

# The Cross of Saint George



A Sign in the Church  
and the World

George N. Cannizzaro  
Cardinal Custom Heraldry

St. George's Episcopal Church

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## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

- ❖ Native of the Middle East, born late 3<sup>rd</sup> Century
- ❖ Served with distinction in the Roman army
- ❖ Came to faith in Jesus Christ
- ❖ Suffered martyrdom during the persecution by Diocletian



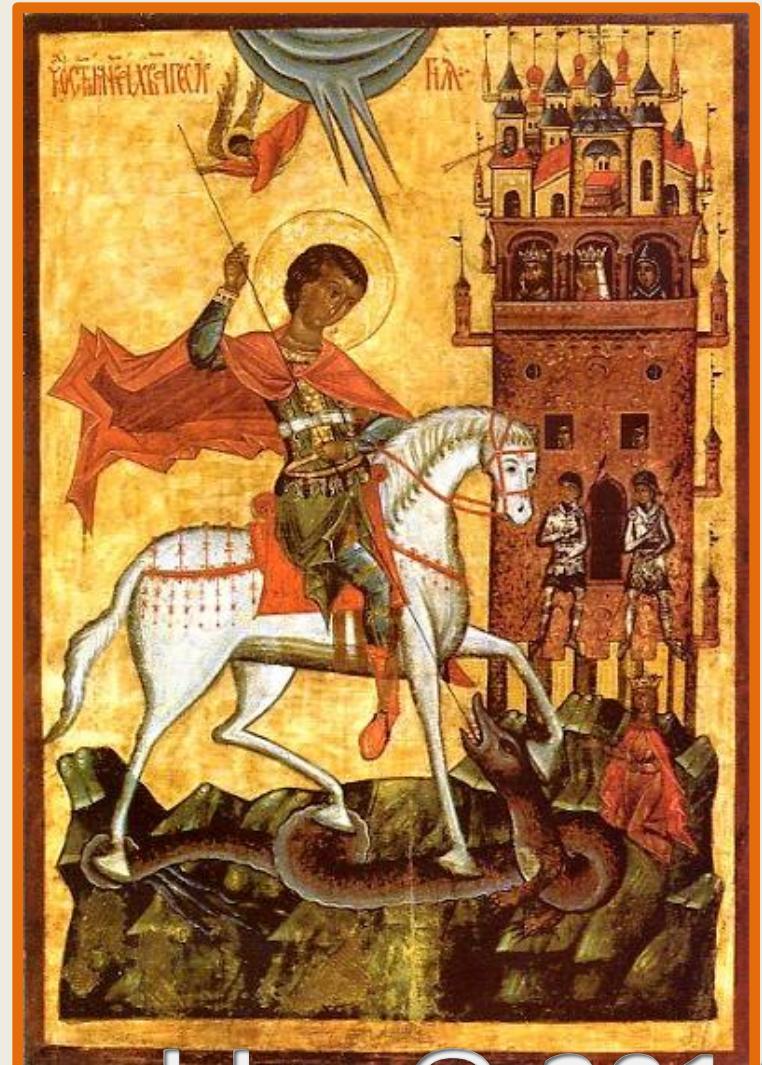
# The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World



- ❖ *In Hoc Signo Vinces*: Constantine's vision of the cross in 312 would change the course of history
- ❖ Legend says Constantine instructed his legions to paint the cross of Christ on their shields before going into battle

## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

- ❖ George's cult is flourishing in the Near East by the 5<sup>th</sup> Century
- ❖ His legend and prowess grow, to include the story of having sleighed a great beast
- ❖ Devotion to George spreads to Western realms in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century



## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

- ❖ The first Crusaders learn of Eastern soldier-saints and adopt them as patrons, assigning them liveries



- ❖ Richard I of England, *Coeur de lion*, takes St. George as his own patron for the Third Crusade (c 1190) and he and his forces bear St. George's emblem, called the “bloody cross”

## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

- ❖ By the mid 1300s, George has become the preeminent patron saint of England:
  - ❖ English ships, soldiers, and kings continued to war under George's cross following the Crusades
  - ❖ The advent of heraldry in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century saw George's saintly arms confirmed as a red cross on a silver field
  - ❖ George's noble pedigree and legendary feats of bravery made him a favorite hero in the age of chivalry



## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World



- ❖ For over 900 years, St. George's cross has been inextricably linked with English history and identity

## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

- ❖ By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century St. George's cross had permeated virtually all aspects of institutional and cultural life in England, to include the newly-established state church
- ❖ The close relationship between England's national patron and the roots of the Anglican tradition remains quite visible in the modern "Compass Rose" Seal of the Anglican Communion



## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

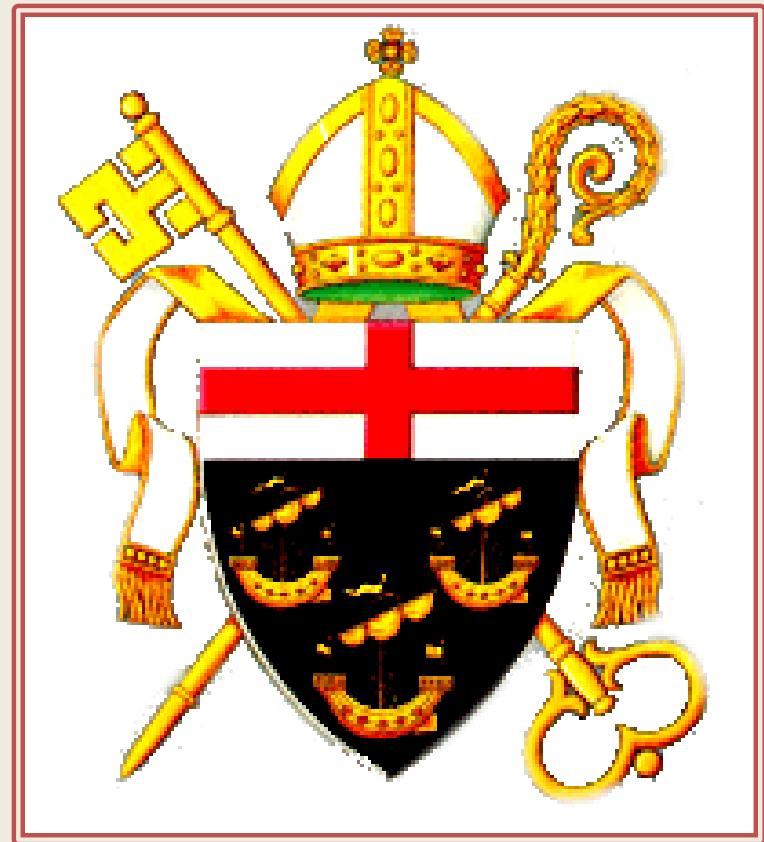
- ❖ As English explorers and colonists set out for worlds unknown to them, St. George's cross went with them



- ❖ When John Smith approached shore on 26 April 1607 near the site of what would be Jamestown Colony, it was under the red-cross banner

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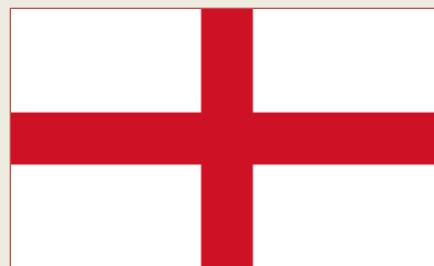
- ❖ Our diocesan arms depict the cross of St. George and the three Jamestown ships: *Susan Constant*, *Godspeed* and *Discovery*
- ❖ These symbols call to mind both our history and our present, wherein we remain on a journey together with Anglicans worldwide and all people of good will



# The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World



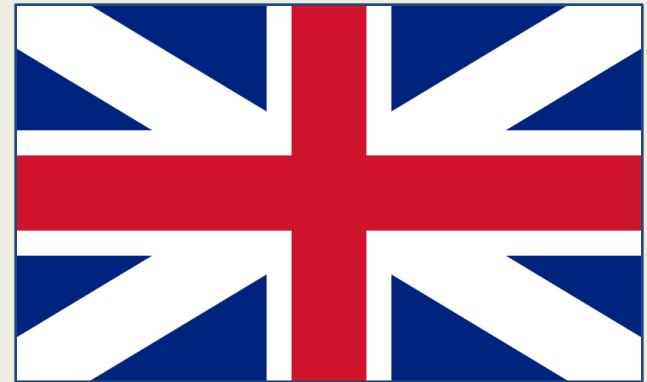
*Scotland, under the protection  
and banner of St. Andrew's Cross*



