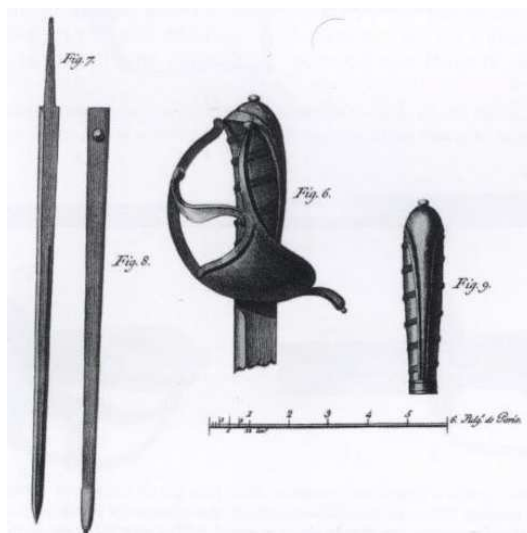


**ARMAMENTS OF THE TROOPS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD 1788-1931
(27)
SABERS OF THE GRENADIERS AND CAZADORES,
OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD'S INFANTRY UNITS
AND A "CADET" SWORD OF THE 2ND REGIMENT OF THE ROYAL GUARD.**

(Translation by Hector J. Meruelo)



Infantry sword or straight-blade saber shown in the Illustrations of the Artillery Treatise in the period 1787-1793; Specimen with the (685x32 mm) blade inscribed "A" and "R" under crown, "Cs IV" (property of the King) / "Y"(infantry) "T" (Toledo) "1801"(year of manufacture).



Infantry sword or straight-blade saber; 646x32 mm blade inscribed "R" under crown, "Cs.IV" (property of the King) / "Y" (Infantry) "1806" (date of manufacture) "T" (Toledo); Stirrup type hilt and guard.

Besides the muskets with bayonets of the Regiments of Spanish and Walloon Royal Guards that I discussed in Chapters 6 and 16, their Grenadier Companies were equipped with sabers of a model that we can consider did not differ from the one used by the Army's Infantry battalions: a model with a straight, broad blade with a single edge and flat spine in its first half, and double edged on three surfaces the second half; The hilt, of brass, with a wood grip wrapped with leather and wired, with pommel finial and ferrule; This saber, with a stirrup type hilt, is shown in the illustrations of the Artillery Treatise around 1802 .

Once the War of Independence (against the French) ended the infantry adopted a type of curved blade saber copied from the French "Anno XI" model "briquet"; The catalogues of the Museo de Artillería in their 1856 and 1911 editions

identify specimen number 1670 of the Collection as: "Saber blade of the Royal Wallonian Guards, Model 1818, made this same year at the Toledo Factory; Curved and single edged except at the tip where it is double edged, with a length of 81.2 cm and a width of 2.7 cm" (including the tang, we assume).

We may suppose that this blade had inscriptions indicating its issue to the Royal Wallonian Guards, as in another specimen I have examined with a straight, single edged blade and a flat spine in its first two thirds inscribed "*Real Fabrica de Toledo, Año 1817, Rs. Gs. Valonas*", with a double edged, three surfaced, last third.

Perhaps the straight blade model was substituted in 1818 by the curved one and the same model used by both regiments, the Royal Spanish and Wallonian Guards; It was precisely in 1818 that the denomination of the two Regiments was changed, both becoming the 1st and 2nd Regiments of Spanish Guards, as the Regiment of Royal Wallonian Guards had, for decades, actually been composed of troops recruited in Spain.

According to the military writer Almirante, in 1809 the Army Infantry battalions added a company of "Cazadores" to their Grenadier and Fusilier companies, and by Regulations of the 8th of May of 1812 these were issued "a saber, and by royal order of the 17th of April of 1819 were completely assimilated into the grenadiers".

Other troops also equipped with curved sabers of the same type included the Marine Infantry, incorporated into the Guard in 1815 but losing their status as troops of the Royal Household in July of 1822 at the same time as the 1st and 2nd Regiments of the Royal Spanish Guards.

Upon the reorganization in 1824 of their Infantry Divisions, the four Regiments of the Royal Guard were declared to be of Grenadiers, and of those of the Royal Provincial Guard, two of Grenadiers and two of "Cazadores", making me conclude that they were all equipped with sabers, as also was the "Royal Marine Brigade" formed in 1827 by uniting the battalions of the Marine Infantry to the Marine Artillery brigades.

The manufacture of sabers derived from the "Anno XI" French "briquette" at the Toledo Factory started around 1815 which is the earliest date observed in Toledo marked blades of this type; The brass hilts, devoid of any maker's markings were also made in Toledo, in contrast to the cavalry swords and sabers which were contracted to Gabriel Benito de Ibarzabal.

On paper, the infantry saber was made in two versions, one with a 30 inch blade for Grenadiers, and one with a 26 inch blade for "Cazadores", both included under the denomination of "model of 1818 infantry saber"; Many specimens exist but I have never seen one with inscriptions that permitted identifying it as having been used by infantry troops of the Royal Household; Only the specimen shown next, entirely made by Benito de Ibarzabal, may be considered to have been part of their equipment, or for that of the "Royal Halberdier Guards", in 1841.



Infantry saber with a 683x35 mm blade lacking any maker's markings; Single edged with a flat spine and double edged at the tip; Brass hilt derived from the "Anno XI" French "briquette" model marked "YBARZABAL"; Overall length 820 mm.



"Machete" specimen number 6233 of the Collection of the Museo de Artillería catalogued in 1911 as "Saber for the cadets of the Royal Guard of His Majesty Fernando VII"; The blade conforming to that of an XVIII Century riding sword but shorter (615x37 mm); Brass hilt with a small badge in the center of the cross guard with a fleur de lis and "2° R" / "GR"(second Regiment of the Royal Guard); Drawing by Eduardo Jimenez Sanchez-Malo.

Of this "machete", specimen number 6233 of the Collection of the Museo de Artillería we can affirm that it was used by the 2nd Regiment of the Royal Guard but, there having been no Cadets in the Royal Guard, it was probably issued to the Major Drummer as each Regiment of two battalions, had each 1 Major Drummer for the first battalion and one First Drummer for the second one.

In the Army, the Major Drummer's side arms were contracted by the different units to different industrial dealers of military equipment and were paid for from their so-called "entertainment funds" (discretionary funds); In the Royal Guard it

may have been a similar situation and, since it had four Regiments, we still have to identify those of the 1st, 3rd and 4th Regiments which may have been different from those of the 2nd Regiment, as the taste of the commanding officers of each contracting unit may have dictated different designs.

Juan L. Calvó
January, 2012

Bibliography:

- M. Gómez Ruiz and V. Alonso Juanola, "El Ejército de los Borbones", Tome V, Vol.2, Madrid, 2001
1856 and 1911 catalogues of the Museo de Artillería, Madrid, 1856 and 1911, Tome II
B. Barceló Rubi "Armamento Portátil Español, 1764-1939", Madrid, 1976
Catalogacionarmas.com (December 2005) 17- Sables y Espadas de oficiales de Artillería e Infantería, 1827-1880
Catalogacionarmas.com (December 2005) 24 and 25-Espadas y Sables para tropas de infantería (I and II)
Catalogacionarmas.com (December 2005) 27-Sables, espadas y machetes "distintivo" de clases a pie (I)

NOTE

These works are copyrighted and are the intellectual property of the author.

**Reproduction by any means without the author's previous explicit authorization is forbidden and penalized by law.
However, it may be downloaded for personal use,
as a service to the collecting community.**