are usually in fragile condition. Outdoor display should be of a very limited duration, and only in clear, dry conditions with little or no wind. Wall display should only be inside of an archival frame with ultraviolet-protective glass or synthetic cover.

Vexillum Submission Deadlines

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

July 20 • October 20 • January 20 • April 20

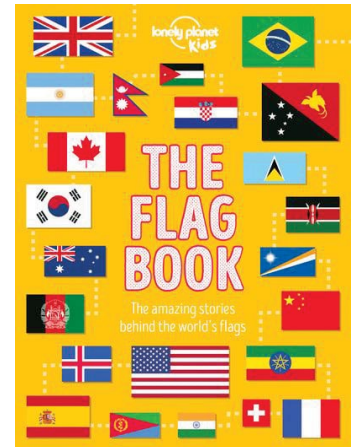
Longer pieces or items with less urgency will be worked into the publication queue as space and time permit.

Book Reviews

Moira Butterfield, *The Flag Book: The Amazing Stories Behind the World’s Flags* (Lonely Planet Global Limited, 2019; 184 pages; \$19.99)
ISBN: 9781788683104

Reviewed by John King

This is a new book in a large format—9½ by 12 inches—with full color illustrations. The presentation is eye-catching and the details included with each flag are both accurate and comprehensive. While listed under the series *Lonely Planet Kids* and found in the children’s section of Barnes and Noble and local libraries, any vexillologist would be well served to have this book at home.



The contents are organized by continent but interspersed throughout the book are sections on pirate flags, flag use on ships and airplanes, international flag signals, and semaphore flags. Additionally, there are brief bits on the world’s oldest flags, the largest flag ever flown, the highest flagpole, and flags used in space, on Mount Everest, in auto racing, and by international organizations.

Of particular interest to armchair vexillologists and those who are just discovering the study of flags are the first four sections of the book that speak to the concept of flags. “What Are Flags For?” discusses the meanings associated with flags as well as the types of flags (national, civil, sub-national, etc.). “Speaking in Flag” discusses flag parts, ratios, shapes, and patterns. “Flag Designs” goes into the history of flags, covers flag etiquette, and gives a few examples of what to look for on flags, such as stars, mythical creatures, landscapes, animals, religious symbols, plants, and historical objects. “Coats of Arms” is the fourth section and here the reader will find an understandable outline of heraldry along with heraldry definitions, shield divisions by name (fess, pale, etc.) and the Norman French words for heraldic colors.

At the beginning of each section is a general map of the continent with its countries outlined and named and an index for the section. For each country, its flag is described in terms of date of adoption, ratio, usage, and design, along with a full color picture of the flag and a smaller map showing its location on the continent and sub-national divisions and territories, if appropriate. For example, the pages for Canada, Japan, and the United States have the flags of their provinces, prefectures, and states shown along with the meaning of their colors and symbols. Specific details of the national flags are also given. For example, the Chilean flag is called “La Estrella Solitaria”

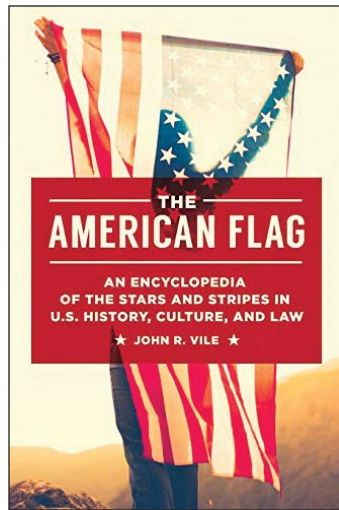
(The Lone Star) and one must have official permission to fly it on any day other than the specified three state holidays during the year.

While the book's text is limited, it is not simplistic or juvenile in its presentation and gives a good synopsis of each country's history and flag. For \$19.95, I bought a copy at Barnes and Noble intending to donate it to the library when I was finished. Instead, I'm keeping my copy and will donate another one.

John R. Vile, *The American Flag: An Encyclopedia of the Stars and Stripes in U.S. History, Culture, and Law* (ABC-CLIO, 2018; 440 pages; \$94.00) ISBN: 9781440857881

Reviewed by Arthur Etchells

This is not a pretty book. It is a scholarly work. It is an encyclopedia and looks like one, with no color illustrations and only a few black and white illustrations embedded in the text. We are used to colorful flag books, with the standard set by Whitney Smith's *Flags Through the Ages and Across the World* (1975). Vile's work is set up in classic encyclopedia fashion with Part I being a series of lengthy overview essays on topics such as flag etiquette, and the flag in music, art, politics, and so forth; Part II has a series of short entries, organized alphabetically, on topics ranging from the East India Company flag to the American flag in space. There is also a listing of entries by topics and a handy cross-index.



In a very honest preface the author states that he is not a vexillologist of long standing, but rather, as a professor of political science at Middle Tennessee State University, he sees the importance of gathering together vital information about the flag to inform scholarship into history and politics. The book is not jingoistic or patriotic, but rather presents an even-handed discussion of the topics at hand.

The authors of the lengthy essays in Part I are mainly academics from various U.S. universities (including former *Flag Research Quarterly* editor Kenneth Hartvigen), except one from Israel. In line with the scholarly approach, each entry has a section on further reading and an extensive bibliography; these have many entries from the NAVA journal *Raven*.

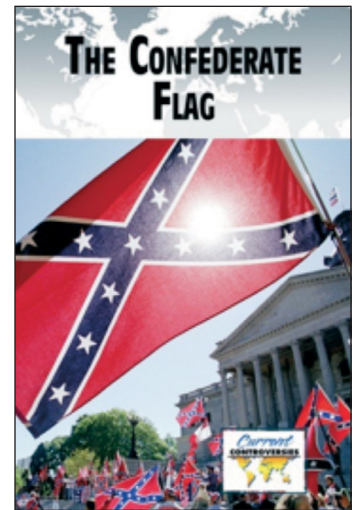
While the book may lack the vibrant illustrations and physical descriptions that appeal to many vexillologists, this encyclopedia is a useful reference for scholarship about the role of flags in American society. Most public or academic libraries would benefit from adding it to their collections, but individual vexillologists will find that its appeal will vary depending on the type of flag study they engage in.

NOTE: This book has a "look inside" function on the Amazon.com website. If you tap the image of the book cover, an amazing amount of information from the book is displayed, including the preface, table of contents, large sections of text, and some of the index. This gives you an additional opportunity to see if this book is for you.

Anne Cunningham (ed.), *The Confederate Flag: Current Controversies* (New York: Greenhaven Publishing, 2018; 182 pages; \$37.12 [library binding]; \$25.60 [paperback]). ISBN: 9781534502444

Reviewed by Benjamin J. Nickodemus

This is a compilation of pieces on the Battle Flag of the Army of Northern Virginia, mostly written after the 2015 mass shooting by a white supremacist in a historical African American church in Charleston, South Carolina, and the subsequent removal of the battle flag from the grounds of the South Carolina statehouse. The essays address the Battle Flag in a dialogical way in order to promote discussion and understanding grounded in history. This book is very helpful in mapping out several of the key arguments about the Battle Flag as well as being an excellent case study in the ongoing question as to whether synchronic meaning (what a symbol means in the present) can ever be separated from its diachronic history (the origin and development of a symbol over time).