*England, under the protection  
and banner of St. George's Cross*

# The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

*Scotland, St. Andrew's Cross*



*Union Flag of 1606,  
also called  
“The King’s Colours”*



*England, St. George's Cross*

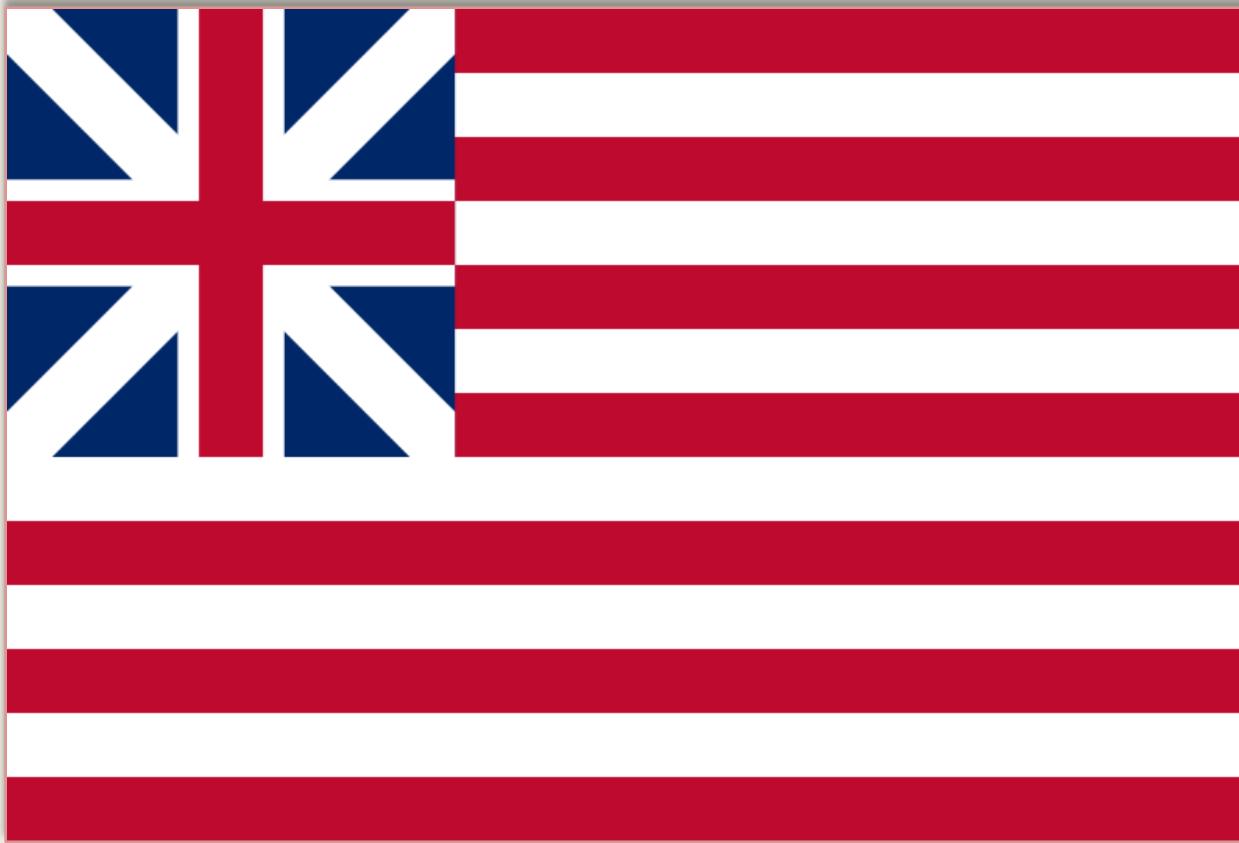
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## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World



- ❖ The Jamestown ships arrived in the New World flying both the English flag and the King's Colours

