

**ENGLISH VERSION SYNTHESIS OF JUAN.L.CALVO'S BOOK
 "PISTOLAS Y REVÓLVERES EN LAS FUERZAS ARMADAS ESPAÑOLAS, 1855-1955"
 (PISTOLS AND REVOLVERS IN THE SPANISH ARMED FORCES, 1855-1955)**

TRANSLATION BY HECTOR.J.MERUELO.

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PART ONE

REVOLVERS, 1855-1915

THE FIRST REVOLVERS

In the mid-XIXth Century news arrived in Spain of handguns capable of firing several shots in succession called "revolver pistols", a term which included today's conventional revolvers with a single barrel and the so called "avisperos" (pepperboxes), with several rotating barrels; The news of the pepperboxes, which were then being produced in London, Birmingham and Liege, came to Spain through Europe, while those of the conventional revolvers came through Cuba, which, due to its proximity to the "República de los Estados Unidos de América" (United States of America) had important commercial relations with that nation; In addition, a more detailed knowledge of this type of weapon was obtained in 1851 due to the Great Exposition celebrated in the Crystal Palace in London where, Samuel Colt and Robert Adams exhibited their respective designs, with very different mechanical characteristics and with different appeal to the public.

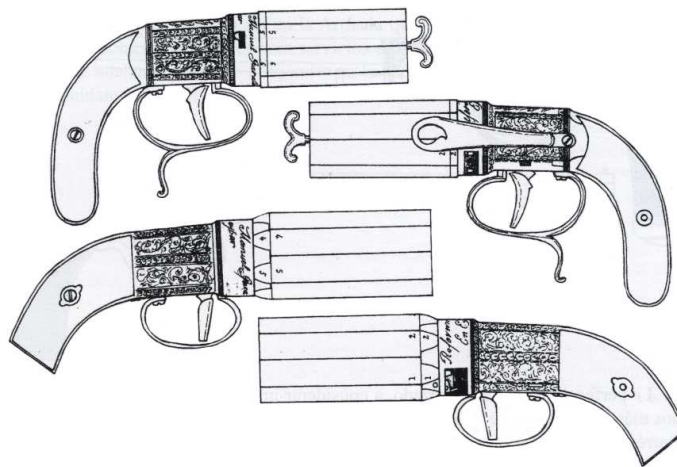
In those years the Spanish national manufacture of handguns was centered in the northern provinces of Asturias and Guipuzcoa, where the artisan-gunsmiths worked organized in guilds; In Asturias, the Oviedo and Trubia state factories collaborated in manufacturing weapons for the Army and the Navy under the supervision of the Artillery Corps; Their transformation into modern factories began in 1844 when the artillery officer Don Francisco Antonio de Elorza was named director of the Trubia factory; In Oviedo the guild structure was dissolved in 1858 and the artisan-gunsmiths became workers-employees of the Artillery Corps.

In Guipuzcoa in the Basque country, the artisan-gunsmiths always combined manufacturing contract weapons for the Army and Navy, with commercial production for private sales. The manufacture of military weapons was entrusted by the Artillery Corps to the "Real Fábrica de Placencia", located in the city of

Placencia de las Armas, which then issued contracts to the gunsmith's guild; The artisan-gunsmiths worked in their own homes or shops in the cities of Placencia, Eibar, Elgoibar, etc, and delivered their production to the "Real Fábrica".

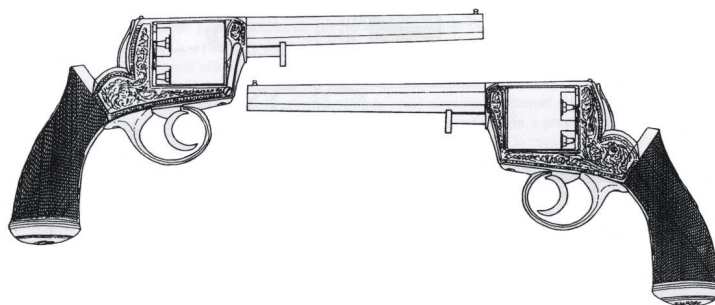
These working conditions and the resistance of the Guipuzcoan guilds to being dissolved, caused in 1865 the closing of the Royal Placencia Factory, leaving only an Artillery commission in that city responsible for receiving and accepting the armaments contracted in that area; The Guipuzcoan gunsmiths then concentrated their activity in the production of commercial arms and, in the city of Eibar, a few entrepreneurs began to create private weapons factories.

In 1909 the writer Pedro Sarasketa published an article about Eibar where he singled the gunsmith Manuel Garate as the first one to manufacture revolvers in that city, in an artisanal manner, with a production of two revolvers per month, which he would then sell to a dealer in Madrid for the respectable sum of 600 "Reales" (Rs.). Sarasketa stated that this production started in 1836 but, no doubt, he exaggerated; The firm of "Garate, Anitua y Cia.", which claimed in its propaganda that its origins went as far back as to Manuel Garate's shop, was more realistic and dated its founding to 1849.



Six barreled pepperboxes, 10,5 mm, caliber, with inscription "*Reformado por Manuel Garate en Eybar*" (Modified by Manuel Garate in Eybar).

