

# AMERICAN PATROL

*F.W. Meacham; 1885*

"*American Patrol*" is a popular march written in 1885 by F. W. Meacham (1850-1895). This song has a long history of recording for well over 100 years. The first recording was a 2-minute Edison cylinder in 1903 and retained popularity during both World Wars. The song was enjoyed as piano roll versions, as well as being continually recorded over a period of 80 years. The version by Glenn Miller and his orchestra is clearly the most significant recording.

Meacham uses a technique where there are comments in the score to describe what images the music intends to convey. At the beginning, the music is pppp, which conveys the "patrol" in the far distance. As the patrol nears, the music gets louder until the patrol passes and the music is fff. Then, the music gradually diminishes as the patrol passes into the distance. Meacham added simple comments such as, "Patrol gradually approaches," "Patrol passing" to the score.

When Meacham wrote "*American Patrol*", he did not include any lyrics. In 1942, however, a song using the theme from Meacham's work was published which did contain lyrics, written by Edgar Leslie. That version entitled, "*We Must Be Vigilant*", should not be considered the same.

He often worked as an arranger rather than a composer, for Victor Herbert musicals and Stephen Foster songs. Meacham's primary fame came with *American Patrol*, but he composed many other works, among them, "*There is No Place like New York After All*" in 1895.

~Tull

