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WW1 Allies Flags Fans

— Pierre-Henri Biger

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Several months ago, Helen Akitt-Heatley had obtained from me the promise of an article. My age and my deadly scholar work are poor reasons for me forgetting it! As I truly do not have the time to indulge in some serious research, please consider this as a little recreation that I would like you share with me. Just after celebrations in Normandy of June 44 D. Day, Summer will bring us all sorts of meetings or speeches to celebrate and regret one hundred years later - too late, I'm afraid-, the start of the First World War. Of course, here, we shall only speak about fans, and in this "Entente Cordiale" paper, about Allies Fans. A number of fans indeed show this beautiful friendship that does exist in Europe, especially between the English and the French when Mars, the God of War, has randomly put both on the same side.



Fig. 1:
Oriental fan with added flags of Japan, Russia, the U.K., Italy, Serbia, France, and Belgium¹.

During WWI, fans were no more the height of fashion. However they were still in use, especially for advertising. It is not surprising that fans were issued in order to support the effort of soldiers, more –seemingly- on the Allied side rather on the Axis one. In several countries, like Germany, Japan, the United States and France, patriotic fans were made showing each national flag. But the two sides were coalitions, and fans were issued in order to comfort those too. Of course we all know about an Austrian *Brisé* fan with the faces of different Axis civilian or military leaders. We can find it, for instance, on David Ranft website² (and see Margaretha Mazzura article Page 53). In fact, this one is maybe more known that its Allied counterpart, which was printed in Italy at the end of the war³. But we think that these “supporting” fans were mostly made in France, and a lot of them bear the Allied flags, which is what we want to focus on here.

The first difficulty, one hundred years later, is to know who the allies were. The second is to recognize their flags. At the end of the war, we can count 55 of them (yes, fifty-five)! It is true that this includes colonial flags. There are 16 for the British Empire (plus the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan) ; three each for France and Portugal, two for Belgium and Italy, and even two also for Russia, as the country got into some internal problems in 1917. To make it simple, the Allies at the beginning of the War are: the British and French Empires⁴, Belgium, Costa Rica, Cuba, Egypt, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Japan, Kuwait, Liberia, Muscat and Oman,

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all illustrations are from the CPHB Collection.

² <http://www.faechersammlung.de/Bilderseiten/Bilderseite20frueh/Bildseite94.htm>

³ In an old FCI Bulletin, Hélène Alexander showed it, with names and titles. *Fans*, Summer 1989, n° 42, p. 35)

⁴ Indeed, as the very Republican France had a Colonial Empire!

Montenegro, Nepal, Nicaragua, Portugal, Panama, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Siam. At least 23 anyway. Others will be added: in 1915 Italy (not to mention the Czechoslovak Legions...); in 1917 will come Brazil, China, the United States and Greece – but Russia will disappear; in 1918 Armenia and Poland will be new-comers. In this list, some countries are of course more important by their size or strength ; but the main nations include also Belgium and Serbia despite their small size. It is well worth noting that the entry into the war - or the departure– of some countries may help to date objects.

Key allies and others

From the beginning of the war the world already had the idea that it was "The First World War", which helped to emphasize the importance of the Allied Nations. However, the main ones then were, as for instance a 1914 document with the national hymns shows, France, United Kingdom, Russia, Japan, Belgium, and Serbia. Those countries' flags were:



But other countries were involved, and some can be found on some fans as we shall see.

Fans with flags

We will begin by a quite unusual fan⁵ issued for the "1915 Exposition Franco-Marocaine Casablanca" and showing on the obverse Moulay Youssef, sultan of Morocco, French and Morocco flags, the French rooster and advertisements for beer, curacao, and Bordeaux (quite surprising near an Islam important leader). The reverse (*Picture right*) is more interesting for us. We see again the Sultan and the Rooster, and behind, the flags of Morocco, Belgium, Russia, France, Great-Britain, Italy, Japan, Serbia, and surprisingly the Ottoman Empire (?), which was on the German side! Is it the Sudan flag ? Is it a mistake, or propaganda?

Most of this *Bulletin* readers own the catalogue of *Fans: War & Peace*, the 2009/2010 exhibition of the Fan Museum: it is not needed that we reproduce the numerous flags fans which were then exhibited. It is however useful to describe them briefly, with the numbers in the catalogue.



⁵ Although the obverse is shown in *Éventails* by F. de Perthuis and V. Meylan, Hermès, Paris, 1989, p. 195.

114: a US ad handscreen, 1918, featuring Maréchal Foch. Above him, *Nike* (Victory, and 16 Allied flags, including the US one. Obviously this fixed fan has been issued after the US joined the Allies and after Foch come-back as a *Généralissime*: end of 1917 or 1918.

