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THE EIBAR “BROWNING”



Six shot, “Eibar” type pistol; 56mm barrel; Markings: AUTOMATIC PISTOL “VESTA” CAL. 6,35 (Hijos de Angel Echeverria, 1911-1919)



6.35 mm STAR No.2 pistols: On the left, the first model (1909), to the right the second one; There was also a third model (1911) similar to the “Esperanza y Unceta” VICTORIA pistols.

Few foreign inventors applied for a “privilege” in Spain from 1826 to 1878, the duration of this legal entity, as in order to maintain the validity of the “privilege”, it was required that it be actually exploited, whether by creating a new factory or by yielding the manufacturing rights to an already established one, and the precarious national industry of the times offered such few possibilities; This situation continued in the following decades even after the enactment of the Law of June, 30, 1878, which established the granting of “Titles of patent”; However, from that point on the number of foreign applications increased gradually, although without any real intentions of actually installing themselves in Spain or yielding their manufacturing rights to a local entity.

The actual intention behind obtaining a patent was to delay for as long as possible the manufacturing of a product in Spain which would compete with their own production, as all patents granted “for twenty years” guaranteed a minimal protection of two years, after which, in order to maintain its validity, the payment of a yearly fee plus the possession of a “certificate” confirming its domestic manufacture was required; A common subterfuge in order to avoid anullment and to prolong the life of the patent was to obtain a bogus certificate.

This is what John Moses Browning did, requesting Spanish patents for his inventions from 1894-1904, after this date these were requested in his name by the Belgian “Fabrique Nationale”; The Browning Model 1900 pistol had already been patented by J. M. Browning, when, in 1902, Juan Miguel Unamuno applied for a patent “of introduction”, not being aware that Browning had a certificate allegedly yielding its manufacturing rights (licensing) to Juan Bautista Silvestre Fombuena, of Madrid; The 1903 Browning pistol also had its certificate stating it was being produced at the Placencia Cannon Foundry, the old “Euscalduna” factory, which was then under Vickers control, and the 1906 Browning was supposedly being manufactured by a Rafael Perez (??) in Madrid.



“Eibar” type pistol marked: AUTOMATIC PISTOL / “VITE” / PATENT CAL. 7, 65 / MODEL 1912 (Echave y Arizmendi)

It is possible that J. M. Browning caused the annulment of Unamuno’s patent, as his shop disappeared in 1906, and apparently he never produced any “1900 Browning”s, but, the mechanical features of the 1903 and 1906 Brownings immediately awakened the interest of the Eibar arms makers, some of whom were already producing original designs; Soon there were many of them manufacturing pistols which, although exhibiting some original features, or patented “improvements”, were obvious infringements of the J. M. Browning patents; These were the “Eibar Brownings”, and “Fabrique Nationale” tried to stop their manufacture by legal threats.

In order to face these, all the effected manufacturers got together on June, 12, 1912 in the Eibar Town Hall, and declared their respective production, in order to assume, proportionally, the expenses to be incurred by investigating the legal situation; These manufacturers were:

- 1- Pedro Careaga, producing 60 pistols per day
- 2- “Hijos de Angel Echeverria”: 35 pistols per day (VESTA trademark)
- 3- “F.Arizmendi y Goenaga”: 30 (WALMAN)
- 4- “Garate,Anitua y Ca”: 25 (EXPRESS)
- 5- Bonifacio Echeverria: 20 (STAR No. 2)
- 6- Martin Antonio Bascaran: 14 (MARTIAN)
- 7- “Beistegui Hermanos”: 13 (DIANA)
- 8- With only 10 pistols per day: “Echave y Arizmendi” (VITE), Antonio Errasti (ERRASTI), and “Hijos de J. J. Aldazabal” (CENTRAL AMERICAIN)
- 9- “Mendicute,Sarrasqueta y Ca”: 5 pistols per day (LIGERITA)

10- Also with only 5 pistols per day: Toribio Zulaica (ZWLAIKA), Martin Erquiaga (FIEL), and Faustino Arteagoitia (TITANIC)

One month later the group of Marcelo Zulaica, who had just started production of 10 pistols a day under the trademark ROYAL, was added to the list.

It was not difficult to ascertain that in the absence of any real domestic production such as was stated to be ongoing in the certificates, Fabrique Nationale could hardly take legal action against them, and once this was known, every manufacturer in Eibar started to market their own “Browning” under a diversity of trademarks, not only of the different makers but also of dealers; The city of Eibar continued to function as a great factory where executive owned his own enterprise.

All attempts to organize a conglomerate similar to Fabrique Nationale failed but, a real accomplishment was obtained with the support of the ex-Minister Don Fermin Calbeton, in the founding of the “Eibar School of Armoury” in 1913, inspired by the Belgian “Ecole d’Armerie”, and dedicated to teach mechanics and its application to arms making, as until then that knowledge could only be acquired as apprentices to those who had them, as was done traditionally while still under the guild system of manufacturing, a practice made obsolete by industrialization.

