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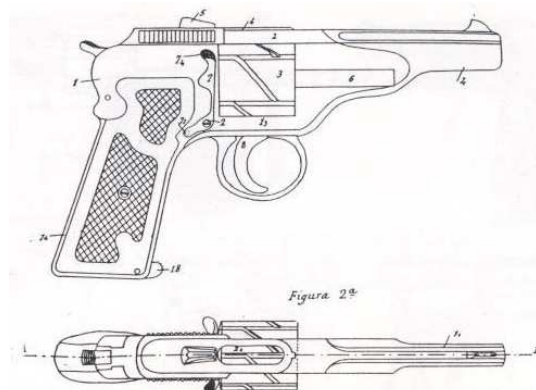
EIBAR POCKET REVOLVERS FROM THE 1900's



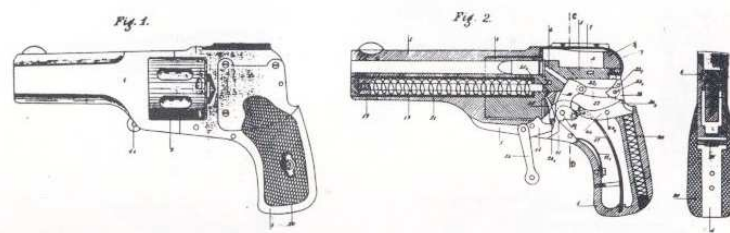
Five shot, hammerless, 6 mm caliber, Velo-Dog revolver; Barrel length 43 mm, unknown maker.

The invention of smokeless powder allowed a decrease, with no impairment of effectiveness, in the caliber of handguns; So, during the 1890s there appeared, among other revolver cartridges, the 6 mm Velo-Dog, the 8 mm "French" or Lebel, and the 7.62 mm "Russian" or Nagant; These plus the 6.35 mm (25 ACP) and the 7.65 mm (32 ACP) became the most common calibers in the Eibar pocket revolver production.

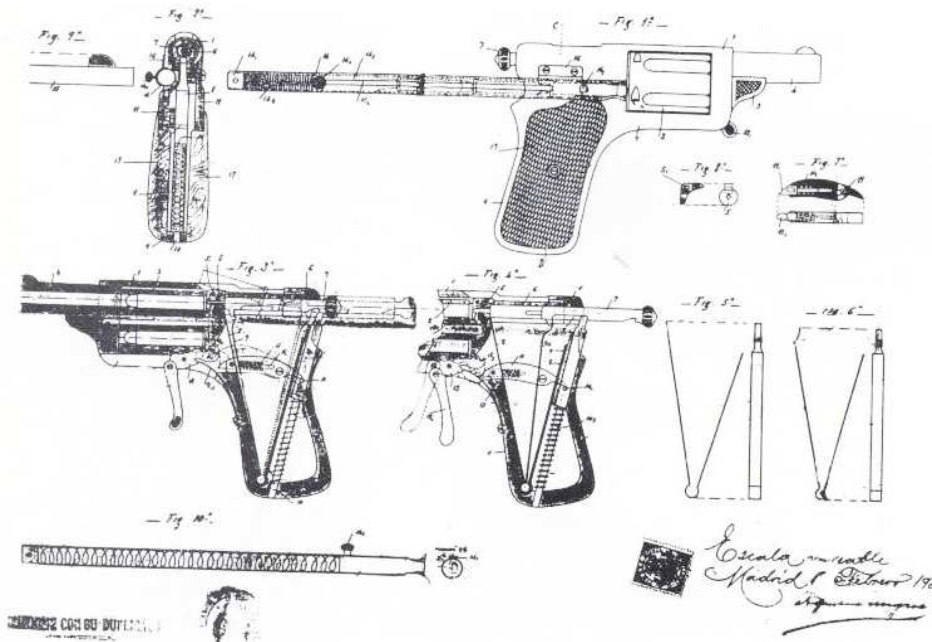
The diversity of these revolvers is such that an attempt to describe them all would require more space than they seem to deserve, judging from the scarce interest they arouse as collector items; Felt to be "all the same", in spite of their variety, and of mediocre quality in general, there is an unfair tendency to disdain the ingenuity displayed in some of their designs and also of the great wonder that many of them convey.



