

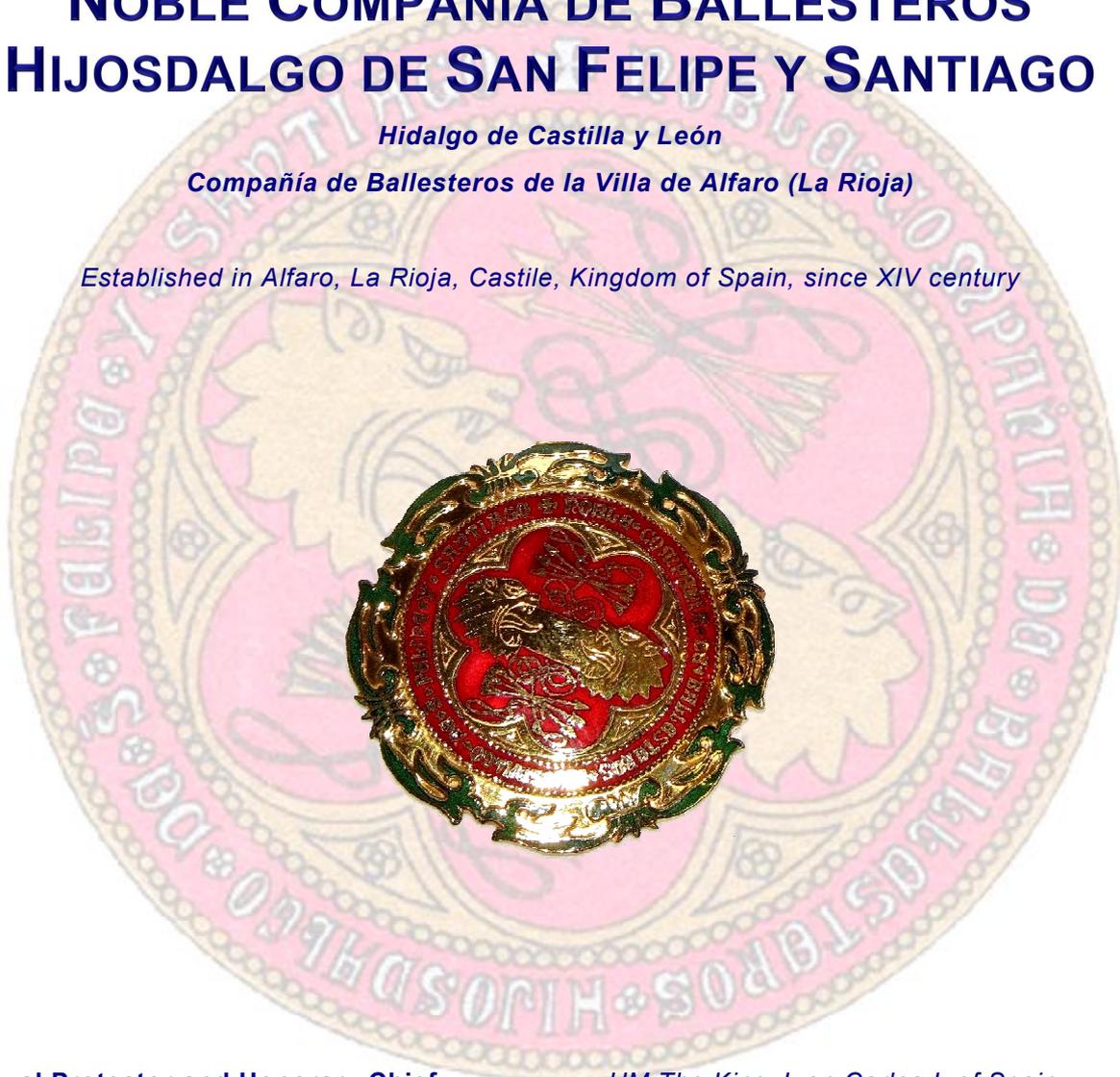


NOBLE COMPAÑIA DE BALLESTEROS HIJOSDALGO DE SAN FELIPE Y SANTIAGO

Hidalgo de Castilla y León

Compañía de Ballesteros de la Villa de Alfaro (La Rioja)

