

Trip Around the World

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The dream I had had for years to travel around the world came true in July and August 1999. I had to preside the XVIIIth International Congress of Vexillology in Victoria, capital of British Columbia on the Pacific coast of Canada. It was the occasion to organize that trip and come back to Belgium through Oceania and Asia.

For many months I organized my itinerary, writing many letters to all the countries I expected to visit and I received plenty of information from officials, I hoped to meet some people to complete my research on flags, and as a teacher of Geography I wanted to see the beautiful landscapes of these countries and to take photographs and video films to show to my students. I wanted to see many things in a short time and I had to make choices. I decided to stop in small islands and some cities where visits were possible in a short time and to select some sites in particular. Jiri Tenora came with me.

My meetings with local authorities gave me plenty of material (books, booklets, pamphlets) about flags and coats of arms, also orders and decorations and I discovered many unknown emblems. Everywhere the reception was friendly except in the United Arab Emirates and I received special authorizations to photograph flags.

The goal of that lecture is to tell you about my hobby, vexillology but also to describe my personal feelings, some friendly relations established during my meetings with generally unknown people and which I thoroughly enjoyed.

As it is impossible to show all the flags I have seen, I have chosen to present in that lecture some of them discovered after I have left the XVIIIth International Congress of Vexillology of Victoria in Canada.

Hawaii

I arrived at Honolulu airport on 3 August. I was welcomed by a representative of the tour operator, we changed airports, the internal flights take off from another place. We received a garland of orchids as a sign of welcome, the « *Aloha* » of the Hawaiian. Our correspondent didn't know the timetable had been changed two days before and we missed our flight to Hilo. 3 hours to wait, we left Honolulu to Hilo in Hawaii island commonly called the Big island because the name is similar to the State's name for the full archipelago.

After our arrival we took off in a small helicopter for a spectacular flight around the volcano *Pu'u O'o*' cone.

The following day we visited the landscape: falls, orchid gardens, and specially the volcanoes national park, it was grand.

In Hilo I only discovered the seal of the County of Hawaii on the door of a public car, a red and white emblem showing volcanoes, the sun, palm trees, the sea and a traditional boat, the motto "Ola na Moku", and around, in black and yellow, the name of the county and of the State.

Honolulu

Kamehameba the Great was born on the Big island in 1758. In 1782 he emerged as the ruler, after local wars with two other chiefs of Big island. *Kamehameba*'s ambitions extended well beyond sharing control of the islands. In 1790 attacked and conquered the island of Maui, after that he conquered Molokai and over the next few years he conquered all the islands and became the only chief in Big island. He was the first King of a united kingdom. His dynasty was overthrown by the Americans and the Republic was proclaimed on 4 July 1894. The last Queen died in 1917. The statue of *Kamehameba* the Great is near the Royal Palace and regularly decorated with flowers. The old Royal Palace called *Iolani* is now restored and opened to the public, it is emotional to visit it and to discover the Royal Thrones, decorations, paintings, and furniture listening to the guide's speech. I even saw the decoration of the Order of Leopold given by King Leopold II of Belgium to the Hawaiian King at end of last century when he paid a visit to Europe.

The Royal coat of arms appeared on the grids of the Palace and its evolution around a small pavilion in the garden.

The visit of the Hawaiian Archives allowed me to discover lots of information on obsolete Royal flags I was guided in my quick research by a friendly imposing American woman.

The Governor's House flew the American, Hawaiian and Governor personal flag, a bicolor blue over red,, a circle of white eight stars and in the centre the word "Hawaii", also in white.

By bus we crossed the city to visit the Bishop Museum, the biggest in Hawaii specialized in Hawaiian and Polynesian culture. The most impressive thing I saw was a feather cloak made for *Kamehameba I* and passed down to subsequent kings. It was created entirely with the yellow feathers of the now-extinct *mamo*, a predominantly

black bird with a yellow upper tail. Around 80,000 birds were caught, plucked and released to create this cloak. Together with that cloak the kings wore a feather hat.

I tried to find information about the Ka Lahui Hawaii sovereignty movement. It was not easy but, by chance, I met a policeman at Waikiki beach who gave me an address and some months later I receive the constitution of the movement.

I couldn't leave Hawaii without visiting the memorial of Pearl Harbor. On December 7, 1941, a wave of more than 350 Japanese planes attacked Pearl Harbor, home of the US Pacific fleet. Some 2,235 US soldiers were killed during the two-hour attack. 1,177 of them died in the battleship *USS Arizona*, which sank in less than nine minutes. Twenty other ships were sunk and seriously damaged and 188 airplanes were destroyed.

Over 1,5 million people 'remember Pearl Harbor' each year with a visit to the *USS Arizona* memorial. The memorial, built in 1962, stands right on top of the *Arizona* without touching it. It contains the ship bell and a wall inscribed with the names of those perished onboard. The average age of the ship's enlisted men was 19. Looking through the water from the Memorial you can see the ship which is still losing oil. You can see a lot of people throwing flowers and praying inside. In the hall preceding the wall there are some flags: USA, Hawaii, Defence Forces and some States are displayed.

Date-line

If you remember the trip of *Phileas Fogg* in the novel « The trip around the world in 80 days » written by *Jules Verne* you know he thought he had lost his bet. He thought he had arrived on Monday but in fact it was Sunday in London. At that time there was no date-line. It is a convention adopted a century ago. The conference chose the meridian 180° to change the date because there are not many people in that area. When you cross the line to the East you lose one day but when you cross to the West, you add one day. The change does not depend on the hours. To prevent some small states or islands being cut into two different days, the date-line doesn't follow the meridian on all its way but follows the boundaries of the countries.

