

The Spanish “Philippine” Bayonet... and its rifle

It is well known that the knife-bayonet adopted by Spain for its “Mauser Modelo Español 1893” rifle was derived from the German Model 1871-84 knife-bayonet with a 250 mm blade, and that it was made in two versions, one made by Simson & Co in Suhl, Germany, and the other one, from 1894 on in Toledo, Spain; Both continued to be in active service even after the adoption of a new model of knife-bayonet with a longer 400 mm blade, the “Model of 1913 machete-bayonet”.



Knife-bayonets for the Model of 1893 Spanish Mauser: Uppermost, the Toledo made model, at the center the model made in Germany by Simson & Co., and lowermost, the Model 1913 also made in Toledo.

However, this “Model of 1913 machete bayonet” was not the first long bladed bayonet used on the Model 1893 Spanish Mausers: Some of the troops of the Overseas Army (Ejército de Ultramar) in the Philippines also used a long knife-bayonet with a 400 mm blade, made by Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co. (WKC) in Solingen, Germany, almost identical to the Argentinian Model of 1891 “saber-bayonet”, from which it differed only in having wood grip panels instead of metal, in lacking any Argentinian national markings, and, in bearing on its crossguard a small “recrossed” cross marking; This marking is also found on the Simson made M1893 bayonets, from which we conclude that its purpose was to identify weapons produced in Germany, for Spain.



“Philippine” knife-bayonet, made by Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Co.



“Recrossed” cross on the crossguard of the M1893 bayonets made by Simson & Co. and on the long bladed WKC made “Philippine” bayonet.

It was only when bayonet collecting began to be popular that this variant of the M1891 Argentine bayonet began to be called “de Filipinas”, as it lacked any official denomination as an approved model or model year, and as it was said to have been used with the Model of 1893 Spanish Mausers used by some of the troops of the Philippine Archipelago’s garrison.



7mm Model of 1893 Mauser Modelo Español made by Ludwig Loewe, Berlin, dated 1896, and bearing the long “Philippines” knife – bayonet.

Most readers are aware of the fact that shortly after the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, the New York firm of Francis Bannerman acquired in public auction 90 % of the weapons, munitions, and equipment, captured by the US Army in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines which were then offered to the public by means of their illustrated catalogue ; It is from these catalogues, particularly the 1903, 1904, and 1910 editions, complemented by the references detailed in the Bibliography, and by data obtained from some friends and fellow collectors, that I have gathered the information that I will now offer.

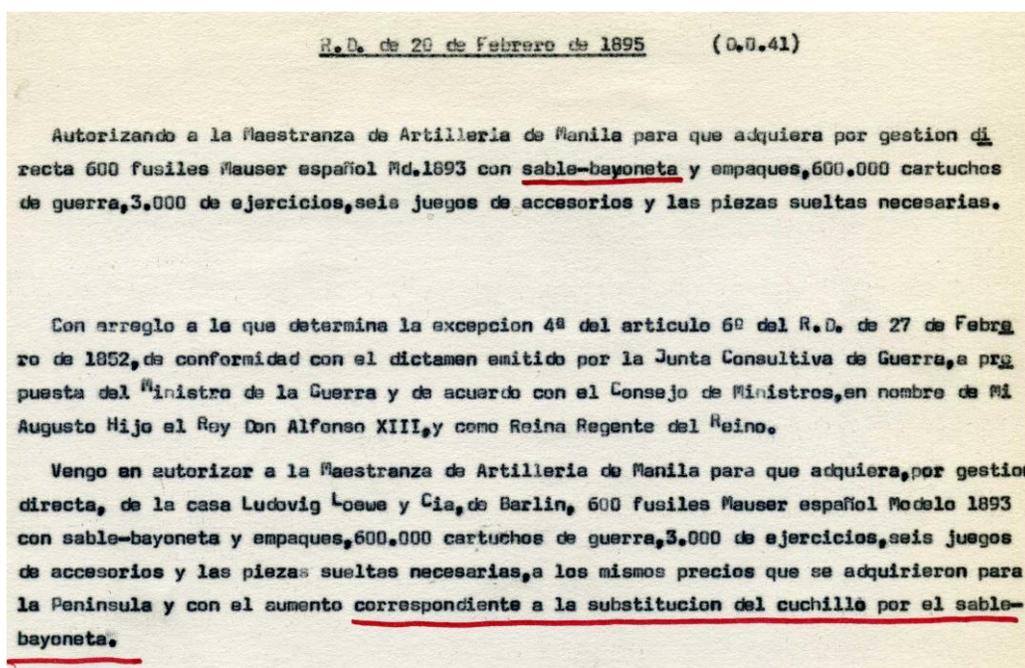


“Bayoneta de Filipinas “.....specimen numbered 28

I have in my collection specimen number 28 of the “Philippine” knife-bayonet in practically new condition, and am aware of the existence of two other specimens, with the highest number being 609, a number which may be significant regarding the number of units acquired.

