



HAVE WE LOST THE FLAG & BELIEF IN OURSELVES

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In days of old the troops in battle would rally around the colours.

The "colours" being the unit flags or banners as well as the nation's flag.

The standard bearer as he was called was charged with looking after the colours.

A very important task. If a unit's colours were captured in battle the unit's shame was for all to see. Some may say that our soldiers died for the flag. A myth created by patriotic souls to instil patriotism. Our blokes never died for the flag, they died fighting for the freedoms we take for granted today.

They may have been buried with the flag draped over their coffin if they were lucky but the point is that the flag was a representation of who they were. I ask the question whether we have stopped believing in who we are. In the Fifties, during my time as a New Australian raising the flag was a big event. I remember as a youngster going to Prahran Primary School and singing God Save the Queen as the Australian flag was being raised. We were New Australians learning to integrate into the Australian society.

When I enlisted into the Australian Army (CMF) in 1969 and then later in the Regular Army in 1971, I stood alongside my mates whenever on parade and watch the raising of the Australian and Regimental flags. We were made to feel proud of who we were.

In the late Eighties, when the Emperor of Japan passed away, we were ordered to lower the Australian flag at Ranger Barracks in Ballarat Victoria. We as the Regular Army Cadre staff objected to this but were overruled by higher headquarters located in Canberra. During the day the public came in and complained about the Aussie flag being at half-mast. I had to address all the complaints and explain that our hands were tied.

In early Nineties when we went to Greece as part of the Telamon Force to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Greece and Crete; I stood in uniform near the Greek parliament house steps watching our Australian contingent marching proudly down the main street.

The Aussie Flag flying proudly in the breeze, Aussie band playing, our blokes a dressed up in uniform marching to the Aussie tune and the eyes right being given as they passed the podium. The tomb of the unknown soldier behind them guarded day and night by the Ezvones. Mind you I think I had a drop of rain on my cheek and lump in my throat as I watched our blokes march past. A couple of the lads giving me a wink and a smile as they passed me. Peter Rosemond was the RSM and he was grinning from ear to ear. The reasons for his grin are for another story. A proud day for all of us.

As the years went by our indigenous brethren felt that they did not accept the Australian flag and created their own. The Aboriginal flag can be seen flying alongside the Australian flag at most government buildings. In the city of Melbourne during a visit I passed by the City Baths located near the junction of Stanton Street top end. At the top of one of the round top spires I saw the brightly coloured rainbow flag of the LGBTQI. I have no idea of the significance to the city of Melbourne the LGBTQI flag had.

The next I see the Australian flag being burnt by the ANTIFA thugs and urinating on it. I have seen the Australian flag being burnt by extremist's ethnic groups not of Australian origin. I have had the unfortunate experience of seeing extremist Australians of the Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia (under Tito) burn the Australian, Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian flags. I see the American flag being burnt by extremists and demonstrators protesting against the policies of the USA. The British flag is also another target for extremist groups because of British policies.

At home, in the back yard, I fly the Aussie flag. It's been flying for the past twenty one years since I separated from the Australian Defence Force. It has been replaced many times and even now it's due to be changed due to the ravages of nature.

The people of Irian Jaywa (West Papua) are using their flag seeking independence from Indonesia. Irian Jaywa was handed to the Indonesians by Holland who were the previous colonial administrators. The people however were not consulted and now rally behind their flag.

At the Hellenic ANZAC Gardens Memorial in my place of birth, Pellana, I have the flags of three nations fling. The Hellenic, Australian and New Zealand flags. They fly 24 hours, seven days a week throughout the year. It may not be protocol but it's my way of paying tribute and demonstrating pride in those three nations.

Today I read about the Chinese Communist flag being flown at the Box Hill Police Station to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Chinese Government coming to power. This is a nation whose leader murdered millions of his own people. A government that like the Phoenix has risen from the ashes of millions to become an inspiration the world. It is of interest to note that Box Hill has one of the highest concentration of Australians of Chinese origin. They like other likeminded new cultures have integrated well into Australia and have contributed to the welfare of this nation.

But let's call a spade a spade shall we. The current Chinese Communist nation did not take any part in defeating the Japanese who invaded them in the thirties. A nation who is no longer considered a developing country but a super power. Now we find that the Box Hill Police Station has no flags of any nation flying and as such I am wondering whether they too were forced to fly the Chinese Communist flag.

The point I making is that the flag of a nation is a representation of the people. The flag is a cloth, a piece of fabric that once meant something. If we stopped believing that our flag is a representation of us then we have lost the plot. It is time that we told our political representatives that enough was enough. They should have the balls and courage to state that it is also an offence to burn the flags of any nation. It is not good form to fly the flag of another nation on every government building.



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