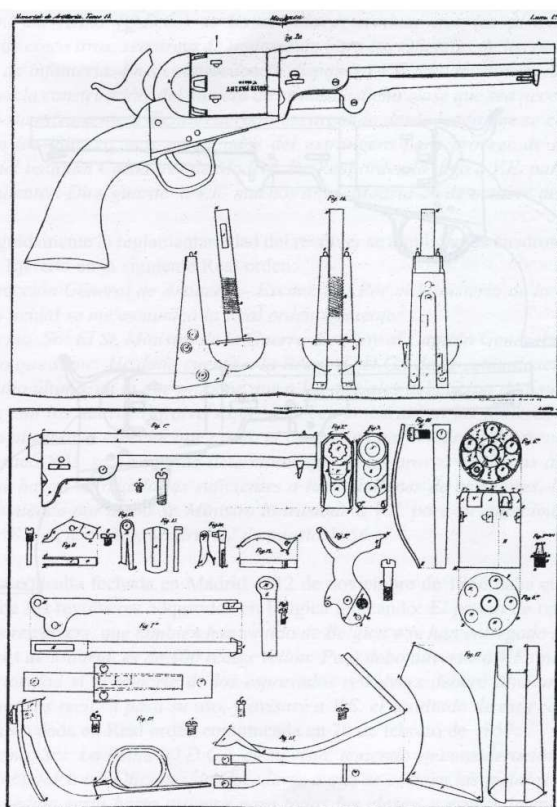
Several pepperboxes are known with the inscription "*Reformado por Manuel Garate en Eybar*", and also an Adams-type revolver engraved in silver "*POR MANUEL GARATE EN EIBAR*" which, no doubt were arms obtained in Belgium and finished by Manuel Garate in his shop; If then, Manuel Garate was not the first to make revolvers in Spain, as these were actually first made at the Trubia factory in 1856, his were at least the first ones sold commercially with Spanish markings.



Adams Revolver 1851, five shots, 9,5 mm. caliber, barrel 160 mm. Engraved in silver "POR MANUEL GARATE EN EIBAR" (By Manuel Garate in Eibar).

THE COLT REVOLVER (1855)

By order of the Captancy General of the island of Cuba, dated May, 11, 1855 it was ordained that all Chiefs and officers of the battalions of "Cazadores" (Chasseurs, Jaegers) and of the elite companies of the other Infantry regiments should use the Colt revolver as the regulation sidearm.



Diagrams of the Colt revolver, included in an article published in the Artillery Memorial, 1858.

This information is found in a document dated October, 15, 1856, sent from Puerto Principe, Cuba, by the Captain of Overseas Artillery Don Manuel García Arévalo, and published in the "Memorial de Artillería" (Artillery Memorial), the official publication of the Artillery Corps, in 1858.

The model of revolver described in that document is the Colt Model of 1849 Pocket Revolver, .31 caliber with a six inch barrel, an illustration of which was included plus disassembled blueprints of specimen serial numbered 95410; This model, the use of which it is said was subsequently extended to all the officers of the remaining infantry regiments, was issued in a case which included a powder flask, bullet mold, a tool for screws and nipples, bullets and caps, for a price of 325 "Reales (Rs.) de vellón" (bullion reales).

In his writing, García Arévalo described the weapon in detail and enumerated what he considered its main virtue (five shots) and its main defect (slow loading).

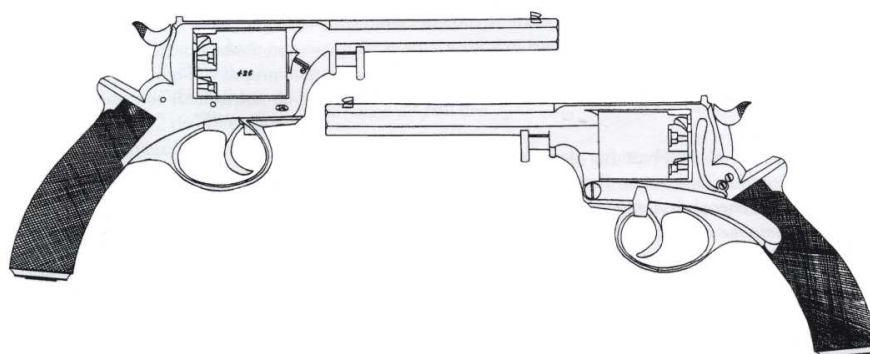
THE ADAMS-BEAUMONT, "ADAMS-DEANS" REVOLVER (1855).

The Adams-Beaumont revolver system may have been the first revolver to be manufactured in Spain as the "revolver Adams-Deans" at the Trubia factory, from January 1856 until uncertain date in 1859.

This five shot revolver model, 11,5 mm caliber, was adopted in October, 26, 1855, for the officers of the battalions of Infantry Cazadores which at the time were the Army's elite troops, and 40 units were immediately purchased in Belgium for the officers of the Madrid Cazadores battalion and, at the same time its production was started at Trubia since, as Adams never registered (patented) his revolver in Spain, no license was necessary to manufacture it.

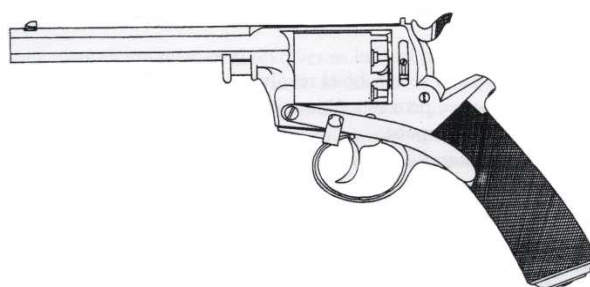
Those revolvers purchased in Belgium were obtained from Auguste Francotte and their very high cost (400 Reales (Rs.) de vellón) brought up the question of whether the officers themselves should pay for them, as was usual and customary, or whether the Corps should pay for them which was the final decision albeit with the stipulation that the officer would care for it and return it upon being discharged or transferred.

Also, on August, 22, 1856, the "Adams-Deans" revolvers were declared regulation sidearm for General Staff officers and on April, 7, 1858, for officers of the "Guardia Civil" (Gendarmerie), although their delivery to these units could not start until all the battalions of Cazadores had been issued theirs (a total of 760 revolvers) and since the Trubia factory manufactured less than 500 units in 1858, it was decreed, on May, 11, 1858 to substitute it for the Lefauchaux system revolver as it was felt that this system was more "convenient and economical".



“Adams-Deans” revolver 1856, manufactured in Trubia (1856-59), marked “TRUBIA” followed by date and number. Five shots, 11,5 mm caliber, barrel 153 mm.

