

# *Textile Preservation Associates, Inc.*

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## TREATMENT REPORT

Date August 20, 2000

TPA No. 1071

Object 5th Texas Infantry

Cat. No. M-74-81

Client Texas State Archives  
P. O. Box 12927  
1201 Brazos Street  
Austin, TX 78711-2927

Contact Chris LaPlante  
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### DOCUMENTATION

15 Kodachrome 25, 35mm color slides were taken before and after treatment.  
Analysis: See attached report.

### Description

Size: Leading edge: 38" Fly: 46"

The flag is a homemade Army of Northern Virginia battle flag variant constructed of wool fabric. There are four red quadrants and a blue (faded to tan) 4 3/4" cross with thirteen stars, twelve 2 1/2" stars on the arms of the cross and a 5 1/4" star in the center. The stars are constructed of off-white silk twill, appliquéd to the cross and finished with an embroidered off-white colored silk chainstitch around the perimeter. The flag has a 3 1/2" x 13 3/4" patch of off-white cotton fabric in the upper quadrant with the unit designation, "5<sup>TH</sup> TXS." painted on in black. There were three battle honors applied in gold pigment in 2 3/4" block lettering to the fly. The honors are located in the top, fly, and bottom quadrants as follows: "ELTHAMS LANDING" / "GAINES FARM" / "MALVERN HILL". There are ten whipped eyelets on the leading edge for attachment.

Accompanying the banner is a blue wool (faded to tan) streamer that measures 4" x 57". There is an off-white silk border around the perimeter on both sides. The streamer is embroidered on the reverse with "VIVERE SAT VINCERE" in rows of white silk chain stitch. On the obverse side, the streamer is embroidered with the unit designation "5 REG VOL" in two rows of chain stitch, one white and one red. There is a five pointed star of white silk appliquéd in the center between "REG" and "VOL". The star is outlined with white chainstitch. The letters "T" "E" "X" "A" "S" are embroidered in red chain stitch in each point of the star.

## Condition

### Previous treatment

The original condition of the flag is recorded in a photo taken about 1866-68 by a photographer named Harvey Marks. The image is in a collection of a Mr. Callahan of San Antonio. This photo depicts the flag with the streamer attached. The top quadrant is damaged along the hoist arm. The fly quadrant is damaged with a horizontal split across the top about 6" down from the end of the cross. The bottom has missing fabric and a tear about 10" above the end of the cross. There are two major holes in the bottom quadrant and there are ties in the eyelets. (see photo copy #1)

A second, later photo in the Texas State Archives (number not recorded on photo) shows the flag without the streamer, and more extensive damage on the fly end that appears to be souvineering. The pieces appear to have been taken from the fly end where there was former damage. Again there are ties in the eyelets. (see photo copy #2)

The next photo of the flag in the Texas State Archives (number M74-81B) shows the obverse of the flag with an extensive stitching treatment over the entire surface. This treatment is lightly mentioned in the report of the Texas Conservation Center, Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. It appears to be the style of treatment performed by Katherine Richey, who was working on the flags in the Texas collection in the 1930's. The treatment consists of adhering the flag to a linen backing by parallel rows of machine stitching over the entire surface. It is very likely that Mrs. Richey cut the flag along the upper cross arm of the top quadrant as this was her usual practice when the fabric would not lie flat for the sewing machine. The ties are not present in this photo and the unit designation was moved to the upper edge of the fly. According to the records the fly was treated in the same manner. (see photo copy #3)

The Richey treatment was removed by the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. The records are not clear but it appears that they removed the cross, and then washed the cross, the fly and the streamer using Orvus detergent. They recorded heavy dye

bleed but did not say which dye on which piece or report the effect of the washing on the lettering. After washing, fabrics were dyed to match the cross and fly. The sections were underlaid with the matching fabric then prepared for exhibit as follows:

A mount was prepared for the flag consisting of a wooden stretcher covered with a layer of foam core and a twill knit fabric. The cross was removed from the flag on both sides. The fly was underlaid with a colored fabric and lightly attached with random stitches. The reverse cross was then reattached to the fly with random stitches. The fly was then laid on the stretcher and sewn with two rows of running stitch using a brown silk thread around the perimeter. A single ply silk thread was used to stitch the damaged areas in place. The obverse side cross was underlaid with a colored fabric then positioned on the fly. The cross was sewn in place down the sides with a beige silk and damaged areas of the cross were sewn with a single ply silk through all layers into the stretcher. The stretcher was placed into a plexiglas vitrene.

