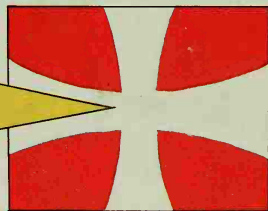
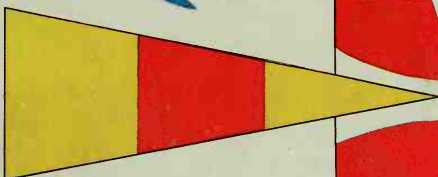


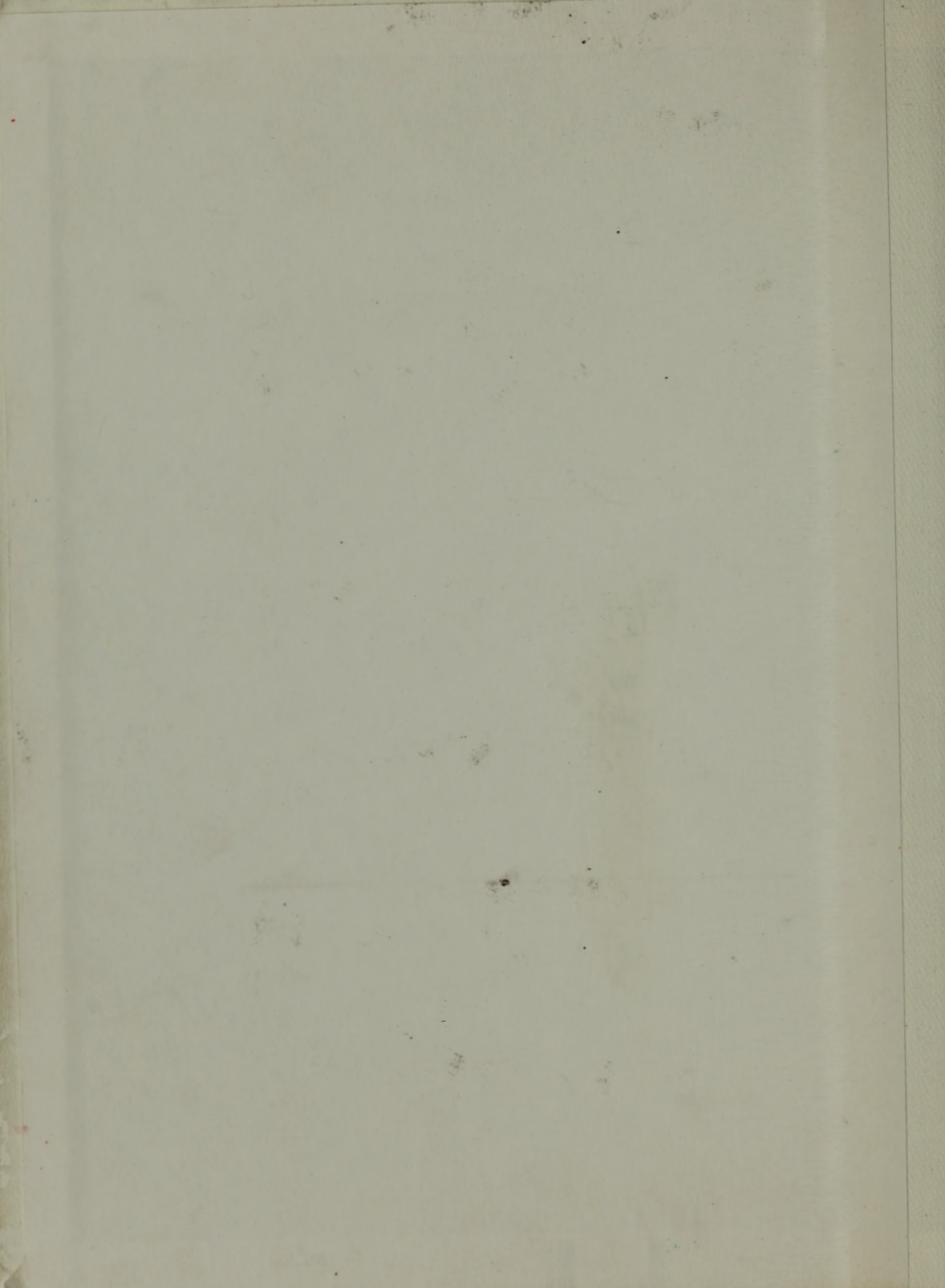
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# Flags





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Flags

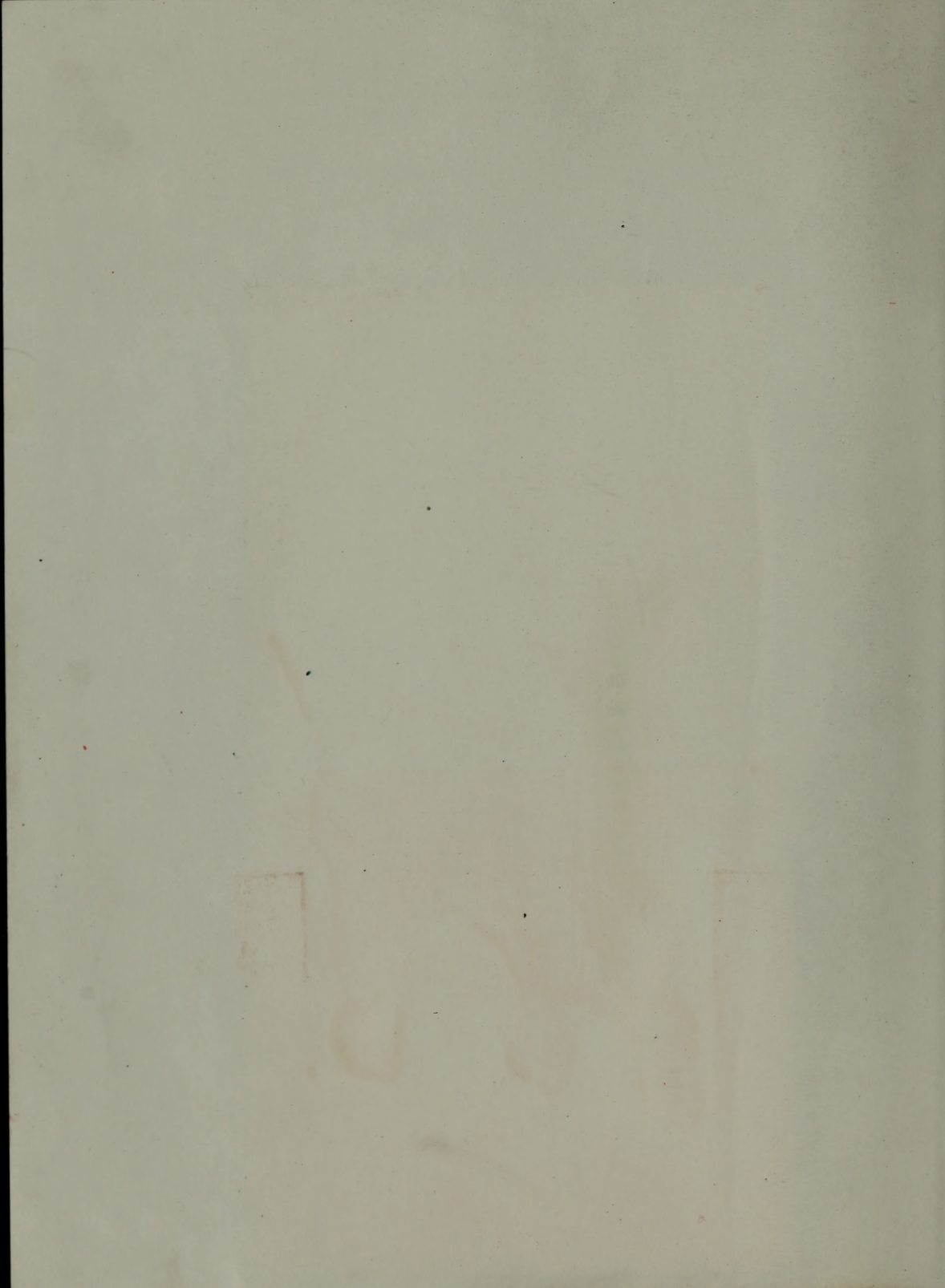
4/88

929.9 Jefferis, David  
JE  
Flags

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APR 25	Mustacci	16
	Stephen M	17





