

Swiss Guard Celebrate 500 Years



[The Swiss Guard are celebrating their 500th anniversary](#) this year and the ceremonies have reached a high point today. This is usually the day in which new recruits take the oath of fidelity to the Holy Father, but because of the significance of this year, it is a very big deal.

There was a special Mass with the Pope this morning and then a gathering in St. Peter's Square for the formal oath-swearing. A delegation of Swiss Guard veterans, some as old as their 70s, had been marching from Switzerland to Rome the past few months to commemorate the journey of this first Swiss detachment to Rome and arrived today. To accompany, special military units from around

the world came as well, including the [Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company of Massachusetts](#), the third oldest chartered military organization in the world and the oldest in the Western hemisphere. They used to train officers for military service, but with the federalization of military training in the 20th century, they shifted to become a patriotic and historical organization. I've been to their museum in Fanueil Hall in Boston and it's fantastic if you're a military history buff. Of course, all the Italian armed services were represented in St. Peter's today, as well as Britain's Honourable Artillery Company.

[Fr. Sylvester](#) has some more reflections and information on the Swiss Guard including the symbolism of their flag and how their ceremony usually proceeds in normal years. The Vatican, of course, also has [web pages](#) for the fifth centenary.

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