

**ARMAMENTS OF THE TROOPS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD 1788-1931
(8)
SABERS OF THE ADMIRAL'S GUARD,
ATTACHED TO THE BRIGADE OF ROYAL "CARABINEROS", 1802-1808**

(Translation by Hector J. Meruelo)



Saber of a Light Cavalry Officer, Regulations of 1803 ; 890x33 mm curved blade, engraved in both obverse and reverse "R.L.F.A.D. TOLEDO"/ "AÑO D 180.."; Blade is single edged up to the double edged tip, grooved under the spine. Eduardo Gorostiza Collection.

The "Guardia del Almirante", Admiral's Guard of Don Manuel Godoy, Prince of Peace, Generalissimo and Admiral, was created in 1801 due to the war with Portugal and it was composed of a Company of Hussars with, one "Comandante", one secondary "Comandante", and fifty-four soldiers; In 1802 it was reorganized and attached to the Brigade of Royal "Carabineros", which was composed of two squadrons, one of Hussars and one of "Cazadores" (Chasseurs, Jaegers), with a joint Main Staff which included one "Comandante" (in effect a Colonel), one major Adjutant (in reality a Captain), one secondary Adjutant (a Lieutenant), one Chaplain, one Surgeon, one saddler, one bugler and four numbers.

Each squadron had two companies, each one with, a Captain, a Lieutenant, a second Lieutenant, one Sergeant major, two second Sergeants, four Corporals, four second Corporals and thirty-nine soldiers including a blacksmith.

In the 1856 edition of the Catalogue of the "Museo de Artillería", saber number 1666 is described as: "Specimen of the sabers which armed the Hussars of the honor guard of the Prince of Peace in 1804; Black leather grip, brass guard, leather scabbard, almost completely covered by the long throat and finial, which are also joined by thin brass strips on its spine and its edge; The blade is 931 mm long and 38 mm wide at the beginning of its tang".

In the 1911 edition of the Catalogue it added that "it was made in 1843 at the Toledo Factory"; Likewise saber number 1663 of the same Collection described in the 1856 Catalogue as: "Specimen of saber used by the Hussars

of “Olivenza” in 1802”; Black leather grip, brass guard, leather scabbard barely visible under the enormous brass throat and finial; 86 cm long blade and 38 mm wide at the beginning of the tang”.

In the 1911 Catalogue, saber number 1663 is shown next to number 4567 as: “Two sabers, reproduction of those used by the Hussars of “Olivenza” in the War of Independence, made in 1843 at the Toledo Factory; The 87 cm long, 3.5 cm wide, curved blade is single edged except at its tip and is engraved in its first one third; The cross and knuckle guards are made of brass and the leather scabbard is almost entirely covered by the long throat and finial, also of brass”.

At this time, the updated edition of the collection of edged weapons in the “Museo del Ejército” Catalogue, is pending publication but, in the 2005 exposition “Los sables del Museo del Ejército” (Sabers of the Army Museum) one of the sabers numbered in the 1911 edition as 1663 and 4657 is shown with number 41259 and identified as used by the Hussars of “Olivenza” in the War of Independence with its blade inscribed “Fabrica NL. (National) de Toledo Año de 1843” and its crossguard marked “To. Lliura”.



Light cavalry saber, number 41259 in the Catalogue of the exposition “Los sables del Museo del Ejército”, Madrid, 2005.

The marking “To. Lliura” (Toledo, Lliura) identifies the brass smelting shop, established at the Toledo Factory in 1808, under the direction of the master smelter Juan Lliura, in order to manufacture sword grips and hilts; This shop ceased functioning in the same year upon being occupied by the French; An original hilt was used in this reproduction specimen, so we may ask ourselves if it was a “restoration” done in the Museum itself in the mid XIX Century by replacing the, perhaps severely corroded, blade of a genuine specimen.



Light cavalry saber, French model of 1776 with an 880 x 32 mm curved blade, inscribed “Sohlingen”, with a crowned arrow marking indicative of use by the English Army.

Towards the end of the XVIII Century sabers of this type with a stirrup type guard, a curved blade, and leather scabbards almost completely covered by the long throat and finial, equipped the light cavalry forces of practically all armies; In Spain, the 1803 Regulations organized the Cavalry into twelve regiments of the line and twelve light ones, of which six were of “Cazadores” and six of Hussars and in these “the equipments and armaments of the twelve regiments of light Cavalry shall be the curved saber with brass hilt and brass-covered scabbard” and they should all be the same as those used by the Officers “except for the three main Officers of each Regiment who may use a more luxurious saber and belt as befits their superior status”.

The model of saber that equipped the Regiments of Hussars and “Cazadores” of the Admiral’s Guard would be almost identical to the one made from 1803 for the twelve Regiments of the Army’s Light Cavalry; In 1805 they were reduced to four Regiments, two of Hussars and two of “Cazadores”.

I have never examined a specimen clearly identified as used by the squadrons of the Admiral’s Guard, nor of the ones used by the Army’s Light Cavalry Regiments which were presumably marked R (under crown) C. IV. (property of the King, Carlos IV) plus with the Toledo Factory marking, the year of production, and some reference to its service in the Light Cavalry , similar to the “CA.D.LA” (Caballería de Línea) seen in the blades of the riding swords used by the Cavalry of the Line .

Perhaps the sabers that equipped the Admiral’s Guard had some inscription that would allow their identification; In the initially illustrated specimen, certain details such as, the groove next to the spine, and markings limited to the factory and year of production are typical of “commercial” manufacture, acquired by Officers of the Army who had to purchase their personal equipment .

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