**AN  
EASY-READ  
FACT  
BOOK**

# Flags

**David Jefferis**



**Franklin Watts**

**London   New York   Toronto   Sydney**

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# Flags

## Contents

<b>The first flags</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Flags of the world</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Flag shapes</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Signals at sea</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>International flags</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Flags of heads of state</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Changing flags</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Motor racing flags</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Flag design</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Flag words</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Semaphore system</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>32</b>

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# The first flags



△This Roman soldier of 2,000 years ago is carrying a vexillum. This type of flag was used mainly by troops of cavalry so they could identify each other at a distance.

The origin of the earliest flags is lost [in the mists of time,] but we know they have been used for 5,000 years or more.

In 3,000 BC, the ancient Chinese made flags of silk for military and religious occasions. The Romans used flags as identifying badges for their horse-mounted cavalry soldiers.

In the Middle Ages, the largest battle flags were hauled to war on heavy wheeled carts. They had a guard of the best soldiers to protect them.

Such was the importance of an army's flag of "color," that if it fell or was captured, the result was usually retreat or surrender. If a battle was going badly, the flag became a rallying point around which troops could gather their strength.

Today's flags are not quite so vital to us, but they can still unite people who believe in the idea or country the flag represents.





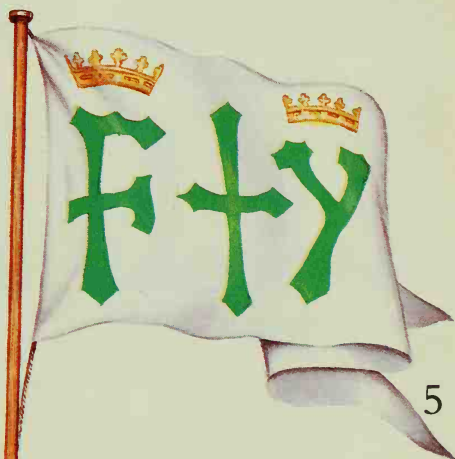
The raven symbol was possibly carried on Viking raiders' flags in the 9th century.

The Knights of St. John used this Maltese Cross in the Middle Ages.

△The battle scene above, at Crecy, France in 1327, shows the way flags were used on battlefields in the Middle Ages. Below you see other flags of the past.



Columbus used this flag on his voyage to America in 1492.



# Flags of the world

On this, and the following pages, are the flags of the world's nations. The flag of Denmark is thought to be the oldest, dating back to about 1219. Those of many newly independent African, Caribbean or Pacific countries are very recent. Vanuatu, for example, became independent in 1980.



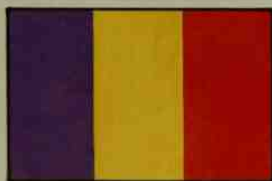
Afghanistan



Albania



Algeria



Andorra



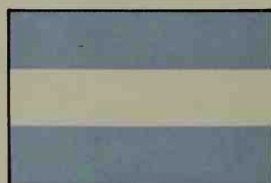
Angola



Antigua and Barbuda



Anguilla (unofficial)



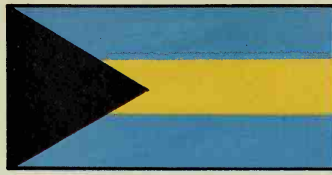
Argentina



Australia



Austria



Bahamas



Bahrain



Bangladesh



Barbados



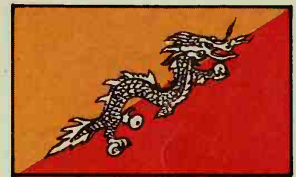
Belgium



Belize



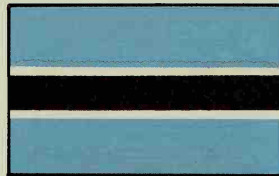
Benin



Bhutan



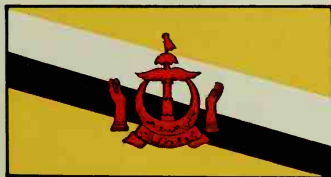
Bolivia



Botswana



Brazil



Brunei



Bulgaria



Burma



Burundi



Cameroon



Canada



Cape Verde Islands



Central African Republic



Chad



China



Colombia



Comoro Islands



Congo



Costa Rica



Cuba



Cyprus



Czechoslovakia



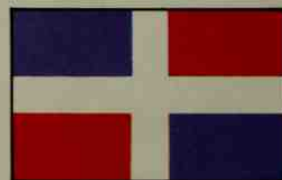
Denmark



Djibouti



Dominica



Dominican Republic



Ecuador



Egypt



El Salvador





Equatorial Guinea



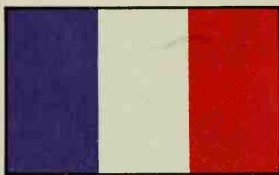
Ethiopia



Fiji



Finland



France



Gabon



Germany (East)



Germany (West)



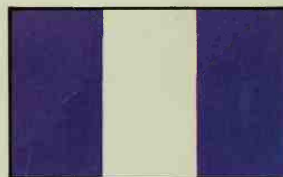
Ghana



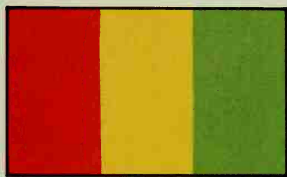
Greece



Grenada



Guatemala



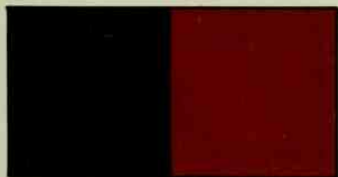
Guinea



Guinea-bissau



Guyana



Haiti



Honduras



Hungary



Iceland



India



Indonesia



Iran



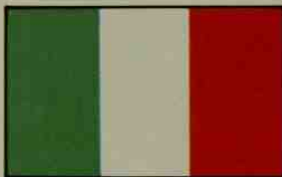
Iraq



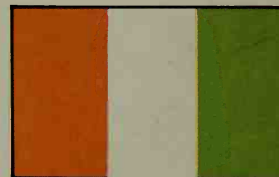
Ireland



Israel



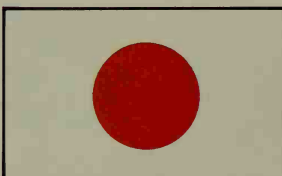
Italy



Ivory Coast



Jamaica



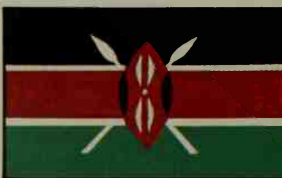
Japan



Jordan



Kampuchea



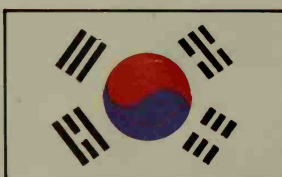
Kenya



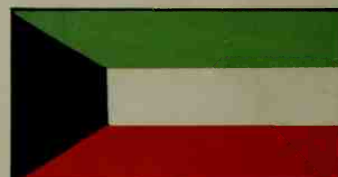
Kiribati



Korea (North)



