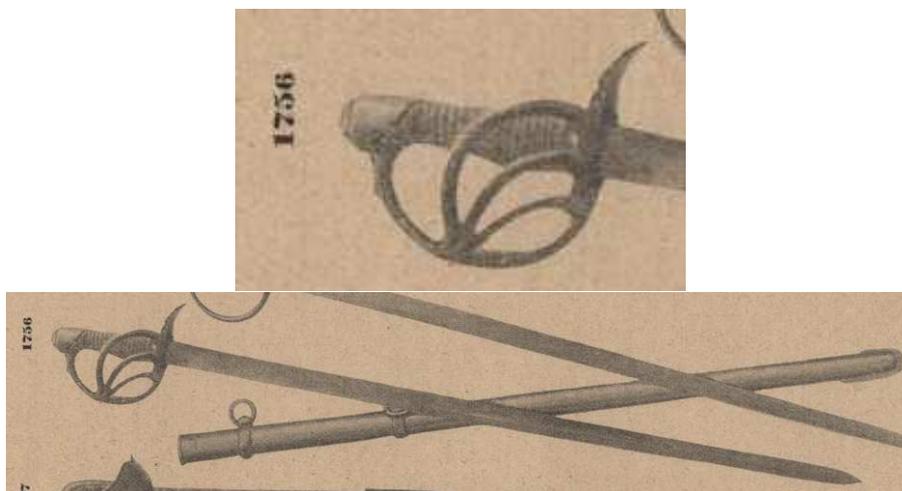


**ARMAMENTS OF THE TROOPS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD 1788-1931
(23)
SWORDS OF THE ROYAL CORP OF
“GUARDIAS DE LA PERSONA DEL REY”, IN THE PERIOD 1824-1841**

(Translation by Hector J. Meruelo)



Photograph of the riding sword, specimen number 1756 of the 1911 Catalogue of the “Museo de Artillería”, identified as the model of 1832, made for the Royal Corp of “Guardias de la Persona del Rey”.

All we know of the riding sword models made for the Royal Corp of “Guardias de la Persona del Rey”, after its restoration in 1824, comes from the catalogues of the “Museo de Artillería” published in 1856 and 1911.

In the 1856 edition, specimen number 1752 of the Collection is described as “Sword blade made in Toledo in 1828 for the Royal Corp of “Guardias de la Persona del Rey””; 938 mm long and 31 mm wide at the tang; This blade, slightly concave on both sides, has a flat lower spine and a rounded upper one which reaches up to 280 mm from the tang where the blade is sharp up to its tip”; This piece, number 1752 is no longer shown in the 1911 edition of the Catalogue.

However, the sword specimen number 1756 of the Collection is shown in both publishings of the Catalogue with a more extensive description in the 1911 edition where it is identified as “Sword for the Royal Corp of “Guardias de la Persona del Rey”, Model of 1832, made in this same year at the Toledo Factory; Straight, single edged blade except at the tip where it is double edged, it is 940 mm long and 32 mm wide; It has brass fittings, the grip is covered with leather and wired and the scabbard is of iron”.

This last specimen, currently specimen number 23301 of the Collection of the “Museo del Ejército”, has a slightly fullered blade on both sides, and is inscribed on its obverse and reverse “Rl. Fa. D TOLEDO / AÑO D 1832”, with a flat proximal spine inscribed “Real Cuerpo de Guardias de la Persona del Rey”, sharp lower edge in its last two thirds and double edged in its third one; The grip is no different from the one used in the 1815, 1825 and 1832 models for the Cavalry of the Line, and it and the scabbard, both lack any inscription identifying the Squadron, Brigade or Number it was issued to.

Since the 1832 dated blade is different from the one dated 1828 we may conclude that there were at least two models of riding swords made for the Guards of the Royal Corp of "Guardias de la Persona del Rey" after its restoration, made respectively in 1828 and 1832; Regarding the model used from 1824 to 1828, I favor the one used from 1816 to 1821, probably refurbished in that year, erasing the coat of arms, or perhaps the model made for the Army's Cavalry of the Line; It is logical to think that the troops of the Royal Household may have been in certain circumstances equipped with models made for the Army instead of waiting unarmed for their specific models to be manufactured.

Around 448 of this model of sword for the Guards of this Royal Corp would be needed (56 Guards out of the 66 members of each of the 8 Brigades) and such a small number could not justify two different dates of manufacture with only a four year interval ; The number of swords required in 1832 was the same as in 1828 and therefore I believe we can discard the possibility of the ones made in 1828 suffering from such defects that justified substituting them in 1832.

However, in 1832 the addition of a Brigade of "Tiradores" to this Royal Corp, "drawing its strength from other Brigades of the Squadrons" was decreed; Perhaps the sword model made in 1832 was meant for this Brigade but was rejected, since, being a light cavalry force, the "Tiradores" should have been equipped with curved sabers and this caused the manufacturing of the saber model made for them in 1834.

Of the model with an 1828 dated blade I have never seen a specimen, and of the 1832 dated one only that one shown in the 1856 and 1911 Catalogues , number 23301 of the Collection of the "Museo del Ejército", which I find surprising; The swords used by the Officers were "commercial" products, lacking inscriptions identifying them as belonging to this Royal Corp but, since they are described in the 1856 Catalogue I have no doubts that those made in 1828 for the Guardias had blades inscribed "Real Cuerpo de Guardias de la Persona del Rey".

Juan L. Calvo
January, 2012

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