

The VFW Tartan: Weaving Service, Sacrifice and Brotherhood

Designed by Army veteran Joshua Cannon, the official VFW tartan honors the shared history and service of VFW members

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In 2025, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) formally introduced the [official VFW tartan](#), a new symbol designed to reflect the organization’s enduring values, history and shared experience of overseas service. Created by VFW Life member Joshua Cannon, the tartan is authorized for wear by VFW members, VFW Auxiliary members, and their families.

Cannon is a native of western Pennsylvania whose family emigrated from Ireland and Scotland some 400 years ago. He served as a Sergeant in the Army from 2002-2010 and deployed to Iraq three times – first with a 99th Division Reserve company and later with the 502nd Regiment 101st Airborne.

“I’m very proud of my heritage and background,” he says. “Every generation in my family has served and fought for America in every American conflict. Because of people like my ancestors, Celtic culture inevitably is now part of the American fabric.”

But how did the new tartan come about?

Cannon explains, “A few years ago, I was in VFW Memorial Park Post 764 enjoying the camaraderie when a kilted comrade was also there. After discussing his tartan representation, I proposed that the VFW should be represented as well!

“So I then asked the Post, the District, State and National if I could design it, and after receiving permission I did.”

Tartans have long served as visual expressions of identity and belonging. Originating centuries ago as regional and familial patterns in Scotland, they have evolved into internationally recognized emblems adopted by military units, civic organizations and

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service groups. Today, organizational tartans are widely used to honor shared history, reinforce camaraderie and provide a tangible link between past service and present fellowship.

Cannon says he envisioned “multi-folded” uses for the VFW tartan such being worn by kilted regiments leading parades or as a formal element for weddings or funerals.

“Having been around kilts most of my life I’ve always noticed a lifted momentum of pride when someone represents their clan,” Cannon explains. “I am hopeful that this tartan will ignite another layer of pride for those involved with the Veterans of Foreign Wars.”

Design Rooted in VFW Identity

The tartan design itself, the “sett,” is the exact colors of the VFW Seal with a small thread of infantry blue added. They reflect key elements of the VFW mission and the experience of our members:

- Red signifies the dangers faced in foreign conflicts, the bloodshed endured and the energy with which the VFW continues to advocate for veterans.
- Gold represents valor, achievement and the unique eligibility earned through service in combat zones, while also reflecting the organization’s long-standing commitment to excellence in service.
- White symbolizes integrity, honor and the ideals VFW members have defended abroad and upheld at home.
- Navy reflects vigilance, perseverance and the steady resolve required to protect freedom across generations.
- Infantry Blue honors the legacy of America’s ground forces and the citizen-soldiers whose sacrifices form the foundation of the VFW.

The design is intended to be inclusive of the entire VFW community. Together, these elements create a bold tartan that is both distinctive and deeply meaningful for VFW members. Worn at commemorative events, formal occasions, and cultural gatherings, the tartan is intended to offer members a respectful way to acknowledge their service and their continued connection to fellow veterans.

Cannon imagines the VFW members as a family; a warrior clan in a sense. The tartan represents the unbreakable bond the members share and can be used in a way that weaves modern with ancient styles.

“The VFW is not just another 501. It’s an extended family that’s willing to fight with blood and pen for veterans’ freedoms and rights and the United States’ freedoms and rights.” says Cannon.

The VFW tartan is copywritten and also [registered with Scotland's National Register of Tartans](#), meaning it cannot be copied. Only mills with express permission from the VFW can weave it and only duly authorized artisans may make products from the cloth. USA Kilts Inc., based in Spring City, Pennsylvania, [is currently producing kilts and related products for the organization, which can be preordered here](#).