As do all titles in the "Current Controversies" series, it attempts to avoid taking a position, but instead hopes to present both sides of a controversy to encourage thought. In this case, the goal is to provide a "historically grounded examination" in order to inform common emotional arguments. That being said, it argues that a historically grounded position eliminates the "heritage, not hate" argument for the Battle Flag. It suggests that this concept cannot withstand real historical analysis. It argues that, at the bare minimum, the flag is so tied to slavery and white supremacy, it makes the editor wonder whether it could ever truly be a neutral indicator of Southern pride.

To ground the flag historically, there are two approaches in the book. The first is to consider the way the Confederacy is remembered. It addresses the "lost cause" narrative and challenges many of its claims. Far more interesting for vexillologists is the other approach which considers the flag itself and asks questions concerning how the flag has been used over time. Some key developments presented in the book are as follows: directly after the Civil War, it was tied to veterans as it

was not the actual flag of the government of the Confederate States of America; the Battle Flag gained new meaning and was treated as the Confederate Flag (as if it were the flag of the Confederate States government itself) in the 1890s as the “lost cause” narratives arose in the midst of Jim Crow laws; some in the military displayed it as a marker for unit identity during the years before the civil rights era; it gained new meaning as a symbol for segregation during the civil rights movement; and the meanings assigned to it in the current era, when it is regarded by some as a symbol of white supremacy all over the nation (not only the South).

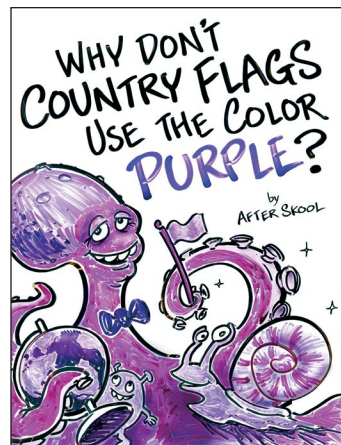
The question, then, is if a current meaning encompasses within it all the meanings grounded in the past. The book recognizes that one possible current usage is simply being contrarian and flying it to thumb one’s nose at convention, but can it really be used that way without the baggage of its former usage? This book never comes to a firm conclusion but implies that it cannot. Meaning can never be isolated from history, especially with a symbol as recognizable as the battle flag.

After Skool, *Why Don't Country Flags Use the Color Purple?* (KramGallery LLC, 2019; 46 pages; \$15.99). ISBN: 9780578489247

Reviewed by Greg Matson

Why Don't Country Flags Use The Color Purple? is a book version of the phenomenally popular three-and-a-half minute animated YouTube video produced by After Skool, an animation studio that produces educational videos on a variety of topics and ideas. After Skool’s animations are in a fast-paced whiteboard style, and this style is carried over into the book. As the book’s intended audience is the elementary school-aged crowd, it adds a bow tie-garbed octopus teacher and a crowd of cutesy monster characters (representing colors) to engage interest.

The book is advertised as the “incredible true story of purple”, and so it is. After the characters discover that purple has been left out of the colors used on country flags (and Purple itself feels dejected), the group goes on a whirlwind tour of history to understand why purple wasn’t used on flags. The book explains the costliness of purple dye developed from a rare sea snail found only near the city of Tyre in today’s Lebanon (and its superior quality to that of simply mixing red and blue dyes). And how the accidental discovery of a synthetic purple dye by chemist William Henry Perkin in 1856—he was trying to find a cure for malaria—made purple widely available.



But by then, countries already had established flags, and it wasn’t until the 1900s that purple began to appear in country flags. The book has a very nice half-page image displaying the flag of Dominica, on which the purple feathers of the sisserou parrot are prominent. Not in the book is the flag of Nicaragua, which, because it displays the country’s coat of arms, contains purple in the rainbow that is part of the coat of arms. Also not in the book is the flag of the second Republic of Spain (1931–1939), which used a purple bar along the bottom third of the field. All three of these flags are shown in After Skool’s YouTube video as examples of country flags using purple, however.

The book’s front and back endpapers provide 490 national flag illustrations, along with cutesy monsters scattered throughout the array. The flags in the front are duplicated in the back but with additional countries represented. I could have done without the cartoons, honestly, but they would serve to cause younger readers to spend time perusing those pages of flags that they wouldn’t otherwise spend.

Since I have a resident sixth grader in my household, I thought I would gauge her take on the book. After reading it, she said it was “interesting”. “How so?”, I asked, hoping for more than a one-word response. She then explained that while she was generally familiar with the history of purple dye, she had never made the connection to flags before.

So, while this book has more to say about purple than it does about flags, if you are looking for a little something that illustrates the connection between flags, the world, and its history, it is a worthwhile choice.

NAVA Grants: Application Deadlines

NAVA offers grants to support research and scholarship in vexillology and flag conservation.

The **Devereaux D. Cannon, Jr. Grant for Research in Vexillology** supports original research in various aspects of flag design and usage in North America. The US\$250–\$500 award is given to individuals pursuing research which advances vexillological knowledge and meets the grant criteria. It is especially appropriate for graduate students making progress towards completion of a dissertation or thesis. Details on the grant program and procedures for applying are available at <http://nava.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Cannon-Grant-Guidelines-2018.pdf>. The deadline for submission of grant applications is June 30 each year.

The **Grace Rogers Cooper Flag Conservation Grant** is awarded to organizations engaged in conservation, preservation, and restoration of historic flags. For more information visit <http://nava.org/grant-programs>. Please write to info@nava.org for more information about the application process. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis.

The 100th Anniversary of the Red, Black, and Green Flag

By Beatrice Jones

This year marks the centennial of the red, black, and green flag known variously as the Black Liberation Flag, Pan-African Flag, Universal African Flag, or Afro-American Unity flag. During the month of August 1920, 20,000 delegates from 25 nations gathered in New York for the First International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World, sponsored by the Universal Negro Improvement Association and chaired by Marcus Garvey. Among the outcomes of the meeting was a document called the Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World, adopted August 31; in its 39th paragraph, the Declaration determined “That the colors, Red, Black and Green, be the colors of the Negro race”.

Since then—especially in the 1920s and 1930s, but throughout the last century—Blacks have embraced a flag that was created in a new spirit of nationalism throughout the world. During the Black Power Movement of the 1960s–70s, flag use soared and flag manufacturers began including the “Afro Flag” in their catalogues. As flag use declined in later decades, the colors have become cultural markers of racial art and pride as seen in our jewelry, clothing, and celebrations.

It is red for our blood that we shed for our nation, black for the people, and green for the lush vegetation of Motherland Africa, our youth, future, and success. When we see our flag’s brilliant colors flying in the wind, we see an expression of our people and ideals. A flag is often the impetus to stir people to courage and some would readily die rather than see their flag fall to dishonor; indeed it is a cherished, unifying symbol of our people. We remember always Garvey’s quote, “show me the race or the nation without a flag, and I will show you a race of people without any pride”.

