



BLUE SHIELD

25th anniversary

Protecting Heritage in Crisis

- 6 June 2021 -

Communication Kit

It's a great privilege to represent the Blue Shield at this landmark time. The organisation has gone from strength to strength and it's a testimony to the vision and hard work of people around the world. Only when heritage professionals work in partnership with governments, local communities, the humanitarian sector and those in uniform can heritage truly be protected during crisis. That was the vision of our founders, and one we are proud to continue to today.

- Peter Stone, President of the Blue Shield-

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PRESS RELEASE

*You can't protect people without protecting their heritage...
the two are completely indivisibly linked.*
- Peter Stone, President of the Blue Shield-

REFLECTION – COMMEMORATION – CELEBRATION

The past twelve months have been amongst the most challenging in Blue Shield's 25-year history. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced all of us in the Blue Shield family around the world to adapt our plans and adopt new ways of working 'virtually' so as to fulfil the capacity building and training activities that were planned, continue our advocacy and cultural diplomacy, provide expert advice and guidance on CPP legislation, and respond to emergencies such as the 4th of August explosion in Beirut, Lebanon. BSI has participated as a heritage expert in training exercises with NATO forces and UNIFIL. In February, 2020 we signed an MOU with the ICRC, followed later in the year by a Letter of Intent with NATO and an agreement with UNIFIL. BSI has also taken part in international forums and policy discussions on cultural property protection and cultural heritage often as a keynote speaker. Our Blue Shield national committees have been the glue that has held us all together, organising webinars and online conferences, participating in seminars, and marking key heritage milestones, and almost all of it online. Four new national committees, from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, have been accredited in the past year alone, bringing our Blue Shield family to 28, with more national committees in formation. We offer them a heartfelt welcome and all our support.

If there can be anything positive to be said about the last few months of uncertainty and concern, it is that the pandemic has made us a more innovative, creative and resilient organisation. It has challenged us far beyond what we thought we were capable of, and we have met that challenge head on, to come through stronger than ever before. We have a clearer vision of how our role as experts committed to the protection of the world's cultural property, tangible and intangible, in the event of conflict and natural or human-made disaster, can contribute in partnership with others across the heritage, humanitarian and uniformed sectors to bring CPP to the forefront of the international communities' agendas, as well as at regional, national and local level, where communities are at the cultural front line of the action.

As we mark our anniversary, we will not only be looking back over the past, and what we have achieved, but also taking stock of where we are now, in these unprecedented times of change, and assessing how we are meeting that challenge. But most of all, we will be looking to the future, to the next 25 years, and what we hope we will be able to achieve to safeguard cultural property and natural heritage around the world for future generations.

CELEBRATE WITH US!



The Blue Shield International Board, Elected 2020

Left to right, top to bottom

Peter Stone, President

Kidong Bae, Vice-President and elected representative of the Korean National Committee

Hamady Gaye, elected representative from the Senegalese National Committee

Lidia Klupsz, elected representative from the Polish National Committee

Klaus Weschenfelder, elected representative from the German National Committee,

Peter Keller, Director-General of ICOM

Emilie Lleumas, Chair of ICA Expert Group on Emergency Management and Disaster Preparedness.

Gerald Leitner, Secretary General of IFLA

Bijan Rouhani, Vice President of ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness (ICORP)

*Protection of people during armed conflict means
protection of their cultural property too.*
- Yves Daccord, then Director-General of the ICRC -

PEOPLE AND HERITAGE: 25 YEARS

For 25 years, Blue Shield has worked to advocate for the protection of cultural heritage in wars, disasters, and emergencies.

What is it we are protecting?