Fiji

The country was granted its independence on 10 October 1970. The total land area is 18,300 sq km and there are 300 islands. I visited the main island, Viti Levu. The country is 12 hours ahead the Greenwich Mean Time. The population is the most multiracial of the South Pacific countries. There are 50% of Indigenous Fiji and 45% of Fiji Indians. Indigenous Fijians are predominantly of Melanesian origin, but have a strong Polynesian influence both physically and culturally. Darker Melanesian features

and afro hair are mixed with lighter Polynesian features and straight hair. Most Fiji Indians are the descendants of indentured labourers. Race relations on an everyday basis between ordinary people are generally harmonious, however racial division is entrenched in Fijian history, language and politics. Underlying concerns and fears have been deliberately plied upon and exploited for political, and religious reasons and consequently reinforce differences. The extremist slogan « Fiji for Fijians » is still used, and Fiji Indian and Chinese shop owners in remote areas protect themselves behind barricades.

I arrived early in the morning and I rented a car to travel inside Viti Levu. There are two main roads from Nadi Airport to Suva, the capital. The Northern one is called King's Road and the Southern one, Queen's Road, each of them are around 200 km, the southern one is more used because the northern one is not yet fully asphalted, part of it is a gravel road.

Along King's Road, in a small village I discovered the Police flag flying in front of a small post. After friendly discussion the policeman agreed to lower the flag to take a photograph of the flag but also of himself. It's the traditional blue flag with a crowned badge.

Our stay in Suva was quiet, in Pacific countries everything is closed on Sunday, the day of God! We walked in the rain, the tropical rain, to discover the city, a small business and harbour centre with many bungalows around. It is one of the biggest city in those small Pacific islands and the city is the seat of different Pacific organisations.

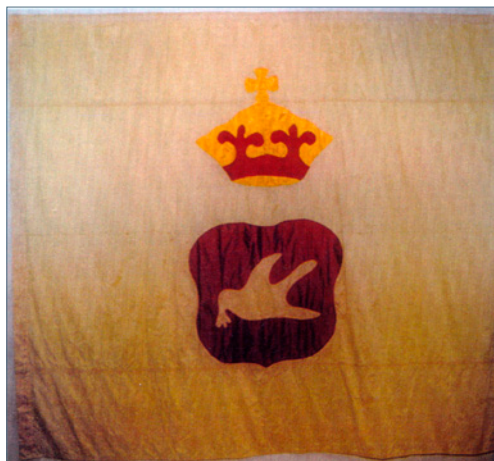
On Monday we had to meet a lot of people of South Pacific Organizations. The welcome was friendly. At first I visited the South Pacific Forum Secretariat, their flag is blue with the logo in a white canton, yellow Southern Cross and waves on a blue circle and a green and yellow palm tree (Fig. 1). That white canton, alone, is used as car flag by the Secretary, its size is 15:28 cm.

The South Pacific Commission has its main seat in Noumea, New Caledonia, but some offices are in Suva. The traditional light blue flag with a white atoll and a ring of 27 six-pointed yellow stars and a white and yellow palm tree. The blue of the car flag of the South Pacific Commission Deputy Secretary is medium but there are only 26 stars and the palm tree is white. The South Pacific Commission had changed its name to Pacific Commission due to the admission of States from North of the Equator. A new emblem was under discussion during our visit and was adopted some months later. We saw the proposition which must be submitted to the meeting of the Organization. I discussed with Mr Blumel Detlef, a German, working at the South Pacific Commission about the competition for a new Fijian flag. He said a competition was held some years ago but it had no success and there was no plan to change in a near future.



1. The South Pacific Forum Secretariat

I had asked in advance permission to photograph inside the Museum, there is a reconstruction of the King Cakobau flag, white with a crowned shield (Fig. 2) and an exhibition of the Fijian decorations. Finally because the Museum was closed on Sunday, I didn't see the original flag.



2. King Cakobau

I met the only Ambassador of Tuvalu (an independent state of 10,000 inhabitants) in the world. We discussed over a cup of tea and he showed us the Government flag, which is the national flag with the coat of arms (Fig. 3). I had to wait the return of his chauffeur from the car wash and I took a photograph of the Ambassador's car flag. Its size is 15/30 cm.



3. Tuvalu State Flag

I also researched the Presidential flag of Fiji which was unknown. I arrived at the gate of the residence. A big Fijian flag flew in front. I discussed with the guard who called the Secretary of the President. I waited a short time

outside and received permission to meet the Secretary who explained the President used a car flag but I had to come again in the afternoon or next day because he was at the airport to welcome the Governor General of New Zealand. A short time later I heard sirens and the presidential car arrived quickly with the Presidential flag and the New Zealand flag. I went out of my car, ran to the gate, asked the officer to meet again the secretary. Prohibition to enter! But he called her and after some time she received the presidential permission to show the car flag, I entered the residence and the car came to park in front of me! (Fig. 4) The flag is blue with the Fijian arms drawn in gold and a scarved whale tooth with a size 20.5:32.5 cm.



4. Fijian President's Flag

As I had delivered a lecture at Barcelona in 1991 about the flags of New Hebrides/Vanuatu I looked for the photograph of a flag of Na'Griamel movement of New Hebrides published in the local Fiji Times dated January 1976. I had written many letters at the time of the publication asking for a better photograph because the flag was cut on the newspaper but I had never received an answer. As I was in Fiji I wanted to have a look at the archives. After three meetings in the day, the woman responsible arrived and she showed me negatives from that time, they were in a bad state due to humidity. She promised to print and send it in Belgium and I paid for that. After three months as I had not received the photograph, I wrote again and finally after ten years of research I found that flag with all the details, there is really a white star beneath the shield!

