

Maltese cross

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Maltese cross** is identified as the symbol of an order of Christian warriors known as the Knights Hospitaller or Knights of Malta. It was originally the symbol of Amalfi, a small Italian republic of the 11th century. The cross is eight-pointed and has the form of four "V"-shaped arms joined together at their bases, so that each arm has two points. Its design is based on crosses used since the First Crusade. The eight points are said to symbolise the chivalric virtues:

- Loyalty
- Piety
- Frankness
- Bravery
- Glory and honour
- Contempt of death
- Helpfulness towards the poor and the sick
- Respect for the church

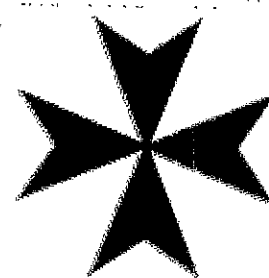
The Maltese cross remains the symbol of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and other Orders of St John, and St. John Ambulance. In recent centuries it has come to be adopted as the insignia of numerous orders of chivalry, and appears on the coat-of-arms of the Mecklenburg-Strelitz district. In Australia the Maltese Cross is part of the state emblem of Queensland.

In the United Kingdom, the Maltese Cross is the symbol used by Rifle Regiments, and has been incorporated into the badges of virtually all rifle units, including the amalgam, The Royal Green Jackets. The first postmark employed for the cancellation of the then new postage stamps in the 1840s was the shape of a Maltese cross and named accordingly. The Maltese cross also forms the basis for the design of the Order of the Bath. The Maltese cross is also the symbol of Neath Rugby Football Club in Neath, Wales.

In Sweden a Maltese Cross forms the basic form for all Royal Orders, such as Order of Seraphim and the Order of the Sword.

In Australia the Maltese Cross forms the logo for South Australian Ambulance Service logos.

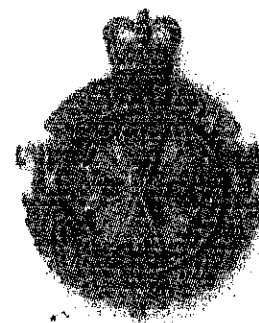
The Maltese cross flower (*Lychnis chalconica*) is so named because its petals are similarly shaped, though its points are more rounded into "heart"-like shapes. The Geneva drive, a device that translates a continuous rotation into an intermittent rotary motion, is also sometimes called a "Maltese cross mechanism" after the shape of its main gear.



Maltese cross



The insignia of a Serving Brother of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem



The Maltese Cross is featured on the badge of the Bermuda

It is considered one of the National symbols of Malta and used to be depicted on the two mils coin of the island prior to the removal of that denomination from circulation. It will be shown on the back of the one and two Euro coins which Malta is expected to introduce in January 2008. ^[1]

Regiment, heir to the
BVRC.

Similar crosses

Other crosses with spreading limbs are often mistakenly called "Maltese", especially the cross pattée. The Nestorian cross also is very similar to both of these. The cross of Saint Florian, used by firefighters and EMS personnel, is often confused with the Maltese cross; although it may have eight or more points, it also has large curved arcs between the points.

Maltese crosses have been adapted for use in the cross of Saint Lazarus and as part of the flag of Wallis and Futuna. It has been the official badge (combined with an ellipsoid in the center) of the Delta Phi Fraternity since 1833. The official symbol of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity is the cross pattée, though the organization's founder thought it was a Maltese cross when the organization was formed in 1865. A similar cross is also used by the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization.

Finally, the Maltese cross should not be mistaken for the George Cross, awarded to Malta by George VI of the United Kingdom in 1942, which is depicted on the flag of Malta.

References

- [^] <http://mfin.gov.mt/page.aspx?site=NECC&page=maltesecoins>

External links

- History of the Maltese cross
- History of the firefighters cross
- Simple method of sketching the cross neatly
- The Maltese Cross: A Cherished Symbol - Article

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maltese_cross"

Categories: [Cross symbols](#) | [Christian symbols](#)

- This page was last modified 08:09, 23 October 2007.
- All text is available under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License. (See **Copyrights** for details.)
Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a U.S. registered 501(c)(3) tax-deductible nonprofit charity.