

**ARMAMENTS OF THE TROOPS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD 1788-1931
(29)
PISTOLS OF THE ROYAL GUARD'S CAVALRY DIVISION**

(Translation by Hector J. Meruelo)



Cavalry pistol of the model used by the Royal Guard's Cavalry Division (1824-1841); 200 mm long, 18 mm ("de a 17") caliber barrel marked "Y/BAR/ZA/BAL" within an oval; French style lock "improved" in 1812 with uncertain maker's marking on the reverse of the plate; Overall length 361 mm; E. Gorostiza collection.

The Royal Guard's Cavalry Division, organized in 1824, was composed of four Regiments with four Squadrons of two Companies each, which were formed into two Brigades, one of the Line, and the other one a Light Brigade respectively; The Brigade of the Line had one Regiment of Grenadiers and one of "Coraceros" (Cuirassiers) and the Light Brigade one of "Cazadores" (Chasseurs, Jaegers) and one of Lancers; It had a total strength of 2,176 men and 1,920 horses.

Its Main Staff was composed of: 1 "Comandante-General" (a Lieutenant-General) and 2 Chiefs of Brigades (Fieldmarshalls); Each Regimental Staff

included: 1 Colonel (Brigadier), 1 major Lieutenant-Colonel (an actual Colonel), 3 Squadron Commandants (academy Colonels), 4 Adjutants,(?) Lieutenants of the Guard (academy Captains), 4 Standard bearers (academy Lieutenants), 1 Chaplain and 1 Surgeon, 1 Major Marshall, 1 second Marshall, 1 Main Bugler, 1 first Bugler, 1 saddler, 1 armourer, and 4 blacksmiths.

Each Company of each Squadron included 1 Captain (academy Comandante), 1 Lieutenant (academy Captain), 1 “Alférez” (academy Lieutenant), 1 Sergeant Major, 2 second Sergeants, 1 Bugler, 4 first Corporals, 4 second Corporals and 56 soldiers.

This force was later on increased as in 1,828 it included 2,599 men, 2,182 horses, 3 Main Staff Generals, 567 Chiefs and Officers, 5 Chaplains and 5 Surgeons .

Due to its decimation in the combats it participated in during the 1833-1840 Carlist War, on August, 3, 1841, General Espartero, the Regent of the Kingdom, reduced its strength to two Regiments, 1st and 2nd , each one with four Squadrons on the same footing and of equal strength as those of the Army Cavalry; The 1st Regiment composed of Grenadiers and “Coraceros” of the previous Brigade of the Line and the 2nd Regiment of “Cazadores” and Lancers of the previous Light Brigade; They were dissolved on the 6th of December of 1841 under suspicion of complicity in the conspiracy I previously mentioned in Chapter 26, which tried to end Espartero’s regency.

The pistol shown above is of the model used by the Royal Guard’s Cavalry Division and it’s attached Artillery Squadron and was contracted to Gabriel Benito de Ibarzabal who made it practically identical to the one he made for the Brigade of Royal “Carabineros”, although it lacks the articulated rod holder and bears the inscription “Guardia Real” on its barrel.



Cavalry pistol, a variant of the model used by the Royal Guard’s Cavalry Division (1824-1841); 200 mm long, 18 mm (“de a 17”) caliber barrel marked “Y/BAR/ZABAL” in an oval and inscribed “Guardia Real”; French style lock “improved” in 1812 with maker’s marking “OROZCO” (Orozco, Placencia) on the reverse of the plate; Overall length 361 mm; Daniel Abarca collection.

The above specimen also bears the Royal Guard inscription and has, the articulated rod holder, a lock with a smooth steel-pan cover (frizzen), and a unusual arched iron trigger guard; This is one of several “intermediate models” between the model for the Royal “Carabineros” (1820-22) and those of the Royal Guard (1824-41), as is shown by the following specimen:



Cavalry pistol of the same model used by the Brigade of Royal “Carabineros” (1820-22); 200 mm long, 18 mm (“de a 17”) caliber barrel, lacking the “Y/BAR/ZA/BAL” marking and any other inscription; French style lock “improved” in 1812 marked “M/UCIN” (Manuel Antonio de Ucin, Placencia) on the reverse of the plate; Overall length 361 mm; Daniel Abarca collection.

The markings on this last specimen are the same as those of the issue models made at the Placencia Royal Factory from 1815 on; The barrel, lacks any maker’s markings or any inscription alluding the “Guardia Real”, and the maker’s mark on the obverse of the lock plate is in contrast to those made by Ibarzabal where the marking is found on the reverse of the plate, and his name on the barrel is the only visible external marking.

I have seen a number of the Royal Guard specimen shown at the start of this article but none of the other two illustrated, which are the only ones known in existence, so we may ponder the possibility that, initially it was intended to equip the Royal Guard’s Cavalry Division with the same model used by the Brigade of Royal “Carabineros” but that, in order to reduce its cost, it was subsequently decided to modify it, minus the articulated rod holder.

Upon the resumption of the manufacture of this pistol model, destined for the Royal Guard, the obligatory Guild system had been re-established, which may explain its irregular production until it was defined as the model lacking the articulated rod holder; As I explained in Chapters 13 and 14, the sub-sequent re-establishment of industrial freedom in 1820 allowed Gabriel Benito de Ibarzabal to establish himself as a “maker” of firearms, an activity which he continued even after 1824, although not without difficulties, as he had shown liberal attitudes during the preceding period.

He was the constitutional Mayor of Eibar from April to December of 1820 and, from 1821, one of the “Comandantes” of the local “Milicia Nacional” (National Militia), up until the French intervention of April 1823; He then paid off his debts to the Royal Tax Collector and went to France, from where he returned a few months later upon being summoned by the directors of the Toledo Factory who were interested in keeping him as a provider; However, upon returning to Madrid and reporting to the Kingdom’s Superintendent of Security in order to have his passport stamped, he was arrested and was able to go free only after paying “on the spot” a fine of 8,000 “reales”, and this thanks only to the intervention of the Toledo Factory administration which recommended his release...”so that Don Gabriel Benito de Ibarzabal may be of use to the State and continue in his position as Director of his Eibar arms manufactory”.

Upon his return to Eibar in 1826 he was deprived of his local civil rights due to his participation in the persecution of Royalists during his years as a commander of the National Militia, although after a few weeks he succeeded in having the City Hall declare him as being “purified”.

It was due to his usefulness to the State that Ibarzabal managed to continue to produce during these, “black years”, firearms which were actually made by diverse artisans and shops contracted by him; Amongst those were the pistol and “tercerola” used by the Cavalry Division of the Royal Guard.

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