

ARMAMENTS OF THE TROOPS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD 1788-1931  
 (11)  
 "1ST MODEL" OFFICER'S PISTOL OF THE ROYAL CORP OF  
 "GUARDIAS DE LA PERSONA DEL REY"

(Translation by Hector J. Meruelo)



**Model of Cavalry pistol that equipped the Officers of the Royal Corp of "Guardias de la Persona del Rey" in the years 1814-1821; Specimen with a 200 mm long, 18 mm caliber ("de a 17") barrel bearing the Royal Arms and the inscription "RI. CVERPO DE GVARDS. DE LA PERSONA DEL REY" and further marked "4<sup>o</sup> 2<sup>o</sup> B<sup>a</sup>" (officer number 4 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> brigade); Spanish lock marked "Zuluaga" (Ramón de Zuloaga, Placencia); Robert E. Brooker Jr. Collection.**

The pistol illustrated above is the only specimen of this model known to me bearing the Royal Arms in the butt cap, and is the one which equipped the Minor Officers, being better finished than the one made for the Cadets and Guards.



In 1815 this Royal Corp was composed of a Main Staff, Legal staff and 4 Squadrons of 2 Brigades each; The Main Staff included 1 Captain with rank of Inspector and “Comandante”, 1 Supernumerary Captain, 2 General Adjutants, 1 Commissar, 1 Secretary of the Inspectorate, 1 General Furrier, 1 Stable Master, 1 filing clerk, 1 Barracks Warden, 3 Chaplains, 3 Surgeons, 4 Horse Tamers, 1 Master Musician, 1 Kettle Drummer for the entire Corp, 3 Saddlers, 2 armourers, 1 Jailer, and 1 barracks servant.

The Legal Staff included: 1 Judge, 1 Prosecutor, 1 Court recorder, and 1 Marshall; The 4 Squadrons were composed of 4 Squadron “Comandantes”, 16 “Exentos”, 4 Major Adjutants, 16 “Brigadieres”, 16 “Sub-Brigadieres”, 72 Cadets including 8 bat boys, 528 Guards, 4 general musicians and 16 Squadron musicians.

The Brigade of “Flanqueadores”, which was added in 1817 included 1 “Comandante”, 2 “Exentos”, 2 “Brigadieres”, 2 “Sub-Brigadieres”, 8 Cadets and 86 Guards.

In the specimen illustrated at the start of this article the barrel is marked “4<sup>0</sup> 2<sup>0</sup> BA” indicating it was the equipment of a 4<sup>th</sup> Officer in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade; Hypothetically it could have been one of those with rank of “Exento” or “Brigadier” or “Sub-Brigadier”; Each Squadron had 4 of these ranks, 2 in each Brigade, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> ones in one and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> ones in the other (??).

Even lacking a confirmatory inscription, the similarity of this model with the one issued to the Cadets and Guards is such that it allows us to consider both as belonging to the same Corp, in contrast to the pistol used by its Major Officers which were paid for, not by the Royal Corp, but by the Officers themselves .



**“Commercial” cavalry pistol which equipped a Major Officer of the Royal Corp of “Guardias de la Persona del Rey” in the years 1814-1821; 227 mm long, 18 mm caliber (“de a 17”) barrel marked under crown “BUS/TIN/DUY” (Juan Esteban de Bustinduy, Eibar) and engraved in gold “CAPITAN SUPERNUMERARIO DE LA GUARDIA DE LA PERSONA DEL REY”; The butt cap, also engraved in gold, “POR LA PROVINCIA DE GUIPUZCOA”; The lock marked “MEN/DIZA/BAL” (Juan Andres de Mendizabal, Placencia); Specimen number 6466 of the the Army Museum Collection.**

In the hierarchy of the Main Staff the “Capitán Supernumerario” (Supernumerary Captain) was second in rank to the “Capitán Comandante e Inspector” (Captain with rank of Inspector and “Comandante”) and acted as his substitute when he was absent; In the years 1816-1820 the position of “Capitán Supernumerario” was occupied by the Field Marshall, Marquis of Villadarias y

de la Vera, to whom the Province of Guipúzcoa presented a pair of pistols, one of which is the specimen shown here.

In my opinion, it is not the “model” that was produced for Major Officers but a commercial model specifically custom ordered by the Province of Guipúzcoa in order to present it to the Field Marshall, “Capitán Supernumerario” of the Royal Corp.



**“Commercial” cavalry pistol with a 227 mm long, 18 mm (“de a 17”) caliber barrel, marked under crown “BUS/TIN/DUY” (Juan Esteban de Bustinduy, Eibar) with the inscription “HERRADS” (of horseshoes); Lock marked “D° Guisasola” (Domingo de Guisasola, Eibar) and triggerguard marked “M/ALVER/DI” under crown (M. Alberdi, Eibar); Specimen number 24595 of the Army Museum Collection .**

That it is a “commercial” model I believe is confirmed by the existence of another specimen in the same Collection, differing only from the above specimen in its caliber (de a 19”) and its lack of any inscriptions relating it to the Royal Corp of “Guardias de la Persona del Rey”.

**Juan L. Calvó  
November, 2011**

#### **Bibliography:**

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