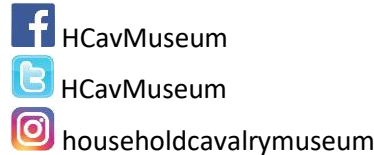




THE  
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Cavalry  
MUSEUM

Horse Guards, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AX



## **HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY MUSEUM COLLECTION**

**No: 3**

### **TWO SWORDS**

Hello, and welcome back to the Household Cavalry Museum's video podcasts. In last week's video I told you about the skull of Corporal of Horse Jack Shaw – this week I am going to talk about two rather rare swords in the museum's reserve collection at Combermere Barracks, Windsor.

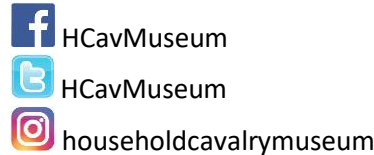
In the years following the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, which marks the formal start of the Household Cavalry as we know it today, our regiments – and The Life Guards in particular – have been tasked with a wider variety of military roles than any other regiment in the British Army.

These roles have included fighting at sea as Marines during the Battle of Lowestoft in 1665, acting as firemen, during the Great Fire of London in 1666, and as policemen during the Gordon Riots of 1780. Perhaps the most unusual military task taken on by the Household Cavalry was that of forming a Camel Regiment for the Nile



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Expedition of 1884-5. However, it was above all during the First World War that Household Cavalry regiments showed their true flexibility.

In addition to their role as horsed cavalry our regiments formed Cycle Companies, a Siege Battery and three Battalions of the Guards Machine Gun Regiment. But the most unexpected of all Household Cavalry formations at this time was the creation in September 1916 of a fully-fledged infantry unit.

Called the Household Battalion, it served only on the Western Front and fought in the battles of the Somme, Arras, Ypres and Cambrai, during which time it suffered more than 200 casualties before it was disbanded in February 1918.

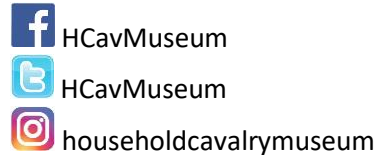
In addition to some cap badges, buttons and an epaulette badge, belonging to soldiers of the Household Battalion, the museum also has a rare officer's sword from this short-lived unit.

After the war, our regiments resumed their former peace time formations and roles, as horsed cavalry and the sovereign's bodyguard, until 1922, when the 1st and 2nd Life Guards were



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amalgamated. The next major event in our regiments' histories was the death of King George V and the accession of King Edward VIII in 1936.

Edward's brief eleven-month reign included inspecting The Life Guards in Windsor Great Park. It also saw the commissioning into the Royal Horse Guards of David Smiley, who during the Second World War would make his name, and earn many decorations, for his daring exploits as a member of the Special Operations Executive in Albania.

The museum has several mementos of Smiley's service in SOE, including an ivory handled pistol and a pair of 24 ct gold badges of rank, that were part of his escape kit. The reserve collection also includes Smiley's Service Dress sword, which bears upon the blade the cypher of King Edward VIII; given the King's very short reign, this makes this sword a real rarity.

I hope you have enjoyed this brief look at two of the Household Cavalry's rare relics. Next week I will be talking about a dog collar. Until then, stay safe.