

the flag.

Strict observance of the above regulations must be made.

Ministry of Home Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

This proclamation referred expressly only to the national flag for shipping, as did the Shogunate decree of 1854.

However, this should be understood as being sufficient to proclaim the Hinomaru generally as the national flag, because, at that time, it was necessary only for large ships to display their nationality. The proclamation provided that if a ship sailed abroad without its national flag flying, there would be no help for it under international law if it were treated as a pirate vessel. This is a very interesting point and demonstrates the significance of the national flag.

I have outlined the history and manner of the birth of the Japanese national flag, Hinomaru, which after being flown on ocean-going ships and at overseas trade ports, is now displayed on every national holiday in Japan. The Hinomaru has thus assumed the status of Japan's national emblem both at home and abroad.

Salvaging silk flags

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This story goes back to the days when World War I was coming to an end in the upper Adriatic Sea and the proud and yet undoubted Imperial and Royal Navy of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, under the strain of centrifugal forces, the same as the rest of the Empire, was in a state of hopeless near-disintegration. The political events which were to follow are beyond the scope of this paper and therefore we shall only focus our attention on the fate of some of the historical records which had been left by the Austrian authorities when the naval installations of Pola fell to the Italians on 3 November 1918.

News of what went on in the former A.H. naval base during those convulsive first days are still confusing and at times conflicting, but it is known that a number of significant military insignia were rescued and brought to Venice to be stored away in her ancient Arsenal and later transferred to the Museo Storico Navale which, incidentally was to gain official status in 1919.

Years went by, when in 1964 all the collections were moved into a nearby building which the Most Serene Republic had set up in the 16th Century to be a granary storehouse for her Arsenale and in which it became then possible to place on view most of the Museum's artifacts which up to now for want of space, had forcibly been kept in storage. Amongst these a number of colours, formally originating from the stocks in Pola which were evaluated as having historical significance, were chosen to go on display, but alas when some of them were taken out of their wrappings, we were faced by an alarming sight for it was soon discovered that time had left its marks upon them. In some the fabrics appeared to

be in threads, while in others whole parts were seen to be missing completely.

To prevent any further deteriorations, something had to be done anyhow and therefore a salvaging operation was decided to be attempted by the Museum's experts to whom the appropriate instructions were promptly given.

It should be stated that our previous experiences in this field derived from many sources, but mostly from the knowhow which had been gained during the various Congresses held by the International Association of Museums of Arms and Military History (I.A.M.M.A.M.) and mainly from the meetings which took place at Zürich in 1972. On this occasion we were lucky to visit the Schweizerische Landes Museum's special departement where we were shown how all sorts of tissues in need of repair were skillfully treated.

This said, we will endeavour to explain how the colours above mentioned were saved and restored as much as their conditions could allow it. All three appeared to have been painted by hand on pure silk cloth, each being of different sizes, possibly in conformance to the specifications laid down by the flag-books of their respective countries. We shall now proceed to examine them separately beginning with: Standard N^o I. (m.2.00 x 1.95) The origin of this banner should be traced back to 1649 when the King Joseph of Braganza (1640 - 1655) conferred on the eldest sons of the Kings of Portugal the title of Prince of Brazil and the right to fly an special flag as his personal standard which showed a celestial globe charged by the cross of the Order of Christ. It was only natural that the same symbol should have been revived and passed down to Don Pedro I when he was forced to take refuge in his American colony during the

napoleonic invasion. He was succeeded in 1841 by his son Don Pedro II who later threw in his lot with a revolutionary group that declared Brazil's independence and named him emperor. He had married Archduchess Leopoldina of Absburg and it is highly possible that on his frequent tours in Europe, he may have called at some Austrian naval base and gone aboard one of S.M. men-of-war where, in accordance to international etiquette, honours were given to him and his colours flown at the mainmast. Later in front of growing unrest in Brazil, Don Pedro gave up his throne in 1889 settling down first in Lisbon and then in Paris where he died in 1891.