I encourage African American members of NAVA to make a commitment to promote and fly the Universal African Flag, wear the lapel pin, or put flags in your window for the year, or at least on August 31. By flying the flag, we are taking up the spirit of Garvey, who exhorted us, “Up you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will.” The flag has remarkable beauty and power—first exhibited on that August day in 1920 and worthy of display one hundred years on.

Bea Jones (pictured at center) is a member of NAVA and founder of Senoj American African Flags. She lives in Garden Grove, California.



In Memoriam:

Dick Libby, 1932–2020

by Nick Artimovich

Richardson (“Dick”) Armstrong Libby Jr. passed away comfortably at his home on Thursday, April 2, 2020, at the age of 88. Dick was a long-time member of the Chesapeake Bay Flag Association and NAVA.

Dick was born on January 30, 1932 and was a graduate of St. Alban’s School for Boys (1950), Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut (1954), and General Seminary in New York City (1960). He served his country as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War, and served his community as an Episcopal priest, Rotarian, volunteer firefighter, and race committee member of the U.S. Naval Academy Sailing Squadron. It was his connection to the Naval Academy that CBFA and NAVA members may remember the most, as he arranged visits to the USNA Museum, and to the numerous other locations on the Annapolis campus where captured foreign flags are on display. Our last Libby-led tour was during the 24th International Congress of Vexillology in 2011.

Dick loved history, including the study of American Revolutionary War flags. One pet project was correcting the design of the “Shaw Flag” that flew over the Maryland State House in Annapolis. He revised the design that the late Grace Rogers Cooper had reconstructed based on the inventory of materials purchased for the flag. Dick found a period painting of the Annapolis State House that appears to show a vertical blue band of stars adjacent to the hoist, rather than a conventional canton of 13 stars.



Dick Libby and his reconstructed Shaw Flag. Source: https://www.times-news.com/news/local_news/man-discovers-flag-error/article_446b7992-6e3a-5f74-a72f-74cba5d838ba.html

David Phillips, 1944–2020

Photo and obituary courtesy of Flag Heritage Foundation

We of the Flag Heritage Foundation mourn the passing of David F. Phillips, our series editor, fellow trustee, and friend, who passed away from a confluence of health issues.

David, for us, had two impressive personas. The first was David as a longtime member of the Board of Trustees. In this role he was a constant initiator. He was always full of proposals to pursue book projects, to make the most of our collections, to find the best professionals to support our work, and in general to lead us forward. He was equally adept as an editor, as a researcher, and as a writer. His sense of organization was consonant with his background in law and librarianship. He worked very smoothly with the

others of us on the Board of Trustees, bringing to us project proposals that were so fully developed that our unanimous endorsement was always a formality. Although his first love was heraldry, he drew respect as a scholar in vexillology as well. All his work was to a very high standard. One could see David as a formidable combination of scholar, editor, and administrator.

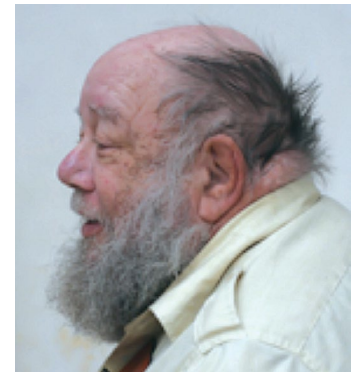
Those coming to know David only through the foundation, however, would begin to realize that David’s true scope was much broader, amounting to quite a different persona. “David wins, hands down, the *Reader’s Digest* prize for ‘The World’s Most Unforgettable Person,’” one of his friends remarked on learning of David’s death.

His legal career ranged from defender of Timothy Leary to law librarian. His writing led beyond scholarship to poetry, children’s stories, travel-ogues, essays, biography, and autobiography. Earlier he had been a draft counselor at the time of the Vietnam War, a taxi driver, a typist, a radio and television broadcaster, and an English teacher in Taiwan. He was one of America’s foremost collectors of heraldic books, atlases, first-day covers, and works in sundry other categories. His spiritual explorations were informed by early psychedelic experiences, which led him eventually to Buddhism and veneration of the Hindu god Ganesha. And even this list is merely suggestive of the twists and turns of his personal journey, as recounted in his autobiography.

David will be sorely missed by his family, colleagues, friends, and acquaintances, and in particular by the remaining trustees of the Flag Heritage Foundation. He leaves siblings Christopher, Adam, and Victoria, as well as a niece and a nephew.

Some life details: David was born on September 15, 1944 and grew up in Manhattan. He graduated from Columbia University in 1968 and the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1971. In 1974 he added an M.S. from the Columbia School of Library Service, leading later in his career to his contributions as a legal librarian. For many decades he made his home in San Francisco, where he resided at the time of his death.

Publications: David’s own publications include, as author, “Emblems of the Indian States” (2011) and “The Double Eagle” (2014), and as editor and lead contributor, “Japanese Heraldry and Heraldic Flags” (2018). All three appear in the publication series of the Flag Heritage Foundation and are available on Amazon. David was a



David Phillips

frequent contributor to the British journal *The Heraldic Craftsman* and was one of only two writers granted craft membership in the Society of Heraldic Arts, in England. At the time of his death he had completed the manuscript and design for a book about the heraldic work of the Polish-born artist Arthur Szyk. Most recently, he was the editor and compiler of *Psychedelic Refugee*, the memoirs of Rosemary Woodruff Leary (Timothy's wife), to be published next winter by Inner Traditions.

David's website Radbash.com contains his extensive autobiography, a full list of his heraldic and other publications, and his essays on many other topics ranging from Buddhism to how he became entranced by heraldry as a young child. In a way, David considered this website to be a summation of his life and of his incredibly wide-ranging and original thought.

Our heartfelt thanks to David's brother Christopher Phillips for essential contributions to this narrative of David's life and work.

Arnold Rabbow, 1936–2018

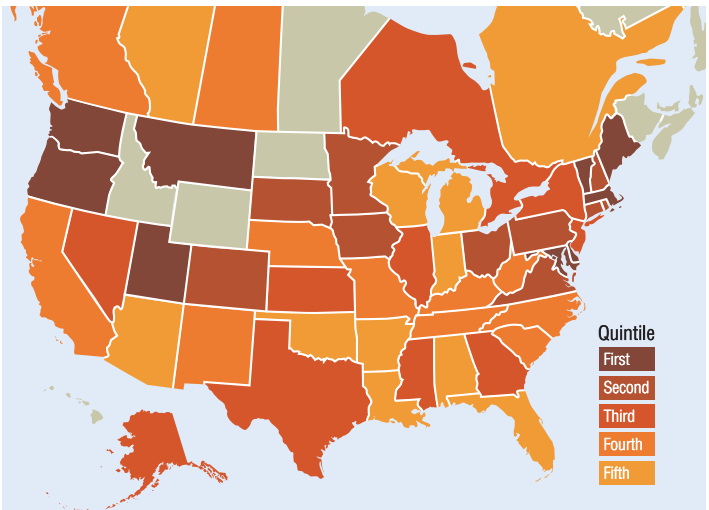
by James Croft

On February 26, 2018, vexillology and heraldry lost an esteemed scholar with the death of Dr. Arnold Rabbow. Arnold was born in Berlin on July 2, 1936, and in 1966 received his doctorate, with a dissertation on the topic, "Visual Symbols as a Manifestation on Non-verbal Journalism". He then moved to Braunschweig and became chief editor of *Braunschweiger Zeitung*. There he created more than 150 local coats of arms and published his famous book, *Lexicon of Political Symbols*, along with many other works.