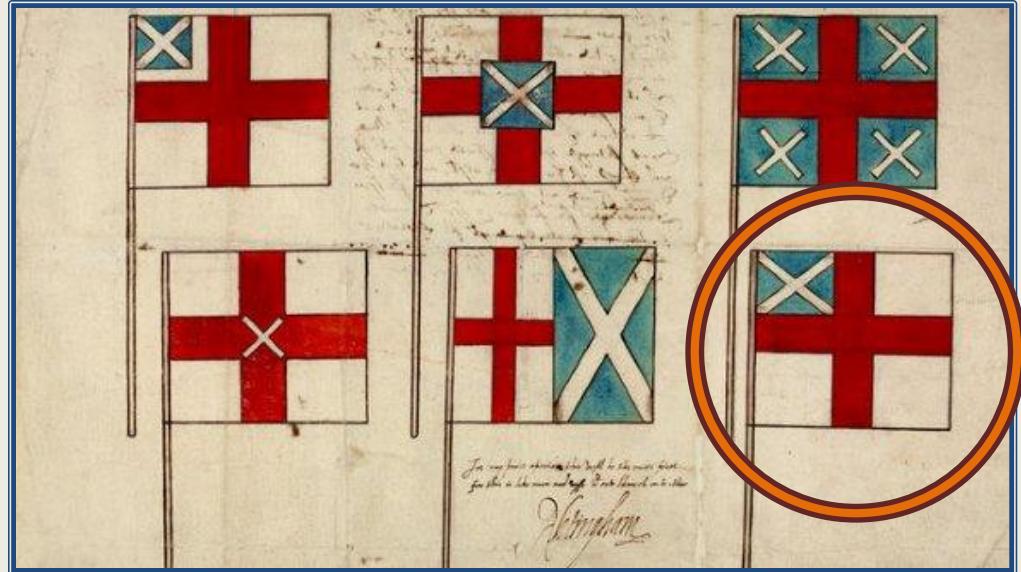
## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World



- ❖ First raised on 3 December 1775, the Grand Union Flag is considered to be the first national flag of the United States

## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

- ❖ There were several proposed designs for the British Union Flag of 1606



- ❖ The particular arrangement of the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George circled prefigures the coat of arms of the American Episcopal Church, which would not exist for another 178 years

## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

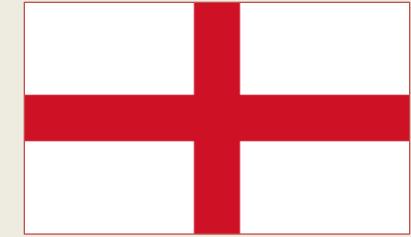
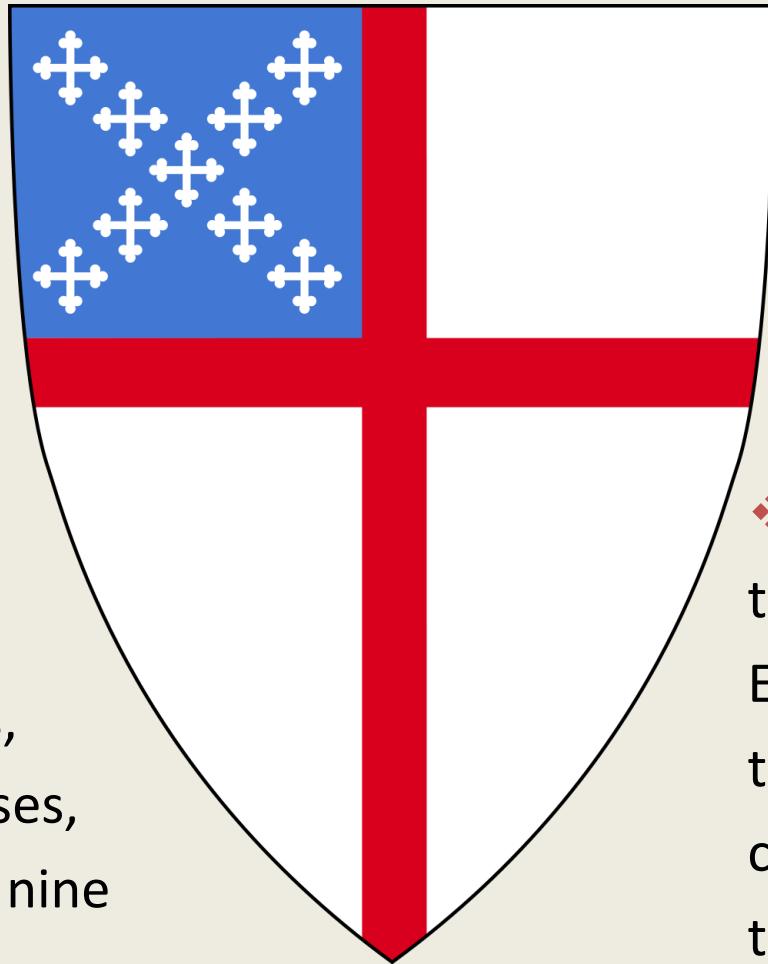


