



# US Guadalcanal Flag

**Client** Ivanhoe RSL

**Services** Textiles Conservation

## Overview

As the first American flag on the beach during the famous Battle of Guadalcanal (link: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Guadalcanal>), this flag is an important piece of WWII history. Following the Battle, Colonel HA Cavanaugh brought it with him to Australia, where he emigrated after the war. In 1957 he presented it to the Ivanhoe RSL and it has been in their possession ever since.

## Condition

After many years in storage, the flag was in much need of conservation and repair. Primarily made out of silk, it has embroidered stars and a heavy braid border, and is attached to a long wooden pole. Antique silks are quite fragile by nature, and so, over time the piece had fallen out of shape and its colours had faded quite significantly. There were also several insect holes across its surface.

## Treatment

ICS was approached by Ivanhoe RSL to conserve and frame the flag. The process involved:

- Removing the flag from its pole
- Carrying out a thorough surface clean
- Stabilising stains and holes in the silk
- Humidifying and flattening the flag to bring it back into shape
- Attaching the flag to a fabric-covered, acid-free backing board, and
- Framing the flag (along with its pole) to conservation standards

## Unveiling

The flag was recently re-dedicated at the MCG and presented to US Vice-President, Joe Biden. It was a symbolic choice of venue as the First Regiment of the First Division of the United States Marine Corps (who held the flag during the Battle) briefly made camp at the MCG whilst on leave. Our Senior Textiles Conservator, Skye Firth, was honoured to be part of the proceedings, and was able to discuss the conservation of the flag with Vice-President Biden.



*After Treatment and Framing*



*Before Treatment*



*During treatment*



Skye Firth in conversation with US Vice President Joe Biden following re-dedication of the flag