Dr. Rabbow joined NAVA in 1973 and at the 12th International Congress of Vexillology (also NAVA 21, held in San Francisco in 1987), he won NAVA's prestigious Driver Award for his presentation of "Flags: Life After Death". In 2016, in appreciation for all his work, German Federal President Joachim Gauk honored him with the Medal of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.



Arnold Rabbow with the arms of Wiedenbrügge, Germany, which he designed. Source: <http://www.wiedenbruegge.net/dorf-wappen.php>



Where Are NAVA Members Most Concentrated?

NAVA members are found in 46 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and five Canadian provinces (as well as 24 other countries). However, some states are more likely to have NAVA members than others. The map shown above displays the states and provinces ranked by the frequency of NAVA members as a percentage of the population.

| State/Province | Quintile | State/Province | Quintile |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| Alabama | fifth | Montana | first |
| Alaska | third | Nebraska | fourth |
| Alberta | fifth | Nevada | third |
| Arizona | fifth | New Hampshire | second |
| Arkansas | fifth | New Jersey | third |
| British Columbia | fourth | New Mexico | fourth |
| California | fourth | New York | third |
| Colorado | second | North Carolina | fourth |
| Connecticut | second | Ohio | second |
| Delaware | first | Oklahoma | fifth |
| District of Columbia | first | Ontario | third |
| Florida | fifth | Oregon | first |
| Georgia | third | Pennsylvania | second |
| Illinois | third | Québec | fifth |
| Indiana | fifth | Rhode Island | second |
| Iowa | second | Saskatchewan | fourth |
| Kansas | third | South Carolina | fourth |
| Kentucky | fourth | South Dakota | second |
| Louisiana | fifth | Tennessee | fourth |
| Maine | first | Texas | third |
| Maryland | first | Utah | first |
| Massachusetts | first | Vermont | first |
| Michigan | fifth | Virginia | second |
| Minnesota | second | Washington | first |
| Mississippi | third | West Virginia | fourth |
| Missouri | fourth | Wisconsin | fifth |

Iwo Jima Anniversary Flag Display at Local Library

By Dale Grimes

As a vexillologist interested in educating my fellow citizens, I have assembled many flag displays that can be moved from place to place for public exhibition. Last year was the 75th anniversary of many battles of World War II, so my traveling flag display focused on flags from 1944 (fig. 1).

This year is the 75th anniversary of the Battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and VE Day (Victory in Europe) and VJ Day (Victory over Japan), which marked the cessation of hostilities against Germany and Japan. I contacted my local library, and talked to Elizabeth Storms, Branch Manager of the North Point Library in Dundalk, Maryland, about mounting a WWII flag display entitled *The Flag Raising on Iwo Jima*. We agreed on setting up the display for the month of February—the 23rd being the 75th anniversary of the date Joe Rosenthal snapped the famous photograph *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima* (fig. 2).

The first thing I had to do was redesign my flag frame from 8' tall by 12.5' long to 6' tall by 15' long so the frame would fit in the area allotted by the library. Using the Pythagorean theorem, I measured a right triangle 3' by 4' by 5' to make sure the frame was square (fig. 3). (Sorry, I'm a retired high school geometry teacher.)

Then I positioned the flags. I decided to place the size 11 ensign to the left and the size 7 ensign to the right. That way the viewer would move left to right as he reads and views the ten 8" x 10" photos that chronicle the timeline of what happened on February 23, 1945 (fig. 4).

The display included information on the historical background of the flags and details about the specimens on display.

The historical background:

The U.S. Marines landed on the island of Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945, with the goal of capturing the island from Japanese forces and securing its three airfields for the planned invasion of the Japanese main islands. The battle saw some of the fiercest fighting of the war in the Pacific. Iwo Jima is the only U.S. Marine battle where the American casualties outnumbered the Japanese. Although the battle went on until March 26, American forces seized the high point of the island, Mt. Suribachi, on February 23.



Figure 1. A display of notable flags from the U.S. military during 1944.



Figure 2. *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima* by Joe Rosenthal.



Figure 3. The flag frame, re-sized to fit the space in the library.



Figure 4. The flag display, including historical photos.

The two ensigns:

Two U.S. ensigns were raised on Mt. Suribachi on February 23, 1945. The first ensign, a size 11, marked "U.S. No. II M1 44" (size 11, issued at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, 1944) and measuring 2' 4" by 4' 6", was raised at 10:30 a.m. (The 76-year-old flag in my display has the same markings.) Upon seeing the first flag going up, the men on the beach began to cheer and the ships nearby blasted their ship horns. It was the first American flag to be planted on Japanese homeland soil.

The first flag was considered to be too small and so a larger flag was found to replace it. The flag display shows that the larger flag is almost five times the size of the smaller flag.

The second ensign, a size 7, marked "U S ENSIGN NO 7 MARE ISLAND OCT 1943" and measuring 5' 2" by 9' 9", was raised in the early afternoon. It was considered the replacement flag and didn't receive the fanfare the first flag raising received. However, that all changed because at the second flag raising, photographer Joe Rosenthal took an image that became internationally famous and won a Pulitzer prize. (The 77-year-old flag in the display is marked "U S ENSIGN NO 7 MARE ISLAND AUG 1943".)

The photo:

The photo of the second flag raising is the most reproduced photo of WWII, but time has not been kind to those associated with the photo. Because of a misunderstanding, Joe Rosenthal spent the rest of his life defending against false charges that the photo was staged. Three of the six men in the photo never saw the photo, having been killed in action in the days that followed. Seventy years later, two of the three men who were initially identified as among the photo's subjects were later determined to have not been in the photo; the third survivor who was in the photo died a tragic death shortly after the war.

Other items on display (fig. 5):

- A National Museum of the Marine Corps brochure with the museum's exterior meant to "evoke the image of the flag raising on Iwo Jima".
- A block of four Iwo Jima stamps from 1945.
- A sample of black volcanic sand from Green Beach, Iwo Jima.
- Autographed photo of Corporal Charles W. Lindberg, who helped raise the first flag.
- A 1995 pamphlet titled "The United States Marines on Iwo Jima: The Battle and the Flag Raisings", published by History and Museums Division Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps.

Both of the original flags from Iwo Jima are at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, located in Triangle, Virginia, just outside of Quantico Marine Corps Base, and are displayed on a rotating basis. The second flag is perhaps the most symbolically important artifact in the Museum's collection.

Dale Grimes is a member of NAVA and the Chesapeake Bay Flag Association. He lives in Sparrow's Point, Maryland.



Figure 5. Items on display alongside the flags.