#### Present condition

The leading edge is intact except for one split at the second grommet. The hoist quadrant has a 6" by 3" "L" shaped tear and several additional holes 1/2" square to 4" by 1/2". The top quadrant has a 4" by 4" hole at the top near the cross which includes part of the "E" in the battle honor. There are smaller holes along the top edge and one 3" by 2" "L" shaped tear at the fly end. There is one 3/4" repair in the center below the cotton patch. The quadrant has split along the top hoist cross which appears to have occurred as part of the previous treatment. Most of the paint on the battle honor is missing with only "EL" and part of the "T" remaining. The fly quadrant has a 5" by 3" hole at the top fly end and a 8" by 6" hole at the bottom as well as additional small holes throughout. The bottom quadrant has a 4" by 2" hole in the center bottom and a 7" by 1" hole at the bottom fly edge. There are two vertical splits down the center. The battle honors on the fly and bottom quadrants are totally missing though a fade pattern remains.

The cross on the obverse side has holes, 1" or less, throughout. There is one 3" by 2 1/2" "T" shaped tear and one 4" by 3/4" hole in the top fly arm. The bottom fly arm has a 3" by 4" hole at the end with additional splitting around the last star. There are only fragments of silk remaining on all the stars around the edges. Much of the decorative chain stitch around the stars is missing also. On the reverse side the cross has 1" or less size holes throughout. The top hoist corner has 1/2" missing along the top edge. The top fly has a 1" by 3 1/2" hole at the end. The bottom fly has 3" missing at the corner and a 1" by 5" hole below the last star.

The streamer has small, 1" or less, holes throughout. The embroidery on the reverse side is intact. There is some damage to the embroidery on the obverse side, especially the red. The silk of the stars is mostly missing on both sides.

## REPORT OF TREATMENT

### *Documentation*

1. The flag, as received, was photographed in the vitrene (see photo 1), removed from the vitrene and photographed on both sides (see photos 2-3). The condition of the fabrics was evaluated to determine the stability of the fibers.
2. The previous treatment was removed by cutting each stitch, working under 10x magnification, then removing the thread fragments. The flag was photographed on both sides after the previous treatment was removed (see photos 4-5). The streamer was received and photographed on both sides (see photos 6-7) and the previous treatment was removed from it in the same manner as the flag. The flag and streamer were photographed together on both sides with and without the cross removed (see photos 8-12).
3. Once the original flag was accessible and additions and alterations had been noted, the fibers, fabrics, and sewing threads were analyzed. Information about the construction of the flag, and any evidence of alterations to the original were noted. Scale drawings were made of the flag and an analysis report prepared.

### *Stabilization*

4. To relax the fabrics and remove creases, the flag and streamer were humidified by light misting with distilled water. When relaxed, the fabrics were flattened and dried under glass weights.
5. The reverse side cross was positioned in its original location and tacked in place down the sides of each arm using a single ply silk thread.
6. The flag was sandwiched between two layers of Stabiltex<sup>1</sup>, a multifilament polyester crepe. A solid layer of ecru was used on the reverse side of the flag. On the obverse, red was used over the quadrants, then cut away at the cross. The obverse side cross was then positioned in its original location and tacked in place down the sides of each arm using a single ply silk thread. Blue Stabiltex was then laid over the cross on the obverse. The layers were attached by sewing through the voids. Fragments were aligned and sewn around their perimeter to hold them in place. Care was taken to eliminate sewing through the fabric where possible, but in large areas with no damage the fabrics were secured with random rows of vertical running stitch through all three

layers. Sewing was carried out with thread pulled from the Stabiltex. On the obverse side, the blue Stabiltex was cut away from the stars and the stars overlaid with off-white Stabiltex. The off-white Stabiltex was stitched in place around the perimeter of the star with Stabiltex thread then the excess fabric cut away. A photo of the reverse was taken after encapsulation (see photo 13).

### *Preparation for Exhibition*

The flag is mounted in a pressure mount frame. This is a custom made exhibit case that will provide the fabrics with uniform support over the entire surface and create an internally buffered, stable environment that will protect the object from outside contaminants.

