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## EIBAR REVOLVERS FOR THE BALKANS



During the late XIX and early XX Centuries, the Balkan Peninsula was an excellent market for the Eibar arms makers; Macedonia, which was still part of the Turkish empire, was coveted by Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, who, in the 1st Balkan war of 1912-13 managed to split her among themselves; Soon thereafter the 2<sup>nd</sup> Balkan war erupted and Bulgaria had to face its old allies, in addition to Turkey and Romania, with predictable results.

The firm of “Garate, Anitua y C<sup>a</sup>”, in its 1903 catalogue, offered the Gasser revolver “adapted to the Montenegrin cartridge” as its “Model 20” in three variants according to barrel length; This weapon could only have been destined for sale in the Balkans, as were some revolvers offered by “F. Arizmendi y Goenaga” in their 1913-14 catalogue including copies of the Nagant revolver, the so-called “regulation revolvers”, and some others, in 7.62 Nagant and 8 mm Lebel calibers, which were offered for sale to the Balkans and French colonies.

The Nagant revolvers, produced by the Belgian firm of this name, were adopted by Belgium in their 1878 and 1878-86 six shot models in 9.4 mm Nagant caliber; They were then also adopted by Sweden (Md.1887), Serbia (Md.1891) and Norway (Md.1893), all six shot, in 7.5 mm Nagant caliber; They were also made for Argentina and Brasil (Md.1893) in 44 Nagant caliber.

The best known Nagant revolver is, no doubt, the seven shot Md.1895 with gas seal cylinder advance system, adopted by Russia, the instigator of the Balkan wars, in 7.62 mm Nagant or “Russian” caliber.

The firm of “F. Arizmendi y Goenaga” in their 1912-13 catalogue offered the “Nagant” revolvers in seven shot models, one with “gas seal cylinder advance system” and two without this mechanism, both in 8 mm Lebel or in 7.62 mm “Russian Nagant” calibers; They also offered, in the same calibers, the “regulation revolvers” inspired in the Reichsrevolver, with a side safety lever, in

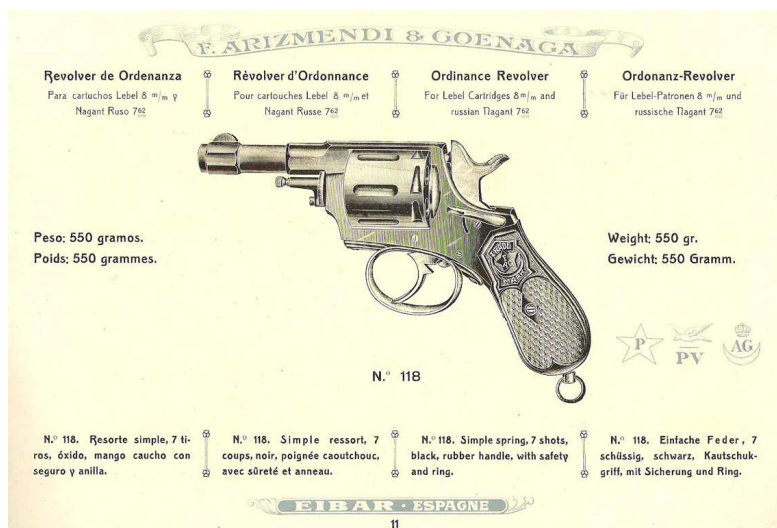
a seven shot and two nine shot, models, and another seven shot model with a “Colt style rubber handle”.



“Regulation revolver with gas seal cylinder advance system, cal 7.62 Russian Nagant”, as shown in “F. Arizmendi y Goenaga”’s 1912-13 catalogue.



Eibar “Nagant” revolver, without cylinder advance system; Seven shot, 7.62 mm Nagant caliber; Barrel length 104 mm with “F. Arizmendi y Goenaga”’s logo; Offered in their 1912-13 catalogue as the “Officer’s Model”.





**“Ordinance or regulation” revolver, nine shot, 8 mm Lebel caliber; Barrel length 107 mm; Offered by “F. Arizmendi y Goenaga” in their catalogue as the “model No 149 Ordnance Qualite 1ere”**



In their catalogue for 1913-14 the firm of “F. Arizmendi y Goenaga” stated the year of their foundation as 1886, as successors of Francisco Arizmendi, who had registered his logo in 1900 as the initials “FA” inside a five pointed star over a half moon, no doubt due to his interest in the Turkish market; However, his shop does not appear in the Eibar Industrial Register until 1905 when he declared five workers.

In 1906 he joined Pedro Goenaga in the firm of “F. Arizmendi y Goenaga” which from 1907-10 declared an average of 10 workers; Between 1911-14 it was the main workshop in Eibar with up to 40-50 employees; The start of the Great War affected them, as it did all, and in 1915 had only 15 workers, but recovered in 1916 with again 30-40; In 1917 it was absent from the Register when Pedro Goenaga left the firm, moved to Ordizia, and entered other activities than arms making.

In 1918 Francisco Arizmendi owned a shop with 20-30 workers and in 1919 with only 10-20, but quickly got over the post war crisis; In 1920 it ranked as a second class factory paying taxes only 25% of those paid by those of higher category.

In 1908 the firm attended the Eibar Arts and Industries Exposition and Pedro Sarasketa tells us that it “presented many and varied models of its making and an automatic pistol”; In that same year Gregorio de Mujica states that he was making” revolvers of the Puppy and Lebel systems and several Velo-Dog and

Galan; He has a patent for a repeating pistol of the "BOLTUM" model and, also has a patent for another, very small, folding-grip revolver of extraordinary range"



**Six shot, 6 mm Velo-Dog caliber, "VELO-GAL" revolver; Barrel length 31 mm, marked: "VELO-GAL" and with Francisco Arizmendi logo.**

The "folding grip revolver" was the "Le Novo" from Galand, patented by F. Arizmendi in 1904 as: "An Arizmendi modified pocket revolver named "VELO DOG GALAN"; In 1907 patents for "improvements" to automatic pistols start to appear under his name; The "BOLTUM" pistol in 6.35 mm caliber was based on the 1907 Pieper but, from 1910 on, he derived his inspiration from the 1903 and 1906 Brownings.