In the spring of 2020, NAVA published an updated edition of Ted Kaye's compilation of guidelines for flag design, "Good" Flag, "Bad" Flag. A copy is being provided to each NAVA member, the title is being made freely available as an

electronic publication on the NAVA website, and print copies are available for sale through the NAVA Shop and on Amazon.com. We spoke recently with the compiler about the history of his publication and the reasons for its update.

"Good" Flag, "Bad" Flag, Updated Edition Available Now

How did *Good Flag, Bad Flag* come about in the first place?

When I became *Raven* editor in 1996, the volume under way documented the flags of American Indian tribes.¹ As I edited that seminal work by Don Healy, I found myself regretting that so many tribal flag designs fell short of their potential, most likely being modeled on poorly-designed U.S. state flags. As more and more tribes were then adopting flags—spurred by native sovereignty laws, casino construction, and the upcoming Lewis & Clark bicentennial commemoration (for which I was serving as executive director in Oregon)²—I began to wonder about the relationship between vexillologists and those who design and adopt flags.

Then in 1999 the concept of a general-interest flag-design guidebook arose during the 18th International Congress of Vexillology (NAVA 33), held in Victoria, B.C. A panel discussion exploring "Vexillology—Guides for Flag Design" (featuring flag merchants Doreen Braverman, Jim Ferrigan, and Peter Orenski) deplored the sad current state of flag design, as evidenced by the poor quality of the flags proposed by their customers. As the panel wrapped up, I rose to assert that we flag experts had no business criticizing the public's vexillographic attempts until we successfully shared the basic principles of flag design. I then impulsively volunteered to draft such a guidebook, promising it for the next ICV, in York, England, in two years' time.

What guided your editorial decisions in creating *GFBF*?

I compiled the text by consulting the writings of about 20 vexillographic thinkers—in the U.S. and Canada and around the world. Many had explored flag design in great detail, advancing important ideas in articles, pamphlets, and booklets. They didn't agree on everything, of course. But finding that they seemed to agree on five basic principles, I made those the core of the guidebook. It appeared, however, that most writers attempted to squeeze too much into their guidance—resulting in over-long, in-the-weeds, touch-every-base materials. Their work failed to market good flag design with a catchy title and short-and-sweet concepts.

And—perhaps most importantly—most focused on what TO do, usually ignoring what NOT to do. Because the North American public had very poor examples to guide it (bad flag design predominates in the United States at the city and state level—often "seals-on-bedsheets"), I thought it important to explicitly show and reject poor designs. That led to the idea of providing examples of designs which followed each principle and designs which did not.

What inspired the title?

Those two concepts—needing a catchy title and presenting "good" and "bad" examples—led to *Good Flag, Bad Flag*. That construct was already familiar to readers in such phrases as "good cop, bad cop" and "good dog, bad dog" (coincidentally the name of a favorite lunchtime haunt of mine in Portland—a hot dog take-out restaurant which proudly posted the first draft of



the *GFBF* cover on its bulletin board, along with photos of customers' dogs).

Tell us about the publication history of *GFBF*.

I'm the compiler, not the author, of *GFBF*—the authors are really the 20 writers on vexillography whose work I condensed and organized into a snappy format with a single editorial voice. I consulted directly with many of them after compiling the first draft.

I first created *GFBF* as a primitive 16-page booklet laid out in Microsoft Word. The NAVA board, led by President Dave Martucci, accepted the text and soon after NAVA webmaster Dick Gideon published it electronically on nava.org. After sharing it with NAVA members³ and receiving helpful feedback (especially from Jim Croft, as well as Lee Herold, Clay Moss, Dev Cannon, and Peter Orenski), I made updates and revisions. A draft distributed at ICV 19 (York) in July, 2001, met with wide enthusiasm from attendees—the first being Kin Spain, FIAV secretary general and former NAVA president. Mike Hale, of Elmer's Flag & Banner, then pitched it to members of the National Independent Flag Dealers Association, and made occasional printouts for customers. (Despite my preference for anonymity, my family insisted I put my name on it.) It remained available only in electronic form for five years.

In 2006, *GFBF* appeared in printed form with professional layout by Melissa Scott, a designer I'd found through a local art school. I funded the design and printing costs and contributed an ample supply to NAVA (over 1,500 copies). Since then NAVA has given one to each new member and made it available on Amazon.com and the NAVA shop. *GFBF* has been translated into Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Slovenian—through the generous work of fellow vexillologists (Gustavo Tracchia, Sophie Rault, Dieter Linder, Flavio Marchetto, Tiago Berg, and Aleks Hribovšek). All are available for download on the NAVA website at <https://nava.org/nava-digital-library-flag-design-resources>.

The size was intentional: 16 pages seemed the outer limit for what a flag-store customer could process or a flag-selection committee could digest, but met the lower limit for a book to receive favorable United States Postal Service Media Mail postage rates!

How was *GFBF* received when it was first published?

The little booklet soon saw action with the Georgia state flag redesign effort in 2003—Ed Jackson, serving as staff to the senate committee developing an alternative to the flag adopted in 2001, circulated *GFBF* to successfully guide members of the General Assembly in their deliberations.⁴ The results of NAVA's 2004 American City Flag Survey presented a powerful validation of the principles in *GFBF*, which predicted the survey results with 89% accuracy.⁵

After its print publication, Annin & Co. (flagmakers since 1847) added *GFBF* to its catalog and several commercial members of NAVA began sharing it with their customers. NAVA members began using it in their own flag redesign efforts—especially at the city and state levels.

What has happened with *GFBF* in the years since it was published?

The booklet—and the principles it advances—appears to have shaped the discussion of vexilligraphy within the vexillological world and in the broader public.

The *GFBF* page on the NAVA website consistently receives more hits than any other page (after the home page). NAVA members named it one of the top three “most important flag books” in the 2018 NAVA member survey—after Whitney Smith’s *Flags Through the Ages and Around the World* and Alfred Znamierowski’s *World Encyclopedia of Flags*.⁶ Participants in the r/vexillology subreddit and the Designing Flags Facebook group often cite *GFBF*.

Perry Dane delivered an insightful commentary on *GFBF* at the 2007 NAVA meeting in Hartford (winning the Driver Award for best paper). It presented a strong argument for considering flag designs in context—the “political, emotional, symbolic, and historical sensitivities that shape our reaction to flags”—saying “the austerity and dogmatism of [*GFBFs*] approach should give considerable pause”, while calling it “probably the only systematic effort at developing any sort of coherent, systematic, prescriptive principles for flag design”.⁷

John Hartvigsen also cited *GFBF* extensively in his paper presented at the 2015 NAVA meeting in Ottawa. It compared several flag-design guides, concluding, “In addition to clean design, vexillographers should also consider history, heritage, symbolism, emotion, branding, and usage when proposing new flags.”⁸

Podcaster and radio show host Roman Mars featured *GFBF* and its principles in his widely-viewed 2015 TED Talk “Why City Flags May Be the Worst-Designed Thing You Never Noticed” (with 6 millions hits to date!), bringing vexilligraphy to the public to an unprecedented extent and sparking a wave of municipal flag redesign that continues to grow.⁹

Others have since produced more expansive flag design materials. For example, the “Joint Commission” of NAVA and the Flag Institute produced a *Report on the Guiding Principles on Flag Design* in 2014.¹⁰ Tony Burton, editor of The Flag Society of Australia’s *Crux Australis*, published his 128-page *Vexillistics: An Illustrated and Practical Guide to Flag Design* in 2015.¹¹ French designer Martin Joubert published an 86-page “expansion” of *GFBF* in 2019, called *Modern Flag Design*.¹²

Most flag-design efforts in the U.S. now quote *GFBF*; it has accomplished its purpose of bringing vexillographic principles to the general public.

