

### MUZZLE LOADING PISTOLS, 1836-1875

The use of the new percussion system in Spain started around 1830 but the Carlist War of 1833-40 delayed its widespread adoption by the Army until 1846 and the last two models of flintlock cavalry pistols were actually adopted as late as 1839 and 1843; The first percussion model adopted was the Navy Model of 1847, the second one the 1852 Cavalry Model, and the third one the Model of 1859 rifled Cavalry pistol.



**Model 1843 Cavalry pistol (Oviedo Factory) and Model 1847 Navy pistol (Placencia Factory)**



**Model 1852 Cavalry pistol (Oviedo Factory) and rifled Model 1859 (Belgian contract) pistol.**

The M.1847 Navy pistol was inspired on the English Sea Service models and its production at the Placencia Factory was supplemented by English made specimens, while the Army supplemented its new Model 1852 and 1859 pistols with old Models of 1815, 1839 and 1843 pistols converted to percussion models of 1849 and 1858.

The “commercial” production of flintlock pistols in the Basque country and in Cataluña ceased in the early 1830s, being replaced by percussion models of similar quality, with forged barrels and “*de patilla*” (small foot) locks (those converted from Miquelet to percussion); Either in the “English style”, those with a real internal front spring, or, in the “French style”, those with an inverted rear spring; Usually with a one piece stock and the fittings usually of iron and less frequently of brass.



**Commercial Eibar pistol, circa 1830; 170 mm barrel, 17 mm bore diameter, inscribed “*De Herraduras*” in silver, referring to the type of forging used in its manufacture.**

These pieces, although of good quality, never reached that of the, usually imported “false stock” type, and their production ended around 1850 when the arms industry in Catalonia can be considered to have already disappeared and the Guipuzcoan (Basque) production limited its quality manufacture only to “fine hunting arms”; The use of light but strong forged barrels, gave way to the use of cast barrels, heavier and more economical, as they based their resistance on the thickness of their walls.



**Commercial pistol with cast barrel 140 mm barrel, 17 mm bore diameter, with silver inscription: FABRICA / DE PEDRO ORBEA EN EIBAR / AÑO 1856 (Pedro Orbea, active from 1850-1870).**



**Percussion pistol of late manufacture; 150 mm barrel, full stock, 18 mm bore diameter, inscribed in silver: EN EIBAR / POR GASTELU / AÑO 1865 (Gregorio Gaztelu, 1860-1870); It bears a number 98, issue number to armed personnel, on its stock, probably constables (Photo H. J. Meruelo)**

This decrease in the quality of muzzle loading handguns was due to the appearance of repeaters and breech loaders, especially those initially called “*revolvers*”, which, being far superior as “personal defense weapons”, relegated the demand for front loaders to those customers of lesser means.

The end of muzzle loader production came late; In 1884 the “Basque Review” gave a summary of the handguns produced in Eibar during the first eight months of that year and listed 16,526 five and six shot revolvers, 13,628 pinfire Lefauchaux pistols, 488 Remington pistols, 148 Sharps pistols, and (only) 540 “nipple” pistols, probably destined for the colonies and underdeveloped countries, These were all of late and economical, ‘lock in box” design.



**Muzzle loading, “lock in box” type pistol, of economical Spanish manufacture for the export trade, lacking any maker or distributor markings.**