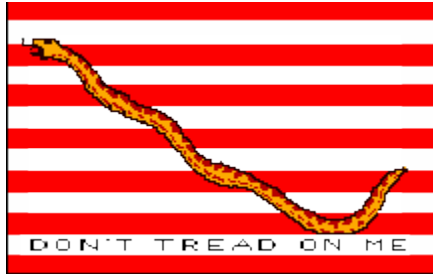
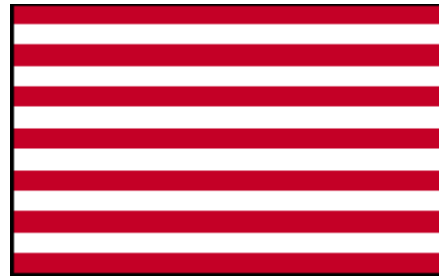


## Traditional First Continental Navy Jacks



First Naval Ensign



Colonial Merchant Ensign

The "Don't Thread on Me!" and Rattlesnake Ensign has become a powerful American symbol which tradition tells us was used by the Continental Navy in 1775 and is now being used again by the U.S. Navy in the War on Terrorism.

Although there is widespread belief that ships of the Continental Navy flew this jack, there is no firm bases of historical evidence to support it. We have several fanciful contemporary pictures showing a very youthful Commodore Esek Hopkins (he was actually 58 in 1776), our First Navy Commander-in-Chief, that appeared in Europe during the Revolution that showed flags flying from both the bow and stern of his ships. In some pictures the rattlesnake flag appears, and in others we only have stripes. In short, there is strong reason to believe that the actual Continental Navy Jack, like the Colonial Merchant Ensign, was simply a red and white striped flag with no other adornment. It should also be noted that the so-called First Navy Jack was probably not a Jack at all, but an ensign. However, by turn of the century the tradition of our navy using the symbol of the rattlesnake with the motto "DON'T TREAD ON ME" was firmly established in American myth.