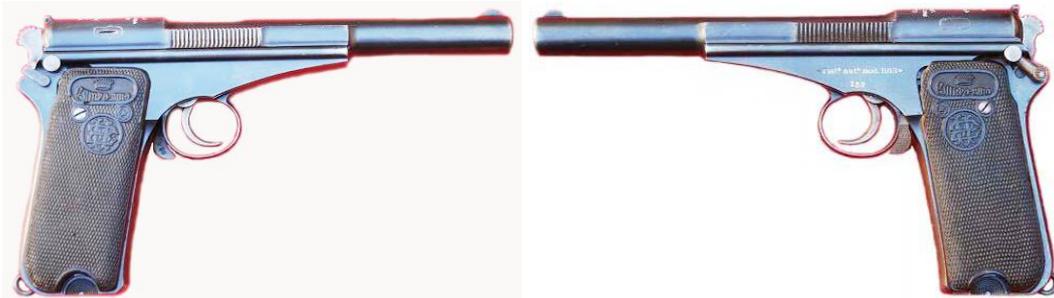


3

THE BERGMANN AND CAMPO GIRO PISTOLS (II)



Md. 1913 Campo Giro pistol, 9 mm Bergmann caliber, fed by 8 round magazines; 165 mm long barrel; Markings: CAMPO-GIRO ,with crown PAT 34798-54214, General Staff emblem, ESPERANZA Y UNCETA / GUERNICA and Pist^a Auto^a. mod 1913. (Photos H. J. Meruelo)

The new model (improved) pistol patented by D. Venancio López de Ceballos in November of 1912 frustrated the adoption of the model which had been accepted on the previous month of September; The report of the Trials Commission explained that, shortly after the Campo Giro pistol Model of 1912 having been adopted, its inventor “presented a new model of this weapon that appeared to have features that improved the type previously taken into service”.

Since the manufacture of that model had not yet begun, it was decided to test the new model and to delay the onset of manufacture, in case that the new trials should demonstrate a clear superiority of the new model and it should be the one adopted.

The essential differences of this new model consisted of, a fixed barrel instead of the previous recoiling one, and a new recoil shock absorber, making the system safer and the pistol more durable by greatly relieving stresses upon firing; It was felt that accuracy would also improve as the aim point would be less affected by each successive rapid shot due to the decrease in recoil.

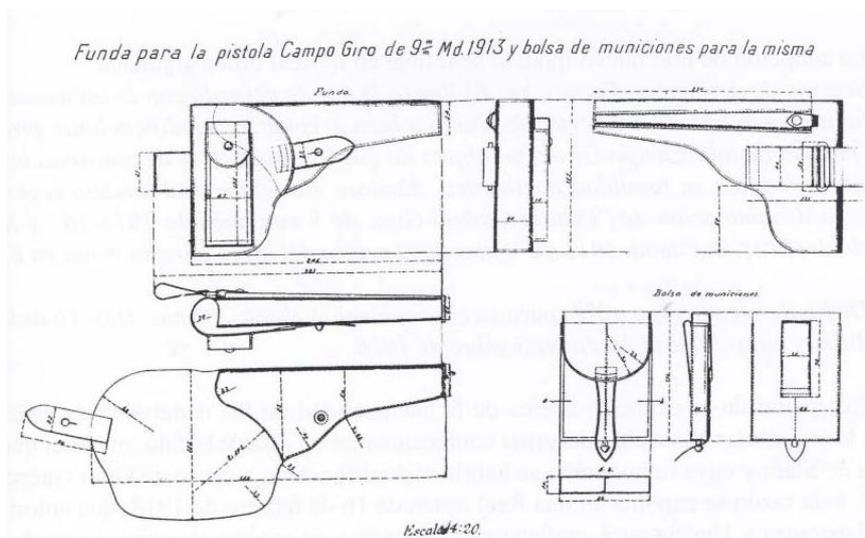
The report concluded that the performed trials had confirmed the superiority of the new pistol and therefore it was recommended it be adopted instead of the previous one; This was made official by Royal Order of January, 4, 1914 as follows: “The King(may God safe keep him)has kindly declared the new model automatic pistol invented by Lt.Colonel (Ret.) Don Venancio López de Ceballos to be regulation for the Army , for the personal defense of Chiefs , Officers and troops, in substitution of the model from the same inventor mentioned in the Royal Order of September, 24,1912; The new weapon shall be designated “Campo Giro pistol 9mm Model of 1913”, abbreviated to “Pist. Aut. Mod. 1913”; The previous dispositions of 1912 regarding the ammunition to be used and the maintenance in service of the Bergmann Model 1908 pistols by those who possessed them, continued to be in effect.