Why did the publication need to be updated?

A fundamental challenge to *GFBF* was that the term “bad flag” offended some who mistook a judgment about design with a valuation of the flag itself. While the title *Good Flag, Bad Flag* and the captions under the flag images used the shorthand of “good” and “bad” to mean “follows the principle in question” and “doesn’t follow the principle in question”, that shorthand raised some emotions when incorrectly perceived as denigrating a flag rather than just assessing its design on a single dimension.

Compounding that challenge, the public and the media often construed the basic principles articulated in *GFBF* as inviolable rules, castigating flags and designs that “broke” them, and leading to a perception of NAVA itself as a “judge” of flags.

With the print inventory of *GFBF* running low, I chose to address those issues and include other minor revisions before reprinting. I believed, however, that expanding beyond design into the larger factors cited by others would make the booklet too long and dilute its effectiveness. Its brevity and focus is its strength.

What’s different about the updated edition?

In place of “good” and “bad” as captions for examples, I substitute “yes” and “no”. Paraphrasing John Hartvigsen (with gratitude), the “Use Meaningful Symbolism” text now includes: “In choosing symbols, consider their history, cultural heritage, emotional value, branding, and usage—assure they resonate with the people or institutions represented.” The flags of California and South Africa provide additional examples of exceptions. A disclaimer clarifies that the publication reflects my opinion, not NAVA’s. A note on the back (reflecting the insightful thoughts of *Raven* editor Scott Mainwaring) addresses the place of *GFBF* in the broader scope of flag design.

Other revisions include updates (the years Libya used a solid green flag), corrections (fixing my confusion of salamander/dragon, seal/shield, crescent moon/crescent), and minor wording changes. The quote from the flag committee of the Confederate States of America is now attributed to its chairman, William Porcher Miles.¹³ At the suggestion of Steve Knowlton, *Vexillum* editor and Publications Committee chair, quotation marks in the title around “Good” and “Bad” temper the stark judgment some see in the booklet. And in the “Test Yourself” section I couldn’t resist adding the new flag of Pocatello, Idaho—to join the old flag (which came in last place in NAVA’s 2004 American City Flag Survey).

Did you have assistance preparing the update?

Correspondence with readers since 2001 provided helpful input, as did the thoughtful commentary of other writers, feedback solicited on the Designing Flags Facebook group page, and advice from the current *Raven* editor and members of the NAVA board—especially President Peter Ansoff. The original layout designer, now Melissa Meiner, updated her original work for the new version. I again financed it and have contributed another 1,500 copies to NAVA—enough for several more years.

What are your hopes for the revised “Good” Flag, “Bad” Flag?

I hope that *GFBF* will continue to promote NAVA and its broad approach to flag studies. I hope the updates temper the concerns some have expressed about it. I hope it will earn more money to support NAVA’s mission and find a place in NAVA members’ flag book libraries. Most importantly, I hope this little booklet will continue to guide any who design flags, reassure those who make decisions about their adoption, and inspire vexillographers worldwide.

¹ Donald T. Healy, *Flags of the Natives Peoples of the United States*, special issue, *Raven* 3/4 (1997).

² See Ted Kaye, “Tribal Flags Fly at Lewis & Clark Events”, *NAVA News* 38, no. 4 (September–December 2005): 6–9; and Edward B. Kaye, “American Indian Flags and the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial”, in *Colours of History: Flags and Banners in the World: Proceedings of the XXII. International Vexillological Congress, FlagBerlin 2007*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Board of the German Vexillological Society, 2009): 77–91.

³ Ted Kaye, “New Mexico Tops State/Provincial Flags Survey”, *NAVA News* 34, no. 2 (April–June 2001): 4.

⁴ Ed Jackson, “The Long Search for a State Flag”, *The Flag Bulletin* 212 (July–August 2003): 135.

⁵ Edward B. Kaye, “The American City Flag Survey of 2004”, *Raven* 12 (2005): 41.

⁶ “NAVA Members Choose Their ‘Most Important Flag Books’”, *Vexillum* no. 5 (March 2019): 17.

⁷ Perry Dane, “Flags in Context: A Discussion of Design, Genre, and Aesthetics”, *Raven* 15 (2008): 75–76.

⁸ John Hartvigsen, “Flag Design ‘Rules’: An Idea with Many Aspects”, *Vexillum* no. 4 (December 2018): 16.

⁹ Roman Mars, “Why City Flags May Be the Worst-Designed Thing You’ve Never Noticed”, https://www.ted.com/talks/roman_mars_why_city_flags_may_be_the_worst_designed_thing_you_ve_never_noticed.

¹⁰ Joint Commission on Vexillographic Principles of North American Vexillological Association and The Flag Institute, “The Commission’s Report on the Guiding Principles on Flag Design” (Boston: North American Vexillological Association, 2014), <http://nava.org/navanews/Commission-Report-Final-US.pdf>.

¹¹ Tony Burton, *Vexillistics: An Illustrated and Practical Guide to Flag Design* (Milsos Point, N.S.W.: Flags Australia, 2015).

¹² Martin Joubert, *Modern Flag Design: An Expansion of Good Flag, Bad Flag: How to Design a Great Flag* (Morrisville, N.C.: Lulu.com, 2015), <https://flagdesignbook.com>.

¹³ Devereaux D. Cannon, Jr., “The Genesis of the ‘Stars and Bars’”, *Raven* 12 (2005): 4.

In the News: Flags During the COVID-19 Pandemic

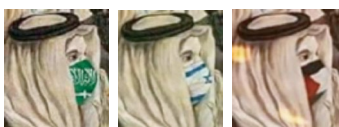
During the last several weeks, a global pandemic of the disease COVID-19, caused by a novel coronavirus, has led to significant numbers of deaths and hospitalizations; a preventative “stay-at-home” order and consequent economic difficulties have only compounded the difficulties experienced in many nations. One interesting phenomenon has been the use of flags in the media and by individuals to express ideas about the pandemic. These images represent only a small sample of what has appeared.

Flags of Solidarity

There were many instances of flag displays used to express a feeling of worldwide support for those suffering from infection, and those treating the infected.



An image with an unclear source has been circulating on social media; it shows a group of people (not practicing proper distancing) wearing medical face masks decorated as national flags.