117: an ad handscreen, 1918/1919, featuring again Maréchal Foch with the German commanders surrendering to him in front of Allies and their flags: Brazil, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, France, Romania and Great-Britain. This fan is said to be from Brazil. But, as the catalogue points it out, there is a mistake in the Portuguese spelling of the title : *Alliados* instead of *Aliados*! So, in spite of the mention of a Brazilian typographer on the reverse, it is more likely that at least the obverse leaf comes from the US⁶. The same kind of mistake was to be found on English or French fan leaves made for Spain on century before.

118: a *brisé* fan which is in the catalog said to have been made in Switzerland in 1917, with the silhouettes of various leaders and the flags of their countries : France, Russia, Great-Britain, Italy, Belgium, and Serbia. Of course this fan predates both the entry of the United States into the War, and the 1917 Revolution in Russia: it may be February, October certainly.

120: *Chantecler*. This Duvelleroy fan shows “the proud French cockerel” and the Stars & Stripes, Belgian, Italian, Union and French flags. At first it seems to have been misnamed. Not every French rooster is a *Chantecler*, from the name of an Edmond Rostand play featuring farm animals as characters (February 1910), and this rooster seems to be posted near a canon. But in fact it is a plough-share... and so *Chantecler* is not unlikely. But why the flags? We are told that the American flag is “painted over an existing flag”... that may only be the Russian one. But the others? They were perhaps painted over a true *Chantecler* fan. The Rostand play had not been successful, and it is possible that Duvelleroy has tried to give them a new and martial life, as he often re-used old lithographs, sticks; etc. “*Les affaires sont les affaires!*” (Business is business!).

121: this (again Duvelleroy) Van Garden fan shows “a man sowing a newly-ploughed field, a broken canon abandoned in the mud, while six fans float in the wind” (Romania, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, USA, and France). The flags (and maybe the canon) here also seem to have been added afterwards to the painting. For some unknown reason, the French flag floats in the opposite direction to the others. As everybody knows, French people are unique, and the laws of nature do not apply to them!

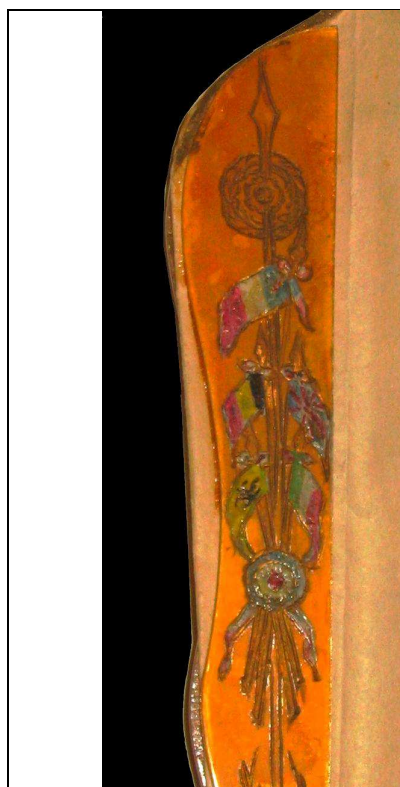
123 : see *infra*.

Miniature fans : (see Ondine Pavy-Pluvinage’s research) - *M3* (Walter Mc Laren’s collection) with Serbia, England, France and Russia flags is obviously from 1916. - *M9* (Parent de Curzon Collection) shows Allies flags on the obverse, apparently including Russia... and on the reverse French and US flags : for sure something added to the original pattern as a welcome to the American soldiers. – *M21* (Maryse Volet Collection): 1915 Belgium, Russia, Serbia, France, U.K., and Italy flags surrounding a motto: “*Tous contre les Barbares*” (All against the Barbarians). – *M26* (Parent de Curzon Collection): again the French rooster posted on a strange French flag, and the flags of Japan, France, Serbia, Russia, Belgium (?), and Canada (?). – *M28* (d°) c. 1915: a brilliant sun amidst the Belgium, the UK, France (twice), Italy and Russia flags. – *M33* (d°), c. 1916: Alsace personified, “draped in the French flag her outstretched arms holding a bunting of flags” (England, Belgium, Russia, Serbia, Italy and Japan); - *M34* (d°), 1915: on the reverse, flags of France, Russia, Italy, the United Kingdom, Belgium, and Serbia.

⁶ A similar fan is shown in Bull (D.) & Roger (R.), *Fans, Advertising & Souvenir*, Schiffler, Atglen (PA), 2012, p. 104. The advertisement is there for Bo La Tonic, Manchester, New-Hampshire

So it is obvious that a lot of fans were issued bearing the Allies flags, with variations due to circumstances: some of them depending on the place where the fan was distributed, but most dealing with the War events : the arrival of new nations and departure of Russia. We would like now to show some fans which are not pictured in the Fan Museum catalog, and insist on some peculiar points.

