



What does this symbol mean?

The pentacle (or “pentagram” if it is not inscribed in a circle) has been used by many different cultures throughout history. This is very appropriate for modern Pagans who draw inspiration from a wide variety of different spiritual sources.

To most Pagans, the 5 points of the “pent” represent the four directions (North, East, South, & West) with a fifth point for Center or Inward. The points also correspond with the four elements: Earth, Air, Fire, & Water, with the fifth point representing the Spirit.

Some people automatically think of Satanism when they see an inverted pentacle (pointing down instead of up). This is misleading! Some Pagan traditions wear the symbol inverted at certain stages of initiation or at certain times of year. It is true that some Satanists wear inverted pentacles, but some choose to wear an inverted cross or other symbol. Meanwhile, many Pagans choose not to wear the “pent” because other symbols are less antagonistic or may have more personal meaning to them.

The bottom line is, when you see someone wearing a pentacle (up or down) or some other nifty symbol, just ask! ☺

Can I join your coven?

The East Anglia Military Pagans group is not a coven. Not all Pagans choose to belong to covens. Joining a coven is a very serious commitment. To some, it is as serious as entering into a marriage. For that reason, many covens ask prospective members to study with them for a year or longer before being invited to join.

Meanwhile, many Pagans are quite happy to practice as “solitaries.” Even without joining a coven, there are plenty of “open” groups that give members a chance to socialize, learn from each other, and even do rituals together.

The East Anglia Military Pagans are this second type of group. We meet at RAF Mildenhall every Thursday. (Please contact the base chapel for times and location.) We also periodically have Sabbat rituals at members’ houses, arrange carpools to regional Pagan events, or just get together to socialize.

You can find out more about us from our web site (below). From there, you can send a message to the list owner to ask about joining our email list if you like.

<http://www.geocities.com/eastangliamilitarypagans>

Bright blessings from the East Anglia Military Pagans!

This document has been reviewed and acknowledged for distribution by the RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath Wing Chaplains as of 30 August 2004.



What is Paganism?

Unfortunately, there’s no one simple answer to this question. Contemporary Paganism incorporates a diverse range of beliefs & practices that are mainly inspired by ancient (Pagan) cultures & religious practices. The modern religion is often referred to as “Earth-based spirituality” because practitioners revere Nature & strive to live in harmony with the rhythms of the Earth.

Some people call this religion Neopagan. Although we draw inspiration from the ancient Pagans, we do not intend to fully recreate their culture & spirituality. We try to learn from our ancestral past and incorporate the best of their ideas into our contemporary lives.

Although not all Neopagans share the same beliefs, many of us are polytheistic (believing in multiple gods/ goddesses) as well as pantheistic (all things are manifestations of Divinity).

For more in-depth information about Paganism and its various Paths, we refer you to the New Age section of your local bookshop. There are a lot of excellent books there (as well as a few that aren’t so great). Browse around & see if you find something that catches your interest.

What's the difference between Wicca & Paganism?

Wicca is one of the sects of Paganism. We call our sects Paths – Wicca, Druid, shamanism, and many more are all counted among the Neopagan religions. Within some Paths, there may be further subdivisions, usually called Traditions, such as Gardenarian Wicca or Dianic Wicca, etc. Many Pagans call themselves “Eclectic” which means that rather than following one specific Path, they draw on many different sources for their spirituality. Still others simply call themselves Pagans.

Do you cast spells?

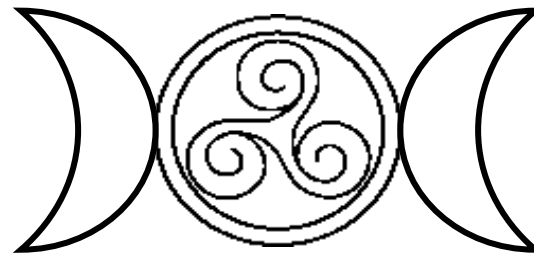
Most Pagans practice magick (spelled with a “k” to distinguish it from illusion/stage magic). This would be equivalent to members of other faiths who pray, light candles, and so on. As with all matters of our spirituality, we make every effort to practice good ethics. We would not use magick to harm or manipulate others. We remember the basic principle of “what goes around comes around.” For example, just as we would not want someone to interfere with our natural feelings, we would not try to make one person fall in love with another. Instead, we might do a general spell to attract loving people into our lives.

Do you practice Satanism/Devil Worship?

Most Pagans don't even believe in Satan. We certainly wouldn't worship anyone or anything that is the embodiment of all that is evil. So, obviously, the answer is “no.”

Do you practice sacrifice?

It is central to our spirituality that we respect Life in all its forms and that we always practice good ethics. So, we certainly would not perform “sacrifices,” either human or animal. Though we recognize that sometimes we cannot help causing some harm (such as plants & animals that we need to eat), we try to minimize the amount of harm we cause. For example, before a meal, a Pagan might say a few words of thanks as well as regret to those Beings who have lost their lives for the fulfillment of our needs.



Can military members practice Paganism?

Yes! Not only can Air Force personnel practice Paganism, we can indicate it on dog tags and in the MPF system. There are currently seven Pagan faiths recognized by the MPF system: Pagan, Wicca, Druid, shaman, Dianic Wicca, Gardenarian Wicca, & Seax Wicca. As of February 2004, there were over 1,500 active-duty Air Force members listing Pagan faiths in the MPF system.

Of course, it is generally not appropriate to discuss religion in the workplace, but Pagans also do not need to be “in the broom closet” unless it is by their own choice. In any case, whatever your beliefs, no one should be harassed about their religious preference in the workplace. If this happens (or has happened or is happening), please get in touch with a chaplain or appropriate advocate to discuss the matter.

For further information about Paganism in the U.S. military, please contact the Military Pagan Network (www.milpagan.org). MPN is a non-profit organization that provides information, networking, and advocacy for Pagans in the U.S. military.