- ❖ In 1784, American priest Samuel Seabury was ordained a bishop in Scotland to avoid taking the Oath of Fealty to the King, and so became the first bishop of the fledgling Episcopal Church

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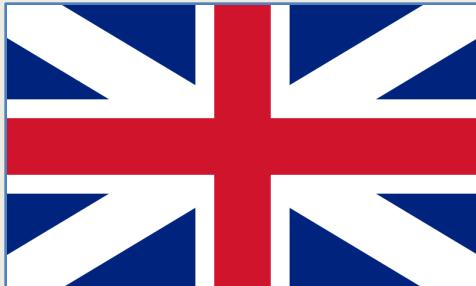
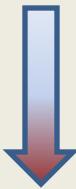
❖ Seabury's ordination at Aberdeen is recalled in St. Andrew's cross, formed by nine crosses, which represent the nine American dioceses in existence at that time



❖ Having cast off the Crown's authority, Episcopalians elected to include St. George's cross in the arms of their Church as a sign of its Anglican heritage

# The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

*Ireland, under the protection  
and banner of St. Patrick*



*The Union Flag of 1606*



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## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World



*The Union Flag of 1801, commonly called “The Union Jack”, remains the national flag of the United Kingdom*

## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

- ❖ As part of the Union Jack, St. George's cross would journey to the ends of the earth and fly over all seven continents during more than a century of British imperial expansion

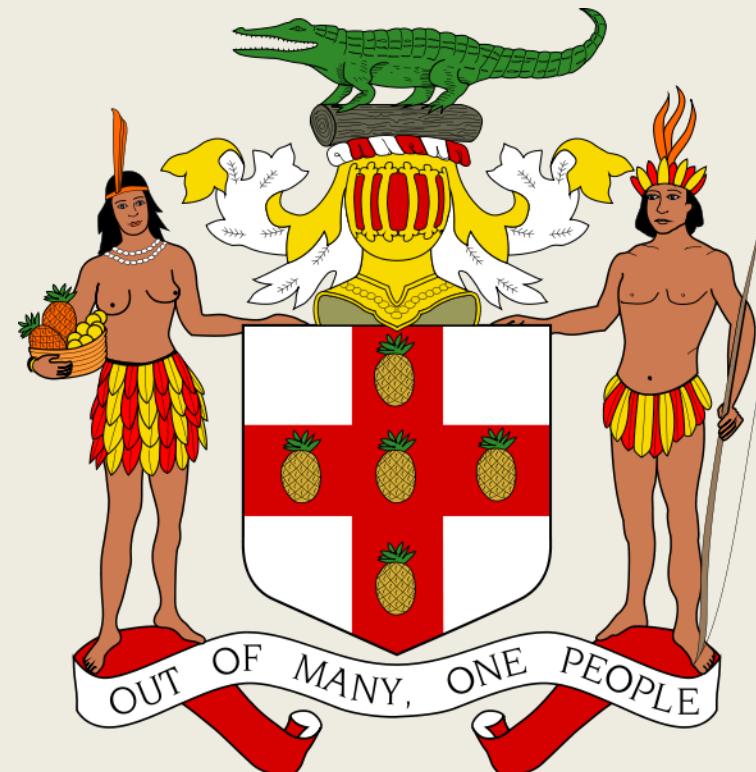


## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

- ❖ In many instances, St. George's cross was combined with flora, fauna and cultural symbols indigenous to these regions