Cultural heritage protection is not only about safeguarding monuments and sites, and the contents of museums, libraries and archives, it's also about preserving the things that ordinary people and communities identify with and cherish as part of their identity. This is why we need to listen to local communities and involve them in all discussions and decisions about the protection of their cultural heritage

When people are displaced because of conflict or disasters, they have to leave their immovable cultural property behind, but their intangible heritage — music, song, dance, poetry, and art — go with them and keep their culture and heritage alive in new surroundings. It should be protected as much as the communities it is a part of

The last 25 years have seen a rise in armed non-state groups, and internal conflicts. If we are to convince everyone that cultural heritage needs to be protected and not destroyed, we need to understand what is sacred to each of them - and why. We must work to engage people in dialogue to find common ground on which to build respect and tolerance

It is not only the heritage sector whose role it is to protect cultural property. We are all responsible for safeguarding our past for the generations to come.

This anniversary is an opportunity for us to:

Advocate for the Blue Shield as a key organisation protecting cultural property in crisis

Raise awareness of the work of the Blue Shield around the world

Reflect over 25 years of work...

...and look forward to the next 25 years

Promote the value of cultural heritage as a vital element of the peace and security of communities

We may not be able to change humanity at once, but if we can continue the dialogue we might be able to increase people's awareness of the consequences of conflict and lack of preparedness.... And we must persevere at this. One of the great challenges for cultural heritage in the 21st-century will not be restoration or authenticity. Rather it will be about the value, meaning and protection of heritage...within an environment of conflict and recovery.

- Dinu Bumbaru, Founder -

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

Our anniversary is an opportunity to reflect over 25 years of work and look forward to the next 25 years.

Reflection - Panel Discussion "The creation of the Blue Shield, 6 June 1996"

We're starting our anniversary with a panel discussion with the four people who founded Blue Shield on 6 June 1996, looking back at what inspired them, and their vision for the organisation, to be chaired by the first President of the Blue Shield Association, Karl Habsburg

Date: Monday 7 June 2021

Time: 12.30 – 14.00 British Summertime (GMT+1)

Register for free here: <https://forms.ncl.ac.uk/view.php?id=11480496>

- Speakers -



Patrick Boylan

then Vice-President of ICOM



Dinu Bumbaru

then member of the International Executive Committee of ICOMOS



George Mackenzie

then ICA Deputy Secretary-General



Marie-Thérèse Varlamoff

then Director of IFLA Preservation and Conservation Core Activity, IFLA

- Chaired by -



Karl Habsburg

Former President of the Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield, and first President of the Blue Shield

If you have a threat or an actual disaster you need to look to the whole of the conservation and cultural heritage family for support.

- Patrick Boylan, Founder -

Commemoration

Blue Shield was named after the distinctive protective emblem in the 1954 Hague Convention - the symbol that indicates important cultural heritage to be protected during conflict, and the people who risk their lives to do so. This year, we're raising awareness of our namesake, by asking people to nominate blue shields around the world.

Whether they indicate protected people, or their heritage, or are used in training and awareness raising, we love them!

Want to learn more - visit [the Gallery on our website](#), and nominate a shield yourself...

Celebration - Events

That event will be followed by a number of others throughout the year, culminating in an anniversary conference in December as we celebrate our achievements and look to our aspirations for the future.

Speakers will include:

- The current representatives of our founding four organisations
 - Our key partners - UNESCO, ICRC, NATO
-

Since its creation it has been obvious that the efficiency of ICBS would be enhanced by the creation of national Blue Shield Committees. It is vital for the international initiative to be taken up and supported by local initiatives. The real value comes when you can transfer the international cooperation to a national and sub-national level and get direct cooperation.

- Marie-Thérèse Varlamoff, Founder -

CELEBRATE WITH YOUR NATIONAL COMMITTEE

We can't celebrate alone – we want to celebrate with you!

This anniversary celebrates just how far Blue Shield has come in 25 short years. Since the first national committees were founded in 2000, we have grown so much and now have 28 committees around the world, dedicated to protecting heritage. This anniversary is also a celebration of your work and we want to tell the world about you!

We want to advocate for the Blue Shield as a key, global organisation protecting cultural property in crisis and raise awareness of the work of the Blue Shield around the world.

How can we do that together?

→ Be an advocate!