The Adams-Deans revolvers were marked “TRUBIA” on their frame, followed by the year of manufacture and the serial number, and the same markings were repeated on the cylinder; Those of very early production also have the marking “J.R.LARROSA”, later on changed to “J.R.L”, the name and initials of José Ramón Larrosa Guisasola (1826-1897) a prominent artisan of the Artillery Corps.



“Adams-Deans” revolver 1856, commercial, marked “FABRICA DE TRUBIA”, without date or number. Five shots, 11,5 mm caliber. barrel 153 mm.

On May, 15, 1857 the Trubia factory was authorized to sell the “Adams-Deans” revolvers to “officers of the Army and persons of distinction”; These revolvers were marked “FABRICA DE TRUBIA” on the frame, without date of manufacture nor any reference to José Ramón Larrosa; The only known specimen is a variant of the conventional model where the hammer retaining spring is substituted for a manually operated safety.

The service lifespan of the “Adams-Deans” was established at 15 years and its price at Trubia, including powder measure, bullet mold and tools, was of 528 Rs., even higher than those purchased in Belgium; On August, 13, 1857 it was reduced to 315 Rs. which supposedly was its production cost at the factory. By comparison, in

1858 the price of the Lefauchaux was set at 305 Rs. and on the 8th of June reduced to 240 Rs.

On June the 26th, 1860 it was decided that the officers should purchase their revolvers; Those already issued, property of the state, would be priced fairly and would have to be bought by the officers they had been issued to; The malaise caused by this disposition on the officers was such that it was followed by another one whereby those officers who did not want to buy the revolver that had been issued to them, should surrender them to the Artillery depots.

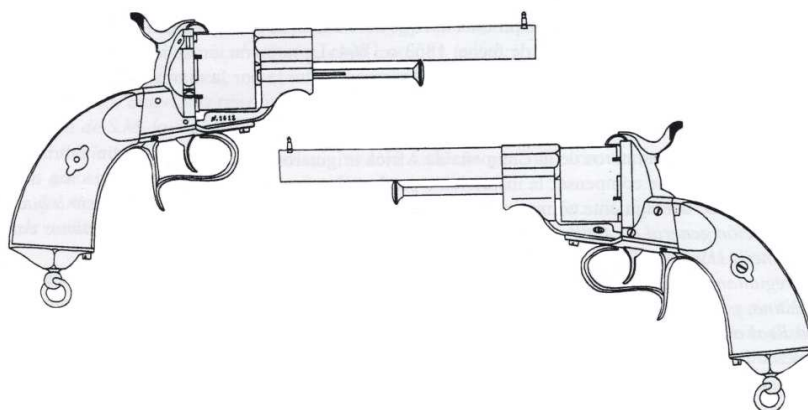
Facing the need to have to buy their own revolvers the officers opted for the Lefauchaux. On August the 12th, 1862, it was ordered that those revolvers surrendered to the Artillery depots be returned to the Trubia and Oviedo factories for their refurbishing; On April the 23rd, 1863, it was ordered that these revolvers be distributed to the Mountain Artillery companies, 130 units to each company, but that they be kept in storage and issued only for training and other service acts.

The officer's preference of the Lefauchaux was due in great measure to the "Adams-Deans" being considered to be dangerous and prone to accidental discharges and apparently there were several "unfortunate accidents"; These "accidents" were most probably due more to inexperience on the user's part than to any hypothetical deficiency, and to their being used to cocking the weapon upon drawing it instead of cocking it at the moment of firing as the delicate Adams-Beaumont mechanism required; Those few specimens I have had the opportunity to examine had been deprived of their single action capability and were actually only self-cockers.

THE LEFAUCHEUX REVOLVERS, MODELS "1858", 1863 and "DE REGLAMENTO"

Halfway through 1858 the Trubia factory starting producing the Lefauchaux revolver known today as the "Modelo 1858" based on Eugene Lefauchaux's 1854 patent; Since this inventor had not registered his patent in Spain its manufacture required no production license; On the 11th of May, 1858, it was officially adopted as regulation sidearm in substitution of the "Adams-Deans", in view of its being considered to be superior in "convenience and economy".

The new revolver, for 12 mm pinfire cartridges costed 305 Rs. in Trubia with a projected lifespan of twenty years; It was issued with 50 rounds and another 50 rounds were issued per year; These cartridges were manufactured at the Pirotecnica de Sevilla (munitions and explosives factory in that city) and they costed 50 centimes a piece; On the 8th of June, 1860, the price of the revolver was set at 240 Rs. as certain "economy measures" introduced in their manufacture allowed their cost to be reduced.



Lefauchaux revolver “Md. 1858”, made in Trubia (1858-63) and Oviedo (1863-64). Six shots, 12 mm caliber, pinfire cartridges, barrel 158 mm.

Since the production of “Adams-Deans” revolvers was insufficient to equip all the officers of the Cazadores battalions, those officers not yet equipped were the first ones to receive the Lefauchaux revolver, followed by General Staff, Guardia Civil, Cavalry (January, 29, 1859) and “Carabineros”¹ officers (April, 15, 1860) respectively, although in 1860 there were still not enough available for the Guardia Civil and Cavalry officers; In this same year, Mr. Elorza, director of the Trubia Factory projected that production would approach 900 units per year; However, this goal was never met in the four years that revolvers were manufactured at Trubia, whose total output was around 2,500 units; Then in the month of February, 1863, the revolver shop was transferred to the neighboring Oviedo factory where production of this model continued until 1864 with a total output of 1,000 more units.

In contrast to the Army, the Navy initially adopted the revolver as replacement for the percussion Navy pistols then in use as regulation sidearm, but in their communication dated July, 9, 1859, did not specify which model was approved; Then in a subsequent communiqué dated November, 26, 1859, it was ordered that Marine Infantry officers should use the Lefauchaux revolver as regulation sidearm; Their respective battalions would pay for these revolvers and the price would then be subtracted from their pay in six monthly installments; For the remaining Chiefs and officers of the Navy the revolver was also decreed to be the regulation sidearm but the particular model was left up to the officer's choice, with the only condition that it should chamber “no less than five rounds”, and they were granted four months in which to purchase them.