At the Army National Headquarters, after some discussion and half an hour wait, I was granted permission to photograph some military flags, a soldier accompanied us with an umbrella, it rained so much and he lowered the flag, it was the Army Defence Force flag, a gold emblem on a green field. I asked to photograph a flag flying at the top of the main building, but as it was impossible, he took us into a small room where he showed a big Army flag red over green, the emblem in dark yellow (Fig. 5) but also the former Governor General flag with the Royal Crest and a light brown whale tooth bearing the word "Fiji" in black, unusual on such a flag.



5. Fijian Army Flag

Before leaving I remembered the Fijians had Colours: it meant new calls to the chief, a new wait and a new authorization. We saw the 3rd Fiji Infantry Regiment Presidential Colour, it was a square red flag, in the canton, the Fijian national flag, in the upper part of the fly, the gold cifer III, in the lower part of the fly, the badge of the Regiment in colour, and beneath the national flag, a gold scroll bearing the word “Solomons” reference to the Second World War (Fig. 6). A second flag is the Colour of the Regiment itself, it differs from the previous one, it is red, the cifer III in the upper canton, the badge and scroll in the centre. In front of the building flew another flag, red over green with the badge on a white shield having the shade of a shell.



6. Fijian Regimental Colour

I also tried to photograph the car flags of the Ambassador of Micronesia but it was lunch time and the post of Ambassador of Nauru was vacant and no flag was available.

Before leaving Suva for the airport I stopped in front of the main jail looking for the administration office, it was not easy but I received permission to photograph that particular flag, green with a yellow shield (Fig. 7).



7. Fijian Prison Service

Samoa

We left Nadi airport (Fiji) early in the morning on board an Air Pacific flight. It was a dream to visit the Pacific countries, my head was full of wonderful pictures but our first visit in Fiji didn't meet my expectations. I would discover the Pacific landscape in Samoa.

For the second time we crossed the *date-line* but to the east and we had to subtract one day. We left Fiji on Tuesday for a 3-hour flight but we arrived on Monday in Apia.

On our arrival, a representative of our hosts welcomed us at the airport with a big 'malo', the local hello. We travelled to the city centre by local bus. The landscape we flew over before landing was wonderful, the real image of the Pacific. Western Samoa was granted its independence by New Zealand on 1 January 1962 and changed its name to Samoa in 1999. It was a German colony until the First World War when the country was occupied by New Zealand.

The population, estimated at 161,300 in 1996, is mainly Polynesian. During our first walk in the city I discovered the Samoan Olympic badge in front of a building, a big representation of the national arms in front of the Government building built by the Chinese. We tried to obtain some information about the national flag, knocked at some doors, but nobody was able to help us.

In Apia, I discovered the Police flag flying in front of the Headquarters. I asked permission to take a photograph, an officer advised us to come in the evening at the lowering of the flag. I arrived on time but the policeman who lowered the flag wasn't in a good mood and forbid to take the photo but it was possible some time later when another policeman showed us the flag in the building (Fig. 8). It is a light blue flag with the emblem in white and the word “Western Samoa Police”. These words have, now probably been changed because the country's name is now “Samoa”.



8. Samoan Police Flag

The following day at sunrise we attended the hoisting of the National and Police Colours in front of the Government building and the Police Headquarters Office. The Police, the only military organisation, have a spectacular uniform. The men wear a light blue uniform: the jacket with silver buttons is of a modern style together like the kepi, but in place of trousers they wear a 'lavalava' the traditional skirt together with bared footed in sandals. As the Polynesians are generally fat you can understand the parade was spectacular !

After that ceremony I met the Commissioner of Police, who offered me a metallic badge from the kepi, and the Chief of the Fire Brigade who promised me a patch I never received. He advised me to meet a responsible of the Fire Brigade about the Fire flag. We searched a long time in the industrial estate to learn the flag was in such a bad state than they send to Australia to manufacture a new one. He promised to send a photograph but I have not yet received it.

We went to *Aggie Grey's* hotel, the best in the country, to see the famous '*fiafia*' with spectacular dancing, drumming and singing, an extraordinary show with dinner. On the stage here was a big Samoan flag to promote the pride to be a Samoan.

Our last drive was a discovery of the Milinu'u Peninsula, west of Apia. It more than anything else it seems to be a repository for political monuments. One of those is interesting for a vexillologist: the German Flag Memorial, erected in 1913 just over one year before the New Zealand takeover of Western Samoa. It commemorates the raising of the German flag over the islands on 1 March 1900. It's a small conical monument with a plate: "Hier wurde am 1. Maerz 1900 die deutsche Flagge gehisst" "Oinei Lava na sisi ai le Fua Siamani I le aso 1. Mati 1900" "Errichtet 1913". It translates: "here the German flag was hoisted on 1st March 1900". A stamp was issued by Western Samoa in 1980 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the raising.

American Samoa

We left Apia to Pago Pago on board a small 20 seater plane. For the first time in my life I was considered as luggage. Before getting into the aircraft I had to be

weighed! The Polynesians are generally fat (it is a genetic heritage) and it is necessary to distribute the seats in relation with the weight. Generally one person uses more than one seat and it is necessary to adapt special larger seat belts! When people were seated it was impossible to walk in the aisle! I entered the last and it was difficult to reach my seat!

American Samoa is covered by a big tropical forest, it was wonderful to see it from the sky. It is an American unincorporated territory, the formal annexation took place on 17 April 1900 when a deed of cession was signed by all the chiefs of all the islands involved.

The population is around 58,000 mainly on Tutuila island (95%). The land area is only 197 sq km. There are some 1,500 foreigners who reside there, most of whom are Koreans or Chinese involved in the tuna industry.

We took a taxi to visit the island.

