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## THE FLAG OF THE PUTNAM PHALANX



The Putnam Phalanx was named after General Israel Putnam of the American Revolution and was formed in Hartford in 1858. The men were clothed in the jaunty dark blue uniforms that were a replica of the uniform worn by Israel Putnam's men in the Revolutionary War, which made them a very popular marching group from their inception through the 20th century.

The Putnam Phalanx was originally formed to give a hearty welcome home to the returning

United States Minister to Russia, Thomas H. Seymour, a local boy who had made good. Seymour was the "Hero of Chapultepec" as a Colonel in the Mexican War and also a Congressman and Governor of Connecticut before being appointed by President Franklin Pierce as Minister to Russia. But after that event passed it was decided to make the unit permanent for these reasons stated in the 1900 Connecticut Magazine article:

"its name, uniform and spirit

so aroused associations of times historic, that it culminated in the organization of a command, the purpose of which was to commemorate and perpetuate the glorious past of Israel Putnam and other sons of the American Revolution."

An engraved print of the original officers of the unit was made by Bingham, Dodd & Co. of Hartford in 1861, just before the Civil War really got underway. The print shows the

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Detail of the flag and portraits of (left to right) Jarvis B. Crosby, Paymaster, Horace Goodwin, Major Commandant, and Otis Smith, Color Sergeant.


leading men of Hartford in detailed portraits with their signatures underneath. They look very serious about their civic duties, honoring the noble and courageous heritage of Connecticut arms. The print has

a wonderful historic setting, the troops are standing in Hartford with the historic Old State House at their backs and their armory on Main Street and a church steeple in the background. In addition their com-

pany colors are illustrated.

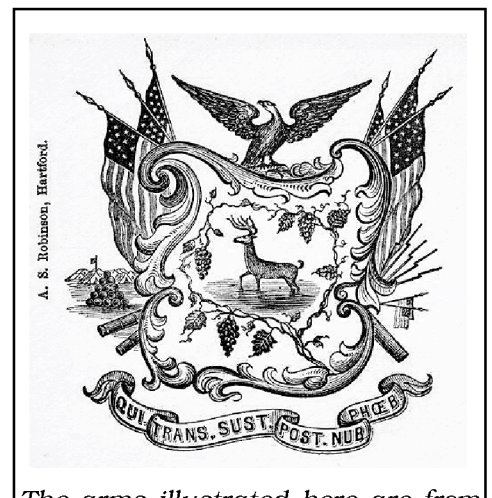
The flag is blue and bears a portrait of General Israel Putnam, the founding date of the Phalanx (August 13, 1858), two cherubs, and the motto associated with Putnam, "He dared to lead where any dared to follow." A photograph made in 1895 of the color guard is the only illustration found that shows the obverse and it would appear it is a mirror image of the reverse, likely with the lettering reading correctly.




A 19<sup>th</sup> Century engraved card illustrating the Putnam Phalanx Colors. 

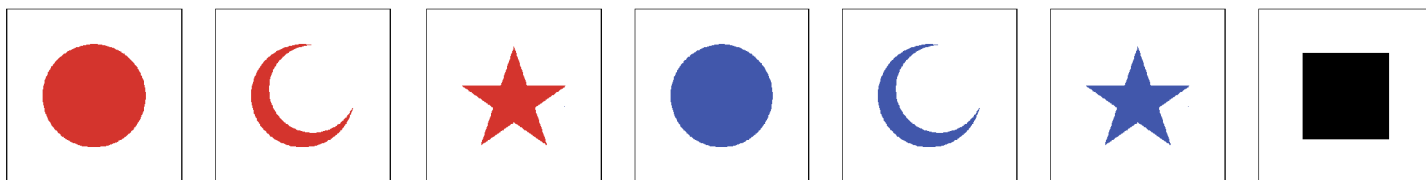


The color guard of the Putnam Phalanx marching in Atlanta, Georgia in 1895.



The arms illustrated here are from a Civil War envelope and they show the hart crossing the ford surrounded by grapevines. There are two mottos, that of Connecticut and that of Hartford. US Flags and the Eagle complete the scene. 