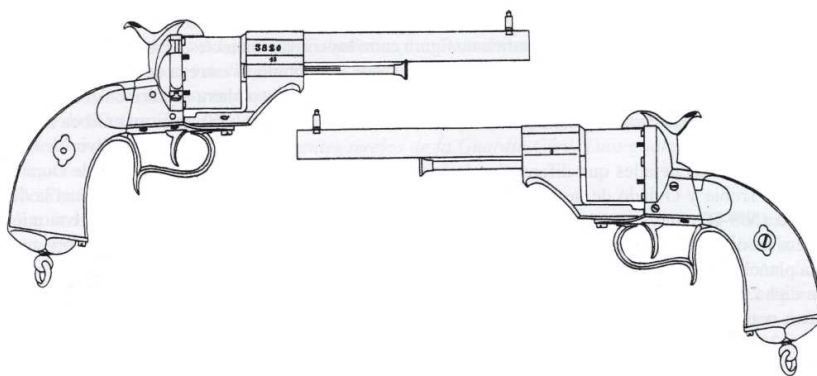
¹ Border and Customs guards, dedicated mostly to combating smugglers

This discrimination between, Army officers who were issued their sidearm at no cost to them, and Marine Infantry and Navy officers, who had to purchase them, was ended on June, 25, 1860, when it was ordered that "those Army officers who use regulation swords, sabers and revolvers should pay for them upon receiving them". Two years later, in May 1862, it was decreed that those revolvers which had been issued at no cost to the officers, be valued at a fair price and sold to them.

As we have already discussed the Lefauchaux revolvers were manufactured at the Trubia Factory from mid-1858 until February 1863, when the revolver shop was transferred to the Oviedo Factory. Those made in Trubia were marked "TRUBIA" on the barrel, followed by the year of manufacture, and on the right side of the frame the serial number, starting at "No.1", while on the left side of the frame they bore the initials "J.R.L" for Master Gunsmith José Ramón Larrosa. Those made in Oviedo were marked "OVIEDO", followed by the year, 1863 or 1864, also starting with serial number 1, but instead of the Larrosa marking they bore an "AR" under Crown marking, for the Artillery Corps.

Certain "economy measures" introduced in June of 1860 in order to reduce their cost, although only minor details, created two variants: the first one, were the position of the spring that controls the rotation of the cylinder is fixed by a screw in the barrel under lug, and a second one where this spring is encased in the cylinder axis; Of the first variation around 500 units were made, the remaining ones being of the second type.

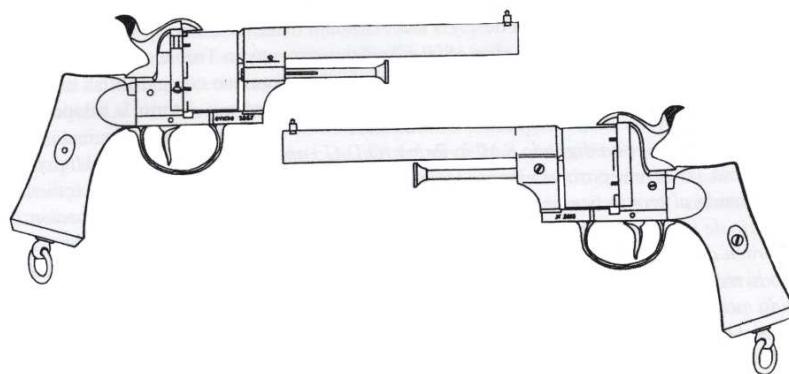
In addition to these Model 1858 Lefauchaux revolvers made in Trubia and Oviedo, there were "regulation" revolvers made in Eibar by several private manufacturers, mainly by "Orbea Hermanos" who started to produce them around 1860.



"Regulation" Lefauchaux revolver 1854, made by "Orbea Hermanos", in Eibar, from 1860 onwards. Six shots, 12 mm caliber, pinfire cartridges; 160 mm barrel.

Since the official production of the state factories in Trubia and Oviedo proved to be insufficient to equip all the officers of the Army and Navy, in 1859, when preparations were being made for war in North Africa, the Army had to purchase private contract revolvers and, from 1860 on, when all Chiefs and officers were required to purchase their own sidearm, acquiring them from private manufacturers in Eibar became routine.

The Model of 1863 Lefauchaux revolver, accepted in November of this year, was a design modification of the Oviedo Factory intended to reduce manufacturing costs and being able to issue it to all the Cavalry troops in replacement of their (percussion) horse pistols; Its price was fixed at 116 Rs. but on the 19th of January, 1865, it was increased to 160 Rs.; This pistol was issued mainly to the Guardia Civil squadrons, as per decree of September, 14, 1864. It was issued with a "one time allotment of 18 rounds and six more rounds per revolver every three months".



Model of 1863 Lefauchaux revolver made in Oviedo (1863-74 and 1892-93). Six shots, 12 mm caliber pinfire cartridges, 155 mm barrel.

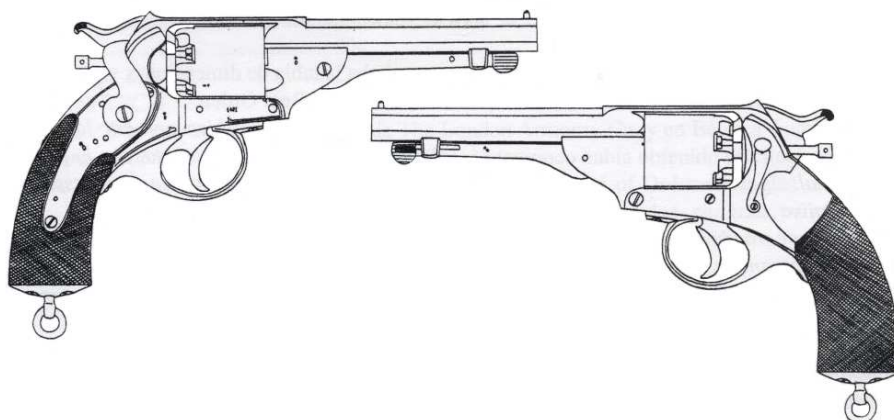
It was made at the Oviedo Factory until 1874, with a total production of 9,000 units, but it was used by the troops until the early 20th Century and, while the Oviedo Factory was idle waiting to start production of the Model 1893 Mauser rifle, the M-1863 Lefauchaux revolver was again put into production in order to keep the workers occupied.