Advocate for the role of Blue Shield in protecting heritage in crisis. Tell local, regional, and national authorities about your work, and why protecting heritage in crisis matters!

Spread information about our anniversary in your national press, on social media and on your website, and use it to tell everyone about your work as a member of the Blue Shield.

→ Share your work with each other!

We've set up a programme of talks to encourage national committees to share their work with each other over the year. Have you signed up yet?

→ Share your work with the world!

We'd like to record a series of short interviews with key members of all our national committees which we're going to put online, showcasing the work we do protecting cultural heritage in crisis.

→ Get involved!

Run your own events and tell us all about them so we can tell the world!

Communicate, communicate, communicate, this is the word. Using all possible media: conferences, the press, television etc. It is essential that people be aware that Culture is an intermingling of archives, libraries, museums, monuments and many other items that are indispensable to build our future and that this cultural heritage has to be preserved as a priority.

- Marie-Thérèse Varlamoff, Founder -

ORGANISING EVENTS - IDEAS AND TIPS

Amidst the backdrop of Coronavirus fears and gloom, event organizers, large venue promoters and cultural institutions have needed to stop their daily in-person activities and have made tough decisions to cancel their events. We want you to stay safe, but that doesn't mean you can't get involved!

We've gathered some ideas, strategies and top tips to help you take a deep dive into hosting successful, active and sparkling virtual events.

Events

Live streaming on Zoom, Google Meet, TEAMS, etc

HOST A TALK: Show the work of your committee - and your partners

- Get some insight into the key areas affecting your work today. Presentations, interviews, panel discussions, Q&A, or "fireside chat" - the virtual world offers plenty of options
- Engage with partners - Blue shield can be the icebreaker!
- Explore a particular event or crisis - go beyond discussions and make a virtual tour

CREATE AN ONLINE EXHIBITION of your work

- Host a virtual poster session
- Organize online or in person exhibition rooms
-

WRITE A BLOG about events you've held, and work you've done

- Interview key people
- Share testimonials

CREATE A PODCAST to make your voice heard

MAKE A TIMELINE of your committee from its foundation (using [this free tool](#))

MAKE A FACT SHEET about your committee and your work

Communicate, communicate, communicate, this is the word. Using all possible media: conferences, the press, television etc. It is essential that people be aware that Culture is an intermingling of archives, libraries, museums, monuments and many other items that are indispensable to build our future and that this cultural heritage has to be preserved as a priority.

- Marie-Thérèse Varlamoff, Founder -

Top Tips!



BE CREATIVE: Start each event with an icebreaker ([Find out more about icebreakers](#))

ENGAGE YOUR FOLLOWERS: You'll be surprised what memories they have of you!

- Make sure everyone has opportunity to speak
- Get beyond the icons and humanize people - encourage them to share a photo to show the person behind the screen
- Announce events in advance
- Create chat rooms
- Encourage presenters and attendees to share ongoing discussions widely
- Ask attendees for their own examples

KEEP THE VIBE: Informal meetings let you continue the conversation

- Use virtual meetings to discuss things further
- Stick to the plan and make specific questions
- Record streamed events and post them later
- Organize online exhibitions (photos, posters, etc.) or create a Live Stream!

KEEP IN TOUCH: Distribute a mailing list to keep in touch (with permission, of course)

- Hold a post-event get together - there are some great virtual platforms for social interactions

BE SMART: Don't forget to *Check the Tech!* And Have a backup for your event platform

- Don't forget the time difference - by going virtual you can run your event for people around the world
 - [See some tips and tricks of hosting online meeting in this video](#)
-

Communicate, communicate, communicate, this is the word. Using all possible media: conferences, the press, television etc. It is essential that people be aware that Culture is an intermingling of archives, libraries, museums, monuments and many other items that are indispensable to build our future and that this cultural heritage has to be preserved as a priority.

