

Chapter 4 - Naval Ensigns

1856 Naval Ensign

In 1856, Harbour Master Captain Charles Ferguson, suggested to the Victorian Chief Secretary (Premier) William Clark Haines, that the various government departments in control of ships should fly a flag bearing initials, indicating their department, underneath a crown on the flag. Captain Norman argued the case with the Chief Secretary to dispense with the originally suggested letter V for HMCS *Victoria*'s flag, and place a kangaroo image under the crown. A note from the Assistant Colonial Secretary stating that "The letter V be dispensed with," indicates that there was indeed room for the kangaroo image below the crown. A further note from the Chief Secretary⁸¹ stated that "The request of Captn. Norman may be complied with." From further evidence mentioned later it would appear that *Victoria*'s first naval ensign looked similar to the image below.



**Figure 12 - 1856 Crown & Kangaroo Naval Ensign.
based on Captain Norman's design of a kangaroo under a crown
on "the same Colored (sic) flag"⁸² as that of visiting H. M. Officers.**

1865 Naval Ensign

Prior to the adoption of the 1870 ensign, *Victoria*'s naval vessel had at first flown the crown and kangaroo red ensign. Following the change of the Royal Navy's ensign in 1864, *Victoria* changed to a blue ensign with the St George cross and union flag. After 1864 HMCS *Victoria* flew a blue version of the 1856 crown and kangaroo ensign. Most likely Captain Norman's strong views on the matter kept the St. George cross from being added to the ensign flown by *Victoria*.



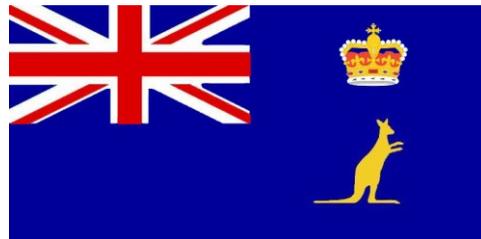
Figure 13 - Tinted photograph of HMCS *Victoria*
presented to Captain Norman in 1867.

Seen above are the old British Naval Ensign flying from the foremast, the new British Ensign flying from the main mast & the crown & kangaroo Victorian Naval Ensign flying at the stern.

Photo reproduced courtesy of Captain Norman's Great Grandson, Martin Lemann.



**Figure 14 – Enlarged & rotated
Crown & Kangaroo Naval
Ensign from Figure 13.**



**Figure 15 – Possible 1865 Crown &
Kangaroo Naval Ensign**

1870 Naval Ensign

The expanded Victorian Navy's need for a London approved ensign was satisfied when its third ensign was inaugurated by being raised on board *Nelson* in front of the colony's dignitaries in February 1870.



Figure 16 - 1870 Victorian Naval Ensign

The 1870 ensign was also flown by *Cerberus* while transiting the Suez Canal so as to obtain a discount on the transiting fee as a Man-Of-War.

1877 Naval Ensign

The 1870 ensign was modified in 1877 when the colony's badge of the imperial crown and Southern Cross on a blue shield, was incorrectly placed on a white disc in the fly of the flag. A few months later the white disc was removed resulting in the 1877 naval ensign.



Figure 17 - Corrected 1877 Victorian Naval Ensign

China Ensign

When the Victorian Naval Contingent went to China in 1900 to assist in suppressing the Boxer Rebellion, it was accompanied by a Victorian Naval Ensign. An 1870 Victorian flag was modified by having a crown sewn onto it between the Southern Cross and the Union Flag.

From diary entries of Armourer G. Prideaux (V.N.) and Lieutenant W. G. Robertson (V.N.), we know that the ensign was flown from the masthead of an armed junk, named

the *Southern Cross*, on the Yung-ting Ho river, and saluted by 100 French cavalry on passing the town of Tsin-ah-Sha.



Figure 18 - Victorian Ensign taken to China.

Photo: *Victorian Parliamentary Library.*

The text on the header of the ensign reads "This Victorian Ensign (the first on active service) was used by the Victorian Contingent during service in 1900 in China. It was presented to Senator Sir F.T. Sargood K.C.M.G. by Captain Tickell C.M.B. Lieut. Col."

The ensign was returned to Victoria by Lady Sargood on the occasion of Victoria's centenary in 1934.

Australian Naval Ensign

Shown in Figure 19 below and in Figure 34, is the first Australian Naval Ensign with six pointed Federation Star, flying from *Cerberus* circa 1902-03.



Figure 19 - *Cerberus* flying the first Australian Naval Ensign
Note the awnings used in summer & pre ordnance grey colour scheme.

Photo: Allan Green Collection, State Library of Victoria