



FLAG BULLETIN NEWSLETTER • INFOLETTRE DE DRAPEAUX • BOLETÍN INFORMATIVO DE BANDERAS

News and commentary from The Flag Research Center

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DR. SCOT M. GUENTER (1956–2026)

With deep sorrow, The Flag Research Center notes the death of Dr. Scot M. Guenter, one of the preeminent scholars of vexillology, on July 31, 2026. Dr. Guenter was a director and the Whitney Smith Principal Research Scholar at the Center and an overseer of The Trust for Vexillology. He served as the 11th president of the North American Vexillological Association–Association nord-américaine de vexillologie. Among his honors, Dr. Guenter was a Laureate and Fellow of the Fédération internationale des associations vexillologiques and a Whitney Smith Fellow of The Flag Research Center. A fuller tribute will be published at a later date.

NEW WHITNEY SMITH FELLOWS NAMED

Graham M.P. Bartram of the United Kingdom and Bruce B. Berry of South Africa have been named Whitney Smith Fellows for their outstanding contributions to the advancement of the science of vexillology through exceptional stewardship of FIAV. Their selection was publicly announced during the official dinner of the 31st International Congress of Vexillology in Paris. Bartram served as FIAV Secretary-General for Congresses from 1999 to 2026. Dr. Berry began his current service as FIAV Secretary-General in 2019 and served as Secretary-General for Congresses from 1997 to 1999.

GHERARDI DAVIS PRIZE AWARDED

Dr. Jeroen ter Brugge, curator of maritime collections at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, received the Gherardi Davis Prize for his paper “Flagbooks (17th–19th Century) and Their Appearance, Use, and Purposes” delivered at ICV 31. His paper was noteworthy for its attention to detail, its careful yet accessible explanations of the material culture, and its consideration of future research potential. The prize was announced and awarded at the ICV 31 official dinner.

2026 FELLOWS LUNCHEON HELD

The Center hosted a luncheon for its research scholars in honor of the Whitney Smith Fellows at L’Escudella during ICV 31. Directors Charles A. Spain and Hugh L. Brady provided an update on the publication of the *Proceedings* of HemisFlag (ICV 28) held in 2019 in San Antonio, Texas, which is expected by December 2026, as well as an overview of the Center’s planned activities for 2027. Dr. Berry was presented with his Fellow insignia at the luncheon.

2027 NORTH AMERICAN COLLOQUIUM IN VEXILLOLOGY ANNOUNCED

In 2027 The Flag Research Center observes the 65th anniversary of its founding in 1962. To honor its Sapphire Jubilee, the Center will hold the North American Colloquium in Vexillology on February 5, 2027. The colloquium will be held in Austin, Texas, and online to accommodate the expected interest. Invited vexillologists will present papers and host discussions that explore the state of the field and its future. Additional details, including registration instructions, will be announced later this year.

REVIVING THE *FLAG BULLETIN NEWSLETTER*

As The Flag Research Center prepares for its 65th anniversary in February 2027, we note the need for an inexpensive and efficient form of communication with vexillologists and friends of the Center. While most organizations would create an e-mail newsletter, which can be designed and sent at practically no cost, we decided to buck the digital trend.

Our thought is that people are inundated with e-mails daily, and it's increasingly likely that e-mails may be ignored or flagged (pun intended) as spam. It's easy to include too much information in e-mails, given there are no physical restraints on content. There are numerous technical issues associated with e-mail; it requires constant attention to ensure they display consistently and correctly across devices and the tasks of managing lists, addressing security and upgrades, and remaining compliant with digital privacy laws across numerous jurisdictions can quickly become overwhelming.

So we decided to revive the *Flag Bulletin Newsletter*, published from 1967 to 1973 as a supplement to *The Flag Bulletin*. As originally conceived by Dr. Whitney Smith, the *Newsletter* was "to present as quickly and briefly as possible the news of interest to vexillologists" at a time when typesetting, printing, and mailing the full journal was a months-long endeavor.

That original purpose is now met through the use of listservs and social media. We will now issue the *Newsletter* to let our friends in the vexillological community know what we are doing, what we're reading and researching, and what we think about matters of interest in the field. Thus, we seek to provide a meaningful review of those activities and developments we consider significant in advancing vexillology.

The *Newsletter*, containing Center news and short items of vexillological interest, will be printed four times per year and distributed without charge to the Center's mailing list of FIAV member organizations and institutions, as well as individual vexillologists. To be both useful and informative, we welcome items of interest for possible inclusion in the *Newsletter* so that it is informative, interesting, and perhaps occasionally, entertaining.

Under Dr. Whitney Smith, The Flag Research Center was primarily a consulting service for commercial enterprises. He often lamented that customer demands deprived him of the time needed to engage in the more creative acts of inquiry and scholarship. The Center's current leadership has spent the post-pandemic period considering its purpose now that the consulting business has ended.

The Flag Research Center advances vexillology -- the scholarly study of flags -- by supporting and encouraging scholarship in the field. The Center works best by providing an organizational base for research and study in vexillology and allied subjects with a targeted publications program, research encouragement, and recognition of scholarly achievement. As the original intellectual giants that fostered vexillology through its first 50 years have largely departed from the scene, institutions focused on fostering learned study are needed now more than ever. Restarting publication of the *Newsletter* is directly connected to the work of building these organizational bases by reporting the Center's achievements towards this purpose.

The Center's work will now continue in a thoughtful way, tailored for the 21st century and designed to advance Dr. Smith's vision and goals for this field -- and this *Newsletter* will be a small, but critical, component of that work.