

Some notes on the modern uniforms of the Military & Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem

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Abstract

From its origins, the members of the Order of Saint Lazarus have adopted distinct dress forms to identify themselves as belonging to the institution. The uniform has changed over the centuries starting with the simple monkish habit of the Crusader period, to the more flamboyant dress style of the Baroque age and the military dress uniform of the modern age. The paper will look at the modern twentieth-century developments in uniform styles.

Introduction

The first instruction in modern times regarding uniforms for the Military & Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem was issued in 1929 and covers two types of uniform, a Gala Uniform and a “*Tenue de Cérémonie*”. These uniforms were designed and generally tailored in France, and are thus following French patterns and standards.¹

The empire of Napoleon Bonaparte lasted for one single decade only. However, that decade changed Europe forever, bringing to an end Constantine’s Holy Roman Empire after fifteen hundred years. The Vienna Congress would cost over three hundred central-European principalities their sovereignty, create new kingdoms, and open the way for Protestant Prussian expansion which, eventually, two hundred years later would result in two devastating world wars. One legacy of

¹ *Statuts including Règlement spéciales concernant les insignes et les uniforme de l'Ordre de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem.* (Paris: Journal officiel d'Annonces judiciaires et legales. 1929), +8p.

Napoleon's short-lived empire, still in evidence, is the creation and development of the Civil Uniform that still forms the basis for diplomatic uniform and Court Dress in several countries, including the uniforms of the military Orders of Chivalry and the pontifical Equestrian Orders.

The Gala uniform

The design of the gala uniform of the Military & Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem is greatly inspired by the uniforms of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and that of the Pontifical Knights of Christ, both of which have epaulettes, a plastron and turn-backs on the tails. It consists of a double-breasted dark green tailcoat with white apparels adorned with gold wire oak leaf embroidery and a large green eight-pointed cross on the plastron. The collar, cuffs, pocket flaps, plastron and turn-backs of the coat tails have saw-edge embroidery within which is a row of oak leaf embroidery, all in gold wire and sequins. That is the coat of a Knight of St Lazarus. A Knight Commander has an additional, shorter, row of oak leaves below, and Knights Grand Cross a third, even shorter row below the second one on the collar, cuffs, and pocket flaps. Rank is thus indicated by the amount of gold wire embroidery, not by "pips" or multiple crosses. The epaulettes are of gold, with bullion fringes and a large green eight-pointed silk cross on the body of the epaulette, and large button of the Order near the collar. The epaulette strap is in gold wire embroidery on white cloth, of standard European pattern for officers of general's rank. On the coat, there are fourteen buttons of the Order on the plastron, three under each pocket flap, two in the waist at the back, and one in the pleat at the end of each coat tail.

According to the Order's dress regulations of 1929, the tailcoat of the gala uniform may be worn either with trousers of the same dark green cloth as the coat, with a wide gold lace along the outer side seams, and boots with spurs, or, for evening wear, knee breeches of white cloth, white silk stockings and patent leather court shoes.



Grand Master of the Order (1935-52)
Francesco de Paula de Borbon y de la Torre wearing Gala uniform

The belt, closed by a gilded buckle with the eight-pointed cross of the Order in green enamel, is of dark green velvet with two rows of gold lace or gold wire embroidery. With long trousers, the headgear can be either a silver helmet with white plumage, or a bicorne with a broad gold lace, cockade of the Order, gold loop and tassels, and white ostrich feathers for all Knights.²

The sword may be either a sabre or a court sword. With the white knee breeches, however, neither the helmet, nor the sabre are worn;

² The *Règlement* of 22nd December, 1774, stipulated white plumage for all Knights of the Order and a white plastron with the green cross. Also the now obsolete full dress uniform of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre included a bicorne with white feathers for Knights of all ranks.

their places are taken by the bicorn and the court sword. The sword knot (*dragonne*) is made of gold rope or gold lace and dark green silk; it has a draw slide and a tassel at the end.

The outer garment is the cape of the Order, made from black cloth, lined with green silk, with a dark green velvet collar, a clasp with chain and six order buttons to close. Like the mantle, it has the cross of the Order over the left shoulder. White gloves complete the uniform.

The gala uniform of the Order has remained in favour in Spain and it is sometimes, erroneously, referred to as the “Spanish uniform” of the Order.