In front of the Fono, the parliament building, a big representation of the seal, in wood. A similar seal, but metallic, decorates the Government building where I met the Acting Governor who was very friendly and gave me some material about the emblems researched. The Acting Governor promised to send material specially the law about the flag's adoption but he wrote he has not found that information and gave the address of a specialist on Samoan flag living in Hawaii, Mr Joseph Theroux who sent me one of the ten copies of a booklet he had published some years before (it was probably the last copy available) about historical American Samoan flags. It was interesting because I discovered some unknown flags from 1858 until the present flag, specially about the German period like the flag of King Malietoa circa 1899 showing a boat landing the King. Some flags have been reconstructed and I am not sure colours and design are correct like Manu'a and Swain islands flags.

The Chief of Police gave me a patch and the Police star adorns the police cars but there is no special flag.

At the airport I looked at the badge of the American Samoa Immigration.

New Zealand

On arriving at Auckland airport I rented a car to visit the North Island. My goal was to visit the geysers and to discover the Maori culture.

The weather wasn't very good because in the southern hemisphere it was winter.

My first stop was in Ngaruawahia, the residence village of *Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu*, the Maori Queen who is the Chief of the *Tainui Confederation*. I saw her palace with wonderful carved red wooden gates and by chance I went to Hopu Hopu campsite where was organized a meeting of the *Tainui Parliament*. At the arrival of the Queen I had to leave, people did not want white people in the neighbourhood, probably for

religious reasons. In front of the gate the flag of Hopu Hopu Site, white with a turquoise-blue sun, a dark blue bird and name and a gold constellation of 7 stars. I tried for one hour to film and photograph the flag but it was so big and heavy it was impossible to fly. I met the guard asking for information about the symbolism, after discussion he proposed to lower the flag and I took a very good photograph! (Fig. 9).



9. Hopu Hopu Site

My friend Christopher Reed from Wellington wrote to me later, he thinks "Hopu Hopu" means respect for a person of high dignity or rank, "a person who has performed great deeds", or even "a brave enemy" but probably it refers to a Maori King, possibly the first Maori King – Te Wherowhero who was elected by Waikato, Taupo and some other tribes and took the title Potatau I.

I drove to Rotorua, the city centre of the geyser district. It was a big surprise to see a lot of smoke coming from gardens, parks. At first I thought some people were making fires to burn scraps from their garden ! But it was hot springs, there were a lot of them.

The flag of Te Arawa was displayed in an exhibition organised in the Rotorua Museum. Later I received more information about that flag from the head of Curatorial Services. It is a British flag bearing a seal, the words Tuhourangi and Arawa 1870. That flag was presented to Tuhourangi of Te Arawa in 1870 to acknowledge his loyalty to the Crown of England. Te Arawa had recognised the Treaty of Waitangi as the binding document partnership between the Maori people and the crown of England, in the 1860s.

Wellington

The city, 400,000 inhabitants, is built around a wonderful bay. I stayed a while to visit a New Zealand vexillologist Christopher Reed, who welcomed us with his wife and children, for a dinner which was delicious and we tasted local white wine. The reception and discussion were great.

The city flag flew on the top of some buildings. It is a yellow flag with a black cross and the city arms. That flag was registered by the College of Arms by letters patent in August, 1963.

700 km and a one day trip to go back to Auckland with

a flat tyre just before driving along the *Desert Road*.

We stopped again at Ngaruawahia hoping to find more information about the flag discovered a few days before. I heard the flag was that of the Tainui people and I received a sheet with the symbolism of the Maori coat of arms. It is difficult to receive information about the symbols of the Maori Queen because of its religious meaning.

Auckland

It is the biggest city and the economic capital of New Zealand. I visited the city centre, the Maritime Museum with Polynesian canoes and material about the ships sailing between Australia and Britain. Inside some Ship Companies flags as the Union Steam Ship Company, the Subritzky Shipping Line and the pennant of the TSS Awatea, a ship launched in 1936.

I discovered some books in a shop and asked permission to take photographs because there was only one maori flag in each books!

We visited the *Domein*, a big museum with sections of geology, botany, animals and history. I was specially interested in the *Moa*, the extinct ostrich and tallest bird in the world and the historical section with flags, orders, decorations, military expeditions in Africa and wars against the Maori Tribes last century. We saw :

- the 1st New Zealand Mounted Rifles Association flag
- the Parade flag and banner of the South African War Veterans: the flag bears the Union Jack over the colours of the ribbons of the Queen's and King's South African Medals.
- the "Our Soldiers Flag": this flag raised a substantial sum for the Auckland Wounded Soldier's Fund, it is hung as a tribute to those who, with courage and devotion, served the Empire in the cause of truth and freedom in 1914/1915. It is the New Zealand flag with a hundred names.
- The flag which flew on the fortifications during the battle of Gate Pa (warriors Ngai-te-Rangi and Koheriki) in April 1864. The flag is red with a white cross, crescent and star.
- Te Porere – the flag of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turiki from the 1860s (795:1940 mm) which is white with a red and black crescent, red star, red letters.

At the top of the Museum there is a war Memorial with flags and references to the First and Second World Wars in Europe and in the Pacific. There are a lot of national flags and New Zealand Regimental flags like the flag of the Auckland Regiment NZ Infantry

Australia

That country is so large it was impossible to visit it in such a short time. I chose to stop in Sydney and in the capital of the Federation, Canberra.

Sydney

Sydney is a glittering, lively city with a fabulously beautiful harbour at its centre. It is the largest Australian city with a population of 3.7 million.

Our Australian friends, Tony Burton and Ralph Kelly were waiting for me at the airport and organized a few activities for me the following days. Their welcome was great.

My friends organized a meeting with the New South Wales chapter of the Australian Vexillological Association. I enjoyed the meeting and discussions specially about the proposals for a new Australian flag. The discussions continued later during the dinner.

The Council of the City of Sydney erected a flag mast to commemorate the first saluting of the British flag on 26th January 1788. A plate bears the following words:

The Council of the City of Sydney

This flag mast was erected to commemorate the location at which the first ceremony of saluting the flag by Captain Arthur Phillip, R.N. and his company took place to mark the foundation of Australia on 26th January 1788

The location was determined by a committee of enquiry comprising

The Chief of Justice of the Supreme Court of N.S.W.
The Hon. L. J. Herron, C.M.G.

