

**ARMAMENTS OF THE TROOPS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD, 1788-1931  
(13)  
PISTOL OF THE BRIGADE OF “CARABINEROS REALES”  
IN THE REIGN OF FERNANDO VII**

**(Translation by Hector J. Meruelo)**



**Cavalry pistol of the model used by the Brigade of Royal “Carabineros” in the period 1820-22; 201 mm long, 18 mm caliber (“de a 17”) caliber barrel, marked “Y/BAR/ZA/BAL” in an oval, bearing the Royal Arms and inscribed “Cs. Rs.” (Carabineros Reales), individualized as “H-11”; Overall length 373 mm.**

There is very scarce information about the Brigade of Royal “Carabineros” during the reign of Fernando VII; Gomez Ruiz and Alonso Juanola tell us that after the War of Independence it was organized into four Squadrons of two Companies each, with an unknown number of soldiers in each of them; Its Colonel, a rank which had never existed before in the Brigade, was “Don Carlos”, brother of Fernando VII, its first “Comandante” (since 1812) was Lieutenant General Don Manuel Freyre, its second “Comandante”, Field Marshall Don Manuel Ladron de Gevara, its Sergeant Major, Brigadier Don Ignacio de Vera and, a new position, the Secretary of the “Infante”, Brigade Captain and Colonel of the Army Don Manuel Mojo.

In November of 1820 the Constitutional Government assigned 793 numbers to the Brigade and instructed that it was to perform the same duties as the other Cavalry bodies and was to be subject to the General Army Regulations; Shortly thereafter it was decided that the first Squadron would be of Grenadiers and the other three of “Coraceros” (Cuirassiers).

In 1821 the Constitutionals split into two parties, the “Moderados” and the “Exaltados”, and the continued existence of troops of the Royal Household, known to be reactionaries, became a subject of debate; The elections to the Cortes (Parliament) of 1822 were won by the “Exaltados” Party and on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May the dissolution of the Brigade of Royal “Carabineros” was decreed, sanctioned by the King on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and instructed to the Ministry of War three days later.

This force was equipped with riding swords, “tercerola”, and a pair of pistols of the model initially shown; These were not contracted to the Placencia Guilds, as had been done with the carbines, “tercerolas”, and pistols of the Royal Corp of “Guardias de la Persona del Rey”, but to Don Gabriel Benito de Ibarzabal, as manufacturer.

In 1808 Gabriel Benito de Ibarzabal had inherited from his father, Ignacio Maria de Ibarzabal, the shop he had founded in 1784 in Eibar, which produced ammunition pouches and cavalry equipment; In 1815 he was granted a ten year government contract to supply the Toledo Factory with brass sword hilts and iron scabbards, to be used with the riding swords and cavalry sabers made in that Royal Factory; He presented then a scale model of his shop to the Artillery Museum which was shown in its 1856 Catalogue with Number 1086 and described as: “Scale model of the shop, established by Ibarzabal in his Eibar Factory in order to, manufacture edged weapons and a cylinder to stretch plates”; Adolfo Carrasco mentions this present from Ibarzabal as “a model of shop and machinery for making swords and stretching iron and brass”; Don Julian Echeverria also mentioned it and reminisced that he remembered this shop from when it was the property of Don Ignacio de Ibarzabal and that the scale model reproduced it with great accuracy.

In May of 1820 the Cortes decreed the freedom of the industries and eliminated the obligatory membership in a Guild, allowing Ibarzabal to widen his activities as a “manufacturer” and to organize the production of firearms as later would be done by the so called “assemblers” and commercializing, under his name, arms made by different craftsmen and shops, contracted by him.



**Marking “A/R/A/N/A” (Francisco de Arana,Eibar) stamped on the reverse of the lock plate of the pistol shown above; By contrast, in the production of locks “of the French style” made at the Royal Placencia Factory the maker’s marking is always on the obverse of the lock plate.**

The model of pistol used by the Brigade of Royal “Carabineros” is marked on its barrel, as a factory marking, “Y/BAR/ZA/BAL”, in an oval plus the Royal Arms

and “Cs. Rs.” (Carabineros Reales) plus individualization of the weapon by a capital letter and a number; Possibly the eight Companies were identified by letters ; A,B,C,D,E,G,H and I , excluding the letter F to avoid confusion with E in the inscriptions (??).

This model of pistol has characteristics of the “Year XIII” French Cavalry pistol and of the English “New Land Pattern” pistol both of which were then well known in Spain due to their use during the War of Independence; The model of 1815 made in the Royal Placencia Factory for the Army Cavalry was inspired on the French pistol.



**French cavalry pistol model “Año XIII”; 17 mm. caliber (“de a 19”), 207 mm. long barrel.**



**English “New Land Pattern” cavalry pistol; 16 mm. (“de a 23”) caliber, 225 mm. long barrel.**



**Spanish cavalry pistol, model of 1815; 18 mm. (“de a 17”) caliber, 230 mm. long barrel.**

The model of pistol made by Ibarzabal for the Brigade of Royal “Carabineros” had a belt hook and was similar to the model of 1815 for the Army Cavalry with a “French style” lock of the model “improved” in 1812 by the addition of a lanyard ring and its national regulation caliber “de a 17”.

**Juan L. Calvó  
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