



# Hangar History

The story of our theatre's unusual home begins in 1912, when the Ithaca Municipal Airport opened with a single hangar and airstrip in what is today's Cass Park. The site was ideal for testing the airplanes being produced by Ithaca's then-bustling aviation business, including the Thomas-Morse Aircraft Corporation's famous WWI plane, "Tommy."

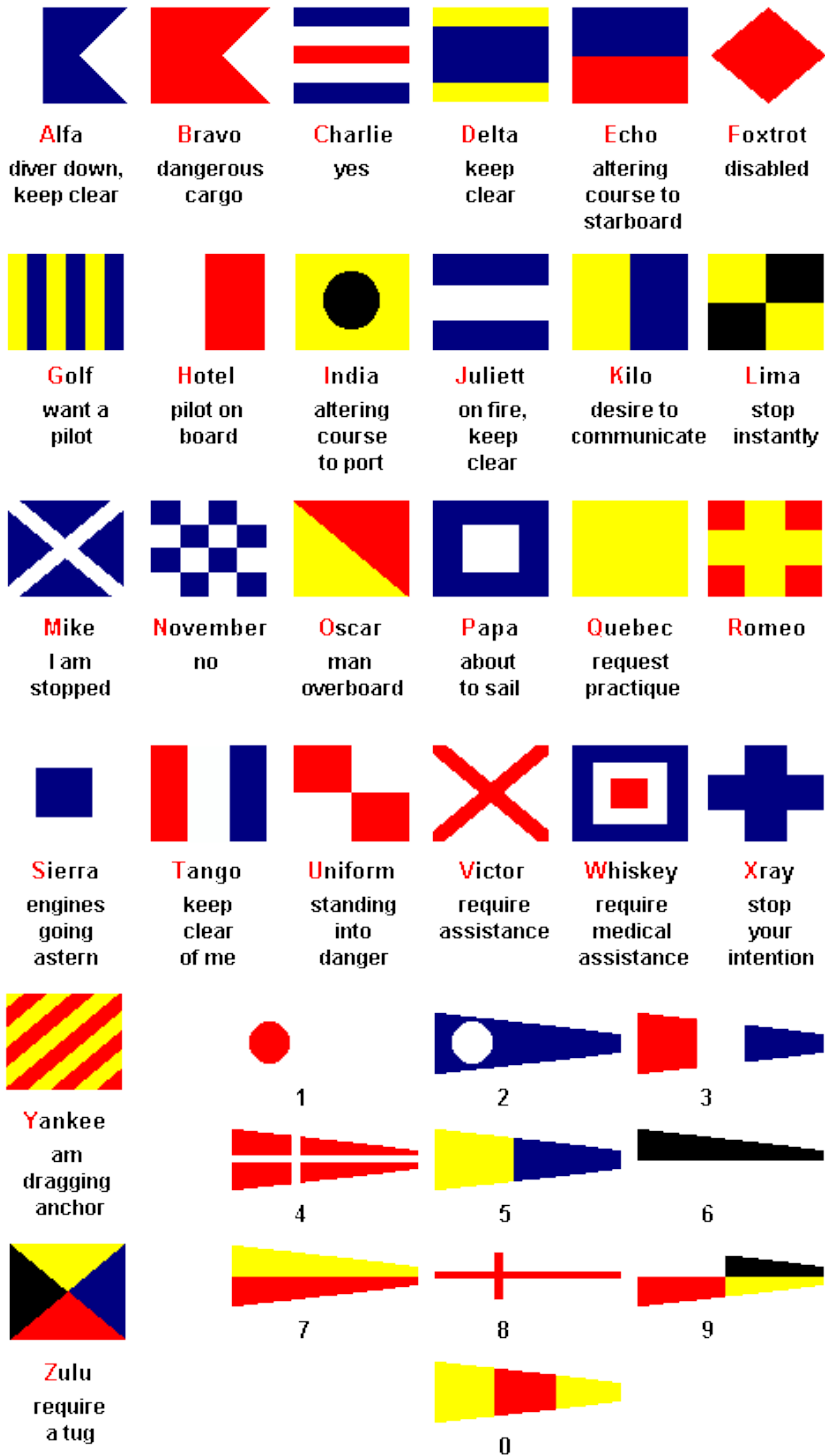
During the Depression, a Civil Works Administration project expanded the airport with asphalt runways and a two-story glass, steel, and cinder-block hangar—the foundation of today's theatre. Huge crowds attended the September 17, 1934 opening, celebrated with fireworks and parachute jumps. WWII was the municipal airport's busiest era, when over 4,000 pilots trained here. But as commercial aviation grew, it required longer runways. When Cornell opened an airport on the East Hill in 1948, use of the lakeside facility gradually decreased until it closed in July 1966. The hangar then languished, used for storage of City equipment.