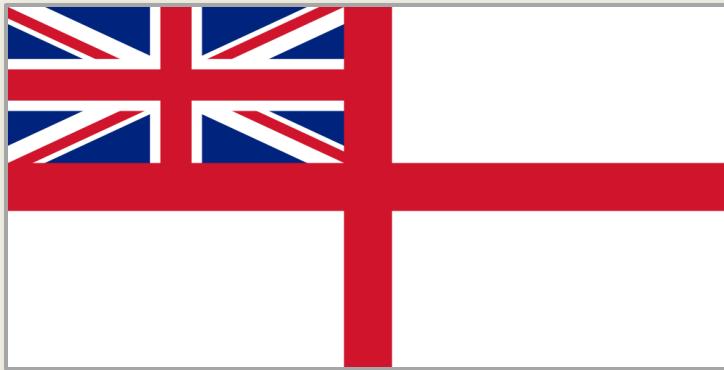


*The Provincial Arms of Manitoba*

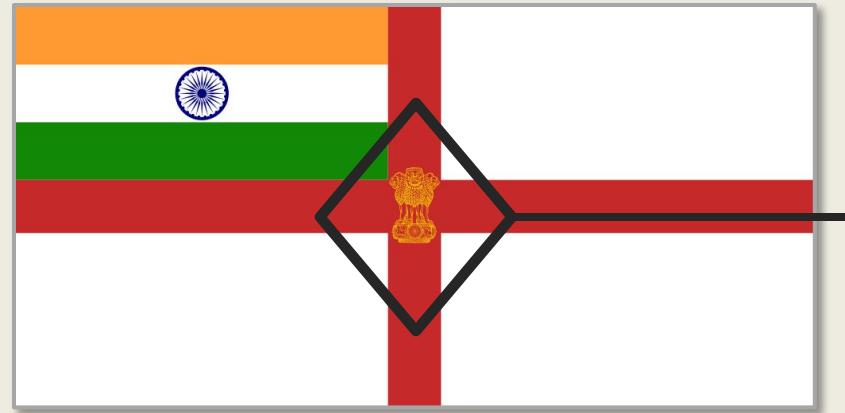


*The National Arms of Jamaica*

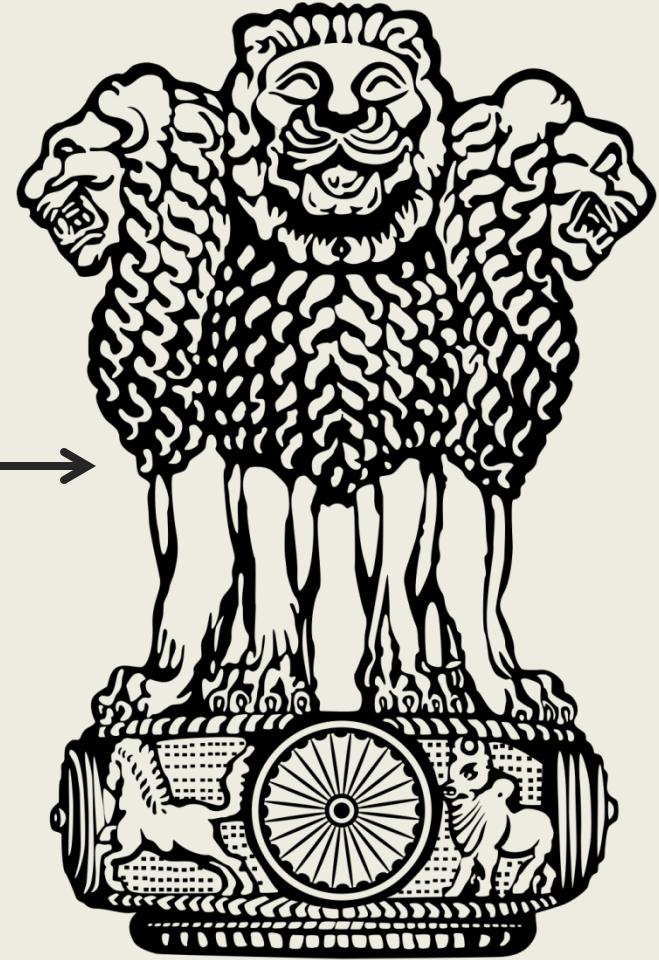
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*Flag of the British Royal Navy*