This model of 1863 was marked "OVIEDO" below the cylinder followed by the year of manufacture on the right side of the frame, and the serial number on the left side of the frame. There are specimens dated 1892 with a serial number lower than the 1874 production run; these may be older pieces refurbished in 1892; there are also unmarked specimens which may be of the second 1892 production run.

THE KERR REVOLVERS, MODELS OF 1862, 1864, 1870 AND 1872.

In the Navy, the dispositions of July, 9, 1859, ordering the replacement of the ship's percussion naval pistols for revolvers, did not specify the revolver model, which should have been the Lefauchaux. In February of 1860 some of these were already being delivered to the ships but, the Trubia Factory's production being insufficient, the Navy was forced to acquire the commercial Lefauchaux Model of 1854 in France and Belgium; These were also imported for the Marine Infantry officers for whom it had been declared regulation sidearm on the 29th of November, 1859; Later on they were purchased from the private manufacturers in Eibar.

Then on February, 22, 1862 it was decreed that the 11 mm Kerr revolver made in England by the "London Armoury Company" (L.A.C) and under license in Belgium, by Auguste Francotte, be adopted for the ship's complements. Its inventor, James Kerr, had not registered the patent in Spain and, therefore, it could be manufactured here without a license; The Navy then entrusted its manufacture to the Real Fábrica de Placencia where they would be manufactured by the artisan-gunsmiths of the Guipuzcoa guild who would then deliver them to this Royal Factory, where a Navy commission would inspect and accept them.



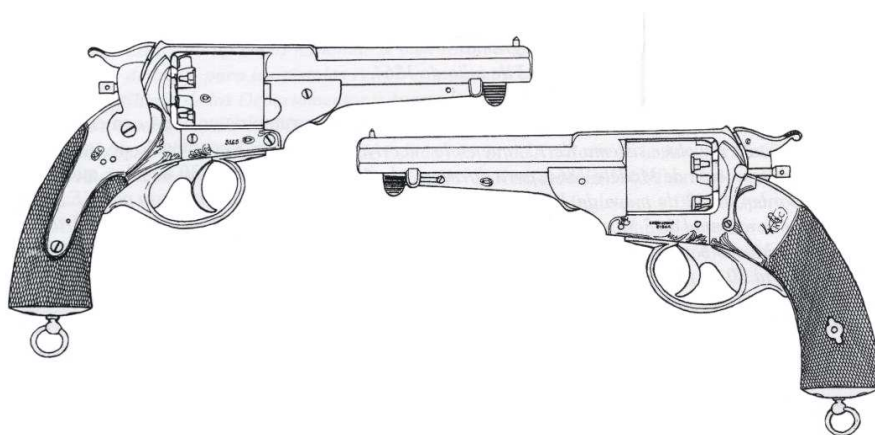
Navy Kerr revolver, Md. 1862, produced by the "Real Fábrica de Placencia". Five shots, 11 mm caliber, 146 mm barrel.

The Kerr revolver was a five shot, nipple ignited, combustible cartridge weapon, and it used the "gut" cartridges manufactured in a shop in Cadiz.

In 1864 with production already well under way and partially distributed, certain defects were discovered that forced their withdrawal from service in order to be refurbished, which led, in July of this year, to a new model Kerr revolver being approved with different interior details; This new model was designated Model 1864 and its predecessor, retrospectively, Model 1862.

The manufacture of the Model 1864 Kerr revolver was contracted with two private companies, under the supervision of Naval officers; These were 4,000 units from Orbea Hermanos, Eibar, and 1,500 units from the "Fábrica de Durango", Durango, Viscaya.

The Model 1862 Kerrs bear only the serial number and the acceptance markings of the inspecting navy commission (A-anchor-O) at the Real Fábrica de Placencia, while the 1864 Models bear the serial number, the naval markings and either "ORBEA HERMS. EIBAR" or "FABRICA DE DURANGO"; The finish of the M1864s is superior to that of the M1862s; Both models were projected a service lifespan of ten years.



Navy Kerr revolver, Md. 1864, produced by "Orbea Herms." and the "Fábrica de Durango". Five shots, Cal. 11 mm, 146 mm barrel.

On the 3rd of February, 1869, the Navy officially admitted that the adoption of the Kerr revolver had been a failure and withdrew from service all of the M1862s, and reduced to 7 years the lifespan of the M1864s and ordered that all the Kerr revolvers be replaced by the Army's regulation Lefauchaux. Those withdrawn from service were to be kept in the weapons depots to be used for training and shore duties.

