



April 25: San Marco, Patron Saint of the Lagunari

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Today, April 25, the [Lagunari of the "Serenissima" Regiment](#) celebrate their patron saint, Saint Mark the Evangelist. This date, which coincides with the death of the Evangelist, is a moment of deep reflection and pride for the amphibious soldiers of the Italian Army. Saint Mark is not only the protector of the city of Venice but also the living symbol of the values and history of the Lagunari.

According to tradition, Saint Mark, during a journey, was shipwrecked in the Venetian lagoon. In a dream, an angel appeared to him saying: "*Pax tibi, Marce, evangelista meus. Hic requiescet corpus tuum*" ("Peace to you, Mark, my evangelist. Here your body will rest"). The prophecy came true in 828, when two Venetian merchants stole his relics from Alexandria, Egypt, and brought them to Venice, hiding them under loads of pork meat to evade Muslim controls. Since then, the figure of Saint Mark has become the spiritual heart of the city, and the winged lion, his symbol, stands out on the crests and uniforms of the Lagunari.

The Lagunari: Soldiers of History and Tradition

Despite being the youngest specialty of the Italian Army, the Lagunari boast a centuries-old tradition. **Already during the Fourth Crusade, in 1203, Doge Enrico Dandolo formed a regiment distributed on Venetian ships, employed in the two captures of Byzantium. In 1550 they consolidated as “Fanti da Mar”, protagonists in Famagusta and Candia.**

Over the centuries, the fighting tradition of the lagoon has been renewed: from the “Cacciatori del Sile” during the heroic defense of Venice in 1848, to the Marina and San Marco Regiments during the Great War, up to the formations of the Second World War, such as the San Marco Division and the “Barbarigo” battalion of the X^a MAS.

After the war, on January 15, 1951, the first nucleus of the future Lagunari was born in Venice Lido. On October 20, 1959, in a ceremony full of significance, the War Flag was delivered in Piazza San Marco. In 1964 the “Serenissima” Lagunari Regiment was officially born, with the “Marghera”, “Piave” and “Isonzo” battalions.

After various restructurings, the Regiment was reassembled in 1992 and today is part of the “Pozzuolo del Friuli” Cavalry Brigade. The Lagunari operate where water and land merge: canals, rivers, coasts, lagoons. And precisely in these hostile environments, their adaptability and initiative make the difference.

The Value of the Winged Lion

The Lagunari have operated in national and international missions: from “Vespri Siciliani” in Sicily, to the “Ancient Babylon” mission in Iraq, where they mourned their first fallen: **Captain Massimiliano Ficuciello and 1st Corporal Major Matteo Vanzan**. They have also been in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Lebanon (operation “Leonte”). Since 2009 they have been active in Venice as part of the “Strade Sicure” operation.

Their commitment has been recognized with important decorations: Gold and Silver Medals for Army Valor, Silver Cross for Army Merit. But more than the medals, it is the symbol of the winged lion that speaks: present on the crests, on the uniforms, and in the hearts. The cry “San Marco!” is much more than a formula: it is a bond of brotherhood, a spiritual legacy.

Every April 25, the Lagunari celebrate their patron with religious and military ceremonies. The date coincides with the death of the Evangelist, but for the Lagunari, it is also a rebirth: an opportunity to renew their oath to the Homeland, to honor, to sacrifice.

San Marco is therefore much more than a saint. He is the living symbol of courage, discipline, and the history that indissolubly binds the Lagunari to their Venice. A bond that withstands time, war, and water — just like the lion that watches over the Serenissima.