

**ARMAMENTS OF THE TROOPS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD 1788-1931  
(38)  
SWORDS, SHORT SWORDS, AND BREASTPLATE  
OF THE ROYAL ESCORT SQUADRON**

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



**Riding sword of the model approved for the Squadron of the Royal Guard in July of 1875; 875 x 26 mm long blade, double edged on three tables, marked on the ricasso “ARTILLERIA / FABRICA / DE / TOLEDO”, undated; Hilt and guard described as of “steel” in 1875 and as of “burnished iron” in 1885, with three quillons and bearing the Monarch’s Cipher, in this case Alfonso XIII; Ribbed, shagreen covered, and wired grip, with long ferrule and pommel cap.**

The Royal Escort Squadron was created in April of 1875: “In order to escort and render services to the Royal Persons when outside the Palace”; It was composed of 1 First Chief (a Cavalry Colonel); 1 Second Chief (a Lieutenant-Colonel), 2 Captains (“Comandantes”), 1 Adjutant (a Captain), 4 Lieutenants (also Captains), 3 “Alférez” (Lieutenants), 1 Veterinarian (a “second professor”), 1 “picador” (horse tamer, also a “second professor”), 1 Sergeant Major, 4 second Sergeants, 8 first Corporals, 100 Guards (first class privates), three blacksmiths, and 1 metal or foundry worker.

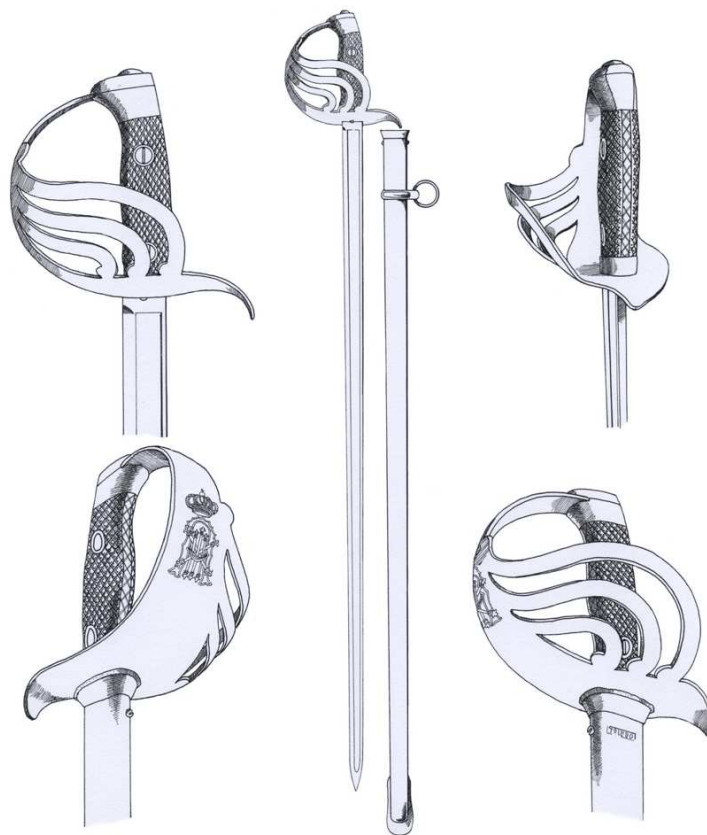
By Royal Order of January, 15, 1919 it was decreed that “Taking into consideration the special organic composition and distribution of the force of the “Royal Escort” Squadron in relation to its peculiar tasks, the King (q.D.q) (“que Dios guarde” = “may God protect him”) has decided that from now on this (entire) unit will be known as the “Royal Escort”; Its strength was then increased, as in the Ordinances of 1923 it is described as having two Squadrons, each one with 1 Captain, 4 Officers and 106 Guards (including all classes).

By Royal Order of July, 29, 1875 the model of riding sword used by the Squadron of the “Royal Escort” is described only as made at the Toledo Factory, and it continues to be briefly described in the 1885, 1892, 1910 and 1923 Ordinances, although from 1892 on the Royal Ciphers on its hilt is specified

as that of Alfonso XIII, posthumous son of Alfonso XII who died in November of 1885.

During the 1910s the 1885 sword model was substituted by its variant of the “Puerto-Seguro” system (designed by the Marquis of Puerto-Seguro) but this fact is not mentioned in the 1923 Ordinances where the previous model continues to be described, although with so few details that the description could also apply to the “Puerto-Seguro” variant.

Regarding the equipment used by the Chiefs and Officers, those Ordinances repeat the same description of the troopers sword, or they describe it as “straight and of the same shape and class as that of the troop”; However, In the 1907 illustrated catalogue of the Toledo Factory it is shown as the “Model of 1875 of this Royal Corp” in, “troopers” and “Officers” variants but with no other difference than their quality.



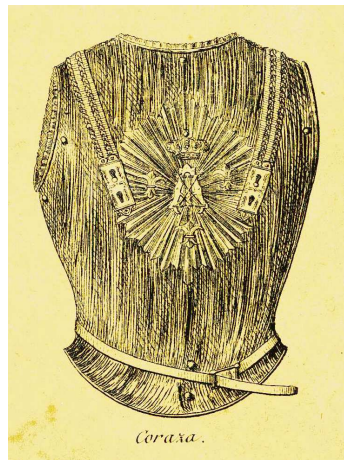
**Model of saber-sword of the “Puerto-Seguro” system used by the Royal Escort during the 1920s; Drawn by Eduardo Jiménez Sánchez-Malo**

Perhaps the belt sword used with the daily dress was approved somewhat later than 1875 as it is not mentioned in that year’s Ordinances; It is, however, mentioned in the 1885 Ordinances as an “espadin” (short sword) and in the 1910 and 1923 ones as a “dress sword”, and wrongly described in all of them as having a “bowl hilt”, as its hilt is actually of the so-called “boat-shape” type, same as the dress sword model approved in 1848 for the Royal Corp of Halberdier Guards, differing from it only in its decorations.



**Belt sword for use with daily dress by the Chiefs and Officers of the Royal Escort Squadron; This specimen with the blade inscribed “FABca DE TOLEDO 1874”; Nickel plated hilt with boat-style guard bearing Alfonso XII’s Cipher; Fleur de lis at the end of the quillons and on its pommel; E. Gorostiza collection.**

The 1875 Ordinances also do not mention the use of a breastplate by the Squadron of the Royal Escort, but it is shown and described in the 1885 Ordinances: “Of polished iron with a yellow metal sunburst and in its center the initials A XII with Royal Crown and three fleur de lis of white metal, with necktie of frizzled scarlet woollen cloth, attached to the white sheepskin internal breastplate’s lining”; In those for troopers the central sunburst is said to be fire-hardened; The Chiefs and Officers also wore the same breastplate for parade....”and for any other services H.M may order”.



**Royal Escort Squadron’s breastplate, as illustrated in the 1885 Ordinances.**

The description of the breastplate in the 1910 Ordinances is practically identical: “Of burnished iron with breast- and back-plate; The breast plate with a golden sun and the Cipher A XIII with Royal Crown and three fleur de lis in white metal; Shoulder straps of white leather with golden metal chain-stitch that clasp the breast to the back-plate, and a belt also of white leather; Frizzled, scarlet necktie attached to the white sheepskin internal lining”.

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June, 2012**

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