Korea (South)



Kuwait



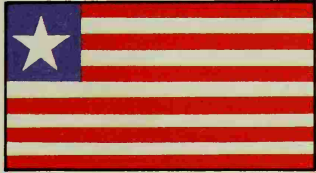
Laos



Lebanon



Lesotho



Liberia



Libya



Liechtenstein



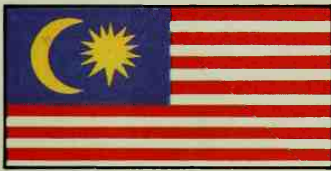
Luxembourg



Malagasy Republic



Malawi



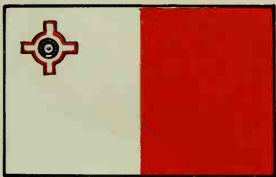
Malaysia



Mali



Maldive Islands



Malta



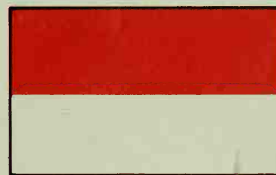
Mauretania



Mauritius



Mexico



Monaco



Mongolia



Morocco



Mozambique



Nauru



Netherlands



Nepal



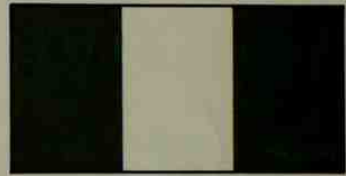
New Zealand



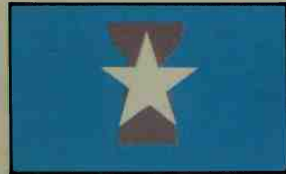
Nicaragua



Niger



Nigeria



Northern Marianas



Norway



Oman



Pakistan



Panama



Papua New Guinea



Paraguay

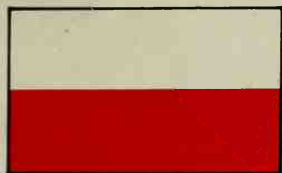


Peru



Philippines





Poland



Portugal



Puerto Rico



Qatar



Romania



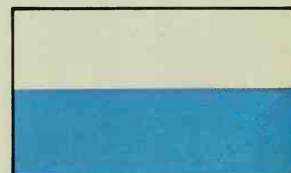
Rwanda



St Christopher- Nevis



St Vincent



San Marino



Sao Tome and Principe



Saudi Arabia



Senegal



Seychelles



Sierra Leone



Singapore



Solomon Islands



Somalia



South Africa



Spain



Sri Lanka



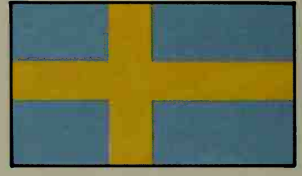
Sudan



Surinam



Swaziland



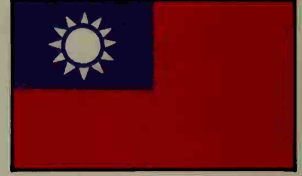
Sweden



Switzerland



Syria



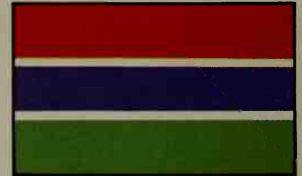
Taiwan



Tanzania



Thailand



The Gambia



Togo



Tonga



Trinidad and Tobago



Tunisia



Turkey



Tuvalu



Uganda



United Arab Emirates



United Kingdom



Upper Volta ☆



Uruguay



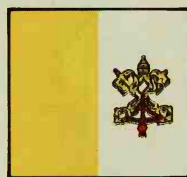
USA



USSR



Vanuatu



Vatican City



Venezuela



Vietnam



Western Samoa



Yemen Arab Republic



Yemen People's  
Democratic Republic



Yugoslavia



Zaire



Zambia

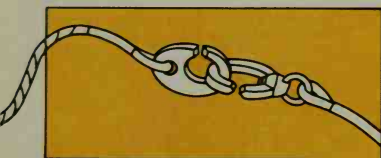


Zimbabwe

☆ Now known as Burkina Faso – see page 32.

# Flag shapes

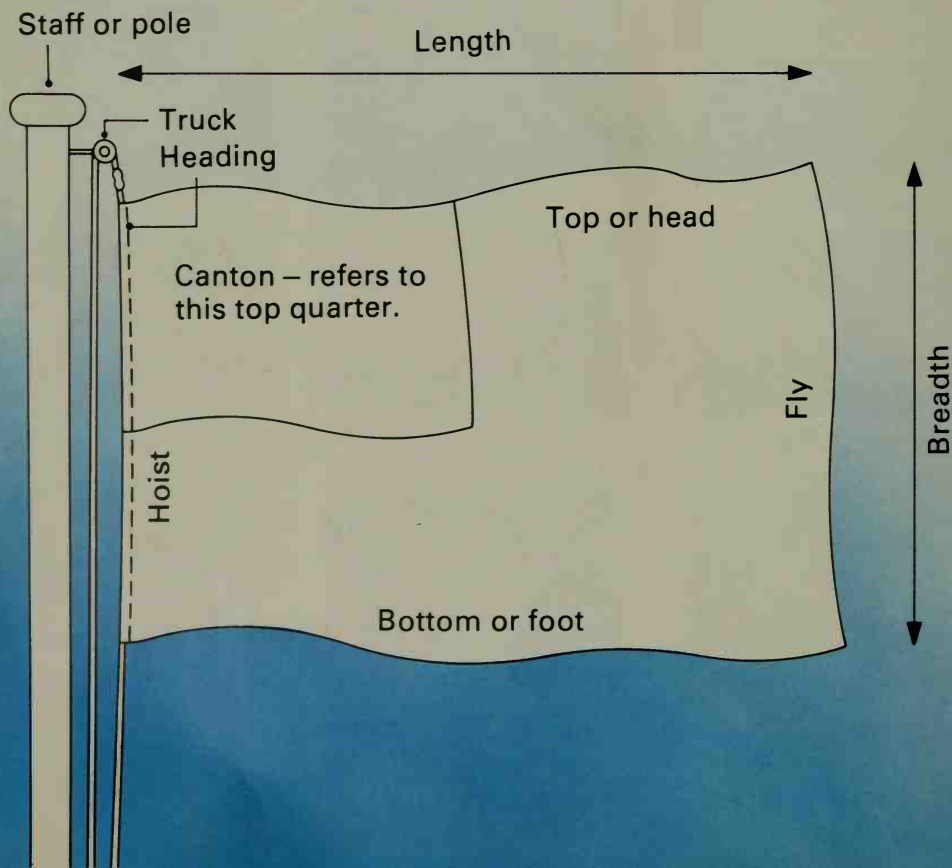
▽ The Inglefield clip can be used to attach a flag to ropes, used to haul it up and down the flagstaff.