The Surveyor General of N.S.W.
Mr C. Elphinstone

Mr J. W. Forsyth

The Director of Parks
Mr C. S. Garth, A.R.A.I.A. M.A.P.I.

And appointed by the Council of the City of Sydney at a meeting held on the 5th August 1965

J. H. Luscombe
Town Clerk

John Armstrong
Lord Mayor

26th January 1967

The flag which flies is the former Union Flag without the Irish St Patrick cross.

Canberra

When the separate colonies of Australia were federated in 1901 and became states, the decision to build a national capital was part of the constitution. The site was selected in 1908, diplomatically situated between archrivals Sydney and Melbourne. In 1911 the Commonwealth Government bought land for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and in 1913 decided to call the capital Canberra, believed to be an Aboriginal term for 'meeting place'.

Tony Burton picked us up at the hotel for a 600-km journey. He had organized receptions and meetings in the capital.

Canberra, population 298,000, has a beautiful setting, surrounded by hills.

Our first reception was at *Parliament House*, a special guided tour had been organized. It is a very modern new building. You can see the four-legged flagpole on top of

Capitol Hill from all parts of Canberra, that flagmast is one of the major design elements of Parliament House. It is 81 metres high and weighs 220 tonnes. The flag is very big, 6.4 by 12.8 metres, weighs 15 kilogrammes and is floodlit during the night (Fig. 10).

Opened in 1988, it cost AUS\$ 1 billion, it took eight years to build. It is built into the hill and the roof has been grassed over to preserve the shape of the original hilltop. The interior design and decoration is splendid. A different combination of Australian timbers is used in each of its principal sections.

In the hall the Australian Women's Suffrage Banner which is the work of an Australian artist, Dora Meeson. It shows "Young Australia" (where women had the vote for the Commonwealth) appealing to "Britannia" to grant the same right to British women.

After that visit we were welcomed at the office of National Orders where a briefing was organized showing us the medals and decorations of Australia. Another meeting took place along the Lake with a representative of the Protocol. Along the road there is an alley of 60 flagpoles with the flags of the countries having a diplomatic representation in Canberra.



10. Australian Flag at Parliament House

All the buildings of the capital are modern, specially the Ministry of Justice where a tapestry commemorates the birth of the nation in 1901, showing the coat of arms of each state.

We had a guided tour of the *War Memorial* displaying a lot of flags from Regimental Australian Units having participated in different wars from the 1st and 2nd World Wars to the Pacific, Korean and Vietnamese wars. Specially two Viet Cong flags, one captured at Binh Gia in Phuoc Tuy Province on December 24, 1967 the other captured by a South Vietnamese in January 1969. The car flag of the Commander of the Resistance Force in Toulouse (France) is also exhibited. Standards of the Royal Australian Regiment are also displayed

There was a visit to the War Memorial Reserve and Conservation Building where women familiarized us with the restoration of flags. We saw some flags and particularly a flag of FRETILIN (East Timor independent movement), of APODETI (East Timor, pro-Indonesian movement), and the restoration of the Rifle Victoria Volunteers Corps, Richmond Cy, a beautiful embroidered flag. During that visit I met Dr Elisabeth Kwan specialized in the study of Australian flags who invited us for a cup of tea in her home. Finally we also stayed for dinner, a delicious dinner prepared by her Chinese husband.

Before leaving Canberra I went to see the illuminated flag on top of Capitol Hill and the illuminations in the city. We arrived at Sydney after midnight. I could not leave Australia without buying a *boomerang* as a souvenir!

Bali (Indonesia)

I was disappointed with my visit in Bali (2,900,000 inhabitants; density 520 inhabitants per square kilometre). I had to leave Sydney airport with an ANZUS flight and a stop in Darwin. But the flight was delayed for hours and finally cancelled. I was supposed to arrive in Denpasar at 1am and I arrived at 2 pm. I had organized a full day trip to visit temples, rice fields and volcanoes with a taxi.

We only saw some national Indonesian flags and political parties flags.

Brunei Darussalam

Brunei is a small country in the northwest corner of the island of Borneo along the shores of the South China Sea and is 5,765 square kilometres. 70% of Brunei's land is covered by unspoiled rainforest. The population is only 300,000, of which nearly 100,000 are temporary immigrant workers. The country has one of the world's highest per capita GDPs, around \$20,000 a year. Its Sultan is probably the richest man in the world.

In fact my visit to Brunei was my main goal about flags during that trip. At Victoria I discovered many unknown flags presented by my friend Scot Guenter from the Coronation of the Sultan book. I wanted to visit Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital city to continue my research on local flags. I knew the country used a lot of flags but many of them were unknown. When I entered, without my shoes,

the *Royal Regalia Museum* for the first time, my heart was beating fast, 119 flags were displayed in the museum and it was forbidden to take photographs! You can imagine how I felt at that moment, a lot of unknown flags in front of you and you can only look! (Fig. 11-12-13).



