

MEMENTOS WITH HISTORY (98)

INTERESTING VARIANT OF THE SPANISH M1858 MACHETE-BAYONET FOR ARTILLERY AND ENGINEERS



A few years ago in the mid-1980s I had the luck of finding in the Madrid “rastros” (flea market) an interesting bayonet, a variant of the M1858 machete/bayonet for Artillery and Engineers, a bayonet which, in my opinion is one of the most striking and beautiful bayonets ever made and an indispensable piece for the specialized collector.

As can be seen in the following photo the original attachment for the M1858 rifled carbine has been replaced by an attachment for a Remington rolling block rifle.



Machete-bayonets for Artillery and Engineers: left the original M1858 and right, specimen modified for attachment to a Remington R.B rifle.

Barcelo-Rubi in his work "Three Centuries of Portable Armaments in Spain" (pages 153-54) describes some variants observed by him but does not mention the one we are describing; Juan L. Calvo describes the machete-bayonets Models of 1858 and 1861 and illustrates a variant inspired in the M1858 for use with Remington rifles but does not mention an actual M1858 modified for attachment to a Remington rifle.

Initially I felt that it was, either a capricious modification created by an artisan of the Toledo Factory in a moment of idleness, or perhaps an experimental study for the then future (1871) bayonet for the Royal Guard of King Amadeo of Savoy, but nowadays I am more inclined to think that the transformation had more practical motives and perhaps dates from the Third Carlist War (1872-76) in order to utilize available but obsolete materiel by adapting it to weapons of that moment such as the Remington rolling block.



Variant M1858 bayonet and the Remington rifle to which it was adapted

The only thing that militates against it having actually been used in combat is the fact that it appears never to have been sharpened ; In my opinion it would have been more effective in hand to hand combat as a machete than as a bayonet, as adding its weight to the already long and heavy barrel of a Remington rifle would make it a cumbersome weapon; If coupled to a short rifle or a carbine it would have been somewhat more agile but still inferior to the standard Remington socket bayonet, much lighter and more penetrating; I would welcome any theories or opinions from fellow collectors on the origins of this interesting piece; I may be contacted at:

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