Established in Alfaro, La Rioja, Castile, Kingdom of Spain, since XIV century



Royal Protector and Honorary Chief:

HM The King Juan Carlos I. of Spain

Chief:

SAR The Prince Alvaro de Bourbon Duque de Galliera

Commander:

Alfonso de Ceballos-Escalera y Gila, Duke of Ostuni in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, Marquess of La Floresta and Lord of the Castle of Arbeteta in the Kingdom of Spain



The Noble Compañía de Ballesteros Hijosdalgo de San Felipe y Santiago, is a little nobiliary-sportive-religious association founded in the XIV century, as detailed enclose. Since XVIII century it was losing its nobiliary and sportive uses, remaining only those religious (like Easter procession).

Among the several forms that historically had adopted the Spanish nobiliary colleges -such as corporations, brotherhoods and companies, and chivalry orders- are barely mentioned by its rarely, the military character associations, like the Noble Compañía de Ballesteros Hijosdalgo de San Felipe y Santiago raised in the XIV century in the ancient town of Alfaro (La Rioja, ancient kingdom of Castile, today Kingdom of Spain).

The Ballesteros as war and hunting weapon it was already known by Romans-Ballesteros comes from Latin word 'ballo', which means to throw- and by Byzantines, in whose documents frequently appears. After a relative dark period, it came to have a preeminent place during XI century in European weapon system, as well as being a military support -remember its importance in the Hundred Years War- as hunting article. Medieval sources give us what kind of arrows it threw, with a huge of different uses and meanings, even stone bullets capable to get through any armour from a distance longer than 250 feet. It was used by knights and infantrymen near the end of XII century, especially in Southern Europe. In land and sea, in sieges, actions and battles, its victims have no number -let's see King Richard Plantagenet's killing in 1199-. In spite of the presence of such evil weapon during medieval campaigns, Church condemned its use in between Christian's wars: already in 1097-1099 Pope Urban II did it, and the 1139 Council in Lateran confirmed that prohibition; but it was useful at all.

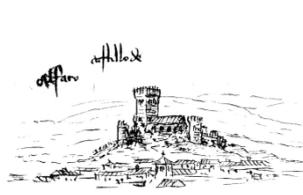


In the ancient Kingdom of Navarre documental references to Ballesteros are very old: in summer of 1280, after the serious dispute between the towns of Alfaro and Corella by Alhama River's water share, afraid of the Alfarians those from Corella are protected by at least thirty five Ballesteros while harvesting their fields. They were paid for serving thirty days the amount of 2.093 Pounds. That service was very appreciated, and distinguished with tax exemptions and even with nobiliary privileges. In 1362 Miguel Sánchez de Ursúa, lord of Ursúa, served as master of Ballesteros, and in 1355 the prince Infante Don Luis ordered the governor of Estella to repair the town ballisters, which were newly mentioned in 1438. Nowadays there are still several Ballesteros companies such as the Ballesteros companies of San Vicente de la Sonsierra, of San Millán (Álava) and of Peñacerrada; that of Ávalos lasted until XIX century; or that of Marquínez (Álava) rebuilt as brotherhood of the Sacred Sacrament and of Noble Ballesteros, is actually working without giving up their historic weapons.

In the ancients United kingdoms of Castile and Leon the first notices about Ballesteros come from the reigns of Alfonso VIII and Alfonso IX, growing during XIII century as an auxiliary crop, as well as military -bodyguard regiments- as police or justice. Although since the days of King Don Sancho IV appears the charge of lord Ballesteros, it was along the reigns of Don Alfonso XI and Don Pedro I when royal Ballesteros reached a significant rank in the Court, having the charges of lord Ballesteros and lord major Ballestero. These pre-eminences were kept are least until the end of XV



century, when there were several lord major Ballesteros, foot Ballesteros and horse Ballesteros. Apart of those palatinian servants, during XIV and XV centuries are notices in reference to King's Ballesteros spread in towns and villages and being their inhabitants: a frustrated try to stablish a territorial Militia and Police Corps. Special relevance had the Ballesteros troop of Madrid, and even more those one hundred and fifty Ballesteros joint to Sevilla, whom reached great privileges and whom, headed by their lieutenant Juan de Monsalve, had a important part in the conquer of Canary Islands in 1480, and in the Granada Campaign ten years later. It was Sea Ballesteros, that is, special skilled Ballesteros, who defended ships on board. After Medieval Age, continued the charges serving the Crown -just a hunting meaning-, under the authority of a lord Ballesteros.



