

**ARMAMENTS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD TROOPS, 1788-1931
(42)
2nd SUPPLEMENT
UNUSUAL SPECIMENS**

(Translation by Hector J. Meruelo)



Cavalry pistol; 210 mm long, “de a 17” (18mm) caliber barrel, engraved with the Royal Arms and the inscription “Gs. DE LA REAL PERSONA”; Lock taken from a “1st” model pistol of the “Guardias de la Persona del Rey”; Checkered grip; Overall length 340 mm. Andres Barnes collection.

Two pieces justify including this 2nd Supplement: First the one illustrated above, which uses the lock and trigger guard from a “1st model” pistol of the Royal Corp of “Guardias de la Persona del Rey” with its barrel inscribed “Gs. DE LA REAL PERSONA”, and, second a specimen of the pistol model used by the Cavalry Division of the Royal Guard, recomposed and inscribed “LA ESCOLTA DEL REY” (The King’s Escort) in its furniture.

The first one is of similar appearance to the “1st model” of the Trooper version of the pistol used by the “Real Cuerpo de Guardias de la Persona del Rey”, although mounted “in the French style” with its barrel lacking any locking springs and fastened to the stock by a brass barrel band.



The barrel is externally different to all other models of the “Real Cuerpo de Guardias de la Persona del Rey” and bears the Royal Arms and the inscription “Gs. DE LA REAL PERSONA”, a denomination that was adopted in 1834 and which I have seen only on this specimen.

We may ask ourselves if this pistol’s construction was due to the personal taste of an individual who served in this Royal Corp, or, if it was an actual “recomposition model” produced for the “Guardias de la Real Persona” (?); Since there were at the time available brand new, unused, pistols and tercerolas of the disbanded Brigade of “Tiradores” it would appear that the construction of a new model was unnecessary and therefore that this pistol was a personal custom order.

Upon the death of Fernando VII, the Royal Corp of “Guardias de la Persona del Rey” was formed by four Squadrons of two Brigades each and in each Brigade, 2 “Exentos”, 2 “Brigadieres”, 2 “sub-Brigadieres”, 8 Cadets, 63 Guards and 2 Trumpets; In 1834 its first two Squadrons were uniformed as Grenadiers and the other two as Light Cavalry; In August of 1838 it was reorganized into only two Squadrons of two Brigades each, all uniformed as Light Cavalry. It’s main General Staff was formed by: 1 Captain-“Comandante”, 1 General Adjutant, 1 Chaplain, 1 Surgeon, 1 “Picador”, 2 Horse Tamers, 2 Field Marshalls, 1 armourer, 1 saddler, 1 counselor, 1 Prosecutor, and 1 Prison servant.

The main Staff of each Squadron included 1 “Comandante”, 1 Adjutant, 2 “Garzones”, 1 Standard-bearer and 1 Bugler; Each Brigade had 3 “Exentos”, 2 “Brigadieres”, 2 “sub-Brigadieres”, 8 Cadets, 55 Guards and 2 Buglers.

We must conclude that, sometime between 1834 and 1841 one of its members armed himself with the pistol shown above.

Regarding the second piece mentioned at the start of this article, I know of the existence of two specimens, one in the Robert E. Brooker collection, and the second one in a private collection in Spain; Both of their barrels bear the oval “Y/BAR/ZA/BAL” marking and the inscription “*Guardia Real*”, indicating their construction by Gabriel Benito de Ibarzabal for the Royal Guard, although their stocks bear also the inscription “LA ESCOLTA DEL REY” and are individualized with reference to a 5th Company of a 3rd Squadron (3r.E.5a.Ca.), when the Royal Guard’s Squadrons included only two Companies; In both specimens all the brass parts including their locks have been silver plated and the lanyard rings have been eliminated with their orifices in the butt caps having been

ground off, although under the caps we can still find their channels in the wood stocks.



Recomposed specimen of the pistol model used by the Cavalry Division of the Royal Guard (1824-41) characterized by having all of its brass parts silver plated and by lacking its lanyard ring; 200 mm long, “de a 17” (18 mm) caliber barrel, bearing the oval “Y/BAR/Z/BAL” and “Guardia Real” inscriptions, and “LA ESCOLTA DEL REY” on the left side of the wood stock, plus the individualization “3R. E. 5A. CA.” (3rd Squadron 5th Company)

Surely they are pistols of the Royal Guard model recomposed by eliminating the lanyard rings and by silver plating all their brass parts probably in an attempt to increase their sumptuousness as worthy of the equipment of a monarch, other than Fernando VII, who had his own Royal Corp of “Guardias de la Persona del Rey”; They may have been used by the escort of Don Carlos during the 1833-40 war although I have only found reference, regarding a Carlist escort, of the “Escolta del Estandarte Generalisimo”, formed by 30 or 40 men for whom,

according to my source, a unique model of cavalry pistol was made with lanyard rings and the inscription "*Escolta del Estante. Genemo. D.J.S.M.*"¹ on their barrels.



Cavalry pistol used by the "Escolta del Estandarte Generalisimo", a Carlist unit formed in 1837; 222 mm long, "de a 17" (18 mm) calibre barrel, inscribed "*Escolta del Estante. Genemo. D.J.M.S.*". Robert E. Brooker collection

The security of the Carlist pretender was the responsibility of the Royal Headquarters Battalion, which was the 5th Battalion of the seven that formed the "Division Alavesa", each one with eight companies.

In their battles with the Cavalry Regiments of the Royal Guard the Carlists may have taken a number of their pistols and may have decided to equip with them a King's Escort.....however I find it unlikely that this justified the cost of a "sumptuous" refurbishing such as silver plating their brass parts and suppressing their lanyard rings and erasing any trace of their previous existence, and believe that, most likely, they are the product of a singular refurbishing of these two pistols by its previous owner.

**Juan L. Calvó
August, 2012**

¹ D.J.M.S: "Dolorosa, de Jesus Madre Santísima", the Suffering Virgin, Generalissimo of all the Carlist armies.

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