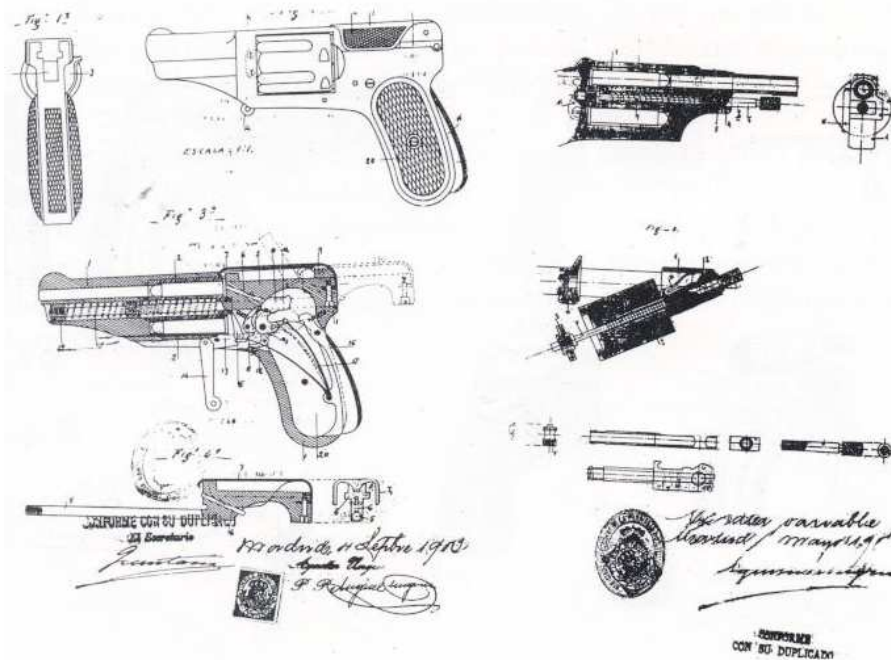
Drawings of the automatic pocket revolver patented by Toribio Zulaica in 1903



Drawings of the automatic pocket revolver patented by Toribio Zulaica in 1904



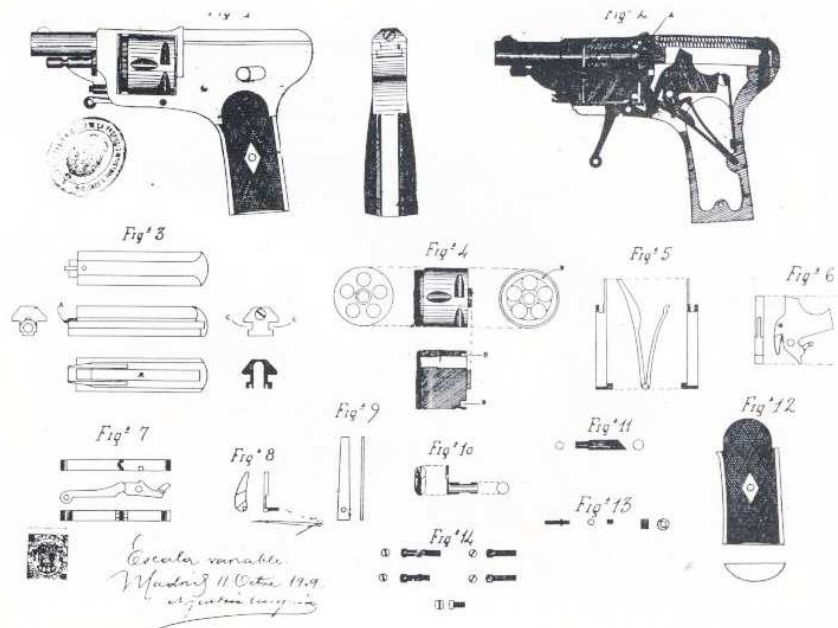
Drawings of the automatic pocket revolver patented by Toribio Zulaica in 1905



Drawings of the automatic pocket revolver patented by Toribio Zulaica in 1906

Among the Eibar production of pocket revolvers during the 1900s, the “automatic” revolvers patented by Toribio Zulaica Unamuno between 1903-1906 stand out; They were made in a number of less than 500 specimens by the firm of “T. Zulaica y C^a”; Toribio Zulaica was the son of the arms maker Narciso Zulaica, who organized the first Eibar Arts and Industries Exposition in 1908; “Zulaica y C^a” never declared ownership of a workshop and limited itself to marketing under its name subcontracted revolvers.

Other Eibar automatic revolvers, besides the Zulaicas, included the "MODERNO", recipient of several patents obtained by Alejo Bolumburu Ojanguren in 1907 and 1908, and, the "AGURO", patented in 1909 by "Erquiaga, Muguruza y C^a"; The "MODERNO" was presented in the Eibar Exposition of 1908 by the firm of "Alejo, Bolumburu y C^a", a firm that, like "T. Zulaica y C^a", never owned a workshop in Eibar and was another marketing firm of subcontracted pieces; The firm of "Erquiaga, Muguruza y C^a" included Martin Erquiaga and José Muguruza and appears in the Eibar Industrial Register declaring two workers in 1913 and five in 1914 and 1915.