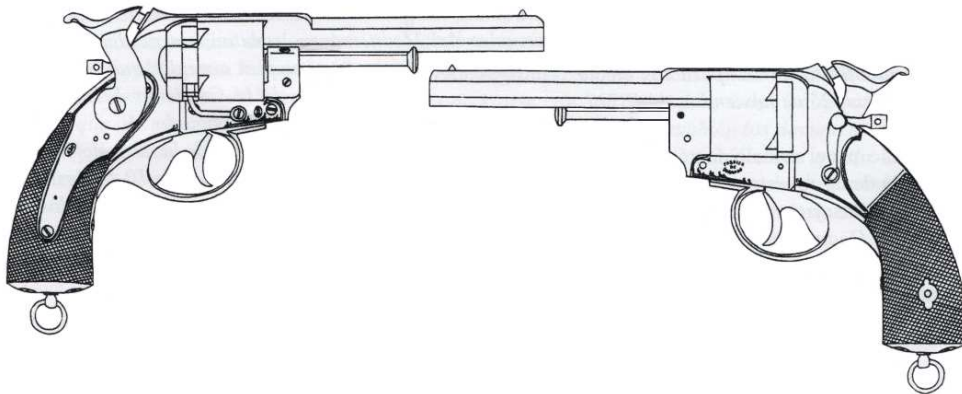
Then, a naval Artillery officer, Don Gaspar de Salcedo y Anguiano (1835-1905) designed a way of using the withdrawn Kerrs by transforming them to use center fire metallic cartridges; This adaptation and the cartridge proposed by Salcedo were approved October, 14, 1870; The transformation was contracted, under the supervision of a Navy commission, to different shops in Eibar

Due to the complexity of this transformation and the bureaucratic regulations involved in order to ship the revolvers from the naval bases in Cadiz, Ferrol, Cartagena and the Mediterranean Squadron, to Eibar, the actual work proceeded slowly; On December, 7, 1872 a modification to the Salcedo design was approved

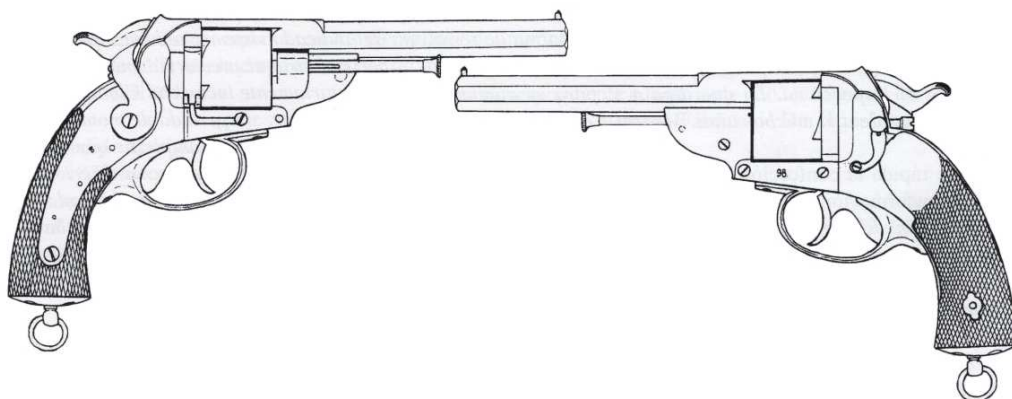
that sped up the work somewhat; This modification was the idea of Don Alejandro Olavarria, "Master Examiner" of the Eibar Navy commission.

But the Kerr's bad luck does not end there, as in that year of 1872 the Civil War (the Third Carlist War of 1872-76) was already underway and on September, 4, 1873, with Eibar under imminent danger of being occupied by the insurgents, the Chief of the Navy Commission ordered the revolvers transferred to San Sebastian and their overhaul was suspended.

Those Kerr revolvers M1862 which had been refurbished in government arsenals and those transformed in Eibar during 1870-73, lack any specific markings which could identify where they were overhauled but they have a double serial number, the original one, and a second one applied with the refurbishing process.



Navy Kerr revolver, Model 1864, transformed to Md. 1870. Five shots, 11 mm caliber centerfire cartridges.



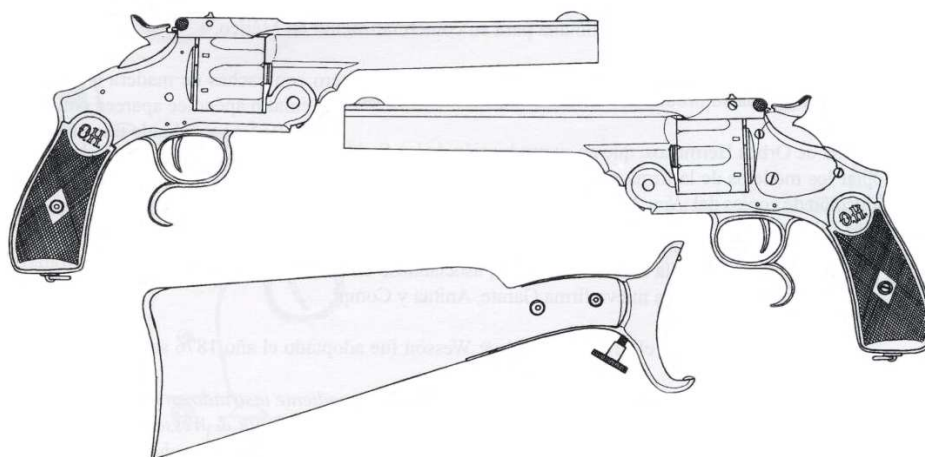
Navy Kerr revolver, Model 1862 refurbished and transformed to Md. 1872

The transformation to metallic cartridge was done to M1862s, refurbished M1862s, and M1864s indiscriminately; I have not been able to obtain information as to the number of units that were actually transformed.

THE SMITH & WESSON No.3 REVOLVERS.

On November, 23, 1874, the General Artillery Directorate authorized the use, by Chiefs and officers of the Army "in active service", of the No.3 Smith & Wesson revolver and advised that it could be purchased in Madrid in Don Joaquin Aramburu's gun shop where they were offered with its ammunition and with or without removable shoulder stocks.

The Smith & Wesson Company had not registered its patents in Spain and this enabled Don Joaquin Aramburu, agent of the Orbea Hermanos Company in Madrid, on December, 9, 1874 to request in their name a "Privilegio de Introducción" which enabled them to manufacture the revolver in Spain, in exclusivity, for five years.



Copy of the Smith & Wesson No.3 New Model revolver, marked "FABRICA DE ORBEA HERMANOS (EIBAR) CON PRIVILEGIO EN ESPAÑA". Six shots, 44 Caliber Russian, 178 mm barrel.