The Noble Compañía de Ballesteros Hijosdalgo de San Felipe y Santiago the Minor should be founded in XIV century, when this land was owned by the Kingdom of Navarre: Alfaro was a highly powerful fortress in front of Castile, it was roughly attacked by the pretendant Don Enrique de Trastamara's troops in 1367, by Infante Don Juan of Castile in 1378, and newly in 1430 by Pedro Fernández de Velasco, master steward of the King Juan II of Castile. Although in those three times the castle remained, in the first and in the third the town was burned by Castilians. During that time were maintained a company of noble Ballesteros, whose privileges were recognized and confirmed by the court of Castile.



The Noble Company was under the protection of Saint Philip and Saint James the Minor, and celebrated its ceremonies and reunions in the church of Saint Francis -meetings and fests to which no one could be invited except clergymen- as well as its religious rites in its festivity days -May, June and December-; they also met in case of a companion's death. The Noble Company was ruled by a major, a steward and a secretary; the two first were yearly elected during the day of Philip and Saint James the Minor in May 3th, following a serious order. The major was law authority, in charge of everything in relation with fees, punishments and penalties; in this matter was compared with an ordinary major in that time, he was like a true Royal Justice. The steward was in charge of economic and administration services of the Company; he managed the organization of ceremonies and reunions. He also was in charge of the surveillance of the communal fields stablishing guard timings. That work had a very important meaning and the Noble Company was special interest in it. The secretary, a secondary charge, managed only the Noble Company books and documents.



The Ballesteros might be noblemen; and be married with same quality women; in other case the Ballesteros was immediately fired out the Noble Company. To belong to the Noble Company was undouble a proof of nobility. All of them were obliged to assist to the corporative and municipal ceremonies and over all to guard the communal fields. That's why Ordinances made special mention that every one of them might own their weapon apart of four arrows at least.



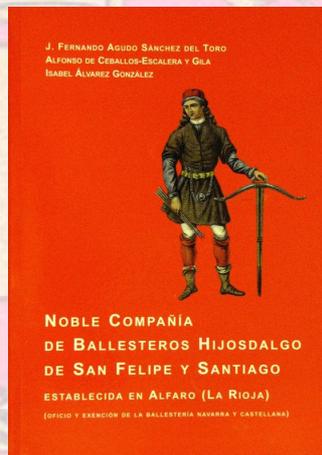


Nowadays the Noble Company, under the commander of the actual alcaide, the Marquis of La Floresta, ancient lieutenant commander of the Spanish Royal Navy, keeps the military tradition, and everyone is obliged to acquire skill enough to manage his weapon each time they meet, especially every time -quite frequently- they meet to pray. After the religious rite, all of them shoot against a blank consisting in the steward's shoe; that who fails may offer his own as a

new target.

