

Lands of the Rising Sun

23rd International Congress of Vexillology Yokohama, Japan – 12–17 July 2009 Ralph G.C. Bartlett - President, Flags Australia

Japan, also known as the Land of the Rising Sun, uses this symbol to great effect on both the national flag and naval ensign. However, it is not the only land to use the rising Sun as a significant symbol for either its flag or other insignia. The Sun is used on at least 12 current national flags, several territorial flags, national arms, and former national or colonial flags. Examples of these are¹:



Fig. 1 Antigua





Fig. 2 Bahamas – Arms Fig. 3 British Columbia





Fig. 4 Greenland



Fig. 5 Argentina



Fig. 6 Argentine Arms



Fig. 7 Uruguay



Fig. 8 Gilbert & Ellice Islands



Fig. 9 Arms



Fig. 10 Arms



Fig. 11 Kiribati



Fig. 12 China - Taiwan



Fig. 13 French Polynesia Fig. 14 Polynesian Disc





Fig. 15 Philippines



The meaning given to the Sun symbols does vary, but a general theme is: "Dawning of a new era and/or day", religious status of the Sun, a symbol of life, enlightenment, or unity, and the geographic relationship of the Sun for a particular part of the world. A significant number of these flags and arms are for countries and territories in eastern Asia and the Pacific region.

When you think about it the use of the Sun as a prominent symbol in this part of the world should not be a surprise, considering the geographical location, abutting both the International Date Line and Equator. The Sun has been a significant symbol for many cultures throughout history around the world. A perfect example of this is the Aztec and Inca Indians of Latin America. They used circular Sunstone Calendars, to calculate the progression of time, seasons, and astronomy, until their demise at the hands of the Spanish Conquistadores in the early 1520s. While there is no known use of these Calendars in material or flag form, each such calendar had a Sun face in the centre. The closest direct descendents in use in the Americas today are the Sun designs on the Argentine and Uruguayan national flags, both of which use different renditions of the "Sun of May", each with a face and compass arrows, just like the Aztecs or Incas.



Fig. 33 Aztec Indians Tenochtitlan Temple (Mexico City)



Fig. 34 Argentina 12 February 1812



Fig. 35 Uruguay 11 July 1830



Fig. 36 Inca Indians South America

In Japan the "Rising Sun Disc" or "Hinomaru" has been an important symbol as far back as the 1600s. Over the following 250 years, it gradually became the predominant symbol of Japan, as it also represents the nation's name, "Source of the Sun". The Sun itself is variously described as representing brightness, life, sincerity and warmth, all positive forces brought by the rising Sun at the start of each new day. Following Commodore Matthew C. Perry's (U.S.A.) initial visits to Japan in July 1853 and February 1854, great thought was given to a national flag to be flown on Japanese vessels. The flag design as we know it today was first officially recognised as a national ensign, or "funajirushi", by a decree issued on 5 August 1854. It took a further 15½ years, until after a review, ordered by Emperor Mutsuhito, or Meiji, for the "Sun Disc" ensign to be confirmed as the national flag on 27 February 1870, although this was not formally approved until 5 May 1872. It is interesting to note that it is believed that the "Sun Disc" national flag was first used by private citizens at the inauguration of the first Japanese railroad here in Yokohama on 17 September 1872².



Fig. 37 Shogun Warships and on Battlefields "Sun Disc Flag"



Fig. 38 Japan's "Rising Sun" National Flag 1600s

International knowledge of, and automatic visual recognition of, Japan's national flag grew slowly during the late 19th century and early 20th century, increasing during the years of the Great War (1914–18), when Japan was allied with the Western European powers. However it was not until Japan's horrific and disastrous East Asian and Western Pacific Wars (1935–45) that Japan's national flags gained immediate international recognition, for all the wrong reasons. Derivatives of the national flag were and are still used by its military forces. The use of alternate coloured rays spanning out from the main sun disc adds a dramatic effect to an already very effective flag design.





Fig. 39 Japanese Naval Ensign since 1889 Fig. 40 Shinto Prayers 1940s



Fig. 41 Patriotic Defence Volunteers Pro-Japan 1943 Dutch East Indies



Fig. 42 Japanese Self-Defence since 1954

The Rising Sun national flag survived these tragic years, and is flown proudly here in Japan and internationally beside other national flags. Japan's Rising Sun has also been incorporated in to the flag of this Congress's host association, JAVA, Japanese Vexillological Association.