Don Julian Echeverria became the Director of the School and, in its staff could be found such well known arms makers as Toribio and Pio Zulaica Unamuno; A Museum was also created in 1914 where Julian Echeverria collected samples of all the arms made in Eibar during the Great War which, unfortunately, was shortly thereafter, looted by thieves.

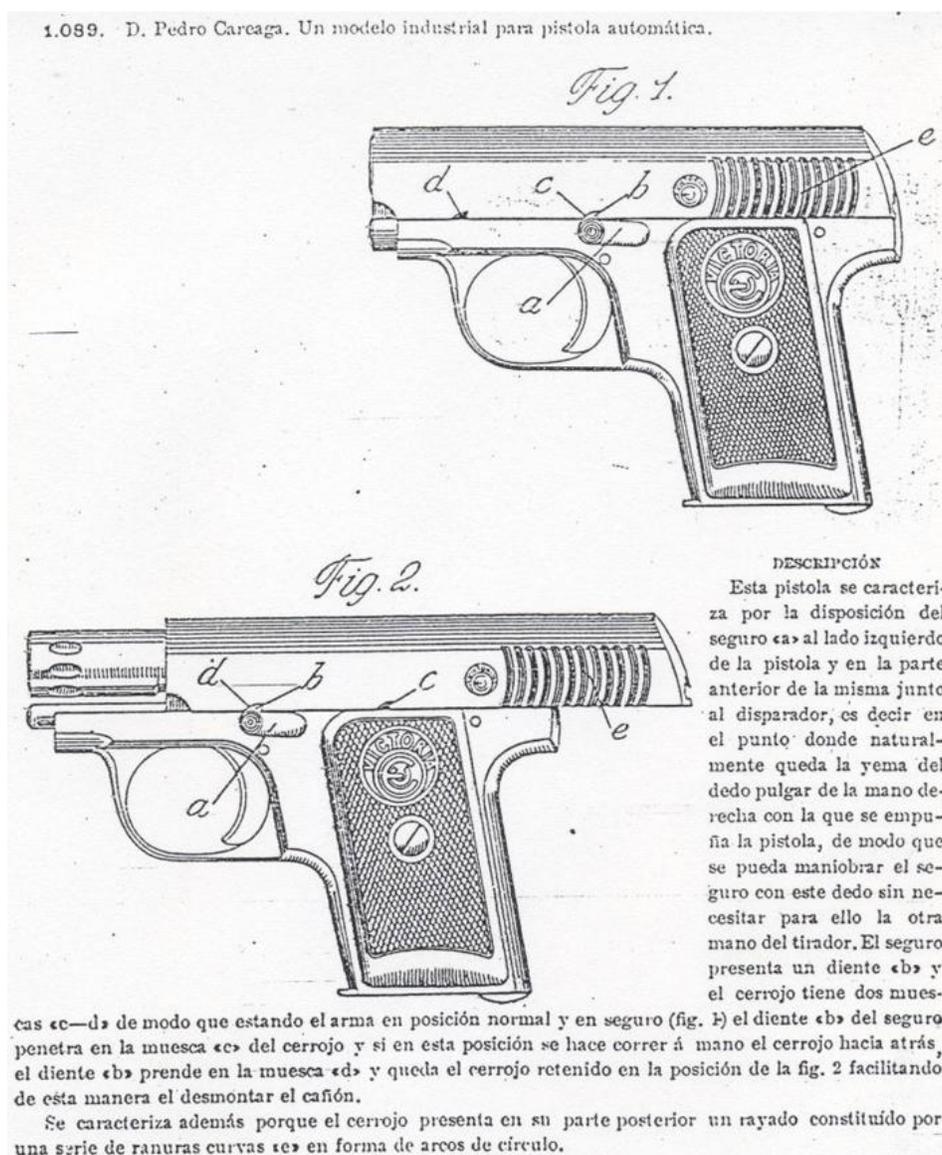


“Eibar” type pistols, six shots, marked: 6,35 1911 MODEL AUTOMATIC PISTOL / “VICTORIA “ PATENT, logo “VICTORIA EU” (Esperanza y Unceta)

Going back to the subject of the Eibar “Browning” and the above described list of manufacturers, the largest production was credited to Pedro Careaga Garagarza (1884-1964) who, while not being a manufacturer himself, demonstrated the most ability in improving J. M. Browning’s designs; In 1906 he obtained a first patent for “A repeating pistol named Careaga” inspired in the Browning 1900, which was never produced; However, his second patent for, “A repeating pistol named PISTOL STOC”, became basic for the development of the “Eibar type” pistols; With a design based on the 1903 and 1906 Brownings, this “PISTOL STOC”, in versions with external or internal hammer, had curved serrations on the slide and a safety placed close to the trigger, improving J. M. Browning’s design who had placed it further back and inaccessible to the hand holding the pistol.