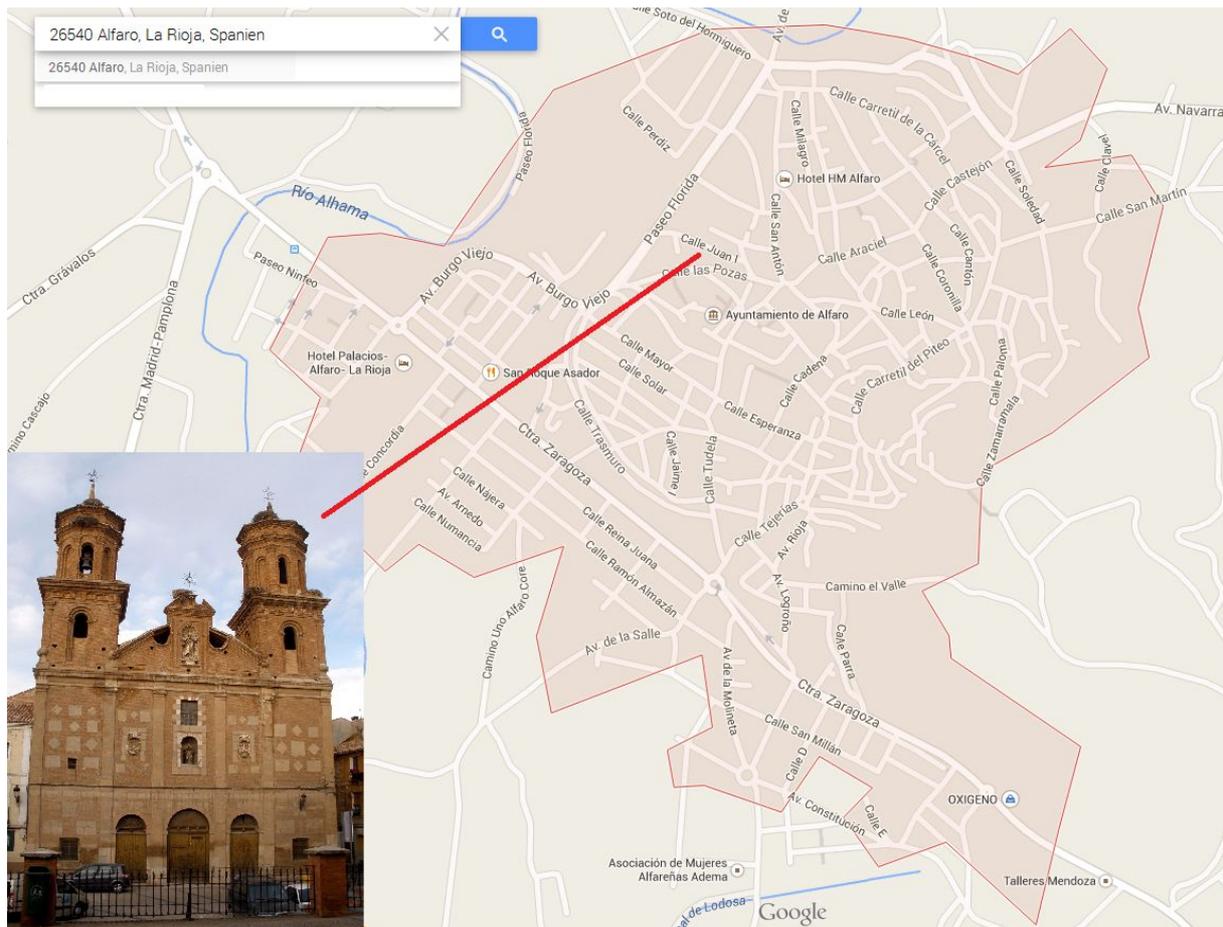


Economic life of the Noble Company depended of its member's fees and quotes; of penalties subscribed by Ordinance and field rents; a part of a yearly donation of each member, consisting in a bottle of good wine in Christmas.



Among several forms historically adopted by the Spanish nobiliary colleges - such as corporations, confraternities, companies, and chivalric orders - are groups barely mentioned by their rarity, the military brotherhoods, such as the Noble Company of Knights Crossbowmen of Saint Philip and Saint James. The Noble Company was raised circa 1350 in the town of Alfaro (Castile, La Rioja, and Spain). Membership in the Noble Company has always been considered a "positive act of nobility," creating or confirming the Knights Crossbowmen as hidalgos with "nobility of blood and arms."

The crossbow as a military and hunting weapon was already known by the Romans. After a relative dark period it came to have a preminent place in the 11th century in European armouires (consider its importance in the Hundred Years War) and for hunting wild game.



Como ente religioso tiene su sede litúrgica en la Iglesia del **Convento de San Francisco, en Alfaro**. Como Asociación de Caballeros tienen su sede en el antiguo **Convento Franciscano de esa villa riojana**.

