

525th Anniversary of the Creation of the *Sergeant* Rank in the Spanish Army

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During the year 2019, the Spanish Army celebrates the 525th Anniversary of the creation of the Sergeant rank.

Five hundred and twenty-five years, which is like saying the whole life of our Army, born in the late fifteenth century as a result of the creation of the first permanent army of the known world, the Sergeant has been, is and will be the soul of the noncommissioned officers Corps, the spirit that permeates history and tradition with its way of being and existence.

At the end of the fifteenth century, there are three historical circumstances that influence the creation of the Sergeant rank: the end of the Reconquest, the discovery of America and the creation of permanent armies.

There is a change in military art - empowerment of infantry to the detriment of cavalry. The Company appears as the basic organization of infantry, the castration is performed, the artillery is reformed, the portable weapons are delivered to the soldier and the evolutions are normalized. Even "specialists" appear as the people who are trained to perform a profession or trade of a technical nature.

The Catholic Monarchs organize the first permanent army. Fernando with his war experience and Isabel who was visionary in what we would call the Intendance, in logistics and, in the promotion of the first field hospitals and apothecaries.

The first reference to the rank of Sergeant is in a Royal Provision of 1493, when the Catholic Monarchs create a corps of cavalry troops called "Old Guards of Castile", in which each company, under the command of a Captain, include a Sergeant, This is the first appearance of the rank. A year later, in 1494 King Fernando "El Católico" signs his ordinances of what would become the first regular and permanent military units of the Spanish Army, and in which the figure of the Sergeant is already part of the military organization.

The chronicles say that it was the Captains who asked the King to create the rank of Sergeant since those first companies only had a Captain and a Second

Lieutenant (alférez). Below them were the Corporals. The Captains and Lieutenants were in charge of nearly 800 men, already with a variety of weapons. This First Sergeant - one per company - was the third officer of the unit. This rank had a wide range of responsibilities, including missions, highlighting logistics, administrative duties and training.

In 1534, Carlos I included the Sergeant in an Infantry unit, when he created the "Spanish Tercios" of Naples and Milan. He would shake half of the world for his limitless courage, his knowledge of Military Art and his exceptional warrior virtues. It is the period of greatest splendor of the Army and the Sergeant, who is responsible for the duties described above and has the added responsibility of instructing each of the different elements of this perfect war machine (pike-man, arquebusiers and musketeers).

During the seventeenth century, the Sergeant's fame darkens at the same pace as the fame of the Thirds with the decline of the Empire. But it will not be until the Ordinances of Carlos III, in 1768, (Ordinances that were in force until 1978), that it will finally appear, consolidated as a hierarchical rank - albeit as an enlisted rank. As the complexity of war tactics increases, the number of Sergeants per company increases to three, and the post of First Sergeant is created.

In 1912, a Law is published in which two categories are created in enlisted corps (one consisting of Soldier, First Soldier, Corporal, and another of the Sergeant, Master Sergeant and NCO rank). Servicemen who had at least six months of service were allowed to apply for the sergeant posts. They were required to sit an examination.

But it is not until 1931, that the Government of the Republic, signs a Law that, for the first time, organizes and recognizes the prestige of this group, laying the foundations of the newly created NCO corps (in which the Sergeant is not yet included). It is composed of First Sergeants, Master Sergeants, "subayudantes" and Sergeant Majors. Subsequently, in 1934, the Sergeant is integrated into the NCO Corps, and remains there to this day.

Forty years later, in 1974, in the “Camp Martin Alonso”, in Tremp (Lérida), the “Academia General Básica de Suboficiales” (Non-commissioned Military School) is created. This is where the common non-commissioned training course is taught. It is the birthplace of the “Básica” (commonly call NCO in our School). After that, forty-four promotions, and twenty-seven thousand three hundred and forty-four Sergeants graduated from the Academy. In 1993, the first female sergeant, belonging to the XVII Promotion, graduates, being the first of seven hundred and ninety-one who have done so until this year.

Two months before, Law 13/1974 on the organization of the Basic Non-commissioned Corps was passed. This was created due to the need for younger staff, with high levels of technical experience and adequate knowledge. It required a renewal of the training

system of the NCO Corps, in which the formation of the noncommissioned officers was regulated for the first time in the 525 years of the history of the Sergeant. This is like saying that the noncommissioned officers are a “fundamental echelon and essential element” of the Army and we must “love and care” for them.

Currently, Military Education, for those who join the NCO Corps, takes place over a period of three years. After an initial period at AGBS (NCO School) where students receive general military training, they continue in the academies of their respective specialties in which, in addition to continuing with their specific military training, they pursue studies to obtain a degree of “Superior Technician” in the General Educational System.



**525º ANIVERSARIO
DEL EMPLEO DE SARGENTO
EN EL EJÉRCITO ESPAÑOL**

1494 - 2019



**45º ANIVERSARIO
ACADEMIA GENERAL
BÁSICA DE SUBOFICIALES**