11. The Royal Regalia Museum



12. The Royal Regalia Museum



13. The Royal Regalia Museum

I knew my predecessor as FIAV President, William Crampton had visited the Museum and had not received permission to photograph. When you have been looking for such information for a long time the stress is big. I stayed a few hours to visit but also to note all the references of those big flags and draw some. What to do to get special permission to photograph? After hours of discussion with the Director of the Museum and representatives of the government at the Parliament, I received the book on the

coronation of the Sultan including the flags shown by Scot Guenter at Victoria but all the flags displayed in the Museum were not printed in the book. The gift of that book was similar to a movie! After discussions with the Director of the Museums of Brunei, he said he had probably one more copy of the wanted book. He searched the cupboards and shelves for a long time. During that time, which was so long for me, I felt very tense! He did not find the book and said he had probably given it to the National Library before his retirement. I was disappointed but he called the Library and by chance they agreed to send one copy by taxi! The director suggested I should visit the national museum while waiting the book, which I did trying not to show how impatient I was to receive the book, one hour later I came back to the Director's office. He told me he had received the book but he could not give it to me immediately because the secretary had to stamp the book but she had left sooner to pick up her children at school! I saw the book through the window but the door was locked and the Director did not have the key! Please come back this afternoon. I came back around 4pm. The Director had left the office! New stress! But the secretary was present and she finally gave me the book! I was so happy, I had been looking for that material for years!

Leafing through the book in my room, I discovered many flags shown in the Regalia Museum were not published in the book. I called the Director again and we organized a meeting two days later. I hoped I would receive permission to photograph in the Regalia.

When I came I received a friendly welcome and had breakfast with the Director and other people. The Director asked a colleague about other flag books, the colleague left the room a short time and came back with 4 small books, one flag a page and on each colour design a transparent paper with the size of each detail of the flag. He said I'd better photograph these illustrations rather than the flags in the Regalia. In fact the illustrations were good and it was easier, I went out with a servant who helped me and I took photographs in the sunlight. Returning to the main office I made some xerox copies but I did not recognize a lot of the flags in these four small books which were different from the book received two days before. I only saw that when I developed my films in Belgium! It was too late to print all the pages!

I discussed again with the Director asking for permission because the official flags of the Sultan, Sultanah, Heir of the throne, Army, Police... were not published in the books he had shown. Finally he agreed and asked a car and driver with a servant to go with me to the Regalia. I had become a "guest" and I entered the Regalia through the main gate and with my shoes on! I photographed the flags, and also a part of the regalia as the coaches, royal symbols like crowns, uniforms. I had asked my friend to

wait me at the Regalia but when he arrived he did not see my shoes outside and he went back to the hotel but I was inside!

You can imagine, I was wild with delight. I had been waiting for a long time and the dream had come true, you enjoy that moment so much! I thanked the Director who said he remembered I had written letters a few months before, ... but he had never answered!

Before leaving the national museum, I took photographs of the different crests used by the country since the beginning of the XXth century. Walking in the streets of the capital I also discovered many coat of arms and badges.

On board of a very fast bus-pirogue we travelled on the Brunei river through the rainforest as far as Temburong to walk in the forest. Brunei is a country divided into two parts separated by Sarawak (Malaysia) and in the forest some Malaysian flags flew in front on houses built on piles. It was a hard journey. I had to walk along a path with lots of steps under big trees (more than 20m high). It was so hot (40°!) and so humid (95%)

Arriving at the small port, I saw a military vessel flying the ensign of Brunei. After some discussion I received permission to go on board to photograph the Ensign. It was prohibit to lower the flag and there was too little wind. Finally a sailor displayed an Army flag similar to the canton of the white Ensign!

At the mosque I also discovered an unknown flag of Brunei, it was the religious flag. I asked an old man permission to take pictures. He refused to lower the flag but showed me a piece of cloth with a similar design but it was not so interesting. A few minutes later our guide asked a young man who agreed to lower the flag. I was very happy because it difficult to photograph flags with crests flying at the top of high flagpole, the flag is always folded and you cannot identify the details. And for a religious flag it was more difficult because of Arabic inscriptions.

In the port I visited the Customs Office where they showed the Customs flag, a blue flag with the crest in the middle and the Immigration flag, a light blue flag with the Brunei flag in the canton and the word "Imigresen" in white in the middle of the fly. On the river, some police canoes flew the Police flag I photographed later at the Police Headquarters.

For my last day in Brunei I went by taxi to have a look at the Royal Palace. It is one of the most impressive sites in the capital. It is the largest residential palace in the world with around 1,000 rooms but you can see the Istana Nurul Iman from the river. On the top of the palace a big dome with golden leaves and a flagpole with the Sultan's personal standard!

A short after I came back home I have received a photograph showing the correct flag used by *Raja Isteri Dan Isteri-Isteri Kepada Sultan*, the two wives of HM the Sultan (Fig. 14).



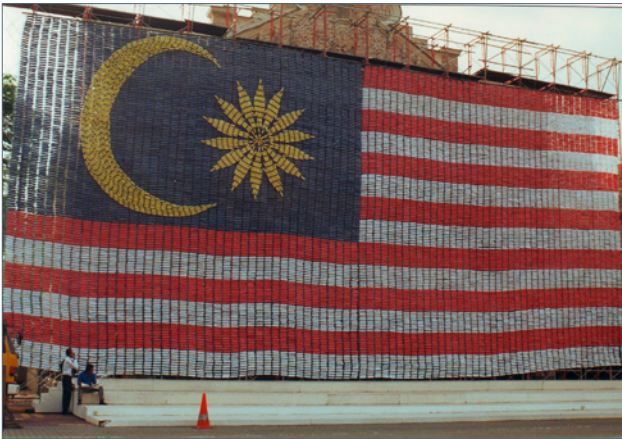
14. Wife of HM The Sultan

Malaysia

I arrived in Kuala Lumpur with Malaysia Airlines very late. The new airport of Sepang is 70km from the city centre and I had to pay a lot for the taxi.

Kuala Lumpur, population 1.1 million, is the capital of the Federation of Malaysia. Malaysia has 55% Malayan, 35% Chinese, 10% Indians.

I have visited the city centre, specially *Merdeka Square* (Independence square) where independence was proclaimed in 1957. A flag pole with a big flag is erected on the grass. It was a few days before independence national day celebrated on 31st August and many flags were displayed through the city. Along the square there is the *Sultan Abdul Samat building* a mixture of Victorian and Moorish styles ; in the past it was the Secretariat Building of the British colonial administration, now it is the Supreme Court of Justice. In front of that building a giant flag was built with small plastic rulers, there were 83 vertical "line" each with 140 rulers (Fig. 15)!