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ARMEMENT
BICORNES
CASQUES
*
ORDRES
FRANÇAIS
ÉTRANGERS
CHEVALERESQUES

*Costume de Gala de l'Ordre
de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem*

*Fournisseur autorisé de l'Ordre Militaire
et Hospitalier de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem*

*Habit de Gala de l'Ordre
de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem*

CONDITIONS SPÉCIALES AUX MEMBRES DE L'ORDRE

1930s advertisement for the Order's Gala uniform



**Charles Otzenberger-Detaille: Superintendent of the Order (1929-1944)
wearing the Ceremonial uniform**

The Ceremonial uniform

The *Tenue de Cérémonie* is the precursor of our current uniform. It consists of a double-breasted white tunic with two rows of nine buttons of the Order and apparels of dark green velvet with gold wire embroidery, of the same patterns as those on the gala uniform. The epaulettes are the same. There are two (although the instruction stipulates three) large Order buttons on each cuff and two in the waist at the back (or sometimes six on the back skirts. The trousers are black with broad gold lace along the outer side seams and worn over boots with spurs. The sword belt is dark green with two rows of gold lace and a clasp consisting of two circular discs, each with the green cross of the Order (not dissimilar to the cape clasp referred to above), joined by a “serpent S” hook. There are two sword slings to carry the side arm. With this uniform, a sabre was normally carried and the headgear consisted of a bicorne, for Knights Grand Cross like the one for the gala uniform, for Knight Commanders and Knights, the plumage is made of black ostrich feathers. The Order cape and white gloves complete the uniform.

The Hospitaller uniform

There was also, briefly, a Hospitaller Uniform which consisted of a navy blue double-breasted coat with Order buttons and embroidered epaulette straps; trousers of the same cloth and a piqued cap. At the moment of writing, precise details are not known.

The Reunion Dress

Soon after the appointment by the Coadjutor and Lieutenant Grand Master (subsequently 45th Grand Master) of the Order, Don Francisco Enrique de Borbón y de Borbón, of the XIIth Duc de Brissac as Administrator General of the Order on 30th June, 1954, the Hospitaller Uniform was modified and a new Reunion Dress was adopted for the Grand Priory of France. On 27th February, 1965, its use was extended to the Order worldwide. The use of the Gala Uniform and the Ceremonial Uniform, however, was never suppressed.

A comprehensive Dress Regulation of 30th January, 1968, contains detailed instructions for the Reunion Dress of the Order.³ It consists of a white double-breasted jacket, closed by two rows of three Order buttons and with collar, lapels and cuffs of dark green velvet. There are two small Order buttons on each cuff and epaulette straps on the shoulders. This “smoking jacket” is worn with ordinary evening trousers, i.e., black trousers with one silk stripe, 11 mm. wide, a white shirt and a black bowtie. The sword belt, with Order buckle, is of dark green silk. The cape is the same as that of the Regulation of 1929. The headgear consists of a white, naval style, piqued cap with black headband. The cap badge is embroidered with the cross of the Order within a laurel wreath surmounted by the Grand Magisterial Crown. The chinstrap is black, embroidered with gold oak leaves and fixed by two small Order buttons.

The Reunion Dress is worn in two versions. The n° 1 version, with shoulder boards in addition to the epaulette straps, and sword belt, was worn as “dress wear” with decorations either in original or miniature, depending on the occasion. With the n° 2 version, which replaced the Hospitaller Uniform, neither shoulder boards nor sword belt is worn; a riband bar or miniature bar substituted for full size medals, and the wearing of a sash was discouraged. There is a curious stipulation reserving the use of the bicorn to “heads of delegations”, and only if worn together with the cape!

The Regulation of 1968 introduced for the first time the use of small green eight-pointed crosses on the epaulette straps as distinctions of rank: one for Knight, two for Knight Commander, and three for Knight Grand Cross. A similar system was adopted by the “Malta Obedience” of the Order at the Grand Magistral Council Meeting in 1977 in Malta with the difference that the crosses were placed on shoulder boards rather than epaulette straps, items unknown in the Anglo-Saxon world.

³ *Règles, Statuts et Coutumes de l'Ordre de Saint-Lazare de Jérusalem. La Vie Chevaleresque.* (Paris: Grand Magistere – MHOSLJ, 1968), +34pp.

(Whether it is appropriate to use the cross of the Order as a distinction of rank, a “pip”, is a matter of opinion).⁴

As is obvious from the above, the Reunion Dress is a strange hybrid of uniform and club wear, very possibly designed to facilitate for Members of the Order to observe French legislation by hiding controversial apparel from public view under a normal overcoat and scarf.