Fig. 43 JAVA Nihon Kishougaku Kyoukai (Japanese Vexillological Association)

In Australia, the *Rising Sun* symbol has been used for over 185 years to represent various political movements, Colonial / State governments, commercial companies, and more recently the Australian Army, thus pre-dating Australia's Federation on 1 January 1901. Its principal use during the 19th century was as a crest on various coats-of-arms representing the people of Australia's different colonies and/or Australia-wide organisations, and their collective hope for the dawning of a new era as self-governing free settlers, free from the shackles of convict transportation. Examples of the use of the "*Rising Sun*" on various arms are as follows.



Fig. 44 Advance Australia Arms 1821



Fig. 45 Anti-Transportation League (Tasmania) 1855



Fig. 46 New South Wales Arms 1876



Fig. 47 Advance Australia Arms 1890s Newcastle, N.S.W.



Fig. 48
Unofficial Australian Arms and two Federation Flags c.1890

Separated by the "Rising Sun" are two Federation campaign flags. The first flag (left) is the "Australian Ensign" dating from 1832 and then adopted by the Australasian Federation League in July 1893. The second flag (right) originated as the briefly used Victorian Mercantile Shipping Flag of 1870. This flag was revived for the Federation campaigns in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia from the 1880s until just after the Federation of Australia in 1901. Commercially, various renditions of the Federation Arms were incorporated into company brand names prior to Australia's Federation on 1 January 1901.



Fig. 49 Established in Melbourne & Sydney – 1881



Fig. 50 McCracken Brewery – 1899



Fig. 51 Established in Melbourne – 1897



Fig. 52 Commonwealth of Australia Inaugural Celebrations – 1901



Fig. 53 Commonwealth of Australia Inauguration Invitation 1 January 1901





Fig. 54 Opening of First Commonwealth Parliament 7 May 1901







"Rising Sun" design elements of Federation-era houses (1890s–1910s)

Once the idea of a Federated Australia was accepted by a significant number of the people and politicians in several of the Colonies, the "Rising Sun" symbol was increasingly used to promote the cause of a new nation rising at the dawn of a new century. This symbol was included in various celebration invitations and even included into the construction of new houses immediately before and after Federation.

Coinciding with Australia's Federation was the unofficial, then official, competition to design a national ensign for the new self-governing Commonwealth. Included in the more than 32,800 entries were at least three designs which included a "Rising Sun". The first proposal (Fig. 58), submitted under the nom-de-plume of "Imperialism", also showed six sun rays beaming out of the British Union Flag canton. The second proposal (Fig. 59) combined the Union Flag and Southern Cross together with a "Sunbeam" or by coincidence a vertical "Japanese Imperial style" design. The third proposal (Fig. 60) was from Newcastle, N.S.W. by marine artist F. Temple-West, and showed a "Rising Sun" of six rays and stars to represent the unification of the colonies all under the one Sun.







Fig. 60 A. Temple-West (1901)





Fig. 58 "Federal Rising Sun Union" (1901)

As part of the Federation of Australia, the previous six colonial armies were united into a single entity, the "Australian Commonwealth Military Forces", as of 1 March 1901. At this precise time all of Australia's States (formerly Colonies) had forces fighting in South Africa's Boer War. So there was an urgent need for a distinctive badge to symbolise that these formerly separate armies were now part of new united federal military force for the Commonwealth of Australia. The design chosen as the symbol of the Australian Military Forces was a so called "Rising Sun" Badge, which was approved in mid-February 1902.



Fig. 61 (c. 1885) Queensland Scottish Regiment



Fig. 62 (Late 1890s) Victorian Cadet Force



Fig. 63 (1896–1903) 6th New South Wales Inf. Regiment

There are several possible origins for this badge. One possible source was an adaptation of the "Rising Sun" then used in the badges by some of the Regiments in the Colonial/State forces. Another widely accepted version of events centres around a "Trophy of Blades", forming a semi-circle of naval swords and army bayonets around a British Crown, given to British Major-General Sir Edward Hutton, the first Commander-in-Chief of Australian Military Forces, back in 1893, when he was serving with the South Australian Colonial Forces. When asked for his thoughts about a suitable symbol, Major-General Sir

Hutton looked at his "Trophy of Swords" and believed that it was symbolic of the co-operation of the various naval and armed forces of the new Commonwealth. There were two original versions of this Badge produced in 1902, one for the land forces, inscribed with "AUSTRALIA", and another for the mounted forces, inscribed with "AUSTRALIAN COMMONWEALTH HORSE".



Fig. 64 Original "Rising Sun" Badge 1902–04

Fig. 65
Diagram of the Trophy of Swords

Fig. 66 Original "Rising Sun" Badge 1902–19

It is also claimed that this new Badge was given the unofficial name of "Rising Sun Badge" by the troops because its design was very similar to the commercial trade logo of the "Rising Sun Jam", made by Hoadley's Jam Factory in South Melbourne, which held a contract to supply jam to the Australian forces in South Africa. The factory itself was also located almost next door to the then headquarters of Victorian, now Australian, Military Forces, at Victoria Barracks, just south of central Melbourne. As the company started production in 1895, the increasingly popular "Rising Sun" design may have been included into the trade logo to promote sales in the final years leading up to Australia's Federation.