- Marie-Thérèse Varlamoff, Founder -

Social Media

Twitter Facebook Website

MAKE THE MOST OF IT: Leverage social media to share your event moments and memories

- Use Twitter to develop understanding of Blue Shield in your country
- Use Facebook to share your history
- Use Clubhouse to talk live to your followers and give the floor to them

BE ENGAGING: Ask your followers to share a picture of what Blue Shield means to them

- Talk about your achievements and marathons
- Tell people about your work - and the next steps?
- Tell your 25-year story, and what you think want for the future
- Introduce your team members. Let people see the faces protecting cultural property in crisis

BE SMART: Update your website with posters and visual aids

- Broadcast the event on social media
- Make a timeline since creation

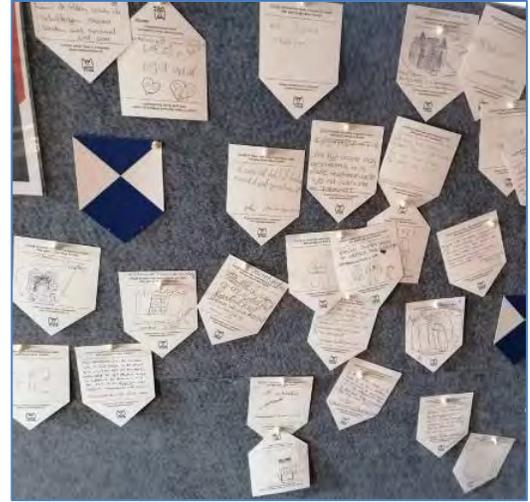
HASHTAGS: #blueshield25 #culturalpropertyprotection #CPP

Cultural property is about people, and what it means to them. Ask your followers to share their experiences.

Make sure to share your events with us!

We're making a dedicated Gallery on our website to showcase our anniversary. If you have something you want to share, let us know!





The Blue Shield today

Top to bottom, left to right

Blue Shield International (BSI) attends NATO exercise ARCADE Globe – Blue Shield France runs training with emergency services – BSI attends Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict meeting – BSI supports UNESCO 1954 Hague Convention training in Georgia – Volunteers for BS Lebanon protect heritage following Beirut blast – BSI supports NATO Exercise Trident Jaguar - BS UK speaks at cultural property protection conference – BS General Assembly 2017, Vienna - BS UK supports UK Defence training – BS Netherlands co-organises cultural protection campaign – BSI at NATO exercise Trident Jackal - BS Georgia conducts cultural heritage protection first aid course with ICCROM at the National Archive – BSI attends UNESCO 1999 Second Protocol Anniversary Conference – BSI attends UNESCO 1954 Hague Convention training in Palestine – PS Peru provides emergency support during fire in Lima

One of the strengths of the initiative of the Blue Shield is that although it is principally oriented toward the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict it does have an important role in mitigating and managing disasters ... I think that's one of the aspects that makes it a truly international initiative and of universal appeal.... In moments of natural disaster the same need for cooperation exists and such cooperation results in the same benefits.

- George McKenzie, Founder -

OUR ANNIVERSARY

What is the Blue Shield?

25 years ago, four international heritage organisations recognised the need for greater cooperation to protect cultural heritage at risk from conflict and disaster: the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). Together, on 6 June in 1996, they founded the International Committee of the Blue Shield, with a vision for national committees across the world. Today simply called the Blue Shield, it is:

“committed to the protection of the world’s cultural property, and is concerned with the protection of cultural and natural heritage, tangible and intangible, in the event of armed conflict, natural- or human-made disaster.”

(Articles of Association 2.1 2016)