An interesting fan was shown in 2011 by Mme Yvette Ferran and M. Jean Bisson (members of the Cercle de l'Eventail). (See *Picture, right*). In a tricolour Kees box, this fan is hand painted, dated 1915 and signed by F. Boscher⁷. A pretty *Marianne* is featured, holding the French flag and a short sword. Her clothes are made of the Allied flags : UK, Serbia, Russia, and Belgium. Of course, Italy is not yet there, and the US are still very far.



Another very pleasant one (CPHB Collection) shows three children (one girl and two boys) playing the soldiers with different utensils used as weapons. This Duvelleroy fan, signed by Gendrot and dated '17 shows on its guards a stack of flags of the main Allies at the beginning of 1917: France, UK, Serbia, Italy, and Russia (See *picture, left*)

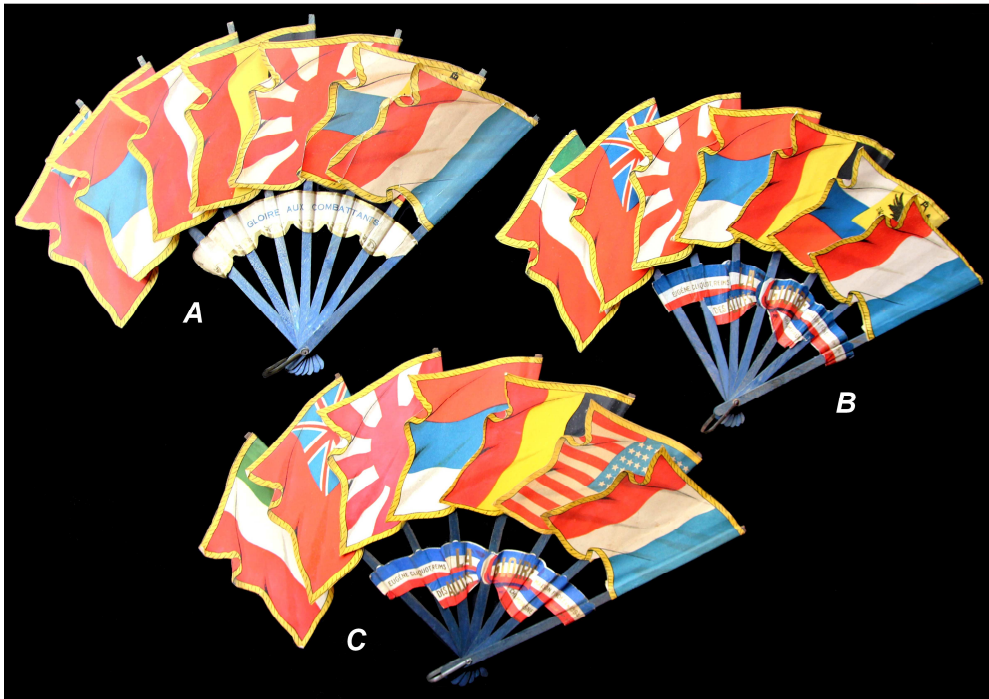
A truly unusual ad fan (Roger Collection) is shown in *Fans, Advertising & Souvenir*⁸ : the wooden sticks are adorned on the "gorge" with bottles of Cognac Foucauld (half of them labelled with a photograph of Joffre in his *Maréchal* attire⁹) and on the upper part with wider "palmettes" showing between laurels false cockades of the United States, Portugal, Russia, Japan, the United Kingdom, Serbia, Belgium, Italy, and France. Apart from the unusual shape, the presence of Victory laurels, *Maréchal* Joffre, and the US and Russian flags are startling, and do not help to date the fan between 1917 and 1919.

⁷ Several other fans by Boscher are shown on our Place de l'Eventail website : www.eventails.net.

⁸ Bull (D.) & Roger (R.), Schiffler, Atglen (PA), 2012, p. 101.

⁹ Those bottles of « Joffre-75 » were marketed as soon as Summer 17.

The *Gloire des Alliés*



Through all those examples we have seen that the flags are an important help for dating the fans. We will dig into this matter with an impressive series of Allies Flags Fans that most collectors surely now : the “*Gloire des Alliés*”. Those fans are literally “flags fans” as the sticks act as the poles of the flags, the “*palmettes*” being so put aside on the upper part, wavy cut to simulate the effect of wind¹⁰.

We have three kind of them in our collection (See pictures : *obverses and reverses*) that we shall call A, B and C.