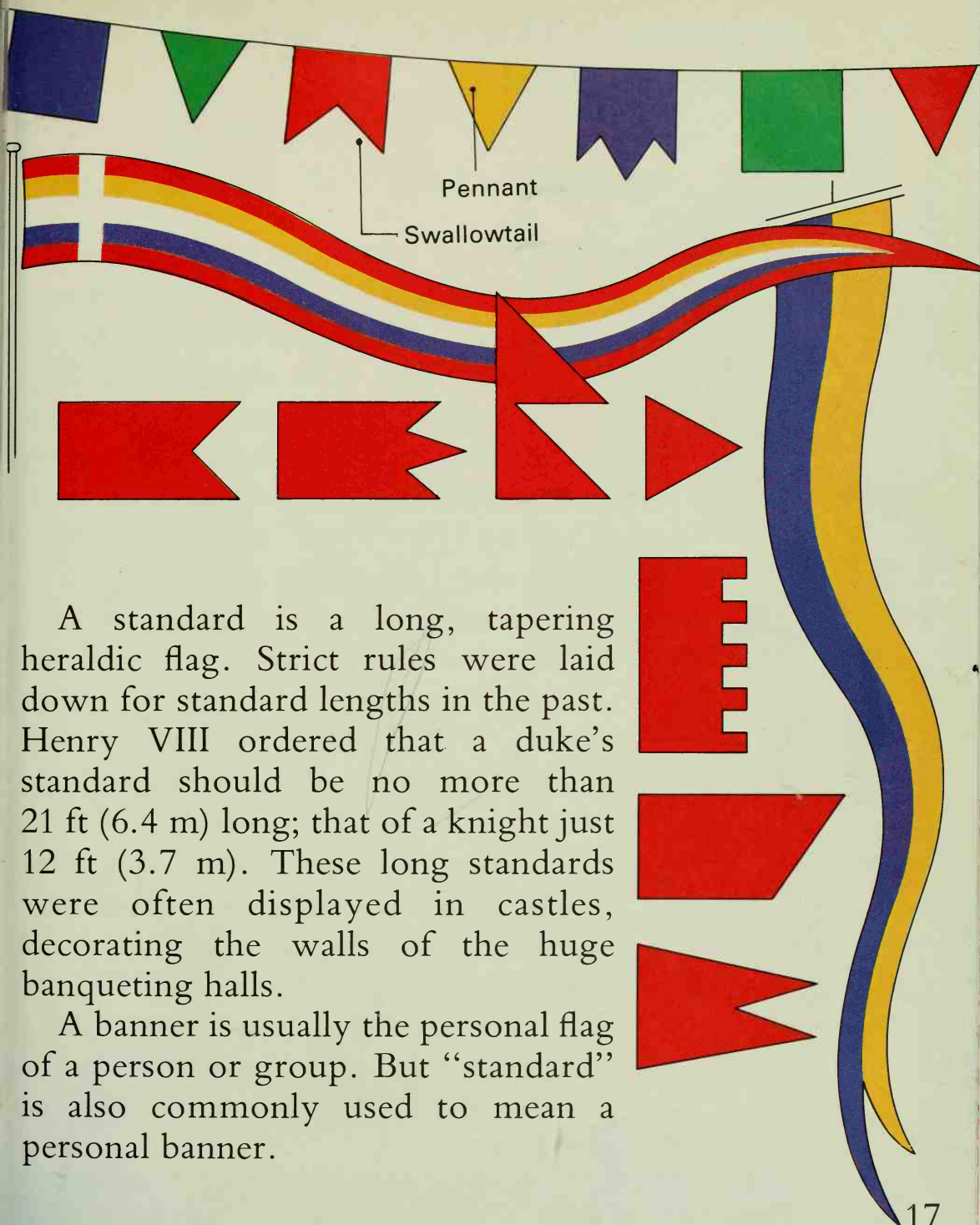
All national flags, except that of Nepal, are plain rectangles. But many shapes and sizes are possible. You can see a typical variety of them on these pages.

A pennant is a small triangular flag. Flags can also have swallowtails, named after the twin-tail of the bird.

## The parts of a flag







A standard is a long, tapering heraldic flag. Strict rules were laid down for standard lengths in the past. Henry VIII ordered that a duke's standard should be no more than 21 ft (6.4 m) long; that of a knight just 12 ft (3.7 m). These long standards were often displayed in castles, decorating the walls of the huge banqueting halls.

A banner is usually the personal flag of a person or group. But "standard" is also commonly used to mean a personal banner.

# Signals at sea

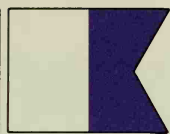


△The “Jolly Roger,” with its skull and crossbones, was used as a bloodthirsty symbol by pirates. An early flag used a devil holding a spear. Nowadays submarine crews have used it to show they have sunk a ship. The white flag is a universal symbol of truce.

Signal flags were first used systematically in the 1700s. They are still in use, though the patterns and meanings are much changed. The alphabet of flags on the right is the present-day International Flag Code. Some flags have other meanings if flown on their own. The P or “Blue Peter” is flown to show that a ship is about to sail. The yellow Q is flown to show that there is disease on board and the ship is in quarantine.

Ships’ flags are flown from various places. The jack (at the bow) and ensign (at the stern) are national flags. Merchant ships fly a house flag, which often contains the same company badge or logo painted on the funnel.

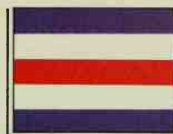
Warships fly masthead pennants and, when in port, the personal flags of the high-ranking officers aboard. In a sea battle, if one side lowers its national flag completely, this is a sign of surrender.



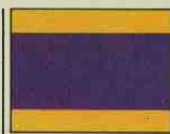
A



B



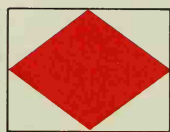
C



D



E



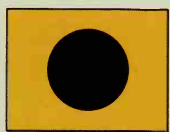
F



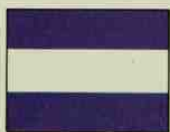
G



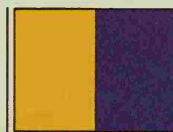
H



I



J



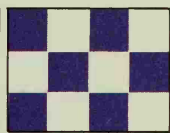
K



L



M



N



O



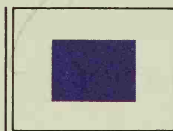
P



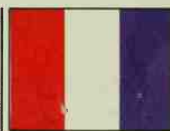
Q



R



S



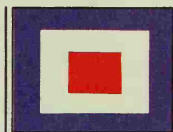
T



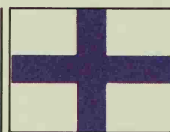
U



V



W



X



Y



Z

International  
Flag Code

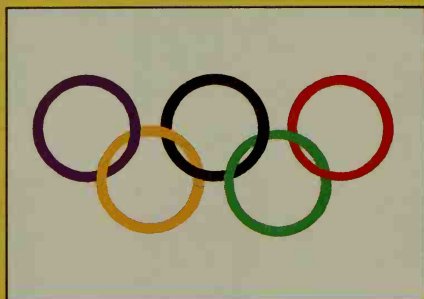
# International flags



United Nations



Organization of African Unity



Olympic Games



Organization of American States

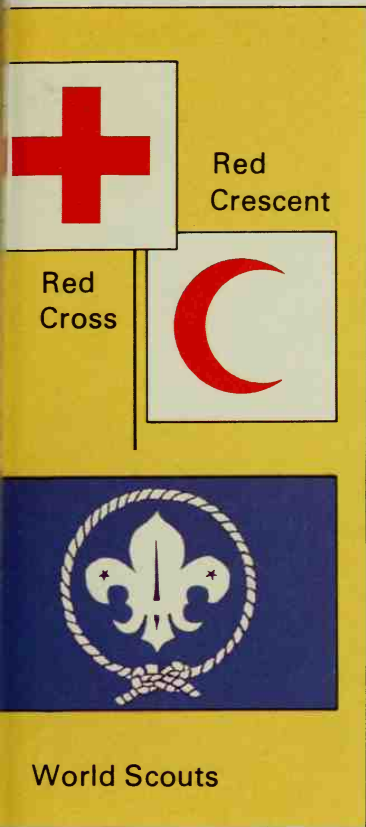
△Shown here are just a few important international flags.

