

6

THE OVIEDO FACTORY'S "PIÑAL" REVOLVERS



First project Piñal revolver with the Ibarra gas extraction system; Six chambers, barrel length 162 mm; Item number 5815 of the Army Museum Collection.

The Oviedo Factory's projects for a revolver model to be adopted by the Army incorporating the Ibarra gas extraction system (see Chapter 5) were designed by Don Clotaldo Piñal Rodríguez, a very restless Artillery officer, as can be deduced from his service record.

Born in Ceuta in 1844, he was the son of an Army Captain and entered the Infantry College in 1859 where he was promoted to Sub-Lieutenant in 1862; The following year he entered the Naval Artillery Academy and was promoted to Lieutenant in 1868 and assigned as officer to the Ferrol Artillery Depot's work shops; In late 1873 he was discharged from the Naval Artillery Corp and entered the Army as an Infantry Captain; He saw action against the Carlists until 1875 when he entered the Artillery

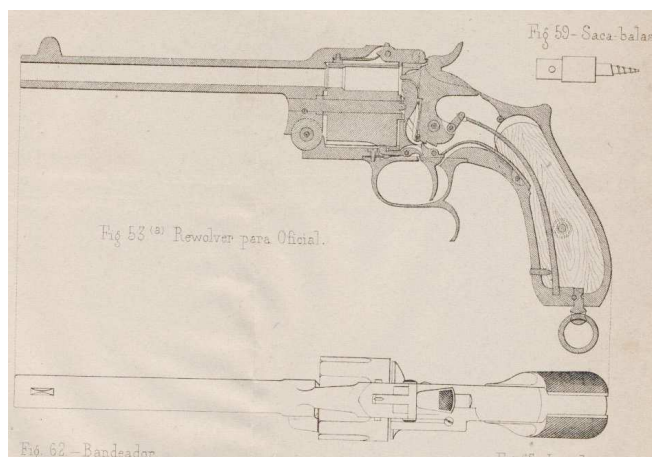
Academy as a Lieutenant and was destined to the Trubia and Oviedo factories, until mid-1879 when he joined the Geographical and Statistical Institute as a professor until 1889, and was a member of the Tribunal which evaluated officer candidates applying for positions in the Topographical Engineering and Geodesic services of the Geodesic Brigade.

In 1880 he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel of the Army in reward for his services in establishing the geodesic relations between the African and European continents, and received also the Legion of Honor from the French government for his collaboration with the French commission involved in the geodesic works between Spain and Oran.

In 1890 he was assigned to the Toledo Factory and in 1891 to the Burgos Depot and was decorated for two studies regarding the modifications to be applied to the regulation infantry cartridge; In 1903 he was attached to the Guadalajara Depot and assisted and participated in the “aerostation” (very early air arm) experiments and trials; That same year he requested his retirement and was discharged from the Corp.

In 1880 the Artillery Memorial reported on the results of the trials performed with the revolver designed by Piñal, which was based on the Smith & Wesson Mod. 2, weighing 760 grams, in caliber 9 mm, with an 11 gram projectile loaded with one gram of standard rifle powder.

This revolver, they reported, “has been accepted in principle, and it is recommended to the higher authorities that a certain number of them be manufactured according to its designer’s instructions, in order to conduct trials on a larger scale”, although they also recommended that certain modifications be introduced such as increasing the weight of the weapon to 850 grams, that of the projectile to 12 grams and the powder charge to 1.1 grams.



Second project Piñal revolver as shown in the work “Tratado elemental de armas portátiles”, by the Brigadier C. Barrios. Madrid 1881

The second project Piñal revolver is said to have been made at the Oviedo Factory in 1882 in a number of fifty units; Based on the Smith & Wesson Model 3, same as the model made for Ibarra, but as a 9 mm caliber, seven shot design, which allowed the

standard six shot capacity and left the chamber receiving the gases from the first discharge, empty.



Second project Piñal revolver with the Ibarra gas extraction system; Seven chambers, 9 mm caliber; Barrel length 146 mm.

Another difference between the revolvers presented by Ibarra and those projected by Piñal is that the Piñals lacked the extractor rod used to eject the last empty shell casing used in the Ibarras; This made it necessary to use a latch so as to be able to swing open the barrel-cylinder complex in order to eject the last shell, something which in the "Ibarra-Smiths" was prevented by a screw pin.

The Artillery Memorial did not report on the trials conducted with the second project Piñal and the Smith & Wesson revolvers presented by Orbea Hermanos on October, 6,

1884, but, ordered the suspension of “*revolver* construction at the Oviedo Factory” and the adoption of an 11 mm regulation cartridge, and ...”as a consequence of the previous dispositions all new trials with the Piñal revolver with the Ibarra extraction system will cease, and both officers are informed of the conclusions of the Special Artillery Board and are authorized to exploit their inventions in the private industry, although their sample “*revolvers*” will be kept as property of the State, in case that in the future it may be desirable to manufacture them in its factories, since both of them have been rewarded with the rank of Major of the Army”.



Double action “Central” revolver with the Ibarra gas extraction system; Six shot, 11 mm caliber; Barrel length 132 mm, marked: “F^a DE UNCETA B^a EIBAR” and “PRIVILEGIO / D.I. (*de invencion*) YBARRA”.

Piñal designed his projects as a service while he was at the Trubia and Oviedo Factories and neither he, nor the Artillery Corp, ever requested a patent; Ibarra, however, acted on his own and his extraction system can be found in some “*central*” revolvers made by private makers in Eibar.