¹⁰ This feature was not used on the complimentary fans of FANA 2014 Assemblage held in San Antonio (USA) built on this model (flags of the State: Spanish, French, Mexican, Texan, Confederate and United States).

All have seven ordinary wood blue sticks, metal rivet and loop, and a small sheet of paper at mid length of the “gorge”, making them a kind of “cabriolet” fans. All are printed with flags on the upper part (obverse only) -and texts on the lower (obverse and reverse). But they are different, as the below table shows:

	Type A	Type B	Type C
Flags from L to R	UK (red ensign), Serbia, Italy, Belgium, Japan, Russia, France	Italy, UK (red ensign), Japan, Serbia, Belgium, Russia, France	Italy, UK (red ensign), Japan, Serbia, Belgium, United States, France
Obverse Text	<i>Gloire aux Combattants</i> (Glory to the Combatants) – Printed in blue, golden edge.	<i>La Gloire des Alliés - Eugène Clicquot Reims Champagne. Maison fondée en 1894.</i> – Printed in gold on a tricolour ribbon.	D° type B
Reverse Text	d° Obverse.	<i>Héroïques Alliés Demandez partout une coupe de “Gloire”</i> (Heroic Allies, ask everywhere for a glass of “Gloire”)	<i>La France et ses Alliés fêteront la Victoire définitive du Droit en buvant une coupe “de Gloire”</i> (France and her Allies will celebrate the definitive Victory of Law by drinking a glass “of Gloire”)
Reverse illustration	None	Near the reverse text are printed two (then) typical Champagne “coupes”.	d° Type B
Patent, poles	Printed on the right of the French Flag, “Déposé” (Patented). The poles ends are visible.	Printed on the right of the Italian Flag, “Déposé” (Patented). The poles ends are less visible than on Type A.	Printed on the right of the US Flag, “Déposé” (Patented). The poles ends of the flags are almost hidden by the paper.
Other			The US flag paper is obviously of a lesser quality than the others.
Our datation	1916 ?	1916-1917	1918

Those fans –at least Types B & C- are quite often seen (e.g. it was the N°123 of the *War and Peace* catalogue) but also misdated. For instance in F. de Perthuis *Eventails*, the Type B is shown, but said to be “ca 1918”. The same is featured on the “*Maisons de Champagne*” website as “1920”. A Type C fan was sold in a Paris auction in May 2002 and, although noted “*Cuvée de la victoire d’Eugène Clicquot à Reims*”, was dated 1916. The date we give are not definite. A poster by Henri Grand’Aigle for the Eugène Clicquot champagne “*La Gloire des Alliés*” is known, which shows a kind of heroic Bacchus, using a bottle as a club, and a frightened German soldier. Alas it is not dated. Some other special “War Champagnes” were marketed: the “*Champagne de la Victoire*”, the “*Qui vive ? - Champagne*”, and even a “*Champagne Verdun*”. (see also p. 44 for a satirical view of this – Ed).

However this implication of the so-French *Champagne* to celebrate the Allies, and encouraging them till the final Victory is a part of WWI life. What did the soldiers think, in the cold, stinky, and muddy trenches about people drinking Champagne in the hope of Victory ? I do not know. One of my grand-fathers died in 1940, his longtime disease mainly due to poison gas. The other I knew well. I am not sure he has (or would have) liked this war champagne very much: WWI had been horrible, and he did not like to speak about.

Pierre-Henri Biger, June 2014



Picture left : A post-Victory fan, with flags of Brazil, the U.K., Belgium, USA, France, Italy, Romania, Serbia. "After the flood of atrocities, the rainbow of Glory". Signed by Cam' Boulanger. This scarce signature is known only on this Faucon fan and on some miniature WW1 fans (cf. Ondine Pavy-Pluvinage). On June 29th 1917, a fan leaf showing *Les Forges de Vulcain*, painted on skin by Camille Boulanger, was offered by "Mademoiselle Camille Boulanger" in an auction sale organized by the *Syndicat de la Presse* for "les éprouvés de la Guerre" (lot 450, p. 84) au Petit Palais, Champs-Élysées, Paris. We suppose she is the same person. Did she stop painting ? Or married and changed her name ? Who knows ?

Addendum : l'art d'accommoder les restes (Making the most of leftovers)



1923 Advertising fan for (reverse) Source Béatrix-Vals; offered by Casino Béatrix. On the obverse, France (Marianne), wrapped in her national flag, welcomes some of the other WW1 allied nations: Britannia, Belgium, Japan, Russia, Serbia, and the USA. Russia and the USA together may date this fan in a short period of 1917, and explain the void phylactery as well as a later reuse for business purposes. The source and Casino Béatrix (inaugurated in 1923) were located in Vals-les-Bains, Ardèche, France.