Careaga was aware of this detail's importance and in 1912 registered his pistol as an "industrial model", emphasizing the "placement of the safety on the left side of the pistol and next to the trigger, exactly where the tip of the right thumb naturally rests upon holding the gun".

The illustration of this pistol, as included in his application for an "industrial model", did not bear the trade mark "PISTOL STOC", but that of "VICTORIA", which had been registered in 1911 by the firm of "J. Esperanza y J. Unceta" (1908-1913); As I mentioned before, Careaga was not a manufacturer himself and he licensed his pistol's manufacturing rights to this firm which paid him royalties for each unit made; Also punctually paying their annual royalties must have been all those who applied this inventor's patents to their production, at least until 1919 when they expired.



Industrial model of automatic pistol registered by Pedro Careaga Garagarza in 1912



“Eibar type” pistols; On the left a 7 shot marked: AUTOMATIC PISTOL “VENUS” PATENT / EIBAR (ESPAÑA) / CAL 6,35, with a 51 mm barrel (Tomas de Urizar); On the right a 6 shot marked: PISTOLA BROWNING AUTOMATICA CAL 7,65 / APACHE (Ojanguren y Vidosa)

After 1911 Careaga obtained other patents which were licensed to “Esperanza y Unceta” and were used in the design of their ASTRA 400 and 300 models; His contributions were also important to the design of the ASTRA-UNION submachine gun adopted by the Army in 1929 and the Navy in 1931, and also in a light machine gun project of the firm “Esperanza y Ca” which was never manufactured.



“Eibar type” 7 shot pistol, 7.65 mm caliber, marked: AUTOMATIC PISTOL “WALMAN” PATENT / MARCA REGISTRADA “F.A” (F. Arizmendi)



“Eibar type” 5 shot pistol, 90 mm barrel, marked: FABRIQUE D’ARMES DE GRANDE PRECISION / “PRINCIPE” PATENT CAL 9 mm. (Tomas de Urizar).

¡¡HAY QUE DEFENDERSE, SEÑORES!!

¿Qué es necesario para conservarla

Una pistola automática DOUGLAS

Con una pistola automática DOUGLAS segura

Una pequeña y ligera pistola automática DOUGLAS

La pistola automática DOUGLAS con indicador automático para saber á simple vista ó tacto si está ó no cargada

SIETE MESES DE CRÉDITO

SIETE MESES DE CRÉDITO

TAMAÑO NATURAL de la pistola de 6,35 mjm.

SEIS PESETAS AL MES
el calibre 6,35 mjm. 6 tiros.

PESETAS 7,25 AL MES
el calibre 7,65 mjm. 7 tiros.

PRECIOS

CALIBRE 6,35 mjm.; en siete plazos mensuales de 6 pesetas.	Plas.	42,00
Al contado.	"	32,00
CALIBRE 7,65 mjm.; en siete plazos mensuales de 7,25 plas.	"	50,75
Al contado.	"	40,00

DIEZ VERDADES EN FAVOR DE LA PISTOLA AUTOMÁTICA "DOUGLAS"

1. Su mecanismo no tiene rival en perfección y solidez.
2. Es el modelo más elegante y moderno.
3. Es la pistola de menor peso con mayor potencia.
4. Es el arma ideal para señoras.
5. Su montaje y desmontaje son rapidísimos.
6. No necesita herramientas para desmontarla.
7. Todo el material es de acero especial belga, y no de hierro fundido.
8. Almacén prodigioso, mortal á cinco metros.
9. Es seguro en lo más perfecto.
10. Tiene indicador automático para saber á simple vista ó tacto si está ó no cargada.

PIDASE CATALOGO Y CONDICIONES A LA CASA
S. L. SUSUNAGA, PRIM, 39, SAN SEBASTIAN
Concesionaria para la venta en España de las PISTOLAS AUTOMÁTICAS DOUGLAS

“GENTLEMEN, WE MUST DEFEND OURSELVES!! ...from any attacks we may suffer in this tough life”.....1920’s advertisement; The “LH” logo was that of “Lasabagaster Hnos”, which never appeared in the Eibar register as owning a shop but, who licensed the trade mark DOUGLAS in 1914 to D. Máximo Idarraga Bengoa, a dealer established in Eibar; S. L. Susunaga, of San Sebastian, had the exclusive distributorship in Spain.



6,35 mm caliber ASTRA pistol with code letter "M" (1941); It is the old "Esperanza y Unceta’s Model 1911 VICTORIA, marketed as the ASTRA 200 by "Unceta y Cia"; The specimen shown bears the GECO marking of its importer into Germany, Gustav Genschow of Hamburg, during WWII. (Photo Len Scibilia)