These "privilegios de Introducción" were granted as long as the product in question could be put into production within one year; Orbea Hermanos could not fulfill this condition but alleged an illness of its general manager, Don Juan Manuel Orbea, as a reason for the delay and managed to avoid its annulment; The Company would actually start production of the No.3 S&W in 1878 including the Third Model Russian and mainly the No.3 New Model; For as long as the "privilegio" lasted they were marked "ORBEA HERMANOS (EIBAR) CON PRIVILEGIO EN ESPAÑA";

Once the "privilegio" expired they were marked "FABRICA DE ORBEA HERMANOS (EIBAR) ESPAÑA".

After the exclusivity ended, the firm of "Garate e Hijo" also made copies of the S&W No.3 New Model and marked them "GARATE E HIJO, EIBAR (ESPAÑA); In 1884 this firm was restructured into the "Larrañaga, Garate y Comp." which, using the S&W No.3 New Model as the basic model introduced a number of models with new details which they patented, enabling them to mark them "LARRAÑAGA, GARATE Y Cia. EIBAR (PRIVILEGIADO)".

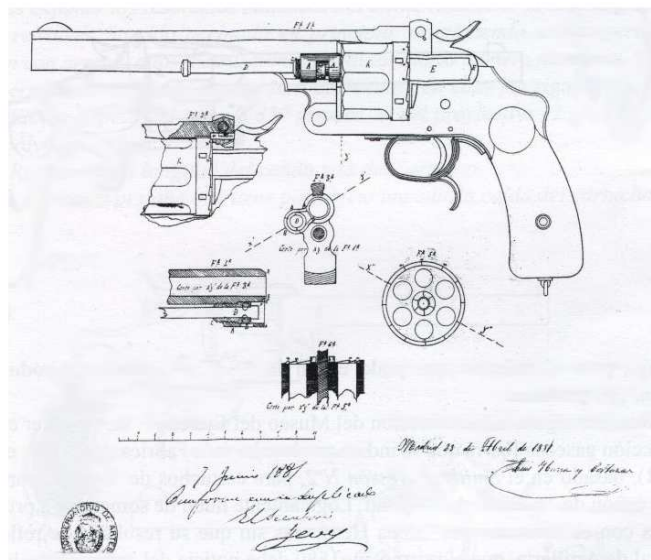
With the No.3 Smith & Wesson the chiefs and officers of the Army were equipped with a much more effective weapon than the antiquated Lefauchaux revolvers which were still in use as regulation side arms and their replacement was authorized by the General Artillery Directorate in 1874; There was also a production series of copies of the New Model No.3 contracted to Orbea Hermanos and to Garate e Hijo by the Cuban authorities for an armed force called the "Guardias de Cuba", which most probably referred to the Guardia Civil and its dependant, the newly created (1877) Guardia Rural, a mounted para-military police corps of similar functions, with a contract for 2000 units

THE IBARRA SYSTEM REVOLVERS

The lack of originality of the regulation revolvers of the Spanish Armed Forces would have been relieved if the Artillery officer Don Luis Ibarra Cortazar (1851-1885)'s "gaseous shell extraction system" had been adopted; This consisted in using a minimal amount of the gases to extract the previously fired shell so as to allow a constant reloading, shot after shot, maintaining a full cylinder minus the chamber used for extraction.

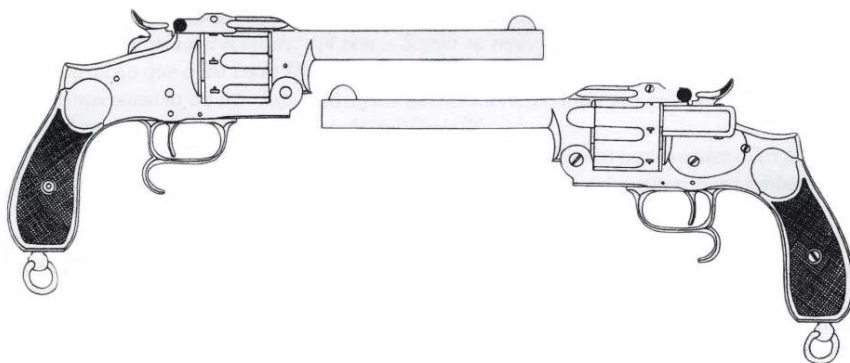
Mr. Ibarra patented his system and immediately offered it to the "Junta Superior Facultativa de Artillería" (the Artillery Corp's Technical Commission) which above all appreciated the fact that the system did not require any mechanical devices and was therefore economical to manufacture.

Mr. Ibarra presented the Junta with a Smith & Wesson revolver modified with his extraction system and later on with another specimen with additional modifications, such as inverting the rotation of the cylinder, so as to facilitate reloading ,and on April , 23 , 1878, patented his system in the then República de los Estados Unidos de America, applying it to a .44 caliber Smith & Wesson No. 3 similar to those he presented to the Junta Facultativa; These prototypes were contracted by Ibarra to Orbea Hermanos.



Blueprint of the revolver patented by Don Luis Ibarra in Spain in 1881, after obtaining a patent in the United States of America, in 1878.

The Junta Facultativa, while granting the advantages of the Ibarra system, did not dare propose its official adoption; At the most, if Mr. Ibarra decided to manufacture the revolvers on his own they would then recommend its use in service be authorized, just as had been done with the S&W No.3 in 1874, although not made mandatory.