(Left to right) #1. Higher Temperature, #2. Lower Temperature, #3. Stationary Temperature, #4. General Rain or Snow, #5. Calm or Fair Weather, #6. Local Rain or Snow, and #7. Cold Wave.

# US WEATHER FORECAST FLAGS 1881-1887

The United States Signal Service (a department of the Army) storm warning network system formally began operation on October 23, 1871 with flag displays at eight ports on the Great Lakes and sixteen ports on the Atlantic Seaboard. A cautionary signal was flown “whenever the winds are expected to be as strong as twenty-five miles per hour, and to continue so for several hours, within a radius of one hundred miles from the station.”

Beginning in 1873, weather forecasts were distributed to thousands of rural post offices (by local Signal Service offices) for display as “Farmers’ Bulletins” in front of post office buildings. This dissemination method continued until 1881 when local signal flags replaced the bulletins. The flags were large (for example, the cold-wave flag measured six-by-eight feet and was white with a black center of two feet square), and were displayed over post office buildings. By the end of 1886, display flags were available at 290 cities and towns.

The flags in use 1881-1887 were illustrated by the Travelers Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut in 1887. The brochure states “How to Memorize the Flags—Red, the color of fire, means amount of heat; blue, the color of the sky, amount of moisture; and in each case that figure containing most surface means most in quantity. Thus the red moon means much heat—rising temperature; red star, less heat—stationary temperature; red crescent, least heat—lower temperature. The blue moon is much moisture—general rain or snow; blue star, less moisture—local rain or snow; blue crescent, least moisture—fair weather.

ture; red star, less heat—stationary temperature; red crescent, least heat—lower temperature. The blue moon is much moisture—general rain or snow; blue star, less moisture—local rain or snow; blue crescent, least moisture—fair weather.”

Weather forecasts indicated by flags covered a period of 24 hours. They were read from top of staff downward. When strung horizontally, they began with the end showing the flag with the red design.

weather, and when not displayed, stationary weather.

No. 4, white flag with black center (cold wave flag), sudden fall in temperature; this signal is usually ordered at least twenty-four hours in advance of the cold wave. It is not displayed unless a temperature of forty-five degrees or less is expected, nor is flag No. 3 ever displayed with it.

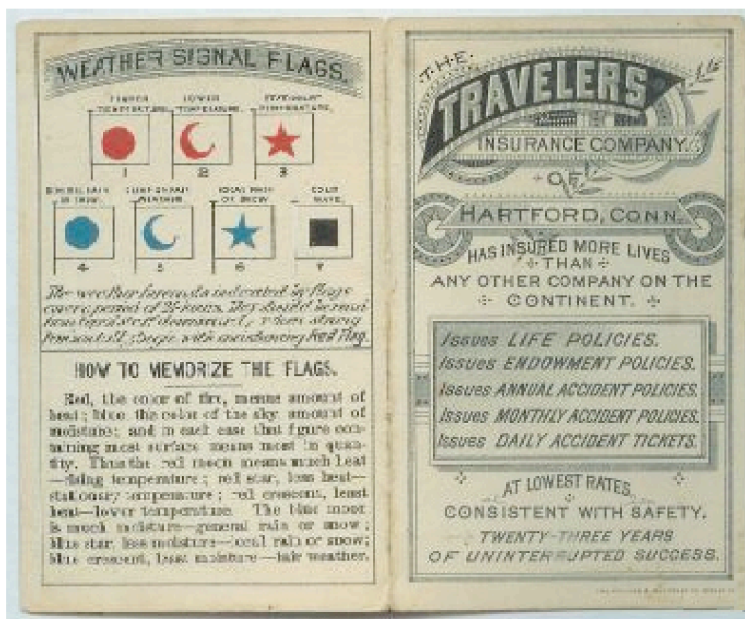
No. 5, white over blue stripes, means local rain or snow; with 3 above it means with higher temperature; and with 3 below it means lower temperature.

A red flag with a black center indicates that a storm of marked violence is expected.

More information on these flags is available on the NAVA web site, “When Flags Could Talk”, <http://www.nava.org/Flag%20Information/articles/storm/storm.htm>.