7. A buffered, acid-free panel<sup>2</sup> was prepared then covered with nonwoven polyester batting<sup>3</sup> and a previously washed, unbleached, airwing grade, fine cotton fabric<sup>4</sup>.

8. The flag was attached to the padded panel with one row of stitching across the top. Attachment was made through the Stabiltex to avoid additional stress on the flag. The streamer was folded under at the top and padded with a roll of airwing fabric. The roll and streamer were loosely stitched to the panel with single ply silk. The flag was photographed on the panel (see photo 14).

9. Ultra-violet filtering OP-2 Acrylite<sup>5</sup> was laid over the flag, applying a light pressure to the fabric. The entire unit was placed in a custom made frame with an aluminum back for support and an outer frame of wood with a silver finish custom made for Textile Preservation Associates, Inc. by Ivy Industries<sup>6</sup>.

10. A final photo was taken (see photo 15) and a treatment report prepared.

### PROGNOSIS

The object should be exhibited under less than five foot-candles of light. Because any light is damaging, it is recommended that the piece be rotated between exhibit and storage, or covered with a dense cloth when not being viewed. Maximum effort should be made to reduce the total exposure to light. Care should be taken to avoid aiming lights directly on the case, which can cause a "greenhouse" effect, or heat build up within the unit.

To best preserve the object, the temperature and humidity level should be kept fairly constant, with temperatures of less than 70 degrees Fahrenheit and a relative humidity of 45% plus or minus 5%. Avoid hanging the object against an outside wall, or place spacers between the wall and the frame to prevent humidity transfer.

## REPORTED HISTORY

The flag is recorded to have been made and presented by Mrs. Young to the 5th Texas Infantry in June of 1862. It was sent to be decorated with battle honors in August then brought out of storage in October of the same year when the "Lone Star" Confederate first national flag of the 5th Infantry (accession no. M-29-80) was sent to Texas. During the fierce fighting of 1862-64, according to one historian, fourteen color bearers fell carrying this flag into battle. In the winter of 1864, officers of the 5th Texas returned the flag to Mrs. Young for safekeeping.

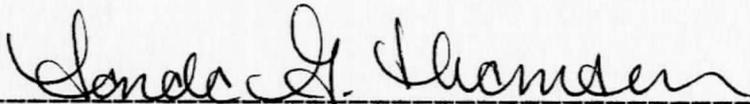
## CONCLUSION

After a thorough examination of the materials and construction of this flag, as well as a comparison of these materials with previous examinations of documented Civil War period flags, it is my opinion, as a Textile Conservator, that the materials in and construction of this flag support the reported history of the flag as having been made by Mrs. Young. The fabrics and decoration are typical garment fabrics and not the usual materials used for the construction of military issue flags.

The photographic record illustrates the damage from use as opposed to later damage from previous treatments. It is unfortunate that all soils and stains have been removed so the battle evidence could not be confirmed, but there is no question as to the identity of this flag.

## REFERENCES

1. The Battle Flags Of The Confederate Army Of Tennessee, Howard Michael Madaus and Robert D. Needham, Milwaukee Public Museum: Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1976.
2. Flag Examination Form, Cons # M-74-80 (T), 9/10/81 The Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Conservation Center, Canyon, Texas 79016



Fonda Ghiardi Thomsen, Director  
Textile Preservation Associates;  
Fellow, American Institute for Conservation

8/20/00

Date

If this object is ever stored, it can be placed flat or vertical. We recommend storage in the frame, since it is part of the conservation treatment and will provide a more stable environment.

#### HANGING THE FRAME

There are two metal tabs along the top of the frame for hooking onto a screw or bolt.

#### CARE OF THE PLEXIGLAS

The plexiglas is soft and may scratch so care must be taken during handling. Plexiglas should not be cleaned with ammonia based window cleaners. Either plexiglas cleaner should be purchased, or water with a drop of liquid dishwasher detergent can be used along with very soft rags (diapers or gauze). If paper towels are used they should be extremely soft.

Total treatment hours: 61

Signed: Fonda G. Thomsen Date: 9/20/00

Fonda Ghiardi Thomsen, Fellow AIC,  
Director, Textile Preservation Associates, Inc.

Work on the object was carried out by Cathy Heffner, Conservation Technician, Textile Preservation Associates, Inc. under the supervision of Fonda G. Thomsen, Conservator.