The crucial step that transformed the hangar into a real theatre came in 1973, when CAI chair Tom Niederkorn wrote to then-Governor Nelson Rockefeller requesting that the \$100,000 he had personally donated for a performing arts center be released to renovate the hangar. His positive answer encouraged other donors. Construction by builder Raymond McElwee started in spring 1975, and the Hangar Theatre had its inaugural performance on July 11. In 1988 a costume and set shop was built next to the main building. Finally, thanks to strong community support, the successful "Hangar for All Seasons" capital campaign raised \$4 million for a complete renovation in 2010, creating a year-round performance venue.

We celebrate our building's aeronautical past in many ways, from the name of our volunteer corps, PROPS, to the photo of Amelia Earhart in the theatre's lobby. The Hangar's logo features a red flag, the international navigational symbol for the letter "B" or "Bravo," echoing the cries of delighted theatre audiences.



**This red flag represents the international navigational symbol for the letter "B" or "Bravo". This symbol respectfully acknowledges our building's storied past and present standing, while propelling us towards our exciting future.**

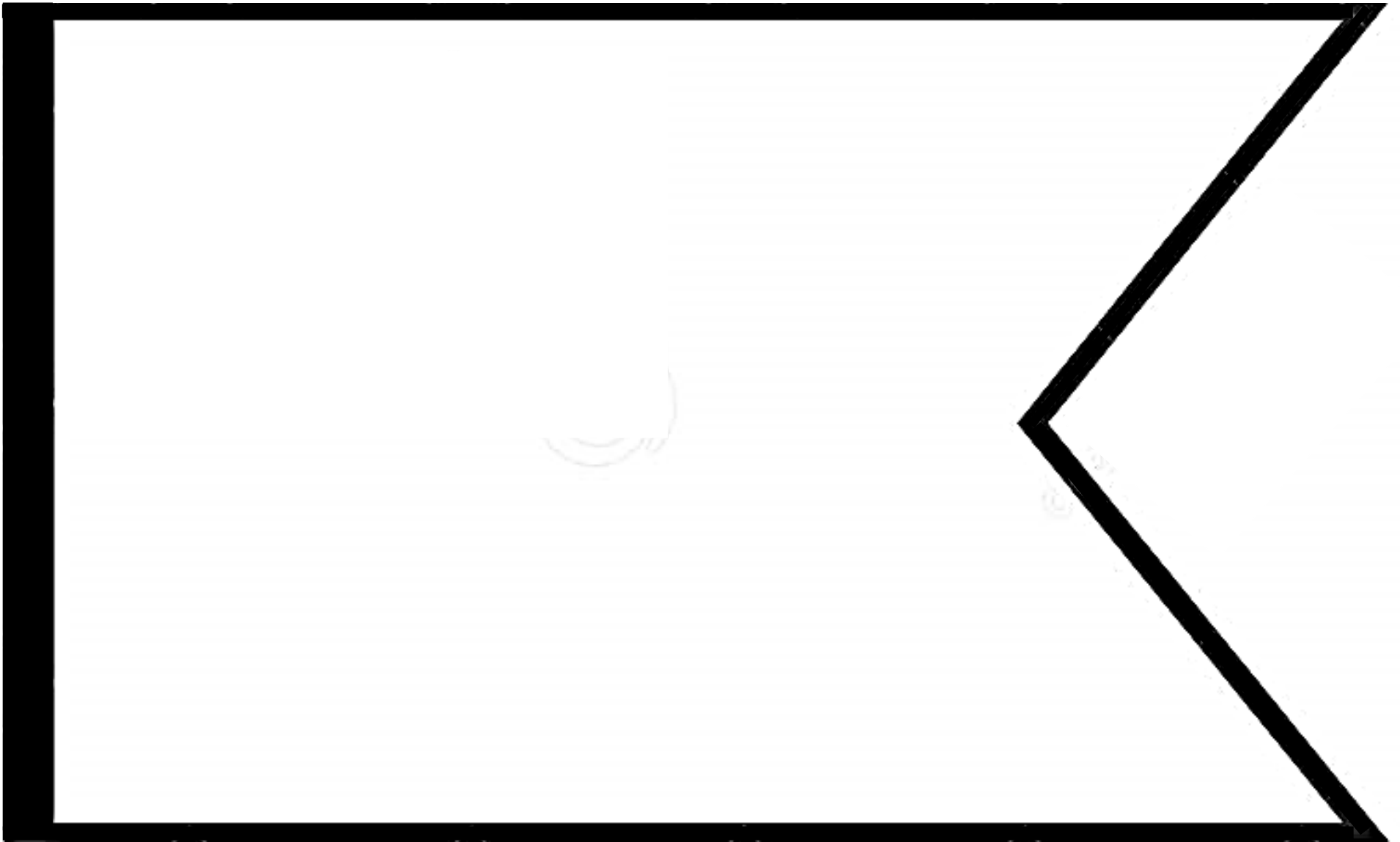


## Why do we say **BRAVO** at a theater?

At the end of a play, you may hear audience members shouting “**Bravo!**” while the actors take their bows. This is a way to tell the actors that they did a good job, and you liked their performance!



Hangar Theatre Company uses the Bravo flag to remind you of our history as an airplane hangar, and to give a big “**Bravo!**” to our wonderful actors!



**My flag represents:** \_\_\_\_\_