

Montana State Flag



On 08 Nov 1889, Montana was admitted to the union as the 41st state.

In 1898, Montana had no state flag. In 1905, the Ninth Legislative Assembly of Montana voted to adopt a rectangular banner depicting the pictorial content of the [The Great Seal of the State of Montana](#) on a blue field as the official state flag. Some states have sponsored contests to determine an appropriate design for an official state flag. Montana's design was born of the initiative of a Colonel Kessler, head of the First Montana Infantry.

During the Spring of 1898, the First Montana Infantry, volunteers from several Montana communities, prepared for the war against Spain at Fort William Henry Harrison. Under the guidance of Colonel Kessler, these volunteers were "whipped" into fighting shape. The ladies of Helena provided these men with a 45-star U.S. flag to carry to the conflict as their Regimental Colors.

Colonel Kessler felt that his group of fighting volunteers needed a special flag or banner to distinguish his men from other forces and on his own initiative, commissioned a unique flag for the First Montana Infantry. The flag that was constructed displayed an embroidered replica of the Montana state seal on a dark background. This hand-made silk flag displayed "1st Montana Infantry U.S.V." above the state seal.

This flag accompanied the First Montana Infantry to war in the fall of 1898 and served the unit well during its tour of duty.

When the volunteers of the First Montana Infantry returned to Montana a year later, Colonel Kessler's flag had grown in stature and though not official, it was considered a fitting symbol of the state. In Helena, Colonel Kessler turned the flag over to the Governor and it was offered for display throughout the state.

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Montana still had no official state flag and many people thought that the regimental flag of the First Montana Infantry should be honored with official recognition. In 1905, the Ninth Legislative Assembly proclaimed Colonel Kessler's flag to be the official flag of the state of Montana. Of course the words "1st Montana Infantry" were stricken.

Since 1905, changes have been made two times to the flag.

- 1981 - The Legislature passed a bill requiring that the word "MONTANA", in Roman letters, be positioned above the seal. This was to distinguish the Montana flag from the flags of other states at a distance. Secretary of State Jim Waltermire also defined colors for the state seal on the flag: from a gold sky with white clouds and white sunrises to blue and white waterfalls.
- 1985 - More specific definition of the letters spelling "MONTANA" was approved. "Helvetica bold" was specified to eliminate the wide variety of styles in use by manufacturers of the flag.

The state flag is blue with a gold fringe on the top and bottom edges. The pictorial content of The Great Seal of the State of Montana centered on the blue field depicts some of Montana's beautiful scenery and reflects the pioneering history of the state. A brilliant sun over snowy mountains, forests, cliffs and the Great Falls of the Missouri River serve as the background for a pick, a shovel and a plow. These tools represent Montana's mining and farming past and present.

The [state motto](#) "ORO Y PLATA" (Spanish for Gold and Silver) is displayed on a ribbon at below the pick, shovel, and plow.

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