



Naval Officer's Sword -- Louis XVI



1 700 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Description

Pre-Consulate Model (circa 1775-1785) Description Following the silver sword from the American expedition, here is a more understated but equally interesting sword from the same period. A naval officer's sword with gilded brass mountings, characteristic of the weapons worn during the reign of Louis XVI. The segmented dome-shaped pommel, finely chased with a scale pattern, is one of the emblematic features of naval mountings from this period. The joint arch and the guard ring are accented by an elegant row of five pearls. It is important to note that this row of five pearls has nothing to do with the English "five balls" associated with Consulate-era swords. The "five balls" are large spheres characteristic of early Napoleonic mountings, whereas the pearls on this

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sword form a delicate, regular pattern typical of the Louis XVI style. This is a classical design that was already well established before 1790 and subsequently inspired certain Consulate-era models, though it does not itself belong to that period. The fluted ebony tang is accented at its center by a gilded oval ring, also adorned with scales. The complete decoration corresponds exactly to the model of the Navy officers' swords (1775-1780) on display at the Musée de l'Armée, including the example with a segmented pommel, black tang, and blued-and-gilded blade, which is considered the twin of this type. The straight, hollow-ground blade is blued and engraved in its upper third with trophies of arms, a radiant sun, and foliage motifs. It is marked on the back: "Pierre Guillaume Knecht Fabricant à Solingen." The leather scabbard strap is preserved. The scabbard, of an extremely rare type, consists of a steel sheet core covered with blackened leather, with a gilded brass ferrule and pommel.

Historical Context and Attribution This type of sword is directly linked to the equipment of officers in the French Royal Navy under Louis XVI (1775-1785). It corresponds precisely to the models on display in the "La Fayette and America" section of the Army Museum, dedicated to the equipment of French officers who took part in the American Expedition (1777-1783). The examples on display--notably Model 1 (naval officer's sword, 1775-1780)--share the same characteristics: a segmented pommel, a black fluted tang, scale decoration, a blue-and-gold blade, and a Louis XVI hilt. This sword thus represents one of the types of weapons carried by officers on board ships during the American War of Independence.

Date France, circa 1775-1785 -- Louis XVI period, pre-Consulate model.

Historical Significance Refined hilt, naval-themed tortoiseshell decoration, signed blued-and-gilded blade, and an extremely rare armored scabbard: a cohesive ensemble that is highly representative of the weapons carried in

the years leading up to the Revolution and during the American Expedition. This is the very model that served as the basis for the development of Consulate-era mountings, though it does not itself belong to that period.