Many flags are designed to represent organizations which have links between different countries.

Probably the best known is the Olympic flag. The joined circles represent people of the five continents. The flag has been used since 1906.

The United Nations flag uses a world globe, circled by a pair of olive branches. These symbolize peace, one





of the aims of the UN.

A red cross on a white background is used by ambulances, hospitals and medical teams in war. It was first used in 1863 and various other countries have similar flags. In muslim lands, the Red Crescent is used. Israel uses a red six-sided Star of David. Russia adds a red crescent alongside the cross.

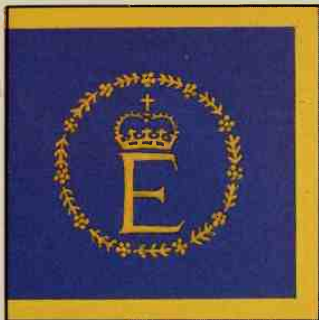
△Flags are used as the basis for many commercial designs. The Greek Olympic Airways adds one circle to the five "Games" circles which are painted on the tails of all its planes.

# Flags of heads of state

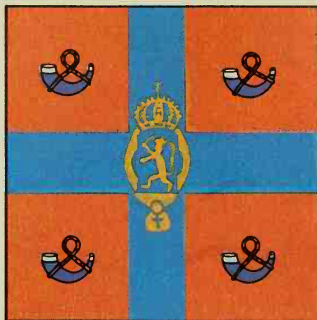


△In Great Britain, flags are displayed at many state occasions. Here, Brazilian flags are flown alongside those of Great Britain as a mark of respect to Brazil's visiting premier.

These flags are flown as the personal standard of the person chosen to lead a country. These people always used to be kings and queens. Today few royal families have any say in the day-to-day running of a country. But they conduct many ceremonies and appear at state occasions where flags may be an important part of the event. On the right you can see a variety of personal flags, belonging to European royal families, Presidents and an Emperor.



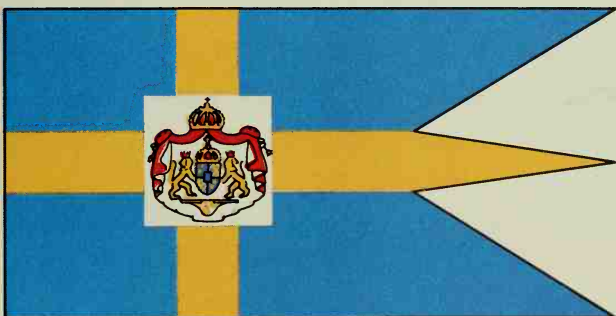
△ Great Britain:  
Queen's personal  
standard



△ Netherlands:  
Royal standard



△ Japan: Emperor



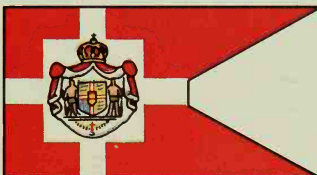
△ Sweden: Royal  
standard



△ United States of America:  
President



△ West Germany:  
President



△ Denmark: Queen's  
Royal standard



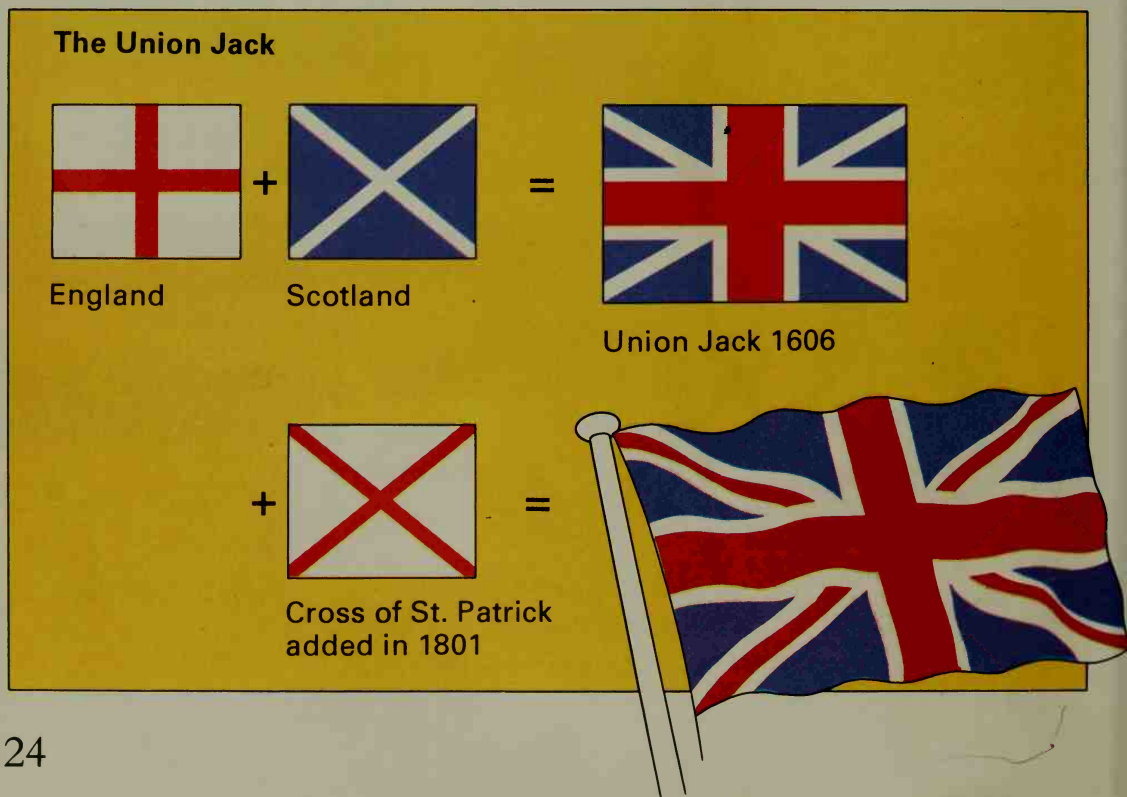
△ Egypt: President

# Changing flags

▽ This chart shows how the Union flag of Britain developed. Strictly speaking, it should only be called the Union Jack when it is flown at the bows of a ship. Opposite, you can see how the Stars and Stripes developed.

Many national flags have changed over the years, as countries have grown or changed in some way.

In 1603, England and Scotland joined in a union. The new flag, chosen in 1606, was the red cross of England, combined with the St. Andrew's cross of Scotland. In 1801, the cross of St.





Patrick was added, to form the familiar Union Flag of today.

The American flag developed in the War of Independence. Earlier flags were used by various rebel groups, but the "Stars and Stripes" was first flown in 1777. It had 13 stars, representing the colonies which broke away from Britain. There are now 50 stars. Each one represents a state of the union.

The French Tricolor became a symbol of freedom, as it was adopted after the French Revolution of 1789.

