

VFW Marks



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS®

The VFW Logo

Same Proud History. Same Strong Commitment. Bold New Look.

This logo includes an artistic representation of service stripes, easily recognizable insignia indicative of military service. Worn on most service uniforms, they denote length of service. As such, the first and leaner of the two service stripes represents our steadfast entry into our second century of service to America's veterans, service members and their families. The second, broader stripe represents our first storied century of service, spanning back to 1899.

The bold letters and sharp angles of this text represent the strength and stability of our organization, and the clarity with which we work to fulfill our mission. The use of vibrant red represents the danger our members have faced, the bloodshed they experienced and the energy with which our organization operates. The gallant gold represents our members' achievements, acts of valor and the unique VFW eligibility status they have earned. Further, it epitomizes our gold standard of service.

The custom upper-case letters were especially designed with an extended width to symbolize an organization that is well established. Combined with a tight letter spacing, these letters visually build a solid and confident block that reflects the unified culture of our organization. In addition to the direct metaphor of the stripes, the visual progression leading to the build of the letter "V" represents our sustained and forward movement into achieving the VFW's mission. In order to bring the acronym and title together, the gold stripes and the "V" from "VETERANS" have been carefully drawn to align on the same axis, emphasizing the element of continuity.



The VFW Seal

The VFW seal, the insignia of our organization is 1,000 years old.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was founded in 1899 but the Cross of Malta was created hundreds of years ago by a group of men known as the Crusaders. Those men were warriors who campaigned, fought, and willingly sacrificed their lives in defense of human liberties. Those early warriors served mankind in many other ways – always under the sign of the Maltese Cross, the symbolic banner of their own choice.

Why did the Veterans of Foreign Wars select the Cross of Malta as its emblem? What has been added to make the VFW insignia we know today? Let us look closely at our emblem for a few minutes. Let us understand its history and its present significance.

We see that the VFW insignia is the eight-pointed Maltese Cross on a background of radiating solar rays. Upon the Cross is superimposed the Great Seal of the United States, encircled by the name of our organization. What does the entire design mean?

Every detail in the VFW insignia has some definite meaning. The Cross, the rays and the seal together symbolize the character, vows and purposes distinguishing the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a vigorous order of men who have traveled far from home to fight for the principles to which they are pledged.

To understand fully the meaning of the Cross of Malta, we must look back nearly a thousand years to the Crusades, waged in the Middle East. There we see the Malta Cross as the insignia of the Knights of St. John, the world's first great brotherhood of men pledged to chivalry.

During the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Knights of St. John also fought gallantly, far from their homes, in defense of religious freedom. At the same time, they administered to the sick, the needy and to the poor.

The Knights of St. John were men from all walks of life. They were noblemen and priests, artisans, and laborers. Regardless of their birth, however, they were brothers bound by a common oath of unity, bravery, and service to mankind. Together they waged many fierce battles against intolerance. They carried their crusades across deserts and seas, into the Holy Land, Cyprus, Rhodes, and Malta. Those crusaders adopted the Cross of Malta as their insignia because its eight points symbolized the beatitudes prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount. Those are, in effect, (1) blessed are the poor in spirit, (2) the meek, (3) the pure, (4) the merciful and (5) the peacemakers (6) blessed are they that mourn and (7) seek righteousness and (8) they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

The Cross of Malta had a religious origin, but the Knights of St. John also made it the battle standard for all men, women, and children struggling against oppression. The things for which the crusaders fought a thousand years ago are identical to the present-day principles of Democracy – freedom, justice, and tolerance.

These are the reasons why a handful of American fighting men who founded the Veterans of Foreign Wars selected the Cross of Malta as their insignia. They were establishing a new brotherhood of crusaders from all walks of life who have gone into battlefields around the world to fight for human rights.

Between the eight points of the Cross the Veterans of Foreign Wars has added the sun's rays. These emphasize the vigor and warmth with which the present-day brotherhood is pledged to defend the nation and to extend its mercy. Over the Cross of Malta is superimposed the American eagle. Everyone recognizes this as the sacred symbol of a proud nation whose men through many generations have fought and sacrificed to preserve our way of living.

The VFW Cross of Malta represents the purposes of the modern overseas war veterans' organization, as set forth in official archives.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is chartered by the Congress of the United States. That charter prescribes specifically the character of this rapidly growing order.

Article I of the VFW Constitution also states that the objective of the order shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical and education; that its members shall preserve and strengthen comradeship; that they shall maintain allegiance to the government of the United States and fidelity to its laws; that the members shall foster true patriotism, extend American freedoms, and defend this nation from all enemies. When a person joins the Veterans of Foreign Wars they vow "in the presence of Almighty God and the members of this Order" to maintain loyalty to the government, to the VFW, and to their fellow comrades.

When the new member is given the Cross of Malta, they become part of a great brotherhood of overseas veterans. They pledge to keep on crusading with them for the freedom of mankind during the years of peace as well as in war. Men and women qualified to wear the VFW emblem have earned it honestly, and they wear it proudly.

That explains the symbolism of the VFW Cross of Malta. It expresses simply but adequately the character and the objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Usage of the VFW Cross of Malta is for special and distinguished situations only, generally reserved for official items to include:

- VFW covers and pins.
- Flags
- Awards
- Official executive correspondence
- Select signage.
- Select VFW Store items when the Cross of Malta can be reproduced consistently and in its entirety.