

# Symbols of Antarctica

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper describes the flags, arms and emblems of the British Antarctic Territory, the Argentinean Southern Territories, the French Southern and Antarctic Territories, the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, and the Australian Antarctic Territory.

*The illustrations for this paper appear on Plate 60.*

## 1 Introduction

The so-called 'White Continent,' Antarctica, is the only continent which is not permanently inhabited owing to the harshness of the weather. Activities in Antarctica are regulated by the Antarctica Treaty of 1959 which has been signed by 42 nations. Although a number of nations have made territorial claims in Antarctica, the validity of such claims is not fully recognized under international law. Those national sectors of Antarctica which have symbols of their own form the subject of this paper.

## 2 British Antarctic Territory

The British Antarctic Territory lies within the Antarctic Treaty area. The Territory, created a British colony on 3 March 1962, consists of all islands and territories between longitudes 20 and 80 West, and south of latitude 60 South. This area encompasses the South Orkney Islands, the South Shetland Islands, the Antarctic Peninsula and areas south and east of the Weddell Sea. With the island of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (now forming a separate territory) this area was constituted by the United Kingdom as the Falkland Islands Dependencies in 1908. There is no permanent population, but scientists and support personnel (59 in the Antarctic winter of 1992) staff the British Antarctic Survey stations.

The Falkland Islands Dependencies were granted arms by royal warrant on 11 March 1952 (Fig. 1):

**Arms:** *Per fess wavy Barry, wavy of six argent and azure, and argent, on a pile gules, a torch enflamed proper.*

**Supporters:** *In dexter a lion or and in sinister an emperor penguin proper upon a compartment divided per pale and representing in dexter a grassy mount and in sinister an ice floe.*

**Motto:** *Research and Discovery*

This coat of arms was the first territorial symbol to be used in Antarctica and was transferred to the British Antarctic Territory on the 1st of August 1963 with the addition of a helm, crest and mantling (Fig. 2):

**Mantling:** *In dexter or doubled gules and in sinister argent doubled azure.*

**Crest:** *Upon a wreath of the colours of the mantling a representation of the research ship Discovery.*

The flag for the vessels of the National Environmental Research Council was introduced on 30 May 1969 by Royal Warrant. This flag is a Blue Ensign with the arms of the British Antarctic Territory in the fly (Fig. 3). Dr William Crampton of The Flag Institute in Chester proposed a flag for the British Antarctic Territory which is white with a canton of the Union Jack and an emperor penguin proper in the fly. This suggestion has not been implemented.

## 3 Southern Territories of Argentina

These territories are officially designated Provincia Tierra del Fuego, Antártida y Islas del Atlántico Sur (Province of Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica and Islands of the South Atlantic). This area includes the Malvinas/Falkland Islands, the subject of a long territorial dispute between Britain and Argentina which culminated in the Falklands War in 1982.

The first arms of the Argentinean Antarctic Territory were introduced during the International Geophysical Year (1957-1958). These arms were depicted on a first-day cover dated 12 July 1958. The arms (Fig. 4) are depicted azure (of the shade of the Argentinean national flag) with a fess argent. In chief is a cartographic depiction of the territory argent flanked in dexter by an anchor argent with a sun or and phrygian cap gules and in sinister by the stars of the Southern Cross argent. In base is a depiction of an iceberg and a sailing ship upon icy waters. Above the shield is a rising sun in its glory or. The supporters are two penguins proper standing on a compartment of ice. On the compartment is a scroll of the Argentinean national colours.

The current arms of this territory (Fig. 5) were devised by Rosana Gimenez and introduced on 24 December 1992. The arms are depicted on an oval shield surrounded by a flaming glory (aurora) gules. On a chief light blue a demi-sun with ten rays or rising over a mountain sable capped with snow argent. On a fess light blue and sable is a depiction of the wavy waters of the Atlantic Ocean. In base are four penguins argent and sable standing on the ice argent. The supporter is an Albatross gules. This territory has no flag of its own.

#### 4 French Southern and Antarctic Territories

The French Southern and Antarctic Territories (Terres Australes et Antarctiques Françaises) form an Overseas Territory administrated under special statute. The territory comprises Adelie Land, a narrow segment of the mainland of Antarctica and several islands (the Kerguelen and Crozet Archipelagos, St. Paul and Amsterdam) in the Southern Indian Ocean.

Under the terms of legislation approved by the French Government on the 6th of August 1955, the French Southern and Antarctic Territories were placed under the authority of a chief administrator responsible to the Ministry of Overseas Departments and Territories. A territorial decree of 20 October 1956 divided the territory into four districts: 1) Kerguelen, 2) New Amsterdam and St. Paul, 3) Crozet and 4) Adelie Land.