The manufacture of the specimens of the new model that had been used in the trials had been contracted by Don Venancio López de Ceballos to the firm “Esperanza y Unceta”, which had recently inaugurated their new factory in Guernica, specializing in the manufacture of automatic pistols; From that point on all Campo Giro Mod. of 1913 pistols were manufactured by this firm.

The firm “Esperanza y Unceta” was formed by Juan Esperanza Salvador (1860-1951) and Pedro Unceta (1854-1934), both of Eibar, and who in 1906 had formed the firm “P. Unceta y J. Esperanza”, which according to its publicity engaged in the “sale of machinery and accessories of all types” with no mention of the manufacture or sale of firearms; Pedro Unceta did engage on his own in the marketing of firearms while Juan Esperanza, also on his own, engaged in their manufacturing; Esperanza’s shop declared 6 workers in 1908 and 10 in 1910; In 1911 he became associated with Isidro Gaztañaga, an industrial arms manufacturer in the firm of “Gaztañaga y Esperanza” and their shop was amongst those that employed 20-30 workers.

It is from 1911 onwards that patents concerning improvements of automatic pistols start to be granted in the name of “Juan Esperanza y Pedro Unceta” and in 1913 they founded their factory in Guernica.

1300 units of the Model of 1913 Campo Giro pistol were made during 1914 and then production was interrupted in order to incorporate improvements designed by its inventor; Lt. Colonel Vazquez de Aldana wrote at the time: “Any officer who, upon going on operations, finds himself in need of a good pistol is confounded because, the Bergmann satisfies no one, the Campo Giro is not for sale, and the reports on the 7.65 Browning are not the best, and probably due to lack of time or resources, has not been able to investigate other models and due to his urgency ,winds up purchasing whatever the gun shop salesman recommends, or the cheapest one he can find”¹



Approved in April, 1914 for right sided wear, the holster for the Campo Giro pistol was then changed to left sided wear as was the position of the spare magazine pocket.

¹ A. Vázquez de Aldana, “Armas y Defensa”, Madrid, 1916



Mod. 1913-16 Campo Giro pistol, caliber 9 mm Bergmann; Fed by 8 round magazines; 165 mm long barrel; Markings: CAMPO GIRO / PAT. 34798-54214, General Staff emblem, ESPERANZA Y UNCETA / GUERNICA and: Pist^a Aut^a mod. 1913-16. (Photo H. J. Meruelo)

The Model of 1913 Campo Giro pistol was followed by the Md. 1913-16 which incorporated the improvements which had been “added” to its patent of 1912, in 1913, 1914 and 1915, the most striking of which was the change in position of the magazine release, which in the M1913 was located below the trigger guard and in the M1913-16 was placed in the lower butt.

The new model was adopted by Royal Order of September, 16, 1916, and was denominated as the “Model of 1913-16, 9 mm Campo Giro Pistol” abbreviated to “Pist^a Aut^a. mod. 1913-16”; By Royal Order of May, 20, 1918 it was decreed that the annual ammunition issue would consist of 50 rounds per weapon “of which 25 will be used to maintain the shooter’s skill and the other 25 for the instruction of first time users and further training of those who appear more apt”; In February of 1918 “Esperanza y Unceta” was authorized to substitute the buffalo horn grips imported from Siam (Thailand) by wood grip panels, due to the difficulty in importing buffalo horn because of the Great War (WWI).

The total production of the Mod. 1913-16 until 1919 amounted to 13,625 units; Its inventor, Don Venancio López de Ceballos died prematurely due to a riding accident in the Casa de Campo in Madrid on the 22nd of May of 1916.