15. A Plastic Ruler Flag

Next to the square, the National Museum displays the first national Malayan flag hoisted on independence day on 31th August 1957. Slightly different from the present flag, it has only 11 stripes and an 11 pointed star for the 11 States of the Federation of Malaya. That flag was hoisted on 24h01 in the night of 30 to 31st August 1957 at Selangor Club Playing Field now Dataran Merdeka (Independence Place).

In the streets there were a lot of vertical banners of the national flag.

We rented a taxi with a driver for a one day trip to Shah Alam, the capital of Selangor, and the suburbs of Kuala Lumpur.

Shah Alam, the new capital of Selangor, is a very modern and new city. In 1978 it was still a hevea and palmtree plantation. In 1974 the Sultan of Selangor gave Kuala Lumpur to the government and it was established as a federal territory. It was necessary to build a new capital for Selangor. Around a lake were built government buildings and a museum specially dedicated to the Royal family with flags, crowns, jewels, decorations and local furniture.

In the street, there are a lot of banners from different colours.

In the museum are displayed the State flag together with the Sultan and Royal family's.

The *Sultan Salabuddin Abdul Aziz Shagh Mosque*, white with blue domes, is the biggest in Malaysia. It welcomes 24,000 believers.

Along the roads, in the cities and villages, a lot of political parties flags flew on the tops of houses and buildings.

I was disappointed with my visit at the Army Museum. We had to leave our bag and cameras before entering that Army Camp. In front of the museum the Army flag flew, a crimson flag with the badge in the middle, a Joint Defence Force Flag, B-R,B+ (horizontal stripes) with a badge, the National flag and the "Imbasan Regimen Semboyan Diraja" : B-Y/B+/R/V with a badge. 4 unknown flags but no photographs. Inside the museum the "Panji-Panji Regimen Askar Melayu Diraja", a former regimental Malayan flag, green with emblems. You can also see communist flags from the time of the communist rebellion in the 50s.

The Police Museum is a very nice new erected building and the exhibit of flags, uniforms, badges, medals and other police materials was great. It was forbidden to take pictures but I met an Officer who showed me a diary book with a manuscript history of the Police flags from the British rule until the present time together with illustrations or photographs of all the Police flags used since 1957. After a friendly discussion he agreed to ask permission to the Director of the Museum to copy these photographs. I paid some ringgit (Malaysian currency) and I received them six months later.

The last stop was in front the Royal Palace, the flag of the King, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, flew on the top of the Palace: it is a yellow flag with the State Arms in the centre.

Singapore

Singapore has a population of 2,95 million, of which 77,5% are of Chinese descent. The port is the biggest in South East Asia and works day and night. It is a strict

state with plenty of regulations that you must respect. Not only for the speed but you cannot cross if the light is red, you can't cross outside the zebra crossings, you cannot throw paper on the streets... it's a kind of sterilized city with a lot of laws you must respect.

At the mouth of the river, there is a statue of the *Merlion*, the city mascot, which appears on all touristic documents. It is a half-lion, half-fish creature which spits water.

The city is divided into areas as *Little India* where I looked for flag, arm and currency posters a friend had shown me in Paris, it was at Mustafa shop and I found them!

In the city streets there were a lot of vertical coloured banners from the flag or showing the coat of arms or the merlion.

I discovered two historical political party flags in the Historical Museum, the Barisan Sosialis Party, red star and circle on white and the People's Action Party, a red flash on blue disc on white (Fig. 16).



16. People's Action Party

We paid a half day visit to Johor Bahru, the nearest Malaysian city on the other side of Johor Strait. We crossed the border with the Mercedes and I visited the *Royal Abu Bakar Museum* located in the old Sultan's Palace. The collection of jewels (crown), flags, furniture, China crockery, arms, gold plates... show the wealth of the Royal family. We look at former regimental flags and a plate with all the Johore flags but weren't allowed to take pictures.

The palace and the *Sultan Abu Bakar Mosque* are built in white and blue. We had a quick lunch in a shopping centre, but it was too hot and after the purchase of a Malayan-English dictionary to try to understand some words, we returned to Singapore.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island at the Southern point of India. The capital of the Republic is Colombo, 66,000 sqkm and a population of 18,2 million. There are two main ethnic groups, 74% of Cinghalese and 18% of Tamil. For many years there has been a conflict between the two communities. The Tamil live in the North East and want to create an independent Republic : Eelam. There has

been a war for twenty years ; many people have been killed and there have been many bomb attacks, specially in Colombo.

I arrived at Colombo airport at 3 am. A taxi driver picked us at the airport for a 115-km drive to Kandy. 3h30' to cover the distance between the two cities. You have to know the roads in the Indian world are very bad and it is not necessary to reduce the speed with laws and signs. It's really impossible to drive quickly, the roads are dangerous, there are a lot of cars, trucks, rickshaws, animals, even elephants !, we only slept two hours and we began the visit of Kandy, the old capital of the Kingdom of Kandy which resisted conquerors for 300 years.

The present flag of Sri Lanka is designed from the last Royal flag of Kandy. The authorities added two stripes, orange for Hindouist and green for Muslims.

Kandy

I looked for information on flags and I only discovered a Singhalese printed book on flags of the world with a lot of errors

The city has 100,000 inhabitants and is at an altitude of 500m, the climate is better than in Colombo along the coast. The artificial lake was built in 1807 by *Sri Wickrama Rajasinba*, the last King. I visited *Dalada Maligawa*, the temple of the *Tooth*. It is the most important relic of Sri Lanka. Referring to the legend, the sacred tooth of Buddha was saved from his pyre in 543 AC, it arrived in Ceylon in the 4th century, hidden in the hair of a princess. Before entering the temple, we walked through a gallery where on both sides, a procession with elephants and flags is painted.