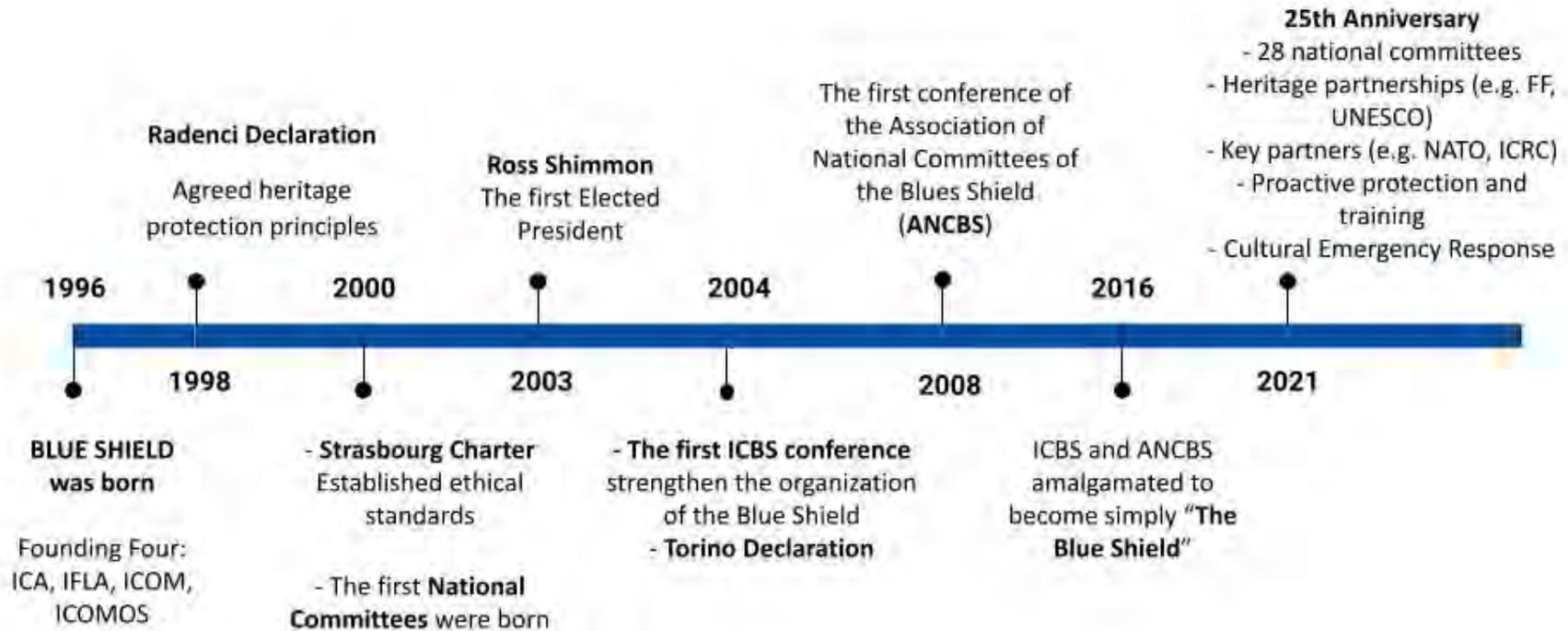
Often referred to as the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross, the Blue Shield is a non-governmental, non-profit, international organisation, working to protect museums, monuments, archaeological sites, archives, libraries and audio-visual material, and significant natural areas, as well as intangible heritage. It is composed of national committees operating across the world, coordinated by an International Board. Members include the founding organisations, governments, emergency services, armed forces, academics, and all those with responsibility for heritage protection in crisis.

We found our work in key international frameworks and law, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and in particular the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which designates our namesake - the distinctive blue shield emblem signifying cultural property protected in conflict. This landmark legislation was followed in 1999 by a Second Protocol, which recognises the Blue Shield as an official advisory body to the international Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (article 27.3).

This year we are celebrating our 25th anniversary. Blue Shield has 28 national committees and more under construction. However, we are an almost entirely voluntary and largely unfunded organisation, supported primarily by Newcastle University in the UK. Despite that, we continue to grow. We have signed key agreements with the ICRC, NATO, and others, and are advocating for heritage protection at national and international levels.

As heritage continues to be threatened by crises around the world,
the Blue Shield stands ready to help.

TIMELINE



The Blue Shield

“brings together the knowledge, experience and international networks of four expert organisations: the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). These represent an unrivalled body of expertise to advise and assist in responding to events such as war in former Yugoslavia, hurricane damage in Central America or earthquakes in the Far East.