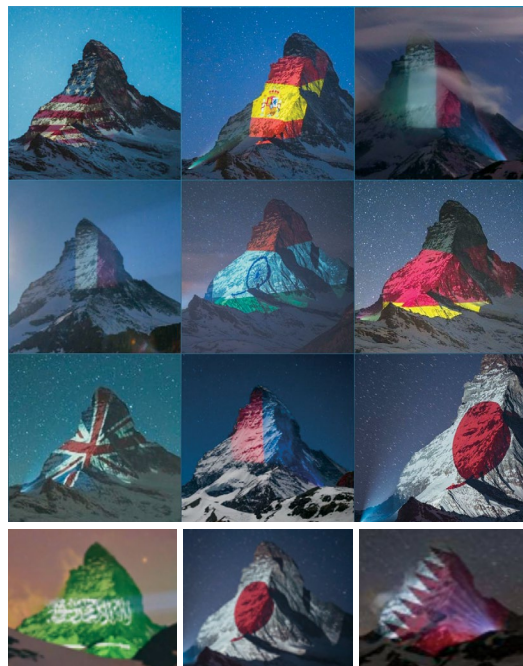
Several versions have appeared, with the person wearing the keffiyeh having a mask variously depicting the flags of Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Palestine.



Spanish authorities used a defaced national flag to offer their thanks to healthcare workers, and share the message “I stay at home.” Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10221595198485564&set=gm.3364689080212457&type=3&theater&ifg=1> <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10221595198485564&set=gm.3364689080212457&type=3&theater&ifg=1>



In Italy, homebound residents displayed national flags as a sign to neighbors that they were healthy. Seen here are images of balconies in Milan. Photo by Wanted in Milan: <https://www.facebook.com/wantedinmilansince1985/photos/a.194040750626140/3332967270066790/?type=3&theater>



Villagers in Zermatt, Switzerland have projected a different national flag onto the face of the Matterhorn every night. Sources: <https://www.trendsmap.com/twitter/tweet/1251666576488697857>; <https://alkhaleejtoday.com/international/80252/Saudi-flag-shines-from-far-on-the-Matterhorn-the-iconic-Swiss-mountain.html>; <https://mypositiveoutlooks.com/swiss-lit-up-the-matterhorn-in-the-alps-to-send-messages-of-hope/>; <https://m.gulf-times.com/story/661136/Qatar-colours-projected-on-Matterhorn>;



Iranian authorities projected images of world flags on the Azadi Tower in Tehran. Source: <https://www.albawaba.com/node/where-are-lebanese-and-iraqi-flags-iran-lights-azadi-tower-flags-most-hit-covid-19-hit>



Authorities in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil projected flags of the world onto the colossal statue *Christ the Redeemer*. Source: <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/03/19/818557823/brazils-christ-the-redeemer-lit-up-with-flags-of-countries-battling-coronavirus>

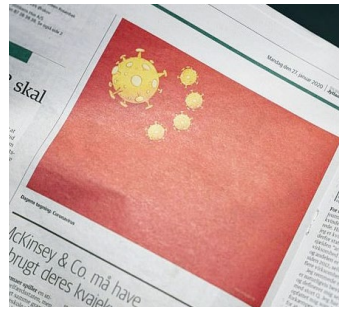


Left: The artist Arte Cardé depicted Jesus as a physician, cradling a personified Earth robed in national flags. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B910Q22gShp>

Flags in Editorial Cartoons



The Sammarinese cartoonist Ranfo used the flag of San Marino as a symbol of the struggle against COVID-19. Source: <http://www.libertas.sm/notizie/2020/03/23/san-marino-guerra-al-coronavirus.html>



The Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* parodied the Chinese flag, causing some controversy. Source: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7938107/Danish-newspapers-virus-cartoon-angers-China.html>



The design firm *suissas + silva* designed a poster using national flags converted to house shapes to encourage people of all nations to stay inside their homes. Source: <https://www.designboom.com/design/suissas-silva-flags-into-houses-stay-home-fight-covid19-03-27-2020>



A cartoonist for the *Times of India* produced this image.



The Bulwark magazine commended South Korean efforts to fight the spread of COVID-19. Source: <https://thebulwark.com/covid-19-lessons-from-south-korea/?fbclid=IwAR1U9dUckpoeNAjoDBFa0Z7Fra8e0sVgG0sx3WiAOvC LpjDOb5dnZYRVuQE>



The Week magazine depicted the coronavirus as one of the stars in the European Union flag. Source: <https://theweek.com/articles/904717/eu-survive-coronavirus>



Bringing Obscure Flags to Our Attention

As the media have focused on those authorities concerned with public health, a number of little-known flags have made appearances in the press.



The United State Public Health Service. Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/27/health/pence-coronavirus-indiana.html>



Bergen County, New Jersey. Source: <https://www.insidernj.com/tedesco-42-presumptive-positive-cases-covid-19-identified-bergen-county>



The Navajo Nation. Source: <http://nmindepth.com/2020/03/18/navajo-nation-asks-tourists-and-other-visitors-to-stay-home-as-first-covid-19-cases-emerge>



The United States Small Business Administration. Source: https://www.pottsmmerc.com/business/sba-offering-loans-to-businesses-impacted-by-covid/article_dc3c53f6-6569-11ea-a1af-4fb9c7077d14.html



The World Health Organization (of the United Nations). Source: <https://www.interaksyon.com/trends-spotlights/2020/02/13/162115/covid-19-new-coronavirus-importance>



The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. Source: <https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/california-governor-gavin-newsom-coronavirus-press-conference-announces-closure-of-bars-across-state>

And One Other Use of "FLAG"

Left: A group of New Jerseyans organized an association to help local restaurants and assist health care workers by buying takeout meals to serve at local hospitals. The group is named Front Line Appreciation Group, or FLAG, and has chapters in at least 20 states. Sources: <https://www.facebook.com/flagoahu/?ref=gs>; https://www.facebook.com/flagcentralvalleyca/?_tn__=K-R&eid=ARDnRyPpxTQiSlepHdN9ZXkHdGJHp2RiQrU_9-LNP-f7H4gg_DI2Z31falBhx4HNiBlQr3BN4CsDB9W8&fref=mentions;

A Flag for the Effort to Treat and Resist Coronavirus Infection

Editor's note: we recently received the following press release from our colleagues at Heraldica Slovenica. Shortly thereafter, NAVA member Charles Kissel shared his response.

Heraldica Slovenica, the Heraldry Society of Slovenia, Embraced the Initiative Seen in Belgium and Proposed a Special Flag in Support of All Medical Staff in Their Efforts

March 25, 2020

The members of Heraldica Slovenica, the Heraldry Society of Slovenia, welcome the initiative to express the support to heroic medical workers by flying a certain flag—the white flag. We have seen the initiative endorsed even by the Royal palace and other buildings in Belgium, where white flags have been raised.

However, modern vexillology already acknowledges the existing powerful symbol of the white flag, an interpretation that has sprung deep roots into our collective symbolism. The white flag generally stands for surrender, a decision to quit, or a plea to negotiate.

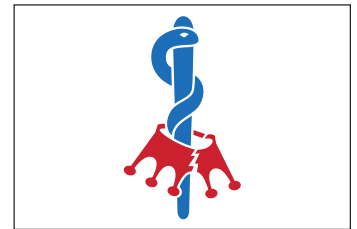
We hold a firm belief that medical workers put their enormous effort in the opposite direction—they are not surrendering, they are not quitting, and they do not want to negotiate with the disease.