Following the Brissac-Coutant revolution in 1969 against the 46th Grand Master, H.R.H. The Duke of Nemours, the Grand Master established the Grand Chancellery of the Order in Malta, hence the subsequent description of the Order as being of the “Malta Obedience”. The smoking jacket of the Reunion Dress, not of a cut that would encourage the wearing of a belt, found little favour in the Anglo-Saxon world, and was soon turned into a single breasted white tunic, closed with five buttons of the Order. The dark green collar, lapels and cuffs were retained although the velvet, often replaced by uniform cloth. The epaulette straps were replaced by shoulder boards and the silk stripe on the trousers by gold lace. For headgear either the bicorne, a piqued cap, or a commando style beret with cap badge was worn. The French club wear was turned into a uniform. However, following the resumption of office by the 45th Grand Master, Don Francisco Enrique, as the 47th Grand Master in 1973, the gala uniform of 1929 had a renaissance. For eveningwear, a Mess Dress was established, consisting of a spencer jacket with Order buttons and shoulder boards, low cut waistcoat with small Order buttons, dress shirt, bowtie, uniform trousers with gold lace, and military dress boots. The Mess Dress exists in two versions, dark green with white apparels and white with dark green apparels.⁵

⁴ *Amendments to Decrees Approved at the Grand Magistral Council Meeting, Malta, 1977.* (Netherlands: MHOSLJ, 1977), +3pp.

⁵ *An English Translation of the Fundamental Constitution of the Order, As Promulgated by the 44th Grand Master, The Duke of Seville, in 1948.* (Malta: MHOSLJ, 1972), +32pp.



H.E. Don Carlos Gereda de Bourbon, Marquis of Almazan: Grand Master of the Order (2008-2017) wearing the Mess Dress uniform

The commission of insignias and uniforms

Following the Joint International Reunion in Oxford in 1986 when, under strong influence from the Greek Melkite Patriarch, the majority of the “Malta Obedience” defected to the “French Obedience”, the Duke of Brissac appointed a commission to review various aspects of ranks and insignia and propose measures to establish uniformity as far as possible. The commission was headed by Prince Willy von Thurn und Taxis who, apart from Count Renaud de Laforcade, was the only non-Anglo-Saxon of the seven members. From various recommendations made by the commission, it is obvious that its members lacked necessary competence.

Uniforms of the Order after 2004

Following the installation of Prince Charles-Philippe d’Orléans as 49th Grand Master, the uniform of the Order has undergone various modifications. The most significant change is the abandonment of the “smoking jacket with evening trousers” and the return of the stand collar. The first new version, made in Holland is generally attractive in appearance, with a narrow gold lace round the dark green apparels : collar, shoulder straps (set into the shoulder seam of the sleeve) and cuffs. There is a large vertically placed pocket flap in the cloth of the tunic on each back skirt, piped in dark green, with three points facing the middle. At each point, there is, curiously enough, a small button of the Order. Normally, the buttons would be large. Another curiosity is the construction of the cuff and the fact that its gold lace does not turn and follow the outer edge of the cuff down to the wrist line, which gives the cuff the air of belonging to hotel livery. This tunic has generously dimensioned inside pockets, also in the waist, but no external pockets, which makes for a neat appearance. Uniform trousers with gold lace have been reintroduced and so has the bicorne.

In a later version of this uniform, the construction of the cuff is modified to resemble a traditional uniform cuff. For some dignitaries,

the cuffs have machine embroidery. The embellishment of the collar is unusual. The pocket flaps on the back skirts have disappeared and been replaced by white horizontal ones, just below the belt line, and there are no longer the customary two buttons in the back waist. The epaulettes are now white, decorated with detachable rank slides (*pattes*) in machine embroidery, such as are normally seen on uniform shirts and pullovers. The trousers for the Order uniform are of normal military cut, not British style military overalls. The latter might be fetching on tall young men, but far less attractive on somebody short and stout.

In 2013, during the Grand Magistracy of H.E. Don Carlos Gereda de Bourbon, Marquis of Almazan, the General Magisterial Council issued new dress regulations and introduced a new Gala Uniform described as: 'This uniform is the black high-necked jacket and black trousers with side stripes, and cuffs bearing the appropriate rank insignia. A cap may be worn. A maximum of four stars may be worn on the left breast: if two, vertically with the senior order on top; if three, in a triangle with the senior order on top and the next most senior toward the centreline; if four, in a diamond pattern with the junior order lowest. One neck badge may be worn one inch (2.5 cms) below the collar, plus one bar of miniature (or full size, depending on time of day) medals on the left lapel. A cordon for the senior order should be worn where applicable. Where appropriate, a court sword may also be worn: ecclesiastics, women and physicians do not wear swords.'⁶

⁶ GMC. *Regulation No. 3: Wearing of Dress, Decorations, Uniforms and Insignia Agreed by the GMC, 8 November, 2013.* (GMC: Madrid, 2013).



