

**ARMAMENTS OF THE TROOPS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD 1788-1931
(16)
LONG GUNS OF THE REGIMENTS OF ROYAL INFANTRY GUARDS
AND OF THE MARINE INFANTRY BATTALIONS
IN THE PERIOD 1815-1822**

(Translation by Hector J. Meruelo)



Infantry musket, specimen number 1979 in the 1856 catalogue of the Collection of the Museo del Ejército and identified as “Model of musket approved by His Majesty for the regiments of Spanish Guards; 1,053 mm long , 18 mm caliber (“de a 17” barrel) , inscribed “Aprobado por S.M en 1815”; French-style lock of the 1812 “improved” model also inscribed “Aprobado por S.M en 1815”.

In Article 6, I made reference to the “Spanish” and “Walloon” Infantry Regiments of the Royal Guards; In 1803 their number was reduced to three battalions each one, then increased to four in 1810 and to five in 1814; In 1818 they were reorganized and they lost their traditional denominations and became the 1st and 2nd Regiments of Royal “Spanish” Infantry Guards, each one with two battalions of eight companies, with 125 soldiers each; In 1820 their strength was reduced to 2,100 men with a proviso to increase it to 6,000 in case of war.

On the 30th of June of 1822 coinciding with the closing of the Cortes, the Royal Guards, clamoring that the King was an “innate King”, clashed with the Madrid crowds who acclaimed him as “Constitutional King”, and there were riots and

casualties; It was the beginning of the so-called “July days”; Already in full sedition, four battalions of Royal Guards left Madrid and took positions facing the city at El Pardo threatening an attack that actually happened in the early hours of the 7th of July; They took over the Gate of the Conde-Duque and, forming four columns entered Madrid where the National Militia, backed by the people, confronted them decisively, forcing them to retreat to the Royal Palace where they had to surrender; They were then abolished as Royal Guards .

In the catalogues of 1856 and 1911 of the “Museo de Artillería” the model of musket, specimen number 1979 of the Collection is identified as the one approved for the Regiments of Spanish Guards, while specimen number 1980 of the 1856 Catalogue is described as “Model of musket approved by H.M for the Army in 1815, with a barrel in “de a 17” caliber (18 mm), 1052 mm long, and with a 397 mm long, 0.431 Kg. (must be an error), bayonet with plain socket and ring”; In the 1911 Catalogue the description of this musket, number 1980, “for the Army”, is more complete, mentioning the inscription “APRO.do por SM en 1815” on the barrel and “Aprobado por S.M. en 1815” on the lock and bayonet; The bayonet, of the same dimensions and weight as the one in the 1856 Catalogue, and the lock also inscribed “Mejorada 17 de Octe.de 1812, Antº Bustinduy Exmr. Maior” (Antonio Bustinduy, Chief Examiner or Inspector).

The specimen of musket for the Regiments of Spanish Guards shown at the beginning of this article, is the one which, still with number 1979, is shown in the current “Catálogo razonado de las armas de fuego del Museo del Ejército” and identified as “Prototype of the model of 1815 regulation Spanish infantry musket”.

This may be because specimen number 1980 of the Catalogues of 1856 and 1911, of the model of 1815 Army infantry musket, is not currently in the Collection of the Museo del Ejército; However ,judging by the description in both Catalogues, both models, the one for the Royal Spanish Guards and the one for the Army, were practically identical.

I do not know if there was a model musket for the Batallions of Marine Infantry , which in 1815 (and until 1822) Fernando VII ordered “to be the equal in all respects to the Spanish and Walloon Infantry Guards”, differing in any details from the two above, but, if so, I do not believe the differences were significant.

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