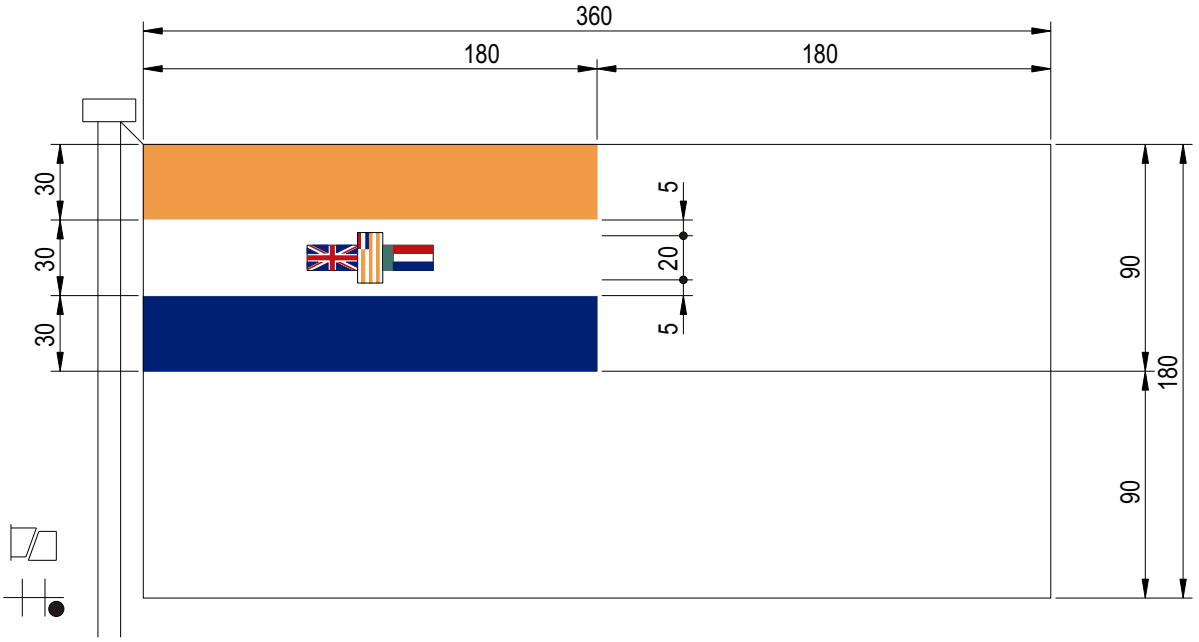
SOUTHERN AFRICAN VEXILLOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
FLAG SPECIFICATION SHEET

South Africa

Naval ensign 1946 - 1951



DATA		COLOUR RECOMMENDATIONS					
		Colour	BCC	C	M	Y	K
Usage:	Naval ensign	Red	210	0	91	76	6
Ratio:	1 : 2	Green	24	60	0	40	40
Adopted:	01 Sep 1946	Orange	57	0	40	80	0
Abolished:	15 May 1951	Blue (Solway)	218	60	0	80	20
Designer:	-						

HISTORY AND SYMBOLISM

Prior to 01 September 1946, ships of the South African navy flew the British white ensign and the South African national flag as a jack. The first specifically South African naval ensign was "a plain white flag with the national Flag in the upper dexter canton". No proportions were gazetted but the ensign followed the British tradition of being one to two, giving the South African flag in the canton incorrect proportion.

In Figure 6.20 of SJ: 2/93, The National flag of the Union filled the whole of the upperhoist canton. It meant, however, that the three smaller flags in the centre of the nationalflag also had the proportions of one to two, instead of two to three as specified in the Nationality and Flag Act of 1927.

It was soon apparent that the new ensign was not a good flag from a practical pointof view. In particular it was difficult to identify at sea in conditions of bad visibility and it was not popular with naval personnel who referred to it as the "*witdoek*" (literally 'white cloth'). As a result there was a recommendation to change the design in 1951. Refer to sheet SV - ZA - 02.1 - 2 for the construction details of the central device on the canton.

Source: SAVA Journal 2/93: Flags of the Union Defence Forces 1912-1993 by Prof. HH Smith