Peradeniya was a royal park. The British developed the park into a botanical garden, the biggest of Sri Lanka with 60ha. You can see orchids, a Java fig tree which is very large. The best is the Royal Palm trees drive. I rented a rickshaw for the visit. At the top of a tree, there were hundreds of big bats. In front of the main gates of the Botanical Gardens, there is a reproduction of the Ceylonese arms adopted in 1948.

Colombo

I was awaited by my Canadian friend who had organized my trip in Sri Lanka. He is working at the Canadian High Commission and with his diplomatic plate we drove and parked easily in the city. His welcome was great with a dinner at home and a meeting with the president of the Sri Lanka Vexillological Association, Mr Kumaran Fernando. His family name is very strange: it is a Portuguese name given to many people in the XVIc during the Portuguese colonization. My friend organized a visit of the capital.

During that visit we discovered the flag of the city of Colombo, historical Ceylonese badges on the gates of

a college and my friend showed us a beautiful and rare book published in 1913. In a very old military post I discovered the flag of the last King of Kandy painted on the wall. He was imprisoned in 1815 there before being exiled to south India by the British, he died in 1832. That small room is now used as a guard house for an office building.

The police uses a flag divided into four triangles, blue at the hoist and fly, white at the top and bottom, in the centre the police badge in blue and white which bears an elephant (Fig. 17).

I received a table flag representing the Western District of Sri Lanka flag (Fig. 18). It is a very complicated flag, like many historical Ceylonese flags, in white, green and yellow, with leaves, the Kandy lion, a bird and a snake. It seems the districts have adopted flags but I did not see anything.



17. Police Flag, Sri Lanka



18. Western District, Sri Lanka

Maldives

A technical stop at Male airport on the road to Dubai.

The United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federation of 7 Emirates with a large autonomy. The foundation was on December 2, 1971. When the British left the so-called Trucial Coast, there were many villages and the first oil fields were discovered shortly after. The capital, Abu Dhabi, was a small village in the 60s, with the Sheikh fortress, some houses and some boats on the shore, now it is a big modern city with plenty of buildings. The square area is 83,000 for a population of 2,41 million (180,000 in 1968!), 60% are foreign workers! These

workers are like slaves, they have no rights and have to come without their family.

The country lies along the shore of the Persian Gulf. It is a desert but they discovered a lot of oil and gas.

Immediately after we had left the air conditioned airport, it was the blaze: 41°, 95% humidity!

Outside the main building of the airport a lot of flags, specially air flight companies flags, were lowered at half-mast. I think it was to honour the death of a Saudi Arabian prince. We took a photograph of the flag of Dubai Department of Civil Aviation, a white flag with words in Arabic and English, UAE and the Dubai flags crossing a falcon.

We wanted to exchange dinars. It was so hot I walked drinking water along the way! The view on Dubai inlet was beautiful. In front of the opposite bank, there are a lot of modern architecture buildings. With a local boat I rented I made a short trip in the creek. There were a lot of *dhows*, local wooden boats, many were taxis to cross. All these boats flew the UAE national flag

We rented a taxi with a driver for a one-day visit of the main cities and the desert. We first visited the port and suburbs of Dubai, a lot of residences for Western engineers and workers, private clubs with swimming-pools, big motorways... but 43°. When I left the car to photograph, it was a nightmare, it was like a sauna and I had problems with the cameras because of condensation on the lens.

Along the road to Abu Dhabi, there is a big 5-star hotel without any clients, because it is too far from cities. Before our arrival in Abu Dhabi we crossed some new modern villages, with shops, mosques, flats: everything is empty, it is too far from the city centre and local people do not live there. The villages were built by the Emir for his people.

At the entry of the city, I stopped in front of a police station to take the photograph of the Police badge. It was prohibited and I was arrested. There were some discussions and I was sent to another police station to meet an officer, new discussions with a translator who told me the police officer had written I had taken a photograph of the police building which was not true, and I had to sign papers in Arabic. I did not like it but I had no choice, hoping to be discharged. No food, no drink but the chauffeur bought me some things. I was sent to another police station, the police headquarters. By that time I had lost my friend and the taxi in the traffic, they found me hours later. Then I began to feel worried, I had to leave the UAE in the evening for Belgium, it was the last day of my world trip! Finally the last police officer called a judge of the Court of Justice who told him to take my negative. I had to give it and also to discuss to recuperate my camera. 5 hours lost and I had paid a lot of money for the taxi. Immediately afterwards I left Abu

Dhabi: it is the worst memory of my trip. We stopped to eat a pizza. At sunset we arrived in Dubai, the driver and guide showed us the big racecourse of the Emir, extraordinary to see that in a desert! First meeting with camels walking along the road. Our last visit in the evening was an excursion through the Emirates of Sharjah and Ajman. In fact kilometers of buildings, shops with furniture and other things, there is so much money in the Emirates.

In fact I had the copy of the badge on my visa application form and I could reconstruct the flag, the Police flag is blue with a white badge (Fig. 19).



19. UAE Police Flag

Along the streets of Abu Dhabi I saw the city (or Emirate) coat of arms displayed along the way with banners but as I was in the Police car and without my camera it was impossible to take a photograph!

We took a night flight to Amsterdam with a connection to Brussels. I arrived at 11 am and I was at school at noon to work !!!

An unforgettable trip and no health problem ! I hope to travel once again around the world in a few time!!!

I tried to work out how many kilometers I had covered. It was not easy because I do not know all the air and sea mileage.

I think I flew 44,000 km, I did 410 km by ship, 5,500 km by car, a total of around 50,000 km in 57 days. A record!



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