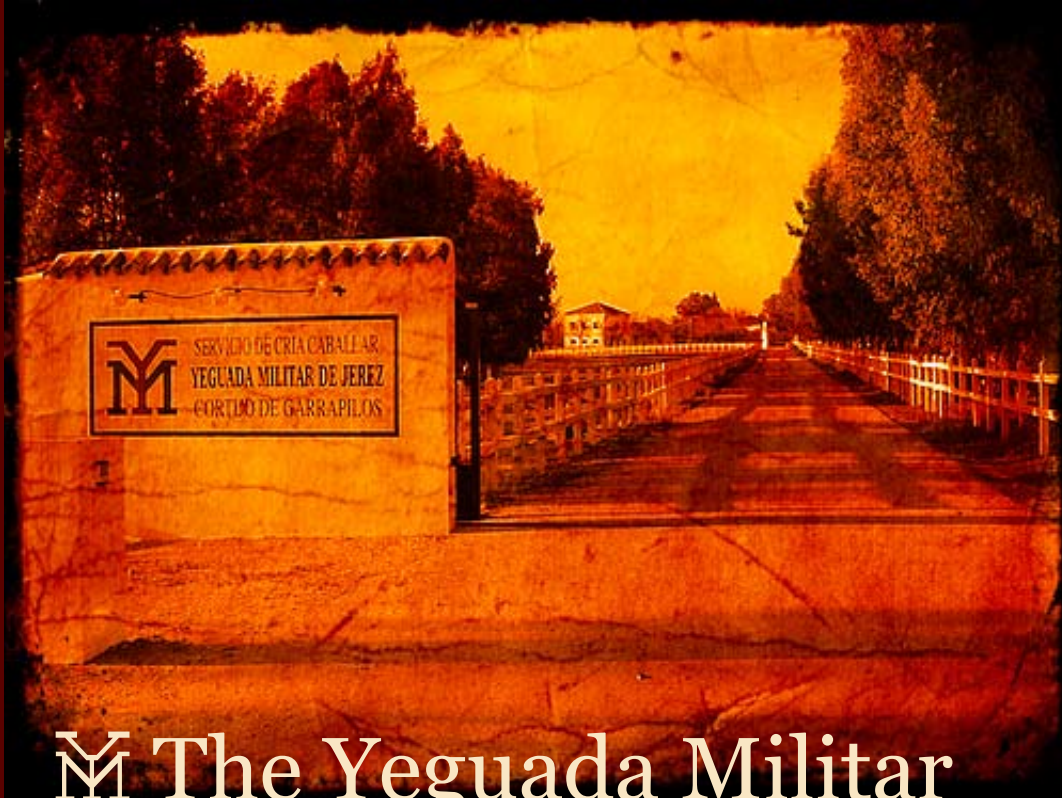


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M The Yeguada Militar

by Terry Waechter

No discussion about the origin of the Pura Raza Espanola (P.R.E.) would be complete without mentioning the contribution of the Yeguada Militar. This article is intended to give the reader a thumbnail sketch of this influential stud farm's history as well as its modern day function. The P.R.E. is only one of the horse breeds nurtured and protected by the Military Stud system, but that is the breed we will focus on in this article.

Establishment of the Yeguada Militar

On June 26, 1893 a Royal Order initiated by the Spanish Minister of War created the Yeguada Militar (Military Stud) in Cordoba. The purpose of the new stud farm was to provide horses for the Cavalry.

In simple terms, this order stipulated the following:

- ❖ 75 broodmares of various breeds be purchased (18 were Pure Spanish)
- ❖ The mares be raised in the pastures of Moratalla (Cordoba) and be fed grain and fodder raised on this land leased by the Spanish military services
- ❖ The costs associated with building the stud be paid by the Military Horse Services
- ❖ The staff be provided by the Cavalry
- ❖ The stallions be selected from those in public stallion deposits deemed to have the most appropriate blood; analyzing thoroughly and scientifically all measures deemed to contribute to the purpose of improving the equine population; and sharing this information with the public
- ❖ The colts and fillies who are not considered appropriate for reproductive purposes or for military service be sold and the resulting funds be returned to the Service's use.

One hundred and twelve years later, "the Military Stud of Jerez de la Frontera has been and still is a genetic reserve in times of decline and a spearhead when opening a new road for a better quality in equine production" according to *Las Mejores Ganaderias deo Mundo*, Edition 2000.





The Facility

Since 1956 the Military stud operates two farms: Vicos and Garrapilo. The females stay in Vicos all their lives while the colts go to Garrapilo until they reach the age of five. They are then sent to the Centers for Equine Reproduction.

Vicos is located near Jerez de la Frontera and is comprised of 1037 hectares (2592 acres). The highway from Jerez to Arcos de la Frontera divides the property. The fillies are raised on one side of the road in the area called Marismillas. On the other side of the road, the mares and foals reside until weaning.