The coat of arms of the territory (Fig. 6) was devised in the late 1950s by Mrs S. Gautier. The shield is quarterly azure and argent. The quarters are charged as follows: 1) a silver Kerguelen cabbage (for Kerguelen), 2) a black lobster (for New Amsterdam and St. Paul, 3) the head and neck of a royal Penguin sable and argent, crowned or (for Crozet Island) and 4) a silver iceberg (for Adelie Land). Above the shield is a coronet or with three stars or enfiled with two anchors in saltire argent. The coronet is inscribed with the title of the territory in sable.

Although the territory has no flag, the High Commissioner does. This flag (Fig. 7) is in the ratio 5:6 and is patterned on the old French colonial flags. The flag is royal blue with the French tricolour in the first quarter and in the fourth quarter a monogram argent comprising the letters TAAF in the form of an anchor beneath which are three five-pointed stars. This flag was introduced by the first High Commissioner of the Territory, M. Richer, shortly after he assumed office circa 1958.

#### 5 South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, formerly known as the Falkland Islands Dependencies and administered from the Falkland Islands until 1985, constitute a separate British dependent territory with its own laws and

revenues. The territory has no indigenous or permanent population. New and separate constitutions for the Falkland Islands and for South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands came into force on 3 October 1985.

The relationship with the Falkland Islands is, however, reflected in the new arrangement, with the Governor of the Falkland Islands also being *ex-officio* the Commissioner for South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

The coat of arms for South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (Fig. 8) was introduced on 14 February 1992 by Royal Warrant. The official description of the coat of arms is as follows:

*Lozengy Azure and Argent, a Pile Vert thereon a Lion rampant Or holding a Torch also or, enflamed proper between in chief two Estoiles Gold, and for the Crest upon a Helm with a Wreath Argent and Azure, upon a Mountain proper of four Crests each tipped Gules, a Reindeer statant and at gaze proper; Mantled Azure doubled Argent and for the Supporters: Dexter a Fur Seal proper and Sinister a Penguin proper, the compartment per pale rock and ice proper overall a (tuft of grass) proper together with this Motto LEO TERRAM PROPRIAM PROTEGAT.*

The azure, argent and vert refer to the ice, snow and grass of the area. The lion is for Britain, the torch for exploration. The estoiles are from the arms of Captain James Cook who named South Georgia in honor of King George III and the South Sandwich Islands in reference to his sponsor, John 4th Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty at the time of his explorations in the year 1775. The reindeer in the crest is included because there are two herds in South Georgia. The mountain peaks are red in allusion to their volcanic character. The supporters are typical examples of the local fauna. The compartment refers once again to the ice, rock and grass of the islands. The motto, *Leo Terram Propriam Protega*, translates to 'let the lion protect his own territory.' The territory has no flag.

#### 6 Australian Antarctic Territory

The Australian Antarctic Territory was proclaimed in August 1936 pursuant to the Australian Antarctic Territory Acceptance Act (1933). It comprises a portion of Antarctica divided by the French territory of Adelie Land lying between longitudes 45°—136° East and 142°—160° East. The Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE) maintains three permanent scientific stations in the territory: Mawson, Davis and Casey. The area of the territory is approximately 6120 km<sup>2</sup>.

The flag of ANARE (Fig. 9) is square at the hoist and tapers to a point in the fly. The field is dark green with a golden leopard seal with white teeth and

a black eye and nostril. Below the seal are the letters ANARE in black above a golden boomerang. This pennant was first flown at Mawson Base in early 1965.

The emblem of ANARE (Fig. 10) is a cartographic depiction of the antipodes showing the Australian sector of Antarctica and other Australian territories in black. This is circumscribed by the words 'AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL ANTARCTIC RESEARCH EXPEDITIONS.' An outer ring contains representations of Antarctic flora and fauna. Both the pennant and emblem are used on the buildings and vehicles of ANARE.

## References

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### Roman Klimeš

Roman Klimeš was born in Prague on 2 November 1948 and emigrated to Germany in 1976, where he currently lives. Since 1980 he has been involved in the systematic study of flags, coats of arms and seals. He has published numerous articles in vexillological journals and participated in several international heraldic congresses.

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Plate 60



Figure 1



Figure 2

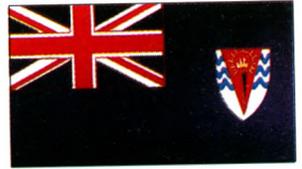


Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

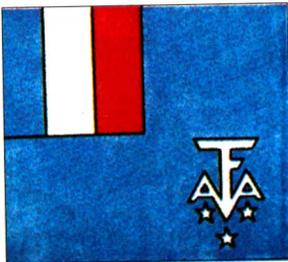


Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10