It is in the 1910 and 1927 editions of the Bannerman catalogues that this bayonet is first illustrated and described, but, they make no reference to any Philippine provenance and Instead tell us that they had been acquired from WKC by President Paul Kruger of the Republic of South Africa and were not delivered due to the British blockade during the second Anglo-Boer War of October 1899 to May 1902.

Wanting to confirm the use of this model of knife-bayonet by Spanish troops in the Philippines, I consulted someone who had been referring to it as “de Filipinas” since 1980, my friend , the well known researcher, Juan L Calvó, who provided me with a forty year old typewritten transcription of a Royal Decree dated February 20 , 1895, which authorized the Manila Artillery Arsenal (Maestranza de Artillería de Manila) to acquire“ by direct purchase from the Ludwig Loewe & Co. firm, of Berlin, 600 Mauser Español Modelo 1893 with sabre-bayonet..../.....with the price increase corresponding to the substitution of the knife-bayonet by the saber-bayonet”



The reason for acquiring these rifles with “saber-bayonets” instead of the standard M1893 knife-bayonet are not known but, in view of the small number ordered (600 units) we may conclude that they were intended as equipment of a specific force, perhaps the troops of the Manila Artillery Arsenal, who may be the ones seen in the following photograph which clearly shows artillery soldiers wearing this long bladed knife bayonet in the Philippines.

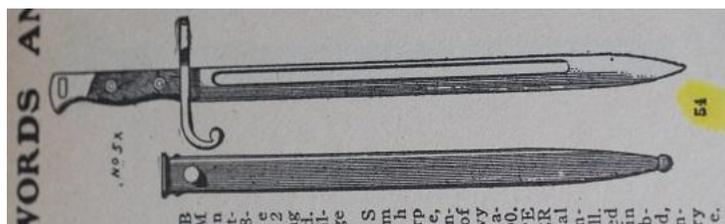


Photograph obtained from the book “El Ejército Español en Ultramar y África (1850-1925)” by Jose Manuel Guerrero Acosta, Accion Press S.A , c.2003

These 600 rifles, however, may not have been the only ones mounting this “saber-bayonet” to reach the Philippines; Returning to the Bannerman catalogues we see that it was in 1899 that the Mauser rifles taken in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines were first offered for sale; These included both the Argentine M1891 in 7.65mm caliber and the 7mm M1893 Spanish model and both were illustrated with their respective regulation bayonets; Then, in 1904 there was a new special offer of “500 Mausers captured in the Philippines” in “new condition, never used, still in the zinc lined cases in which they were packed at the Mauser factory in Germany” (we do not know if they refer to the Mauser Oberndorf factory, but believe that, more likely, this refers to the factory that made these “Mausers”, that is Ludwig Loewe & Co.)

They also tell us that these rifles arrived in Manila shortly after the signing of the Treaty, according to which Spain retained ownership of any weapons that had not been surrendered prior to the end of hostilities (August 1898); Therefore they belonged to Spain, but, the Spanish authorities, not wishing to transport them back to Spain, offered them in auction and were purchased by the US government, who kept them in reserve at the Springfield, Massachusetts, Arsenal, until 1903, when, coinciding with the onset of production of the Model of 1903 “Mauser-Springfield”, they were declared surplus and were acquired, again by Bannerman, in public auction.

These 500 “as new”, “Philippine Mausers”, must have been sold quickly as they no longer are featured in the 1910 edition of the catalogue; However, it is precisely in this edition, which was still offering the “used” Mausers taken during the Spanish-American War, that we see for the first time an offer of a knife-bayonet, identical to the “Philippine bayonet”, but referred to as a “Boer bayonet” in the description following the illustration.



The “Boer” knife-bayonet, identical to the “bayoneta de Filipinas”, as illustrated in the 1910 Bannerman catalogue.

It is possible that the 500 M1893 Spanish Mauser rifles which arrived in Manila after the cessation of hostilities were also equipped with the same model of “saber-bayonet” as the 600 acquired in 1895, but the only indisputable facts, at this time, are that the denomination of these first 600 rifles and their bayonet as of “de Filipinas” is correct, and that they perhaps were used by artillery units in the Archipelago.

No doubt there is still much to be discovered regarding the history of the “bayoneta de Filipinas” and also of its rifle; Production was apparently limited but I am sure that there are other specimens in other collections and I would like to invite their owners to contact me with serial numbers, photos, or any other information of interest regarding this unusual bayonet which has long piqued my curiosity; My email addresses are...meruelo@bellsouth.net, and, hjmeruelo@gmail.com....Please, feel free to contact me.

Special thanks are due to my friends Juan Luis Calvó and Eduardo Gorostiza for the information and photographs of the “bayoneta de Filipinas” provided.

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Miami, Florida, USA, July, 2013

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