Drawings of the "AGURO" automatic revolver patented by Martin Erquiaga in 1909

In 1907 Toribio Zulaica started to become interested in automatic pistols and ceased patenting revolver improvements; The same applies to Alejo Bolumburu who presented automatic pistols, and no revolvers, to the 1914 Eibar Exposition; However, "Erquiaga, Muguruza y C^a" presented "samples of their revolvers and pistols of the "FIEL" trademark," to the same exposition.



Five shot, double action, swing-out cylinder, pocket revolver; Marked "CAL 6.35 mm"; Barrel length 50 mm and "AF" logo (Francisco Arizmendi); It was offered by "F. Arizmendi y Goenaga" in their 1913-14 catalogue as the "PHENIX" revolver in 5 mm Velo-Dog and 8 mm Lebel calibers; It was later also made in 6.35 mm Browning with the same length cylinder.



“Smith-Hammerless” pocket revolver with automatic top break opening and simultaneous ejection of the empty shell casings, patented by the Pagnon brothers, Martin and Antonio in 1907; Five shot, 8 mm Lebel caliber, barrel length 64 mm, marked “VELOMITH EXCELSIOR MODEL 1907”, with “MAB” logo (Martin Antonio Bascaran).

During the 1910s the manufacturing of automatic pistols became as common as that of revolvers; The “Smith” type, top break, revolvers started to lose ground to the swing-out cylinder Colt and Smith & Wesson types, and as pocket weapons, revolvers marketed with names such as “Bron-Auto”, “Bron-Grand”, “Bron-Petit”, “Bron-Sport”, “Excelsior”, “Hammerless”, “Puppy”, “Velo-Dog”, “Velo-Brow”, “Velo-Mith”, “Velo-Smith”, etc, competed with automatic pistols in 6.35 and 7.65 mm calibers.



“Smith-Hammerless” pocket revolver with automatic top break and simultaneous extraction of empty shells; Five shot, 6.35 mm Browning caliber; The upper one, with safety, marketed under the “CRUCERO” trademark and with “OV” logo (Ojanguren y Vidosa); The one below, with no safety, with “ME” logo.



Pocket revolvers; Left: “Hammerless”, six shot, 6 mm Velo-Dog caliber; Barrel length 52 mm with “AE” logo (Antonio Errasti, 1904-1936); Right: “Smith” of unknown maker with a 55 mm barrel.

I have not been able to locate photographs of Toribio Zulaica’s automatic revolvers, nor of the “MODERNO” or “AGURO”; The most intriguing photos I can share are of the revolver marketed as the “LEBEXTRA” with a shell extraction system patented by Felix Gabilondo Unceta.



Pocket revolver with automatic shell extraction system patented by Felix Gabilondo in 1904; Double action, five shot, barrel length 55 mm, marked: “LEBEXTRA”, with “IHC” logo, serial number 161; Logo “JBC” on grips.



Once all five chambers have been discharged, upon opening the loading gate the arm located above the cylinder descends by gravity and, upon pressing the

trigger it is hit by the hammer; This impact is transmitted to the extractor rod located in between the chambers so that, with each successive hammer drop the empty shell in that chamber is expelled.(!!!)

Felix Gabilondo was part of the firm of “Gabilondo y Maiztegui”(??), which, although disappearing in 1904, had requested a five year patent for “An automatic empty shell extraction system for cylinder weapons, not using the gases from the discharge”, in a clear reference to the gas extraction system “privileged” by Luis Ibarra twenty five years before, and to the one patented by Toribio Arrizabalaga, also in 1904, where gases drained in the cylinder , from chamber to chamber, through communicating orifices, are used to expel the shells.



Pocket revolver with the automatic shell extraction system patented by Felix Gabilondo; Double action, five shot, 6 mm Velo-Dog caliber; Barrel length 52 mm, marked:“VELO-EXTRA”, with “IHC” logo, serial number 12; Logo “JBC” on grips.

Besides the “LEBEXTRA” revolver, Felix Gabilondo’s extraction system was used, in an 8 mm Lebel revolver marketed as the “VELO-EXTRA”, and in a 6 mm Velo-Dog; Both were five shot, with “IHC” logo on the frame and “JBC” on the grips but I do not know to which firms these logos belonged.