

Marcia Vexillum

— vexillology and military marches

Lars C. Stolt

Vexillology and military music have many points in common. The military banners and colours being the visual signs in the battle field correspond to the audible signs represented by the regimental calls and marches. The military marches have often established a connection with vexillological items as flags, banners and colours to the mutual advantage. Music instruments like bugles, trumpets and kettle drums are often provided with banners, and march titles often refer to flags and colours and their symbolic values.

The internationally best known example of a march with flag connection is *The Stars and Stripes forever*. It was written by the American ‘march king’ John Philip Sousa, returning from Europe 1896 in the ship Teutonic. The march was born of homesickness and conceived during Sousa’s journey home.

David Wallis Reeves, by Sousa called ‘The father of band music in America’, wrote in 1880 his *Flag March*, based on ‘The Star Spangled Banner’. Further American flag marches are *Flag of America* (George Rosenkrans), *Flag of freedom* (Frank Panella), *Flag of Victory* (Paul Yoder), *Under the Stars and Stripes* (Frank H Losey) and *Under One Flag* (Annibale Buglione).

The rich German march world presents many flag marches. The German ‘march king’ Hermann Ludwig Blankenburg offers several: *Mit der Siegesbanner*, *Mit Paradeflaggen*, *Unter dem Friedensbanner*, *Unter Freudenfahnen*, *Unter Kaisers Fahnen*, *Unter Preussens Fahne* and *Unter siegenden Fahnen*. Other German flag marches emanate from the well known composer Franz von Blon: *Mit Standarten*, *Unter dem Siegesbanner* and *Flaggen-Marsch*, the last mentioned having a title in the United States with another, more specific meaning: *Under One Flag*. *Unter dem Grillenbanner* by Wilhelm Lindemann means ‘Under the banner of gaiety’ and *Unter Bayerns Rautenbanner* by Georg Fürst means ‘Under the Checky Banner of Bavaria’. Walter Porschmann honours the flag of Hamburg with his march *Unter Hamburger Flagge*, whereas the higher politics are reflected in *Unter dem Banner Grossdeutschlands* by Wilhelm Koch-Hainfels.

The British Union Flag has also been honoured with marches, e.g. *Union Jack March* by Cuthbert Clarke, *Under the British Flag* by John Slatter and *Under the Old Flag* by William Myddleton. The great march composers in the old Austrian Empire of course also composed flag marches like *Unter der Admiralsflagge* by Julius Fučík, *Unter der Friedensflagge* by Feliks Nowowiejski, *Unter der Siegesflagge* by Joseph



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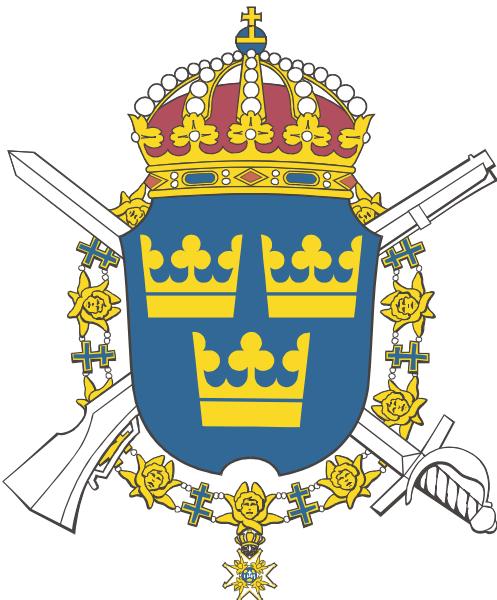


Figure 1 Troops from the Royal Life Guards participated with military music in both the opening and closing ceremonies of the XX International Congress of Vexillology. The arms of Livgardet, the Royal Life Guards, consists of a royally crowned shield charged with the three crowns of Sweden, crossed musket and sable behind the shield, and, under it all, the Order of the Seraphim, signalling the royal significance of the unit. Drawing from Livgardisten (winter 2002).

Pécsi, *Under the Flag* by František Kmoch and *Pod pradorem svobody* (Under the Flag of Freedom) by Rudolf Obruča.

The most well known Swedish march is *Under blågul fana* (Under the blue-yellow flag) by Viktor Widqvist, the honour march of the Swedish Armed Forces. *Under tretungad flagg* (Under the double swallow-tailed flag) by Ivar Widner refers to the Swedish war ensign, and *Fanvakten* (The Colour-guard) by Knut Ekström is a very popular regimental march in Sweden. In 1905 the union between Sweden and Norway was annulled and the union canton disappeared from the Swedish flag. This event was celebrated by J. B. Lundberg with his march *Honnör för Sveriges rena flagga* (Salute the pure flag of Sweden). Swedish marches often refer to regimental colours as for instance *Under regementsfanan* (Under the Regimental Colour) by Gunnar Löthgren, *Under Jämtlandsfanan* (Under the Colour of Jämtland) by Napoleon Jonzon, referring to the colour of the Royal Jämtland Rifles, and *Under svartgul fana* (Under the black-yellow colour) by Gösta Mårtensson, referring to the colour of the Royal Älvborg Regiment. Personal banners may also be dedicated in marches. My personal banner (see Fig. 27 to the chapter by Magnus Bäckmark in this report) is referred to in two march titles: *Med svärd och eklöv* (With sword and oak leaves) by Ingemar Badman and *Gladio et quercu* by Mac Wassberg.

The different ways for handling of flags have also given birth to march titles as for instance *Die Flaggen gehisst* by O. Beuger, *Flaggan i topp* (The Flag Aloft) by Viktor Widqvist, *Flags unfurled* by Alfonso d'Artega, *Mit entrollten Fahnen* by Carl Friedemann, *Böljande fanor* (Waving Colours) by D. Ottoson, *Mit flatternden Fahnen* by Hans Schmid, *Mit fliegenden Fahnen* by Johann Müller, *Mit wehenden Fahnen* by Heinrich Steinbeck and *Die Fahnen geschwungen* by Christoph Tucher.

In view of the above the organization committee of the XX International Congress of Vexillology found it appropriate that FIAV should have its own march. Consequently we have dedicated the march *Marcia Vexillum* to FIAV. It is composed in 2003 by the famous Swedish march composer Harry Sernklef, former Director of Music in the Swed-



Figure 2 Composer Harry Sernklef conducts the Dragoon Trumpeters of the Royal Life Guards as the march Marcia Vexillum, dedicated to FIAV, is performed for the first time during the congress opening ceremony. Behind to the right is the colour party with the flags of (from left to right): The Nordic Flag Society, Sweden, FIAV, and the XX International Congress of Vexillology.

Photo: Kjell Hedberg.

ish Army. The observant listener may hear a fragment of the Swedish flag hymn *Sveriges flagga* cited in the march.

During the congress opening ceremony the march *Marcia Vexillum* was performed for the first time by the Dragoon Trumpeters of the Royal Life Guards directed by the composer Harry Sernklef. Then the score was handed over by him to the president of FIAV, Michel Lupant. The trumpeters were dismounted at this occasion, but mounted during the closing ceremony. During the congress week the guard duties at the Royal Palace were performed by the mounted Dragoons of the Royal Life Guards. At the changing of the guard ceremony the mounted band made a musical show on the horseback every day. Sweden is one of the few countries which still have a cavalry band, a reminder from the eight Swedish cavalry regiments in the beginning of the twentieth century.