Convento de San Francisco | Calle Juan I. | Alfaro

Noble Fraternity and wepons

Medieval sources provide us the types of arrows they threw, with different uses and meanings—even stone bullets capable of getting through armour from a distance longer than 250 feet. It was used by knights and nifty men near the end of the 12th century, especially in Southern Europe. In land and sea, in sieges, actions and battles, its victims have no number (note - King Richard of the House of Plantagenet's killing in 1199). In spite of the presence of such an effective weapon during medieval campaigns, the Catholic Church condemned its use between Christians in wars: already in 1097-1099 Pope Urban II had condemned it, and the 1139 Council in Lateran confirmed its prohibition.

Kingdom of Navarre

In the Kingdom of Navarre documental references to crossbowmen are very old. In the summer of 1280, after a serious dispute between the towns of Alfaro and Corella (regarding water sharing of the Alhama River), Corella residents while harvesting their fields, being afraid of the Alfarians. were protected by at least thirty five crossbowmen. They were paid for serving thirty days the amount of 2093 Pounds. That service was very appreciated, and distinguished with tax exemptions and even with nobiliary privileges. In 1362 Miguel Sánchez de Ursúa, lord

of Ursúa, served as master of crossbowmen. In 1355 Infante Don Luis ordered the governor of Estella to repair the town ballisters, which were mentioned in 1438. Nowadays there are still several crossbow companies such as the Crossbowmen companies of San Vicente de la Sonsierra, San Millán (Álava) and Peñacerrada (that of Ávalos lasted until the 19th century and that of Marquínez (Álava) were rebuilt as the brotherhood of the Sacred Sacrament of Noble Crossbowmen.

Kingdom of Castilla and Leon

In the kingdoms of Castilla and León the first notices about crossbowmen come from the reigns of Alfonso VIII and Alfonso IX, growing during 13th century as an auxiliary corporation as well as a military bodyguard regiments (as police or justice). Although since the days of King Don sanco IV there appears the charge of lord crossbowman, it was during the reigns of Don Alfonso XI and Don Pedro I that the royal crossbowmen reached a significant rank in Court, having the charges of lord crossbowman and lord major crossbowman. These titles were kept at least until the End of 15th century, when there were several lord major crossbowmen, foot crossbowmen and horse crossbowmen.

King's Crossbowmen

During the 14th and 15th centuries are notices referring to the King's crossbowmen spreading into towns and villages and being their inhabitants—a frustrated attempt to establish a territorial Militia and Police Corp. Additionally special attention is given to the crossbow troop of Madrid, and even more to the one hundred and fifty crossbowmen of Seville, who reached great privileges (headed by their Lieutenant Juan de Monsalve) This group had an important part in the conquer of Canar Islands in 1480 and in the Granada Campaign ten years later. After the Medieval Era, the charges served the Crown under the authority of a lord crossbowman.