#### Reference list of materials used in the conservation of this object.

1. Stabiltex, a sheer, multifilament, plain weave, polyester: Talas, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012 (212) 219-0770.
  2. Corrugated Board, buffered, acid free: Hollinger Corporation, P.O. Box 8360, Fredericksburg, VA 22404 (800) 634-0491.
  3. Batting, "Jasztex" a thermo bonded polyester batting: Museum Services Corporation, 1107 East Cliff Road, Burnsville, MN 55337.
- "Poly-fil Traditional Batting" a non-woven, needle punched batting:  
Fairfield Processing Corporation, 88 Rose Hill Avenue, Danbury, CT 06810.

4. Cotton, a 100% airwing grade fabric: Fox Reich Textiles, Inc., 54 Danbury Road, Suite 228, Ridgefield, CT 06877 (914) 533-2445.

5. Acrylite OP-2, a colorless cast ultraviolet filtering acrylic sheet: Cyro Industries, P. O. Box 950, 100 Valley Road, Mt. Arlington, NJ 07856 (416) 675-9433.

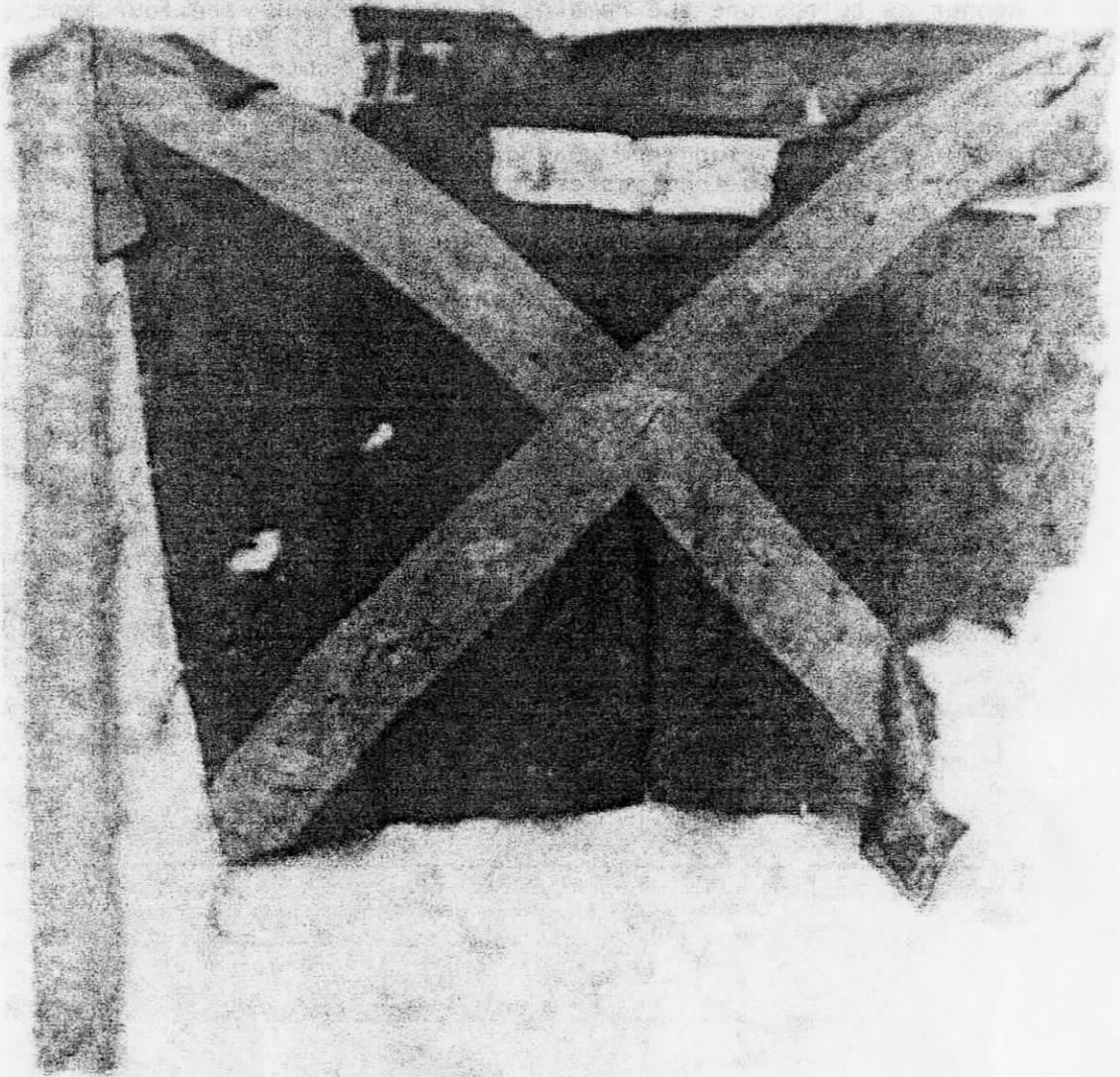
6. Ivy Industries, Inc., P.O. Box 7747, Charlottesville, VA (800) 446-1600.

