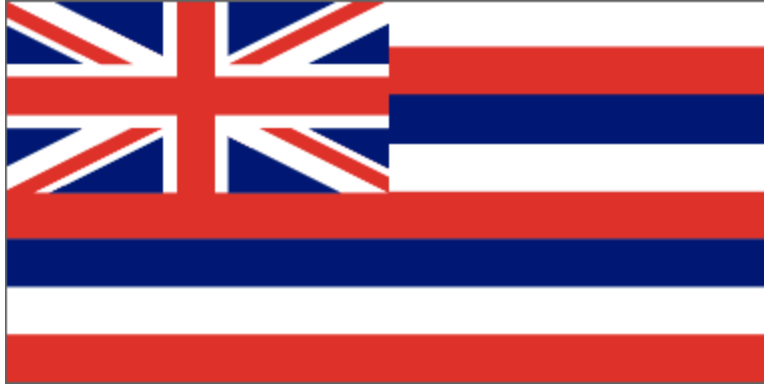


Hawaii



On 21 August 1959, Hawaii was admitted to the union as the 50th state.

Before 1810 each of the populated Hawaiian Islands was ruled by its own King and the political and religious systems administered by ali'i and kahuna (chiefs and priests). Though there were conflicts between the various ali'i and kings from time to time, the people of the islands, for the most part farmers and fishermen, were not inclined toward long term war and life among the islands was relatively peaceful and practical.

That was before 1810 and before a young, ambitious ali'i, Kamehameha, managed to acquire a small schooner with a cannon. With the help of his cannon and various small arms brought to the islands by European travelers, he was able to take control of the island chain from Hawaii to Kauai. He instituted systems of governance, commerce, and taxation, establishing his court on the island of Hawaii and appointing governors to control all of the other islands. Kamehameha created a single sovereign nation that gained recognition as such by the major powers of the world.

In 1816, Kamehameha the Great commissioned the Hawaiian Flag, the flag that has represented Hawaii the nation, Hawaii the people and Hawaii the state for over 180 years. Though Hawaii's independence was briefly challenged in 1843 by Lord Paulet, Great Britain sent Admiral Thomas to officially restore and recognize Hawaii's sovereignty and flag on July 31, 1843.

On that same day, Kamehameha III proclaimed "Ua mau ke ea o ka `aina i ka pono." (The life [independence] of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.) And, two years later on May 20, 1845, Kamehameha III officially re-commissioned and dedicated the Hawaiian Flag at the opening of the Kingdom's Legislature.

The eight alternating white, red and blue stripes represent the eight islands of Hawaii. The British Union Jack represents Hawaii's historical relationship with Great Britain as its protectorate. It also represents a stylized puella (a triangular standard laying across two crossed spears called an alia) which is the symbol of the Hawaiian ali'i.

Source: http://www.netstate.com/states/symb/flags/hi_flag.htm