A white flag flying over the royal palace in Brussels. Source: <https://www.archyde.com/coronavirus-in-belgium-look-at-the-photo-like-many-belgians-the-king-and-the-queen-make-a-symbolic-gesture-for-the-nursing-staff>

From this perspective, Heraldica Slovenica took the current initiative and added a symbolic representation of hope that unites all people: the victory of health care over the pandemic. The existing white field was overlaid by the symbol of healthcare workers and medicine (the Rod of Asclepius) rising over the defeated and overturned crown (Latin *corona*).

We express our immense gratitude and support to doctors, nurses, and other workers in health care and other services who are protecting our society!



New coronavirus flag from Heraldica Slovenica in support of all medical staff in their efforts. Source: <http://www.heraldica-slovenica.si/protikoroni.php>



Department of Infectious Disease and Febrile Conditions of Celje General Hospital, (recently renamed the COVID Department) with new flag from Heraldica Slovenica. Photo: Andrej Strahovnik, 2 April 2020.

March 29, 2020

To the Editor:

Since flags interest us, I suppose it was anticipated that a flag for the fight against the coronavirus might appear. The proposed Coronavirus Flag may have some validity since it is not coming from a single person, but is recognized by a known flag society in Slovenia, with some European support. The interesting things are:

1. The symbolic depiction is the healthcare system (rather than just workers) as the Rod of Asclepius breaking the upside down broken crown (in Latin, *corona*), on a white field. The symbolism seems to make sense.
2. The Heraldry Society of Slovenia symbolically sits astride the Western nations and the Balkan–Middle Eastern cultures.

Some interest in the article and others is also roused by using the “white flag”, as heraldic rules use white for purity (as in the colors of the U.S. Stars and Stripes). However, in the U.S., other nations, and in my mind, that's a sign of surrender. So, as a U.S. veteran, I cannot give credence to the use of the plain white flag in this case. A 1959 film was entitled *Surrender—Hell!*

Charles L. Kissel, Ph.D.
Anaheim, California

Cyberspace • **NAVA 54** • June 13, 2020

Join your fellow NAVA members in cyberspace for the 54th annual meeting of the North American Vexillological Association! NAVA's first-ever virtual meeting will take place Saturday, June 13, noon to 8 PM EDT (9 AM to 5 PM PDT). Generously hosted by the U.S. Library of Congress using its WebEx-based 1,000-seat "virtual meeting room", this historic meeting will unfold "live", with all attendees participating.

Program

We plan familiar NAVA meeting components such as the opening ceremony, scholarly presentations, the business meeting, virtual tours, Vexi-Bits, the Driver Award, and a closing ceremony, along with some breaks! The program will be held via webinar software, allowing participants to join each other in cyberspace. Presentations will be recorded for later public viewing. However, attendees will provide their own meals. The platform will allow member interaction—such as the question-and-answer period following each presentation and during the business meeting.

Full program and schedule information appears on the meeting web page on nava.org.

NAVA 54 Flag

The design competition for the NAVA 54 flag began in April and is underway as this issue of *Vexillum* goes to press. The winning flag will decorate the virtual meeting and a real flag will join NAVA's meeting flag collection.

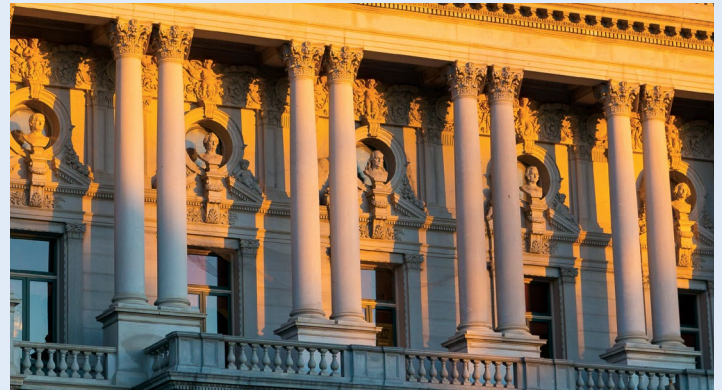
Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting originally planned for St. Augustine, Florida, in 2020 has been postponed to June 11–13, 2021. The flag originally adopted to represent NAVA 54 now represents NAVA 55. See nava55.com for details.

Registration

All NAVA members may attend the meeting at no charge by registering in advance. Confirmation, log-on instructions, and technical tips will be sent to registrants via email before the event. Attendees will be tallied for NAVA history. Register online after May 4, via the link on nava.org.

Technology

To participate fully in NAVA 54, attendees should have an Internet-connected computer with a webcam, microphone, and speakers. If you have the computer without the speakers, webcam, or microphone, please register anyway and get the audio via telephone (a toll call). Attendees may also use a smartphone or tablet, although a larger screen will make the presentations more viewable. Watch the website and other NAVA communications for information on familiarization sessions.



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Sponsors

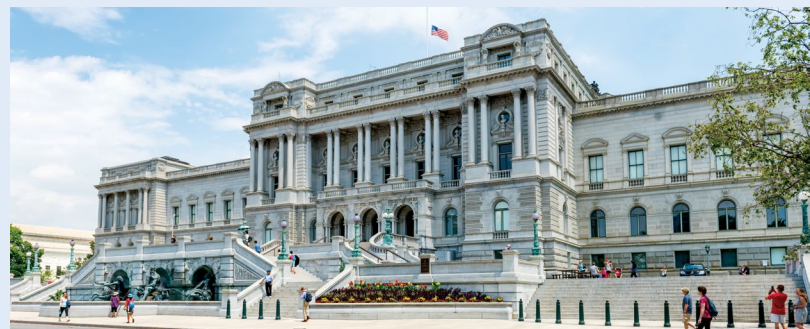
The event is free to attend, but planning it is not without costs. Sponsors help with those expenses. Traditionally, the \$25 "sponsor" category provides those who cannot attend in person with all the materials distributed at the meeting. This year a "sponsor" provides financial support to the meeting, and in return will receive a 4"x6" meeting flag and other materials from NAVA 54. Purchase your sponsorship in the NAVA shop at nava.org, or send \$25 to NAVA via PayPal to treas@nava.org or via check to P.O. Box 55071 #58049, Boston, MA 02205-5071.

Library of Congress

The research library that officially serves the U.S. Congress is the *de facto* national library and the oldest federal cultural institution in the United States. It is the world's largest library, and complements its 18th-century origins with 21st-century technology. Hosting NAVA's annual meeting forms part of its public service. As part of NAVA 54, librarian and NAVA member Elizabeth Brown will give a guided tour to using the library's digital resources.

NAVA 54 Organizing Committee

Peter Ansoff, Amber Atteberry, Elizabeth Brown, Stan Contrades, and Ted Kaye lead the planning. The NAVA board thanks the volunteers who have stepped up to create a NAVA meeting in two months' time, and to the presenters who are adapting their work to this new format. Contact NAVA Secretary Ted Kaye at sec@nava.org with any questions.



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