### Stars and Stripes

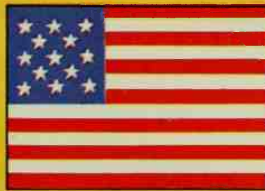
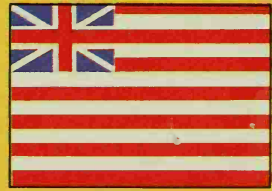


Puritan settlers' flag



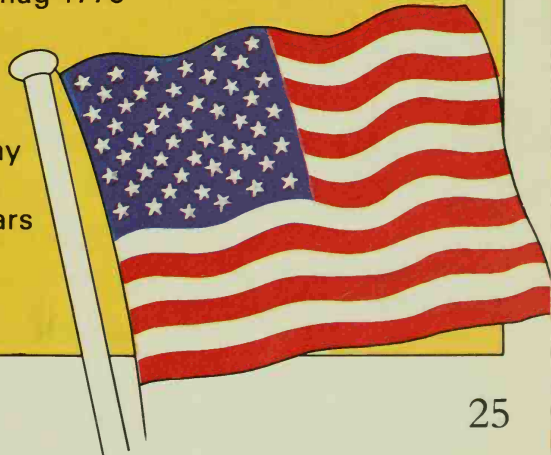
Bedford flag 1775

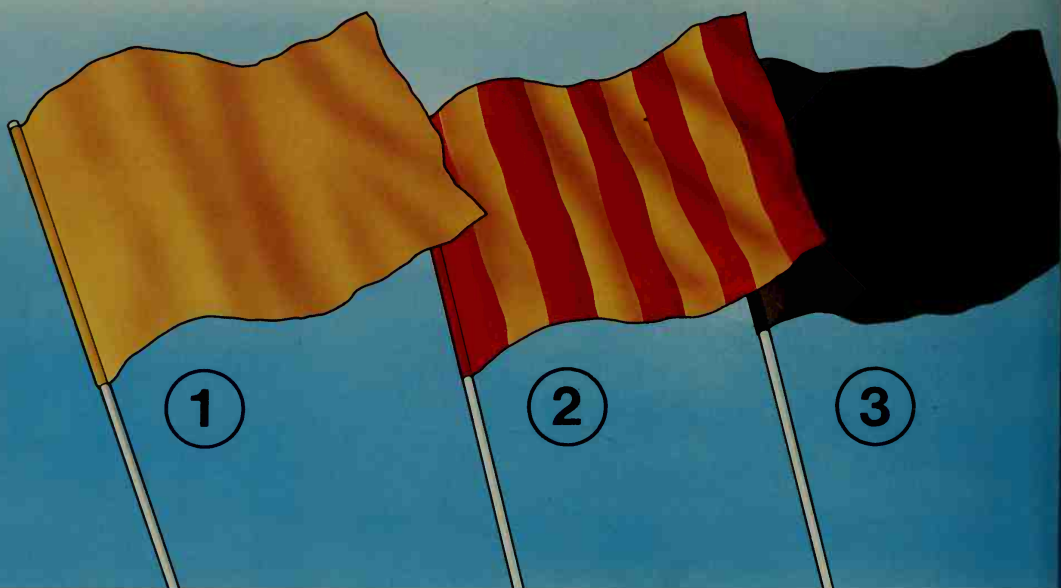
### Stars and stripes 1777



Continental colors 1775

Present-day  
flag  
with 50 stars





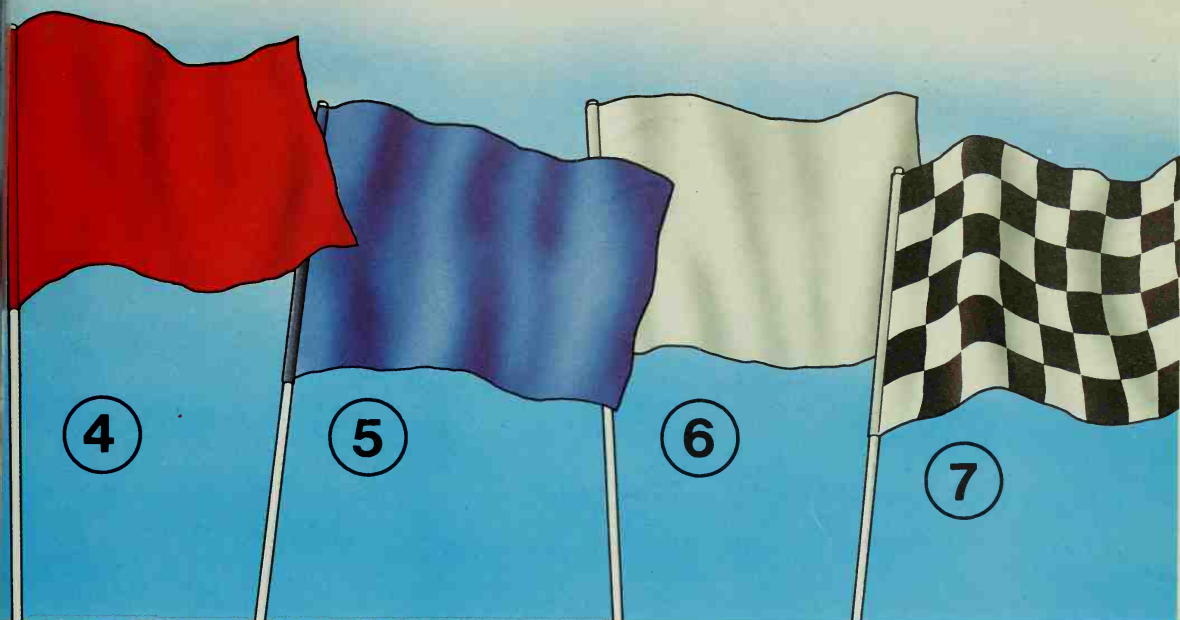
# Motor racing flags

△ Here are some race track flags.

- 1 Caution, danger ahead.
- 2 Oil on the track.
- 3 Must call in at pit.
- 4 Race must stop.
- 5 Let a faster driver overtake.
- 6 Ambulance or other official vehicle on track.
- 7 Finish.

Motor racing flags are used by track marshals and other race officials to signal clearly to the drivers.

The start of a race used to be signalled by the downward wave of a flag, generally the national flag of the country where the race was held. Today, starting-signal light systems are mostly



used on all but small tracks.

Trouble on the track is shown by a variety of flags. Yellow indicates danger ahead – perhaps an obstruction on the track. Red and yellow stripes indicate oil on the circuit. A black flag is an order to pull in at the pits, the service bays near the starting line. There are other flags too, and you can see them in the picture below.

The finish is always shown by the wave of a black-and-white checkered flag as the winner crosses the line.



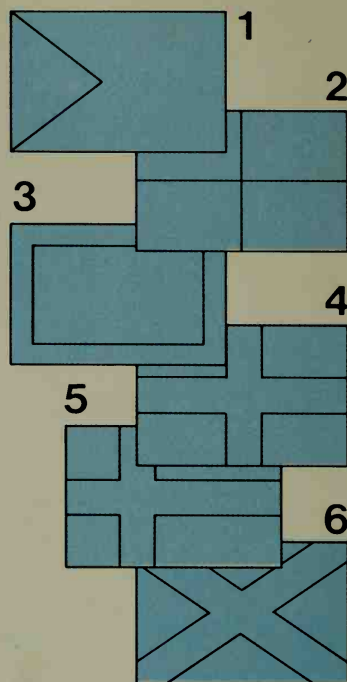
△A track marshal waits with his checkered flag at the ready.

# Flag design

Some of today's flags originated with the heraldry or coats of arms of powerful families of the Middle Ages.

Knights began to put "arms," signs and pictures, on their shields. They were needed in battle, as a knight was unrecognizable in his helmet and armor. The knights could not have the same arms, so strict rules of heraldry were laid down. These decided what the arms meant and who could wear them. The system came from Normandy, in France, so all the terms have roots in the French language.

Many heraldic designs were imprinted on banners carried by medieval knights into battle. Early European flags were strongly influenced by heraldic designs and even today certain heraldic ideas and styles can be found in the flags of the world.



△ Flag patterns include the ones shown here.