Garrapilo is located nearby. The size of this farm is 597 hectares. It is made by irrigated, un-irrigated and bush land. The property is used for raising colts and is also

the site of the Center for Training and Selection.

The Guadalquivir River provides water to these properties.

There are seven Stallion Depots located throughout Spain. Selected stallions are available to the locals to breed one or more mares. Many breeders do not maintain a stallion of their own but prefer to build their program around the carefully selected and tested stallions from the Military Stud. Other breeders may want to improve their stock with the use of an approved stallion and the stallion depot will assist them. It is also possible to select a stallion and use him on-site at the breeder's own farm for a specific period of time.

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P.R.E. Horses of the Yeguada Militar

Today the P.R.E. section of the Yeguada Militar still exists. The original 18 mares came from the following breeders: Don Francisco Molina, Don Francisco Rioboo, Don Gregario Garcia, Don Pedro Guerrero, Don Rafael Romero, Mrs. Widow of don Vicente de los Rios. It was noted at the time that these breeders allowed the Procurement Commission to choose from the best stock in order to further the vision of the Spanish government.

Bloodstock from Muira, Baones, Guerrero, and Escalera as well as the Bocado lines have been used since to expand and build the Military herd. In the 21st century, all known genetic lines of the P.R.E horse are represented at the stud farm.

There are five genetic sire lines ("Destinado II", "Maluso", "Nevado III", "Valencia", and "Estepeno") and eight dam lines ("Andaluza", "Peregrina", "Airosa III", "Hechicera V", "Urbana", "Tabertera", "Mariposa", and "Africana II").

Mares

As the years passed, mares were added and in 1949 there were 84 P.R.E. mares in the band. To this day, there is a subset of broodmares with Carthusian lines that date back to original stock and are still bred true to their roots. In 1949 20 of the 84 mares wore the brand of the Hierro del Bocado and the Militar brand. After 1955, the practice of double branding ceased, and the mares of Bocado descent only wore the Militar brand. The origin of some of these Bocado mares can be traced back to the farms of don Vicente Romero, señor Marques de la Casa Domec and don Francisco Chica Nararro

The modern brood mare band numbers between 100 and 120 mares. The coat colors of the mare band are divided approximately as follows: 45% grey, 55% bay. Females become broodmares in their fourth year.

Stallions

Destinado II, Maluso, Nevado III, Valencia, and Estepeno are the basis of the five Military Stud sire lines.

It is said a picture is worth a thousand words. Let's look at Evento (Leviton out of Tecnica by Jensen). He came on the equestrian world stage at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia wearing the Militar brand. Ridden by Ignacio Ramblas, he was the first P.R.E. to successfully represent Spain. Examining his pedigree illustrates the interplay of genetics in these basic sire lines. His famous sire Leviton is a grandson of Maluso; his dam is a daughter of Jensen/ Agente/Maluso. Leviton's dam is a daughter of Estepeno.

While doing pedigree searches notice how often such names as Agente, Jensen, Jecomias, Leviton, and Maluso appear in the pedigrees of horses we admire today. This is proof of the potency and influence of the Military Stud breeding program on the world.

Current Mission of the Yeguada Militar

Much has changed in the last century concerning the horse. They are no longer used by the military or on farms. The automobile and airplane have replaced equine transportation. These events have changed the use of Military Stud products as have the locations of the farms changed but one thing that is not different is its basic purpose.

- ❖ To breed, select, and improve the Pure Spanish PRE breeds
- ❖ To produce the stallions needed by the Centers of Equine Reproduction
- ❖ To grow and train the colts of the Center for Training and selection of Breeding Stock.

This mission is carried out in the following ways: the best fillies from the breeding program are retained as mother mares, colts are strenuously evaluated as candidates for use in the stallion depot program, and all other animals are offered in an annual sale.

Breedings from the stallions at the military stallion depots are offered to the public and/or used with the state breeding program. A private breeder can petition to use a particular stallion at his or her farm for a limited number of breeding periods. Private citizens pay no fees unless the youngsters are to be registered. This is a government service in Spain, just as we expect fire and police protection.

Las Mejores Ganaderias deo Mundo, Edition 2000 says it best:

"The breeding plan (of Yeguada Militar) is intimately bound to the improvement project, based on getting a horse that, without losing the qualities that it possesses and following the breeds' pattern, improves its qualities and eliminates defects. The means of this plan of improvement are based on a continuous evaluation and selection process for individual type, improving the environment and the genetic selection."

According to Juan Carlos Altamirano in his book, *The Spanish Horse under the Bourbon Kings*, three events in the 20th century shaped the revival of the Spanish Horse: in 1913, reopening the Studbook of Purebred Spanish horses and giving it the name of Registro Matricula de la Raza Espanola under the management of the Horse Breeding Board; in 1972, the creation of ANCCE and before either event, in 1892 came the creation of the Military Stud.

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