The great strength of Blue Shield is that it is cross-sectoral, bringing together professions and institutions across the cultural spectrum. By pooling their expertise, and drawing in military authorities and emergency services, the Blue Shield offers a powerful model for managing disaster risks at a national level.”

George McKenzie, ICA Deputy Secretary-General, Founder

OUR FOUNDERS



PRESS RELEASE



BLUE SHIELD

25th anniversary

Protecting Heritage in Crisis

Looking forward to looking back

This year, Blue Shield is celebrating its 25th anniversary, and the coming six months will be filled with events that mark our work as a leading heritage NGO committed to the protection of the world's tangible and intangible cultural property, when threatened by conflict and natural or human-made disaster.

Professor Peter Stone, President of the Blue Shield and UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection and Peace at Newcastle University, UK, said:

It's a great privilege to represent the Blue Shield at this landmark time. The organisation has gone from strength to strength and it's a testimony to the vision and hard work of people around the world. Only when heritage professionals work in partnership with governments, local communities, the humanitarian sector and those in uniform can heritage truly be protected during crisis. That was the vision of our founders, and one we are proud to continue to today.

The current pandemic will prevent us from meeting in person, but it won't stop us from travelling the globe virtually from Brussels to Buenos Aires, Tblissi to Timbuktu, and most places in between, to share the celebrations with our 28 National Committees and take part in the events they will be organising until the end of the year. We will be celebrating on social media, too, sharing stories, photos, videos and news on our different Twitter and Facebook channels using the hashtag #BlueShield25.

Blue Shield, or the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) as it was then called, was founded by representatives of four international NGOs, International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), on the 6th June 1996 in the Hague. Dinu Bumbaru (ICOMOS),

George Mackenzie (ICA) Marie-Therèse Varlamoff (IFLA), and Patrick Boylan (ICOM), the ‘Founding Four’ as they have come to be known, will start the celebrations by sharing thoughts about their hopes and aspirations for ICBS at the time, during an online panel discussion moderated by former Blue Shield President, Karl von Habsburg, on the 7th June.

For Blue Shield today, what began as a simple idea has developed into a holistic vision of cultural property protection in cooperation or partnership, with the heritage, humanitarian and ‘uniformed’ sectors, as well as with others who share Blue Shield’s belief that although people’s lives must always come first, the protection of people and the protection of their cultural heritage are actually indivisibly intertwined being intrinsic elements of a nation’s or a community’s identity, sense of belonging and wellbeing.

Although we are looking forward to looking back, we will be looking to the future, too, with these areas of our work in mind: advocating for the Blue Shield as a key organisation protecting cultural property in crisis; raising awareness of the work of the Blue Shield around the world, which remains a largely unfunded, voluntary organisation; building on the past 25 years to move ahead during the next 25; promoting the value of cultural heritage as a vital element of efforts to ensure the peace and security of communities; and promoting the implementation of cultural property protection as a vital element of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in our work.

We are following the path that the founding four dreamed of for ICBS 25 years ago, and as the events over the coming six months around the world will show, Blue Shield’s commitment to the protection of the world’s cultural property when threatened by conflict or disaster remains as steadfast as ever.

For more information please contact:

Professor Peter G Stone
President, The Blue Shield
Blueshield.international@theblueshield.org

The Blue Shield is an international advisory body to the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict on the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. It has 28 national committees (with more under construction) across the world and an international board composed of elected members and representatives of ICA, IFLA, ICOM, ICOMOS, the major international organisations responsible for cultural heritage. The Blue Shield is *“committed to the protection of the world’s cultural property, and is concerned with the protection of cultural and natural heritage, tangible and intangible, in the event of armed conflict, natural- or human-made disaster”*. See <https://theblueshield.org/>



BLUE SHIELD

25th anniversary

Protecting Heritage in Crisis

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www.theblueshield.org

Download the Anniversary Logo, this pack, and other information at:
<https://theblueshield.org/download/anniversary-information/>

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