- 1 Triangle
- 2 Quarterly
- 3 Border
- 4 Cross
- 5 Scandinavian cross
- 6 Saltire

▷ On the page opposite, you can see how heraldic shields were divided and some examples of charges.



## Divisions of heraldic shields



Per bend



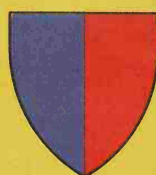
Per bend  
sinestre



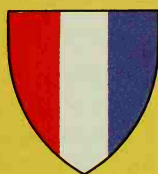
Quarterly



Per  
saltire



Per pale



Tierced in  
pale



Gyronny



Tierced  
in fess



Checky



Per fess

## Symbols and charges



*Fleur de lys*



Lion



Maple leaf

British Royal standard,  
flown wherever the Queen  
is in residence.



# Flag words

Here is a list of some of the technical words used in this book.

## **Arms**

The name given to the signs and symbols of heraldry. Arms were first put on the shields of knights to show who they were.

## **Banner**

The personal flag of a person or group.

## **Blue Peter**

Name for the P flag of the International Flag Code. Flown when a ship is about to set sail. Other naval flags include the yellow Q – traditionally flown to show “plague aboard.” It has a similar meaning now; it shows the ship is in quarantine – “infectious disease aboard.”

## **Charge**

Pictures and symbols of heraldry. Examples include the lion of

England, the maple leaf of Canada and a Masai warrior shield, found on the flag of Kenya.

## **Color**

The word used for the flag of a particular military unit such as an army regiment.

## **Flagstaff**

Official name for the flagpole.

## **Fly**

Part of a flag furthest from the flagstaff.

## **Halyards**

The ropes used to haul a flag up and down the flagstaff. A flag flown at half-mast is a sign of mourning for someone who has just died.

## **Heraldry**

The rules laid down in the Middle Ages

governing the coats of arms used by knights. To avoid confusion no two knights could use the same arms when they had their armor and helmets on.

Today there are clubs and societies devoted to re-enacting the battles and tournaments of the Middle Ages. If you get to see a public display you can see the brightly colored arms of old in the 20th century.

## **Hoist**

Part of a flag nearest the flagstaff.

## **Jack**

Flag flown at the front, or bow, of a ship. The ship's ensign is flown from the stern.

## **Jolly Roger**

Nickname given to the skull and crossbones flag flown by pirates.

## **Pennant**

Small triangular flag.

# The semaphore system

## Standard

The banner of a head of state or royalty.

## Stars and Stripes

The US national flag. From having just 13 stars when it was first introduced, the flag now boasts a total of 50, each representing a state of the union.

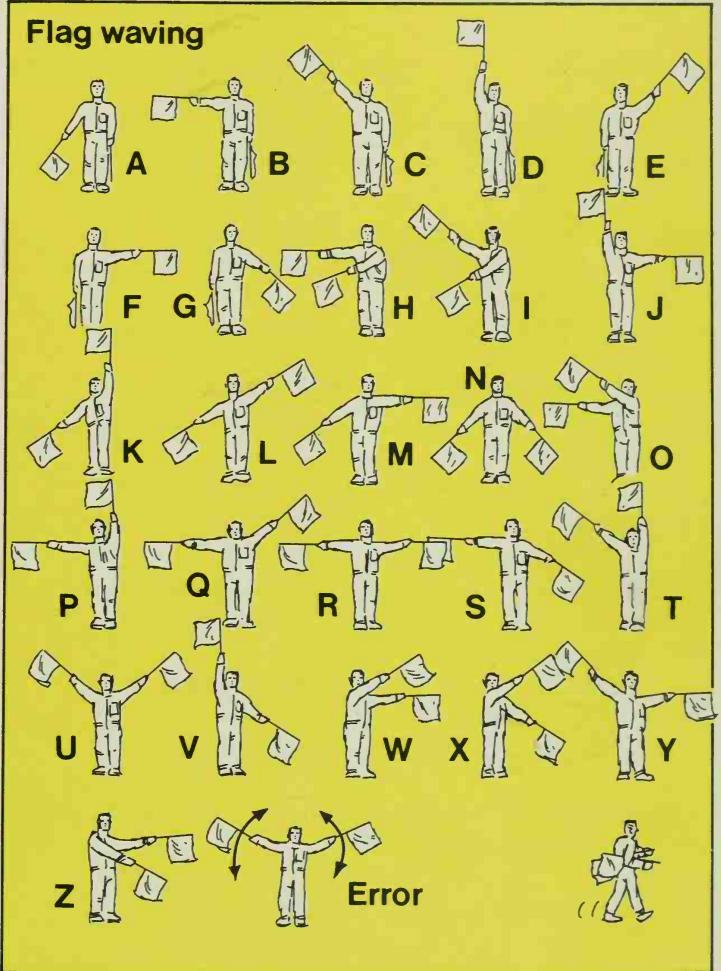
## Vexillology

Word used to describe the study of flags. A flag expert is called a vexillologist.

## Vexillum

Flag used by the Roman army, carried on the end of a lance. The exact date of its introduction is unknown, but likely to have been about 100 B.C.

The vexillum was usually purple or red, but sometimes came in blue or white. It was the only "flag" in the modern sense until the Raven flag of the Vikings was devised. This was first recorded in the year 878 A.D.



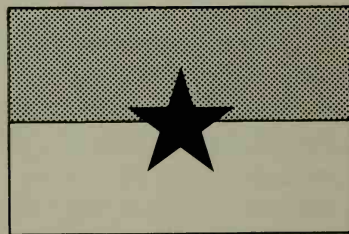
△ Here you see the semaphore flag alphabet. It was invented before the days of radio. Navies

used semaphore for communicating between ships and for ship-to-shore messages.

