

Flag Guide and Notes

British Flag

The British flag, or the “Union Jack,” is an artistic representation of Ireland, England, Wales, and Scotland existing under the British authoritative entity. The “red cross on a white ground” represents England’s patron saint, St. George. The “diagonal white cross on a blue ground” is the saltire of Scotland’s patron saint, St. Andrew. The “diagonal red cross on a white ground” represents the saltire of Ireland’s patron saint, St. Patrick.

From 1763 to 1776, Parliament, King George III, royal governors, and colonists clashed over regulations of trade, representation, and taxation. Despite the growing unrest, many Americans perceived war and independence as a last resort. The Revolutionary War was primarily fought between the Americans and the British.

Source: [“Union Jack”](#) by the Royal Family



Spanish Flag

The Spanish “Cross of Burgundy” is “a red saltire raguly on a white field.” This flag is reminiscent of “St. Andrew’s cross” and was instituted by Charles I, the son of Isabella and Ferdinand’s daughter Juana and her French husband, Philip, Duke of Burgundy. The flag calls upon St. Andrew because the Burgundy region’s patron saint was St. Andrew. Also known as the “Spanish Colonial Flag,” this flag flew on Spanish colonial ships from the 1500s through 1785.

Before joining the war on the American side, the Spanish watched and waited, receiving overtures from both the French and the British to enter or not enter the war. Eventually, Spain brokered a deal with France to enter the war on its side (no formal treaty was signed with the United States), adding some 57 ships of the line to the allied fleet. Pressure on the British and military and financial assistance were paramount, as the While America fought for its independence and freedom from the British Crown, France, Spain, the



Dutch and other powers seized the opportunity to strike a weakened or distracted Great Britain.

Source: "[Spanish Flag](#)" by the National Park Service

French Flag

This flag, called the "French 23" or "Fleur 23," is most known for 1590-1790 ceremonies. There was no standardized number of the fleur-de-lis symbols on the flags.

During the French and Indian War (1754-1763), French and British troops fought in the North American colonies and Europe. France lost, and in the following years, both the French government and the public eagerly looked for a way to avenge their loss and to erode British power. The French rebuilt their navy, reorganized and modernized their army, and strengthened their diplomatic connections in preparation for the next war. As colonial resistance to British authority gained traction in the 1760s and early 1770s the French saw the opportunity that they had been waiting for. During the struggle for American independence, France provided the money, troops, armament, military leadership, and naval support that tipped the balance of military power and paved the way for the Continental Army's ultimate victory.



Source: "[French fleur-de-lis aka 'Lilly Banner'](#)" by Acadian.org

American Flag

The [first "official" flag](#) of the 13 colonies was known as "the Continental Colors" or "Grand Union Flag." This flag is decorated with the pre-Irish inclusion of the Union Jack, surrounded by white and red stripes numbering 13. The first time this was used was by [John Paul Jones](#) on the *Alfred* on December 3, 1775. This flag was likely used during the activities at Charlestown's Prospect Hill on January 1, 1776, by the army of George Washington.

Sources:

["Our flag - "The grand union" excerpt from a book written by Barlow Cumberland ... Brookline, Mass. 1926."](#)

["The Grand Union Flag"](#) by the United States District Court, District of Puerto Rico



American "Betsy Ross Flag"

The history of this flag lives in on American folklore and mythos, allegedly created by Elizabeth Griscom- "[Betsy Ross](#)"- of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The legend goes that [George Washington](#), [Robert Morris](#), and George Ross came to Betsy Ross's house to discuss the design of a national flag. The original design had six-sided stars representing the thirteen colonies on a field of blue with red and white stripes. She suggested a five-pointed star. The three men, amazed at how quickly she could cut the five-pointed stars, assigned her with the task of sewing the flag. This flag was created in June 1776.

Source: ["Short History of the United States Flag"](#)



Hessian Flag (not included in Traveling Trunk)

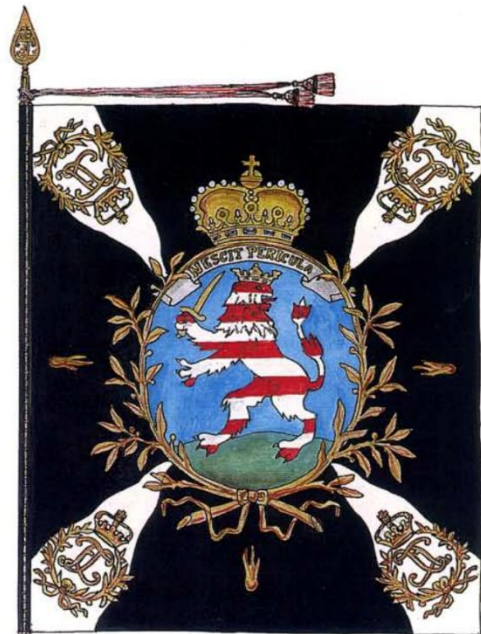
The [Hessian](#) flag is generally taller on the mounted side, generally 55 inches tall and 45-47 inches long. They are made of three silk pieces, 18.5 inches in width with a dark blue oval shape in the middle. The flag is a mirror image of itself on either side. The Hessian flag is modeled after Prussian influence. Hessian flags varied by color, but all included a crest with a white and red striped lion wearing a crown, with “NESCIT PERICULA” written in Latin, which can be interpreted to mean “Ignorant of Fear” and “[They] know no fear.” On all the Hessian flags used between 1776-1783 in North America, they all have four gold script Prussian markings in each corner.

In the American Revolution, the Hessians were a professional band of German auxiliaries who arrived to quash the rebellion. They were leased out from their home region of Hesse-Kassel—now part of modern Germany—and used by Britain to augment their small standing army. In 1776, 18,000 Hessian troops were sent to [Staten Island](#). During the war, 5,000 were killed or injured, and 3,000 stayed in the United States after the war's end. Because of their circumstances as being rented by Britain, the Hessians were viewed as violent mercenaries who were willing to fight for the highest bidder.



Figure 1 “Leibfahne of Regiment Erbprinz. As noted in text, it is not entirely clear whether small crowns and cyphers were always gold or followed the color of the uniform metal. It seems reasonable that the spear point would be silver or gold to match the regimental metal in buttons and cap plate.

Source: [“Hessian Flags in the American War for Independence, 1776-1783”](#) by Steven W. Hill



Gadsden Flag (not included in Traveling Trunk)

The Gadsden Flag was created in 1775 by Christopher Gadsden, used by the Continental [Marines](#) and those who wanted to make a point of illustrating their demand for independence. It is a yellow background with a rattlesnake in a bed of grass, with the words, "DONT TREAD ON ME."

Source: [Encyclopedia Britannica](#)



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★