

RECALLING ST. PATRICK'S BRIGADE IRISH IMMIGRANT SOLDIERS FOUGHT FOR THE MEXICAN ARMY

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Irish immigrant soldiers who deserted and **fought** for the enemy during the war with Mexico are revered south of the border, honored in Ireland and all but forgotten in the United States.

It's time for this country to acknowledge the San Patricios existed, says Patrick Coggins, who is leading a crusade to dust off the history books.

The San Patricios (the **St. Patrick's brigade**) was the name of the unit the men formed in the **Mexican Army**. They **fought** well, maybe too well. Once back in American hands, 50 of them ended up at the end of a rope. Many others were branded on the right cheek with a two-inch letter D -- for deserter.

Coggins and some friends were to don San Patricio uniforms and march in San Francisco's **St. Patrick's** Day parade today. Last year the unit took first place.

Some people objected to the heroic portrayal of the **Irish soldiers** when the 1995 documentary "The San Patricios" was shown last year in San Antonio, said Coggins, who first heard of the San Patricios while working with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers in Delano 25 years ago,

Every year the San Patricios are remembered with a ceremony in Mexico City. There is also one in County Galway, Ireland, birthplace of the **brigade's** commanding officer.

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