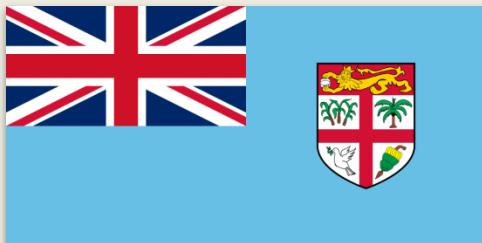


*Flag of the Indian Navy*



*Capital of Emperor  
Ashoka (c. 250 BC)*

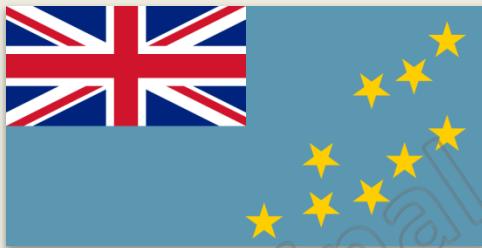
## National Flags



Fiji

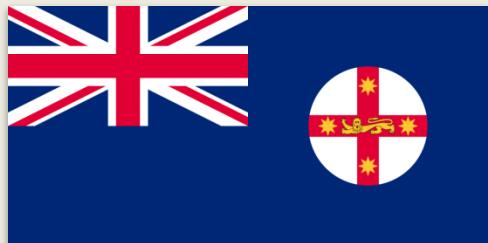


New Zealand



Tuvalu

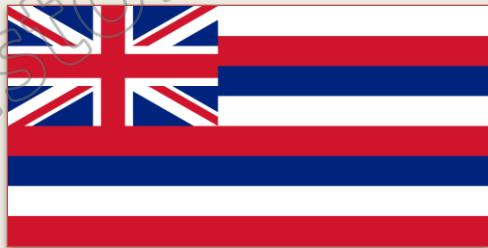
## Sub-National Flags



New South Wales (Australia)



Ontario (Canada)



Hawaii (USA)

## Territorial Flags



British Antarctic Territory



British Indian Ocean Territory



British Virgin Islands

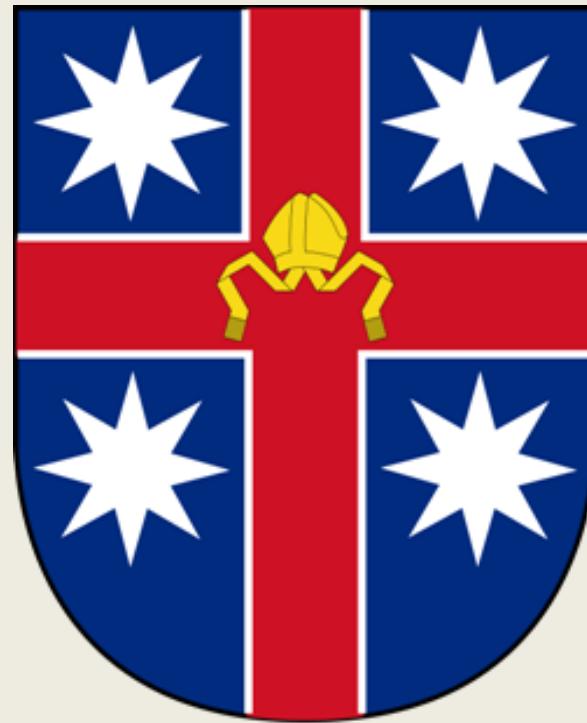
Today, St. George's cross can be found throughout the world in national and sub-national flags of former British colonies, as well as in flags of territories that remain under British administration

## The Cross of Saint George: A Sign in the Church and the World

- ❖ St. George's cross is also found in the heraldry of Churches throughout the Anglican Communion



*Arms of the Church of Canada*



*Arms of the Church of Australia*