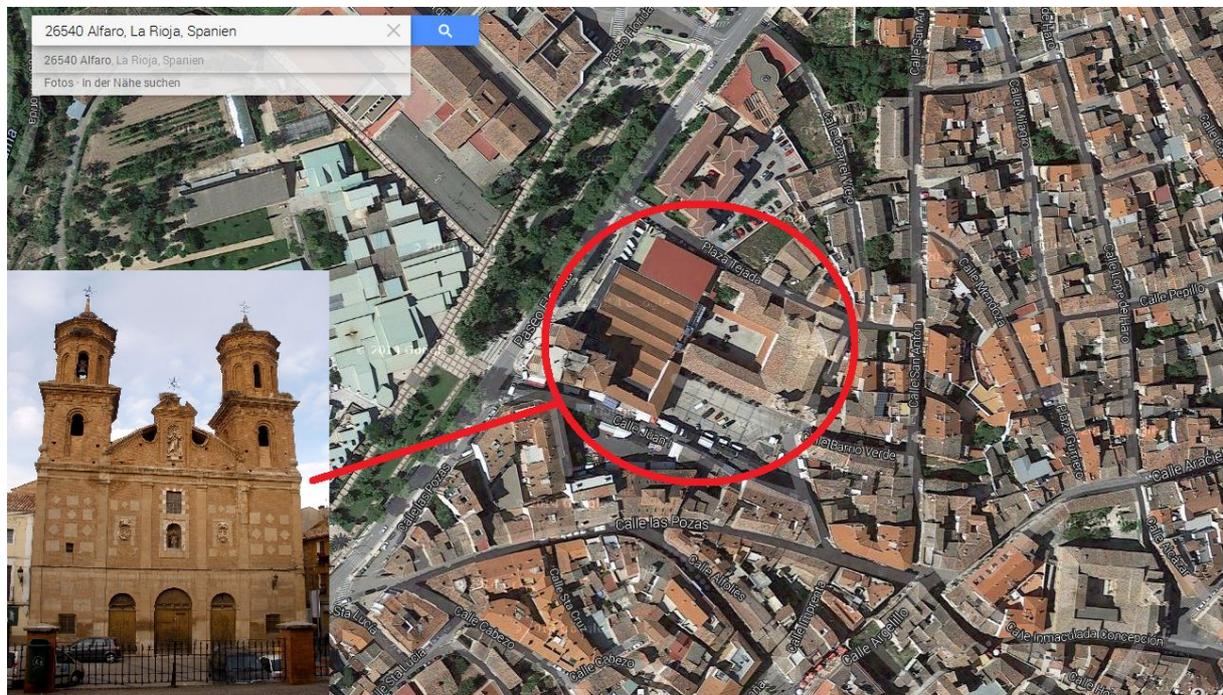
The Noble Company of Knights Crossbowmen of Saint Philip and Saint James was founded in the 14th century. During this period, the land was owned by the Kingdom of Navarre (Alfaro was a highly powerful fortress in front of Castilla):Alfaro was attacked by the pretendant Don Enrique de Trastamara's troops in 1367, by Infante Don Juan of Castilla in 1378, and later in 1430 by Pedro Fernández de Velasco, master steward of Don Juan II of Castilla. Although in those three times the castle remained, in the first and in the third the town was burned by Castilians. During that time there were maintained a company of noble crossbowmen whose privileges were recognized and confirmed by the courts of Castilla.

Protectors of the Confraternity

The Noble Company was under the protection of Saint Philip and Saint James and celebrated its ceremonies and reunions in the church of Saint Francis (meetings and fests to which no one could be invited except clergymen) as well as its religious rites in its festivities days -May, June and December. The Noble Company was ruled by a major, a steward and a secretary; the two first were yearly elected during the day of Saint John on May 10. The major was the lawful authority in charge of everything in relation to fees, punishments and penalties. In this matter he was compared to an ordinary major in that time and he was like a true Royal Justice. The steward was in charge of economic and administration services of the Company. He managed the organization of ceremonies and reunions. He was also in charge of the surveillance of the communal fields. This work was of great importance. The secretary, a

secondary charge, managed only the Noble Company books and documents.

The crossbowmen were noblemen and were married to ladies of equal rank. To belong to the Noble Company was proof of nobility. All knights were obligated to assist in the corporative and municipal ceremonies and over to guard the communal fields.