On July 1, 1891, the weather stations, telegraph lines, apparatus, and personnel (military people who were honorably discharged from the War Department and were now civilians) were transferred from the Signal Corps’

Division of Telegrams and Reports for the Benefit of Commerce to the Department of Agriculture’s new civilian Weather Bureau. The weather forecast flags fell out of use when radio began to broadcast this information. The storm warning flags were also abandoned but recently the small craft, storm warning, and hurricane warning signals have been revived.



The flag designs, except for the cold wave flag, were changed on and after March 1, 1887 as follows:

No. 1, white flag, clear or fair weather, no rain.

No. 2, blue flag, rain or snow.

No. 3, black triangular flag, refers to temperature, and above Numbers 1 or 2 indicates warmer weather; below Numbers 1 or 2 indicates colder

# MINUTES OF THE NEVA MEETING HELD AUGUST 4, 2007 AT FORT INDEPENDENCE IN SOUTH BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## ATTENDING

President Carl Gurtman, Secretary/Treasurer Dave Martucci, Robert Lloyd Wheelock, Tom Hale.

## CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 1:40 p.m. by President Gurtman.

## MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

MOTION by Wheelock, SECONDED by Gurtman to accept the minutes of the 11/26/06 meeting as written and ACCEPTED by acclamation.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer reported there we had \$575.88 in the checking account as of 8/4/07. On a MOTION by Wheelock, SECONDED by Gurtman, the Treasurer's report was ACCEPTED by acclamation.

## NEW BUSINESS

It was noted that we have received word that Joe Policastro, a long-time member, has passed away. President Gurtman agreed to write a note of

condolence to the family.

A photo sent in by Bob Koeller showing the historic flag replicas he displays on his business for the 4th of July was passed around.

Tom Hale was absolved of his 2006 delinquency because of his help in organizing meetings.

Tom was also thanked for the fine refreshments he provided for the meeting.

The election of President was postponed to the next meeting.

A discussion on what to do about the web site was held.

## ROUND TABLE

Robert Lloyd Wheelock described the local copy of FOTWW that he has installed on his home computer. He has Flag Handbook web pages in development. He showed some new 4"x 6" flags he recently purchased: England, Scotland, Wales, Litchenstein, New Jersey, Delaware, and the new Georgia State Flag.

Dave Martucci showed some flags and books recently acquired. He

passed out a sheet illustrating US Flags recently sold at auctions.

Tom Hale showed some flags he recently collected. One was white with a green cross, but he is unsure what flag it is. He also showed pictures of Massachusetts Municipal flags.

Carl Gurtman discussed Nautical flag etiquette and other flag issues. His article on Newfoundland flags was published in FlagsCan.

## NEXT MEETING

Will be held concurrent with NAVA 41 in Glastonbury, CT. We will have a display table and it was authorized to have the Treasurer make arrangements and pay for this. We will have some back issues of the newsletter made up and maybe some new brochures. It was authorized to spend no more than \$150 on this.

## ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Dave Martucci

Secretary/Treasurer

The ***New England Journal of Vexillology*** is published irregularly by the New England Vexillological Association, Dave Martucci, Editor. Annual membership dues in NEVA is \$10 for a single class of membership and this fee includes a subscription to the *Journal*. In addition to the print version, there is an online edition of the *Journal* found at URL <http://www.midcoast.com/~martucci/neva/nejv.html>. The editor can be contacted by writing to:

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The views of individual authors are their own and do not reflect the views of NEVA.

## SPECIAL OFFER FOR NAVA 41

Attention NAVA Members! The first five new NEVA members who join during NAVA 41 will receive a free copy of the booklet "New Hampshire's Hall of Flags: Preserving a Legacy" as a benefit of membership.

Annual dues are only \$10 per year

and it includes a subscription to the *New England Journal of Vexillology*.

## NEXT MEETING AT NAVA 41

The next meeting of NEVA will be held at **7:30 p.m. on Friday, October 12th, 2007** at **NAVA 41**, Hilton Garden Inn, Glastonbury, CT. Come prepared for the round table.