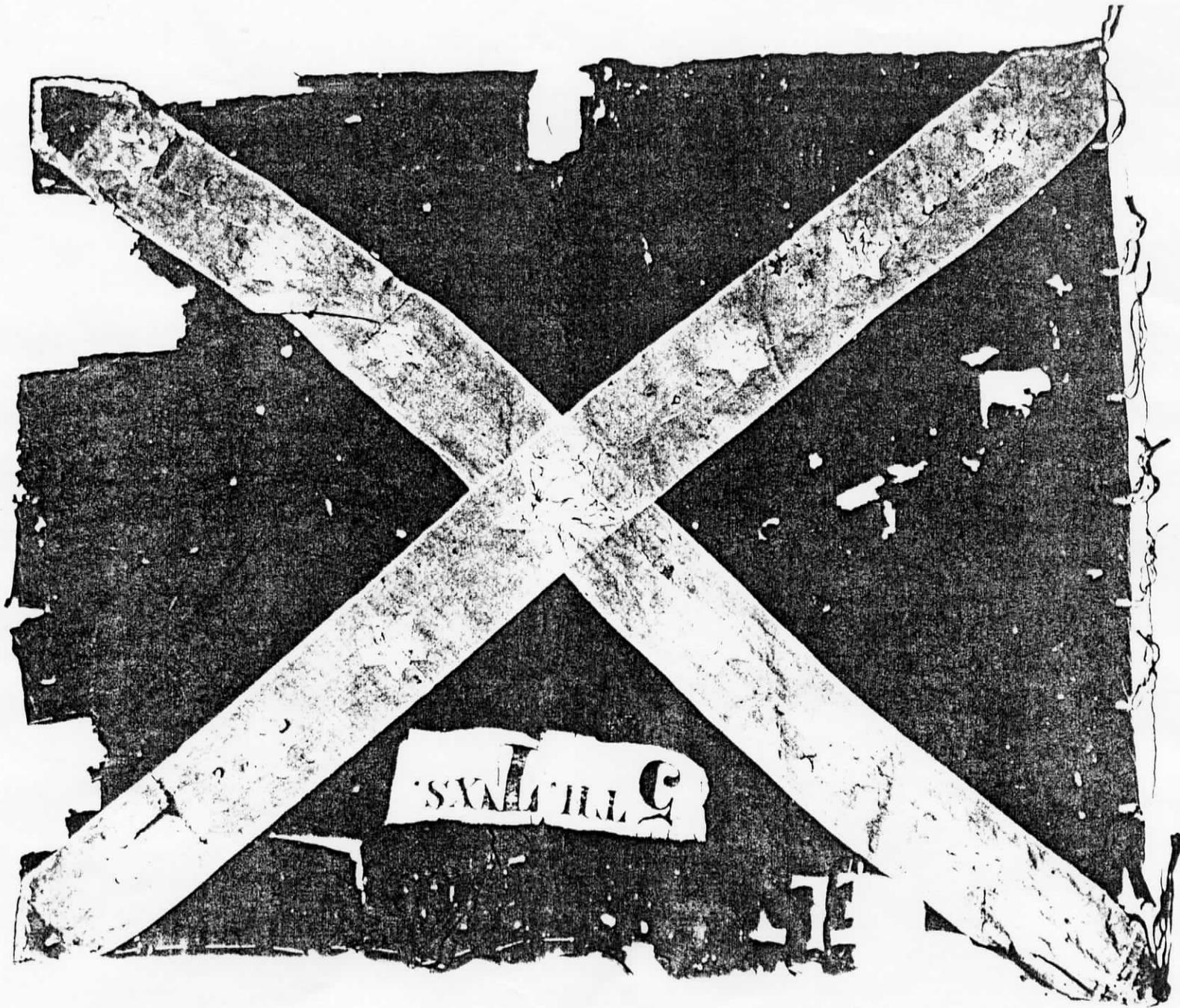




Marks photo of Young's 5th Texas battle flag

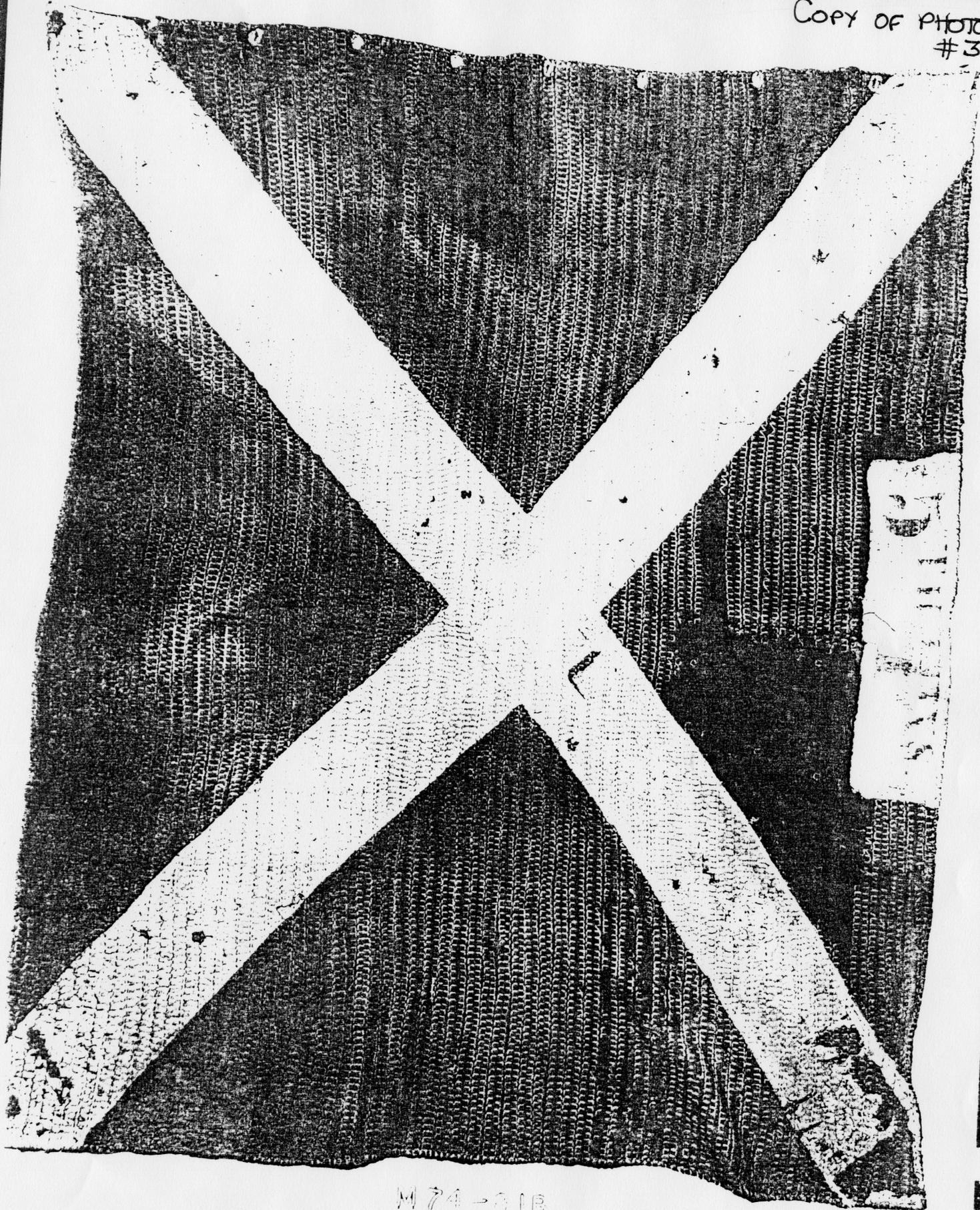
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Copy of PHOTO #2

COPY OF PHOTO  
#3



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