Fig. 67 Hoadley's "Rising Sun" Jam Label



Fig. 68 Australian Army "Slouch Hat" Photo: Ralph Bartlett

The "Rising Sun" badge is traditionally worn on the up-turned left-side brim of the Australian Army's "Slouch Hat". The initial land forces badge was modified in 1904 which included new wording on the scroll: "AUSTRALIAN COMMONWEALTH MILITARY FORCES".

The original mounted (horse) badge continued to be used until about 1919. Although intended for use by all members of the army this badge was initially used mainly by staff officers. Full general use started in 1911, and it was worn with pride by the 1st and 2nd A.I.F., the Australian Imperial, later Infantry, Forces during both World Wars I & II.



Fig. 69 "Rising Sun" Badge (1904–49)





Fig. 70 Shrine of Remembrance – Melbourne, Victoria. Photographs – Ralph Kelly (Feb. 2009)

During the First World War the "*Rising Sun*" Badge was also used in items supporting Australia's armed forces. Such items included an A.N.Z.A.C. commemorative brooch (1915–16), a patriotic dress made by recovering injured Australian troops for the Manageress of a troop's cafe in London (1918–19), and the Mothers and Widows Badge issued by the Government (1919).



Fig. 71 A.N.Z.A.C. Brooch 1915–16



Fig. 72 Patriotic Dress 1918–19



Fig. 73 Mothers & Widows Badge–1919



Fig. 74 Australian "Rising Sun" Badge 1949–69

Following the re-introduction of corps and regimental badges into the Army in 1949, the wording on the scroll was changed to read, "AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES". The badge was revised in 1953–54 with a change to the St. Edward's Crown, and again in 1969, with the inclusion of the Australian Federation Star within the "*Rising Sun*" and deleting all text except for "AUSTRALIA". This particular version of the Badge was not very popular with service personnel with the first badges not being issued until 1989. In 1991 a new rendition of the whole badge was produced, based more upon the earlier 1904 and 1949 badges, including new wording on the badges' scroll: "THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY".



Fig. 75 Australian "Rising Sun" Badge 1969-91



Fig. 76 Australian "Rising Sun" Badge 1991-Present

After use of the "Rising Sun Badge" in both the Boer War and the First World War and its popularity with the troops, this badge was modified for use by both governments and commercial organisations across Australia. Examples of this are (Figs. 77–80);



Fig. 77 John Hooper Foods S.A. - 1901



Fig. 78 A. Macrow & Sons Pty. Ltd. Melbourne, Victoria – 1908



Fig. 79 Olof Henry Olson, N.S.W. Talking Machines – 1922



Fig. 80 The Army & Navy Food Stores, Ltd. S.A. – 1922



Fig. 81 South Australian Flag 13 Jan. 1904



Fig. 82 South Australian Flag Badge



Fig. 83 South Australian Arms 20 Nov. 1936



Fig. 84 14 April 1984

In South Australia, the flag badge is heraldically described as, "Rising Sun Or (Gold)...", when it was proclaimed on 13 January 1904, and is still in use today. The New South Wales official arms, adopted 11 October 1906, retained the "Rising Sun" from the unofficial 1876 Arms.



Fig. 85 New South Wales Arms 11 Oct. 1906

Use of the "Rising Sun" in Australian symbols declined greatly during the 1950s & 60s after the adoption of Australia's "Flags Act – 1953" which in turn had the effect of encouraging more use of the National Flag by the general population, with elements of the flag, mainly the Southern Cross, being

included into the symbols of various authorities and commercial organisations. The Sun symbol did not re-emerge into general public awareness until 1971 with the designing of the Aboriginal Flag by Harold Thomas, and its popular and successful use in the "Land Rights" campaigns of the last quarter century of the 20th century in Australia. In the early 1990s the High Court of Australia officially recognised Mr. Thomas as the flag's designer and in July 1995 the Aboriginal Flag was officially recognised by the Federal Government under the "Flags Act-1953" as the symbol of the Aboriginal people of Australia.



Fig. 86 Aboriginal Flag (Australia)

Harold Thomas' idea when designing this flag was to represent the strong bonds between the indigenous people and their lands, all of which are covered by the bright Sun above the island continent, now called Australia. Originally this flag had squarer proportions, similar to 2:3 proportions, but he eventually consented to its commercial production at 1:2 proportions, to conform to Australian flag manufacturing convention.