# Index

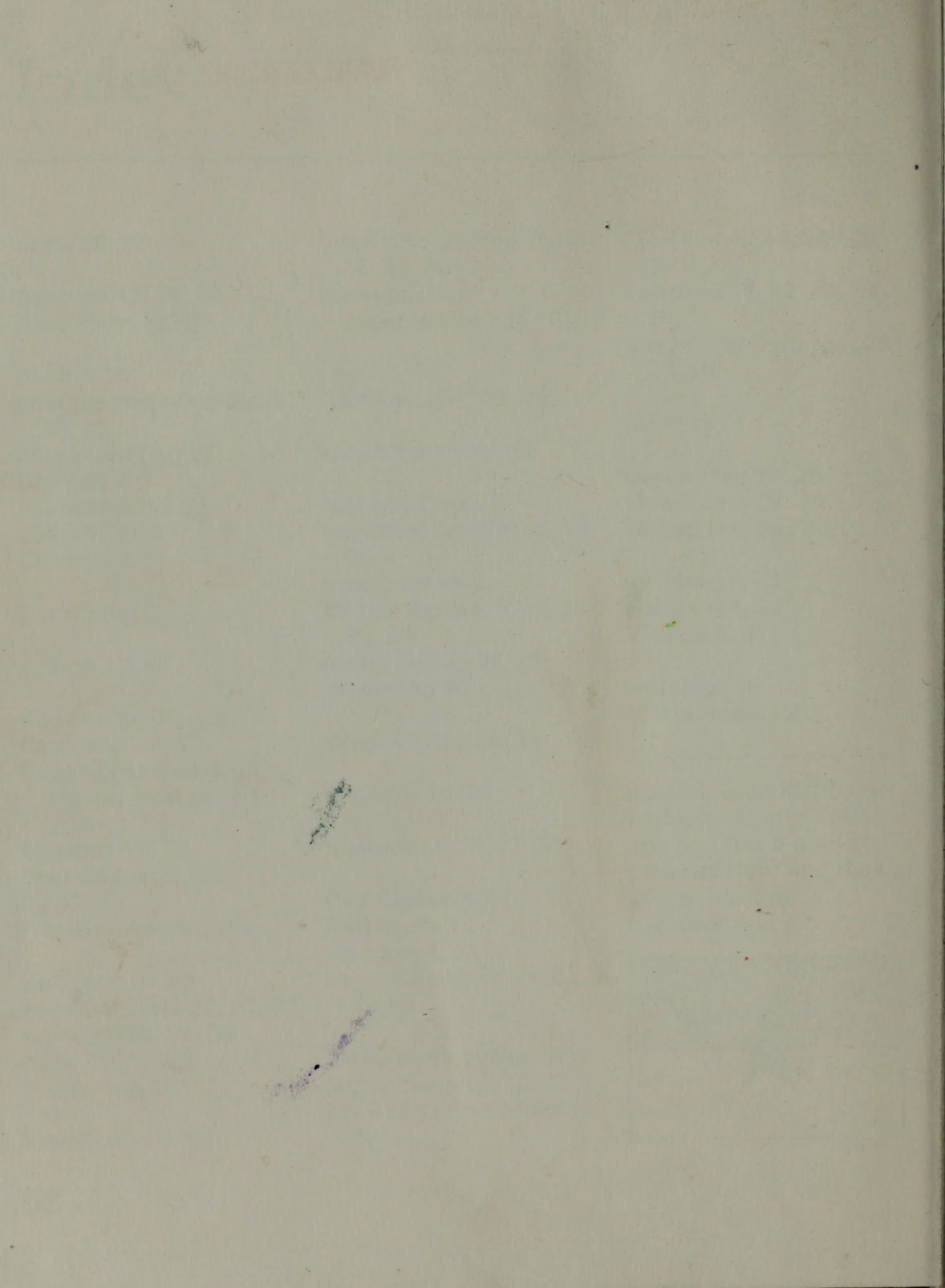
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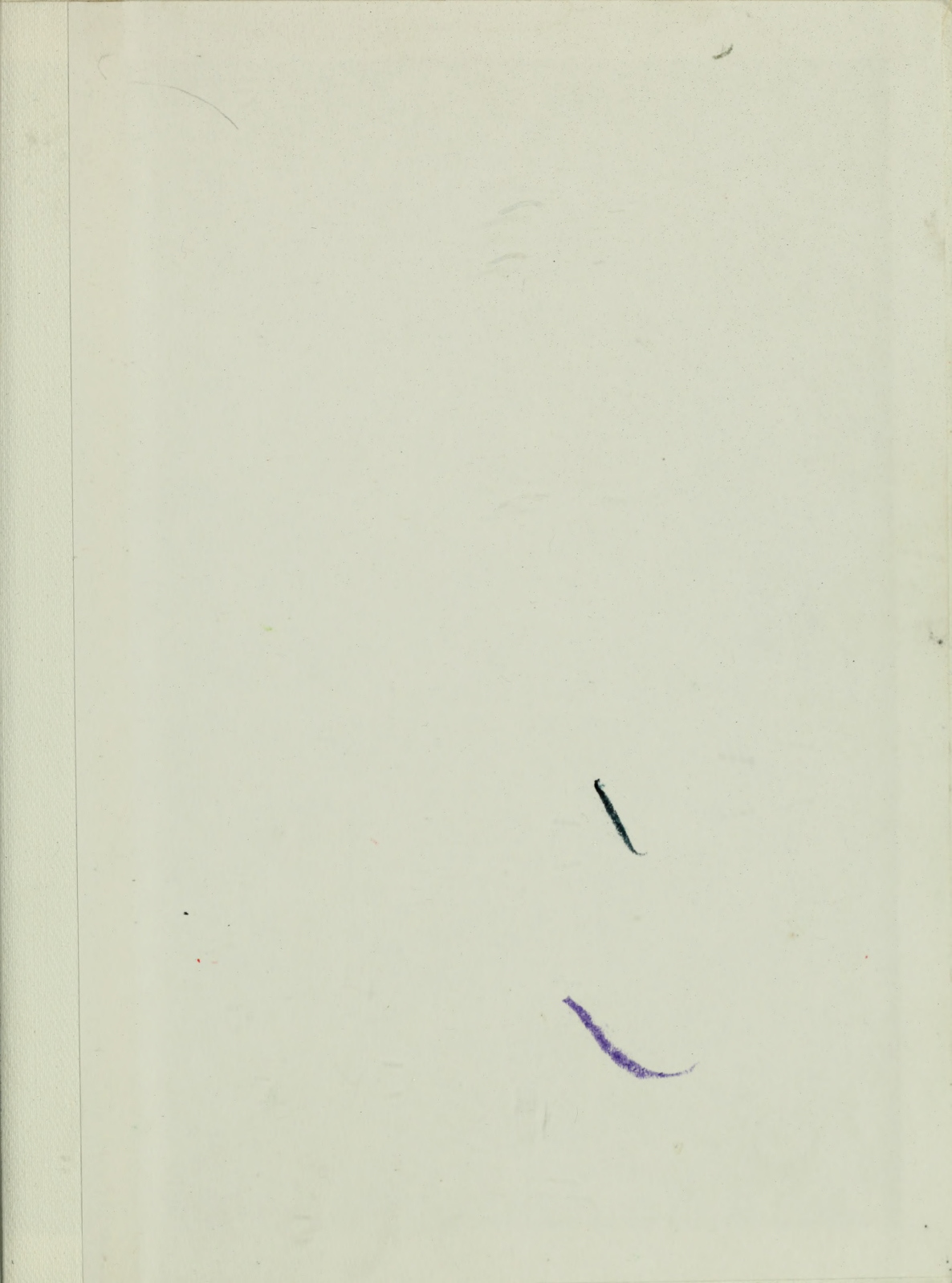
- arms 28, 30
- banners 17, 28, 30  
Blue Peter 16, 30
- canton 16  
charges and symbols 28, 29, 30  
checkered flag 27  
Chinese 4  
coats of arms 30  
color 4, 30  
Columbus 5
- Denmark 6
- ensign 16, 30
- flag design 28, 29  
flag parts 16, 17  
**flags of the world** (in alphabetical order) 6-15  
flagstaff 16, 30  
*fleur de lys* 28, 29  
fly 30  
French revolution 25
- halyards 16, 30  
heads of state 22, 23, 31  
heraldry 28, 29, 30  
hoist 16, 17, 30  
house flag 16
- Inglefield clip 16
- International Flag Code 18, 19, 30  
international organisations 20, 21
- jack 16, 30  
"Jolly Roger" 18, 30
- knight-banneret 17
- Maltese Cross 5  
medieval knights 16, 28, 30  
merchant ships 16  
Middle Ages 4, 5, 16, 28, 29, 30  
motor racing 26, 27  
mourning 30
- Olympic flag 20, 21
- pennant 16, 30
- quarantine 16, 17, 30
- Red Crescent 20  
Red Cross 21  
Romans 4, 31  
royal standards 22, 23, 29, 31
- semaphore system 31  
signal flags 18, 19, 31  
skull and crossbones 18, 30
- "Stars and Stripes" 25, 31  
standard 17, 22, 23, 29, 30  
symbols and charges 28, 29, 30
- truce 16
- Union Flag 24, 25  
Union Jack 24, 25  
United Nations 20, 21
- vexillology 31  
vexillum 4, 31  
Vikings 5, 31
- warships 18  
World Scouts 21
- 
- Burkina Faso is the new name for Upper Volta. The flag has a gold star on a red (top) and dark green (bottom) background.





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# Flags



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