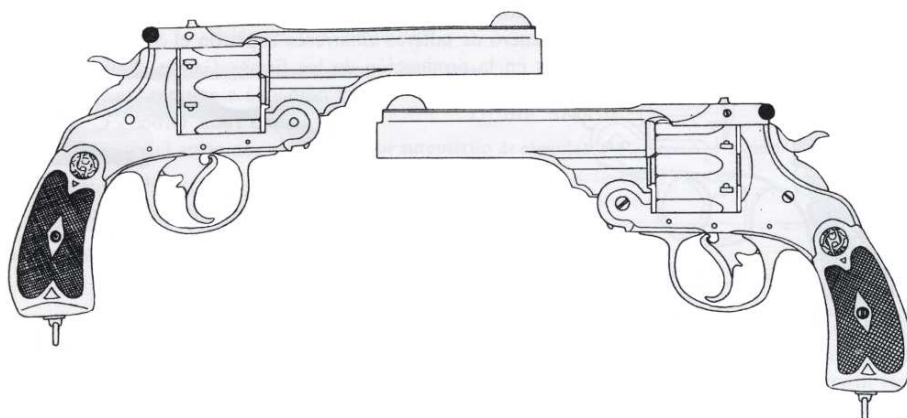
“Second Piñal Project revolver” (1881), with Ibarra system shell extraction. Seven shots, Cal 9 mm. 146 mm barrel.

At the Oviedo Factory attempts to apply the Ibarra system were made (experimentally) by an artillery officer, Don Clotaldo Piñal Rodríguez (1844-1903); These included a Model 1863 Lefauchaux with the Ibarra system incorporated, a Smith & Wesson No.2 -based 9 mm six shot revolver, and around twenty “Second Piñal Project” revolvers, similar to a No.3 S&W but in 9 mm and with seven chambers.

In October 1884, due to the official adoption of an 11 mm caliber regulation cartridge, any possibility of the gas extraction system being adopted by the Army was abandoned.

THE REVOLVERS FOR THE MODEL OF 1884 11 mm CARTRIDGE

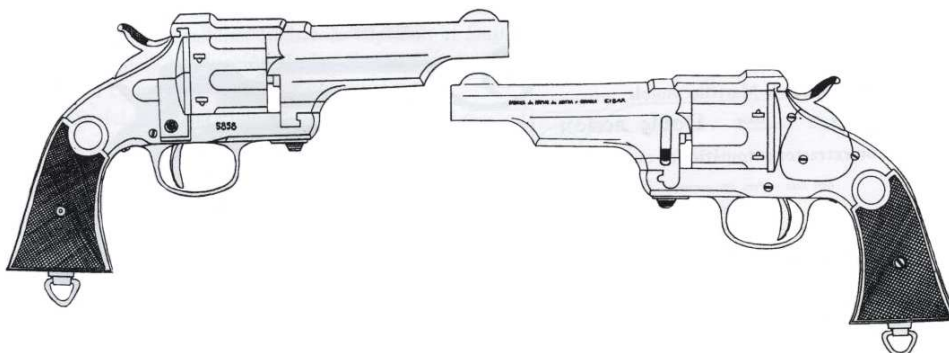
In the Army, the need to equip its Chiefs and officers with a better sidearm than the 12 mm Lefauchaux revolver, was satisfied in October, 6, 1884 by the adoption of a center fire 11 mm cartridge; Any revolver weighing between 850-900 grams (14-16 ounces) and having a length between 140-260 mm (5.5-10.24 inches) could then be used in service as long as it chambered this M-1884 cartridge; Although the Chiefs and officers could choose any revolver that used this round, the Orbea Hermanos No.7 Model, a revolver based on the S&W First Model D.A that this firm had patented December, 23, 1883, was "recommended".



"Number 7 Smith" revolver for the Model 1884 11 mm cartridge, made by "Orbea Hnos." and "recommended" to Army Chiefs and officers in 1884; Six shots, 129 mm barrel. Not until around 1905 was this revolver denominated "Model 1884".

No doubt this "recommendation" tilted the military's preference towards this model and this caused the firm of "Anitua, Charola y Cia" to request and obtain, in 1888, a similar "recommendation" for one of its "Merwin" models, based on those made by Merwin, Hulbert & Co; Also located in Eibar this firm (Anitua, Charola y Cia) was founded around 1880 and in the next year started registering the Merwin & Hulbert patents; But in spite of this "recommendation" the Anitua, Charola y Cia. made "Merwin" revolvers did not draw great interest from the Spanish military which clearly preferred the "Smiths" as the S&W based models were called; Some other Eibar manufacturers produced revolvers similar to the Orbea Hermanos No.7 with some different details so as to avoid a legal confrontation with Orbea and, once this firm resigned its patent in 1895 they all jumped in to copy it down to the last detail,

although only the firms of "Trocaola, Aranzabal y Cia" (TAC) and "Garate, Anitua y Cia" (GAC) produced them at the same level of quality as Orbea Hermanos.



"Merwin" revolver for the 11 mm Mod.1884 cartridge, made by "Anitua, Charola y Cia", it was "recommended" to Army Chiefs and officers in 1888. Six shots, 116 mm barrel.

At the turn of the 20th Century the Lefauchaux Model of 1863 revolver was still in use as regulation sidearm by the Guardia Civil and those Army troops needing a sidearm; In the Navy the ship issued Lefauchaux and Kerr revolvers were decommissioned long before; In 1885 the Navy declared standard issue the "Smith & Wesson system revolver presented by Srs. Orbea Hermanos of Eibar with the modifications specified by the Junta Especial de Artillería de la Armada" (Special Naval Artillery Technical Board") which was denominated "Revolver Smith & Wesson Model 1885" and a proposal for 4,000 units was requested from Orbea Hermanos.

To this moment I have not been able to determine the differences between the Orbea Hermanos No.7 and the "Navy Model 1885"; From observed pictures of sailors wearing this revolver it appears to be identical to the Orbea Hermanos No.7 although using the M1884 11mm cartridge.

The M1863 Lefauchaux revolver, which still equipped the Guardia Civil, Carabineros and certain Army troops, was expected to be replaced by the 1903 semiautomatic Bergmann pistol but, due to manufacturing delays, it was decided to issue these troops with the Orbea Hermanos No.7 revolver which was then labeled the "Model 1884", a term which, until then was applied only to the M1884 cartridge; This round was also updated on August, 23,1915 and was then classified as the "Model of 1915 cartridge for the Model 1884 revolver".

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