Francesco de Borbon Hardenberg: Grand Master of the Order (2018 *et sec*)
wearing the new Gala uniform

Indications of rank

In international diplomatic and military protocol, there are certain accoutrements to a uniform that obviously indicate rank and others which fulfil the same purpose without being, necessarily, discernible to people in general.

a) INDICATIONS OF RANK ON THE COAT

As we have seen above, on the two Order uniforms of 1929, the rank is indicated by the amount of gold embroidery on the apparels of the coat in accordance with diplomatic standards. Similar rules apply to court uniforms and the uniforms of the Pontifical Orders. Uniforms of the armed forces, on the other hand, nowadays carry distinctions, “pips” or stripes, either on the collar, or on the epaulettes, or on the sleeves. With the exception for certain naval uniforms, distinctions of rank are not normally carried together on both the sleeves and the epaulettes.

b) INDICATIONS OF RANK ON THE TROUSERS

At the present, most uniform trousers for dress wear have side stripes. Generally, there is a principal difference in respect of the side stripes on trousers for navy and for the army. On naval uniform trousers, the side stripes are of metal lace, whereas army trousers often have cloth stripes in a contrasting colour. In several countries, the colour of these stripes is scarlet. Uniforms of Orders of Chivalry, the Pontifical Orders, of Royal Households and the Corps Diplomatique (civil uniforms) follow naval practice and use metal lace.

The width of the stripes indicates rank. For instance, Knights Grand Cross and Knight Commanders of the Pontifical Orders of Pius IX and of St Sylvester have a 40 mm.-wide gold lace with laurel leaf pattern along the outer side seams of the trousers; for Knights, the stripe is only 30 mm. wide. Similarly, the Order of St Gregory the Great uses silver lace with oak leaf pattern in the same widths.

According to British protocol, there are five classes of Civil Uniform. The width of the gold lace on the trousers is for the 1st and 2nd class 2½" (63 mm.) and for classes 3 to 5 it is 1¾" (45 mm.). International diplomatic protocol generally follows similar principles.

Until the end of Court Levees in the autumn of 1939, gentlemen who did not wear uniform had three types of Court Dress to choose from. One alternative was the Cloth Court Dress, which could be of any colour except blue or black. For Levees, it had trousers with a narrow gold lace 5/8 " (16 mm.), indicating a rather inferior status.

The Grand Master S.M.O.M. has red piping set into the side seam of his trousers and a row of gold lace, 50 mm. wide on either side. Also in imperial Austria, some of the most senior ranks wore trousers with two parallel rows of metal lace. Army dress trousers, as mentioned above, usually have cloth side stripes. Generals may have piping (*passepoil*) in a contrasting colour set into the outer side seams with a stripe 40 to 50 mm. wide on either side. Less exalted officers will have only one stripe of varying width depending on rank and service branch.

c) INDICATIONS OF RANK ON THE BICORNE

The common headgear for both uniforms of 1929 is the bicorne with white ostrich feathers for Knights Grand Cross and black for Knights. The Grand Master and other Grand Dignitaries had a wide gold lace with scalloped lower edge round the outer edge of the brim, bound over its edge. There is a white & green cockade (the livery colours of the Order), fastened with three double loops of gold wire cord and an Order button, and a formalised gold tassel at either end, barely visible among the plumage.

In the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, the Grand Master and Bailiffs Grand Cross of Justice have wide gold lace round the brim and white ostrich feathers. Other Knights of the Order have no gold lace

round the brim. The feathers are white for Knights of Justice and Knights Grand Cross; for all other knights the plumage is black.



**Bicorne belonging to Chev. Richard Flores Martin
(Ta' Lanzun Archival collection, Malta)**

Of the Pontifical equestrian Orders, all Knights Grand Cross have white feathers, but only Knights Grand Cross of the Order of Pius IX have gold lace round the brim. Knights Commanders and Knights all have black feathers, with the exception for Knights of the Order of Saint Sylvester who have no feathers at all.

“Le chapeau militaire ou bicorne” ... “n’est plus porté, depuis 1884, que par le personnel de certains corps de troupe ou établissements: gendarmes, gardes républicains, École polytechnique, ainsi que par les officiers généraux et assimilés; contrôleurs généraux, intendants, médecins inspecteurs, etc. Pour cette seconde catégorie, le chapeau est borde d’un large galon d’or ou argent brodé, et d’une garniture de plumes d’autruche: noir pour tout le monde, à l’exception du ministre de la guerre, des commandants de corps d’armée, des présidents de comités

d'armes, et des membres du conseil supérieur de l'armée qui la portent blanche".⁷



Swedish Military Auditor



1930s Swedish General



Swedish Admiral



**Other officers of the Royal
Swedish Navy**

The brim of a bicorne is bound with ribbon to hide the raw edges. Normally, this is done with grosgrain ribbon but, for Grand Dignitaries, this may be done in gold provided that there is a wide gold lace instead of the black lace. Without the gold lace, the golden binding would suggest the hat of a page of honour, a lackey, or somebody else of inferior status. A bicorne nearly always has a tassel at each end, and these tassels are indispensable! Some are loose, like a piece of bullion fringe, others are formalized into an "acorn".

⁷ Claude Augé. *Nouveau Larousse Illustré, Vol. 2: Dictionnaire Universel Encyclopédique*. (Librairie Larousse: Paris, 1910).