The "Rising Sun Badge" has also been used by Australia's Army Command on a suite of "Commander" car flags since 1991 (Figs. 87–92). These are:



Fig. 87 Chief of Army



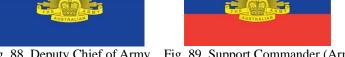


Fig. 88 Deputy Chief of Army Fig. 89 Support Commander (Army)



Commander Land Command



Fig. 91



Commander Training Command Special Operations Commander Australia

On 1 March 2001, the Australian Army commemorated its centenary in Canberra with the consecration of a commemorative "Australian Centenary Army Banner". This banner featured the Australian Coatof-Arms on the obverse and the "Rising Sun Badge" on the reverse. It was formally presented to the Australian Army on 10 March 2001 by the Governor-General, Sir William Deane as part of a special "Army Centenary Parade" along ANZAC Parade in Canberra.





Fig. 94 Australian Centenary Army Banner – 2001

During the 1990s two Australian vexillographers, George Poulos (1993)³ and James Parbery (1996), each designed an alternative Australian national flag which included different versions of a "Rising" Sun". Poulos' design alludes to the ANZACs by using part of the Sun together with Aboriginal colours, whereas Parbery uses a mariner's compass style to form a "Sun resplendent" in the centre of a "rising" Southern Cross. In 1998, George Poulos also designed a Bondi Beach Flag for the Sydney suburban local council of Waverley. This flag is a modified version of his 1993 flag design, as shown below.







Fig. 96 James Parbery – 1996



Fig. 97 Bondi Beach, Sydney – 1998

In closing, I hope I have demonstrated how the "Rising Sun" symbol has been and still is an important symbol, not only here in Japan, but also in Australia and the East Asia–Pacific Ocean regions. Perhaps this symbol could be used to represent all the "Lands of the Rising Sun" as a sign of international cooperation and used at events such as the A.P.E.C. (Asia Pacific Economic Co-Operation) forum meetings.

> Thank you for your attention. Ralph G.C. Bartlett – President, Flags Australia.



Fig. 98 "Sun Burnt" Colours Stephen Berry – 1998

Dedication

In memory of my mother, Norma M. Bartlett (1928-2008), a daughter of the "Sunburnt Country". Great supporter of my interest in Vexillology and of Flags Australia – Flag Society of Australia.

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Mimmo Cozzolino: Co-Author, "Symbols of Australia", Penguin Books 1980, 1987 editions.

Eleanor Goodwin: Librarian – Pictures Branch, National Library of Australia, Canberra, A.C.T.

Iwona Hetherington: Rights and Permissions Officer, Powerhouse Museum, Ultimo, Sydney, N.S.W.

- 1 Most example images were obtained form the Flags of the World (F.O.T.W.) web site, $\underline{www.fotw.net}$. See list of Illustrations for names of individual graphic artists on F.O.T.W. web links.
- 2 Summary information of the adoption of the Japanese national flag was sourced from "FLAGS Through the Ages and Across the World", by Whitney Smith, Ph.D. (McGraw-Hill 1975).
- 3 Refer to George Poulos' essay, "Rising Sun Equally Important to Australia as the Southern Cross" (condensed version) at http://www.sunburntflag.com.au/page/inspiration.html .
- 4 Sunburnt Country refers to a line written by Australian poet, Dorothea Mackellar (1885-1968), in her 1907 poem, "My Country".

Illustrations

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- Fig.~82-Aboriginal~Flag:~http://www.flagsaustralia.com.au/NationalFlag.html~.~Graphics~by~Ralph~Kelly~(Flags~Australia~2006).
- Fig. 83–88 Australian Army Commander's Car Flags graphics: Ralph Kelly (Pennant Advisory) 2009.
- Fig.~89-90-Australian~Army~Centenary~Banner~photograph~enhanced~and~graphic~image~by;~Ralph~Kelly~(Pennant~Advisory)-2009.~Original~photograph~sourced~from;~http://www.defence.gov.au/media/download/2004/Mar/010304a.cfm~advisory)-2009.~Original~graphic~graph~graph~graphic~grap
- Fig. 91–92 Proposed 1990s Australian Flags: http://www.flagsaustralia.com.au/newflag.html . Graphics by Ralph Kelly (2006) . Information about James Parbery's design, refer to; "*Crux Australis*" ("A Flag for Us All") Vol. 12/4, No. 52, pp. 191-193 (Flag Society of Australia 1996) and his web site, http://www.allaustralianflag.com.au/all-australian-flag-design.html
- Fig. 93 Bondi Beach Flag: http://www.sunburntflag.com.au/page/inspiration.html
- A.P.E.C. (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) Logo: http://www.apec.org/apec/about_apec/apec_trade_marks.html

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