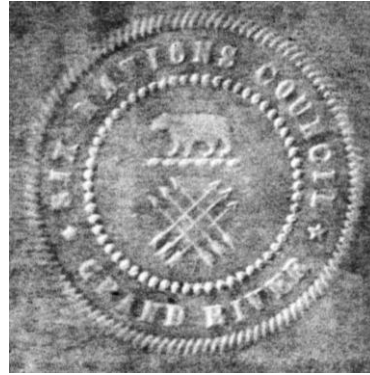


Six Nations Legacy Consortium

War of 1812

Military Legacy



When the first commemorative medallion was designed for veterans of the War of 1812, a lion represented Great Britain, a beaver represented Canada and an Eagle represented the Americans. However, there was no symbolic animal for the Native nations which participated.

The current letterhead of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy council of Chiefs has a logo of a black bear standing over six crossed around. The arrows represent the six Nations who were told to bundle their arrows together as a symbol of strength. The arrows also mimic the logs stacked on the council fire, a reference to the Chiefs in Council.

But why the black bear, of all nine clan animals? The answer may be in the old military alliance between Great Britain and the Six Nations. When the 125th Battalion (1st Overseas Battalion of 38th Regiment Dufferin Rifles), Canadian Expeditionary Force of Brantford formed in 1915 they created a cap badge with the image of a bear standing over several wood stick that are tied together. They were nicknamed the “Brants” and the wood sticks were a reference to one interpretation of Joseph Brant’s Mohawk name.

There is another connection to the black bear. The British forts often kept a black bear cub as a pet. Later, the black bear fur was used on the caps of the Royal Guards. To this very day, the fur on those caps comes from bears in Canada. The bear symbolizes the power, skill and courage of the soldier as well as the powerful medicine of the Native Warrior.