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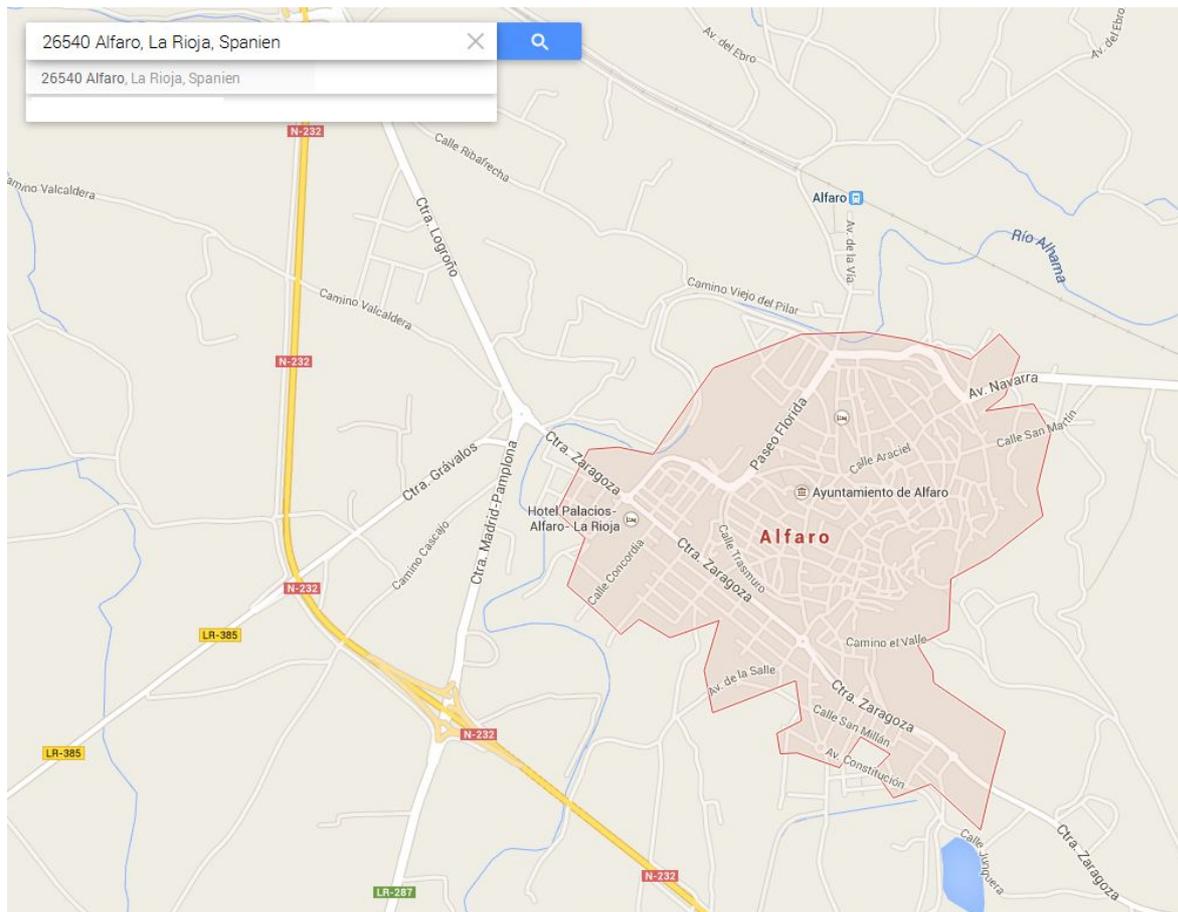
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The Confraternity in the 21st century

The Noble Company was modernized with its official registration with the Gobierno de Rioja in 1999 and revised statutes in April 2004. Under the command of the President-Alcaide, Don Alfonso Ceballos-Escalera y Gila, Marqués de La Floresta, the Noble Company keeps the military tradition. Knights are obliged to acquire skill enough to manage his weapon each time they meet, especially every time they meet to pray. Each member is also expected to pledge fealty to the President-Alcaide by sending him a good bottle of wine at Christmas.

There are two classes of membership: Ballestero de Plaza and Ballestero de Hermandad. The former is reserved for residents of Rioja and its environs while the latter is for all others. As noted in the 14th century statutes and indicated on the contemporary petition for admission, all members must be Catholic men who are: (a) armigerous (with their arms duly registered in Spain), (b) validly married (according to the Catholic Church) to women of good breeding, and (c) possess nobility in the male line. By virtue of their admission, members of the Noble Company receive the honorific Don for themselves and their male descendants (who will inherit and transmit the member's armorial bearings). The members' wives and female descendants are referred to as Doña. Economic life of the Noble Company depends on the members' passage fees and field rents.

Today members of the Confraternity are present in Spain, the USA, and Italy.



References

Noble Compañía de Ballesteros Hijosdalgo de San Felipe y Santiago: establecida en Alfaro: (oficio y exención de la ballestería navarra y castellana) Noble Company Ballesteros Hijosdalgo San Felipe and Santiago: Alfaro by J. Fernando Agudo Sanchez del Toro, Alfonso de Ceballos-Escalera y Gila and Isabel Álvarez González. 2006. ISBN 84-933019-8-1.

