

Meaning of the Air Force Symbol

Target Audience: All Personnel

Purpose

To describe the background and meaning of the Air Force symbol. This guide can be used at Wingman Day events to help facilitate group dialogue in reference to Air Force Heritage and their Core Values.

Description

The USAF symbol was thoughtfully crafted to represent the Air Force's history as well as the promise of the future of the armed forces branch. The symbol can take on two different forms depending on how you choose to see it: a medal of valor in service or our nation's emblem of freedom, an eagle.



Employ

The U.S. Air Force symbol honors the heritage of our past and represents the promise of our future. It retains the core elements of our Air Corps heritage -- the "Arnold" wings and star with circle -- and modernizes them to reflect our air and space force of today and tomorrow.

The symbol has two main parts. In the upper half, the stylized wings represent the stripes of our strength -- the enlisted men and women of our force. They are drawn with great angularity to emphasize our swiftness and power, and they are divided into six sections which represent our distinctive capabilities -- air and space superiority, global attack, rapid global mobility, precision engagement, information superiority, and agile combat support.

In the lower half are a sphere, a star and three diamonds. The sphere within the star represents the globe. It reminds us of our obligation to secure our nation's freedom with Global Vigilance, Reach and Power. The globe also reminds us of our challenge as an expeditionary force to respond rapidly to crises and to provide decisive aerospace power, worldwide.

The area surrounding the sphere takes the shape of a star. The star has many meanings. Its five points represent the components of our Total Force and family -- our active duty, civilians, Guard, Reserve and retirees. The star symbolizes space as the high ground of our nation's air and space force. The rallying symbol in all our wars, the star also represents our officer corps, central to our combat leadership.

The star is framed with three diamonds, which represent our core values -- integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do. The elements come together to form one symbol that presents two powerful images -- at once it is an eagle, the emblem of our nation, and a medal, representing valor in service to our nation.