Unfortunately this banner when unfurled, appeared of having suffered considerably, mainly in the areas of the upper left side which were missing. These parts were not reintegrated with new segments of silk taffeta, but left void, a policy which was strictly observed throughout the various processes of restoration.

Standard N^o 2. (m.290 x 280).

As the preceding one, this also should rank amongst the "courtesy" flags and most likely was to be flown by ships belonging to the Austrian Navy when the French Emperor Louis Napoleon III may have paid a visit either to Trieste or Pola or to some other naval base. It bears in its centre the Imperial Coat of Arms encircled by the symbols of the State which, incidentally were the same as those which had been chosen by Napoleon I. The blue, the white and the red are equally studded with gold bees, a Napoleonic substitute for the heraldic Fleurs de Lys which decorated in various arrangements the banners of the French Royalty. When laid out flat, these colours were found in dreadful condition and looked at first to be beyond any hope of restoration. All the centre section in fact was split up in minute fragments due to the brittleness of the silk tissue where

it had been painted over in gold. However after days of painstaking work, bit by bit as in a huge puzzle, most of the pieces were set back in their original full splendour. It was regrettable however that great part of the red section was lost.

We come now to:

Standard N^o3. (m.2.82 x 2.77).

It is the most important and significant of all three due to the implications which lie deep within its folds, for it shows the Coat of Arms of the Absburgs in all their glory, revealing as well a superb workmanship carried through by an artist skilled one might think in miniature paintings, so much every smallest detail is brought out. We thus believe that it could only have been His Majesty The Emperor Franz Josef's own colours which were flown whenever he may stepped aboard one of his battleships. We were lucky to have found this flag in a fairly good state.

A similar process of restoration was undertaken for these three colours as they were all made out of the same silk material.

Each one was spread out upon sheets of glass placed on a wooden platform so as to have an even surface and at the same time reference lines were stretched across the boards for realignment. To prevent further disintegration of the silk, the whole surface was lightly sprayed over with distilled water and treated with soft cotton to remove dirt or any sorts of pollution, all other forms of washing or dry-cleaning being of course banned. One by one the fragments were then set back in their place and covered over with glass slabs and hence allowed to rest for a while. The brittleness of the gold segments was overcome by touching them up with a solution of trielline and a 5% albuminous liquid. Subsequently small stripes and glued on by means of a light adhesive substance named "Sichezell

Kleister" diluted in distilled water, this to, prevent that pieces which were still detached might fall apart when the flag was to be turned over to take on the special gauze which would firmly and finally assure its integrity. This protective fabric, known as "Stabiltex 4, plain weave, is produced by the Swiss Silk Bolting Cloth, mfg.Co. It comes in in rolls 1.00 m. wide and therefore can only be set on by using a synthetic emulsion named T.B.M - Emulyd (Emuldo ksf.France) which must be spread over on both sides which are to be glued together. However as a precaution, leafs of "policrillanic" paper should previously have been placed under the surface of the flag to prevent that minute portions of the liquid solution which might philter through the silk tissue, could cause the flag to get stuck down to the glass panels upon which it is lying.

At this point the banner is turned over again and the small stripes of thin paper which had been set in during the early stages of the operation, are removed by simply wetting them with a light solution of trielline diluted with 1% of common vinegar, while eventual remaining traces of "Emulyd" glue were removed by mopping them up again with trielline to which a 2% of NH₃ (ammonia) had been added.

Permanent boards (3 cm.thick) made of conglomerate timber, over which a tempera undercoating had been previously spread, were made for each colour to lay upon, these being firmly kept down by means of small brass pegs inserted in the narrow stretch of "Stabiltex" weave which to this purpose, was left sticking out above an along the upper side of the flag.

These colours are now on view hanging from a wall in one of the Venetian Museum's main rooms and are screened by large glass