

THE SPANISH MAUSER FAMILY...A history with multiple sources

PREFACE

The history and genealogy of the Spanish Mauser family is extensive and somewhat difficult to unravel; The purpose of this article is to try to unify information obtained from several well known sources into a coherent and I hope, also interesting narrative, particularly from the historical and collecting points of view, as I am basically a collector, and with somewhat less emphasis on the technical aspects, although without ignoring them when necessary.

The main sources have been: Bernardo Barceló Rubí (Tres Siglos de Armamento Portátil en España), my friend Juan L. Calvó (Armamento Reglamentario y Auxiliar del Ejército Español, plus multiple articles from his website www.catalogacionarmas.com, plus innumerable personal communications), my other peninsular friend Eduardo Gorostiza, preeminent collector of Spanish bayonets, Josep M^a Abad, Manuel Estirado and Francisco Fuentes (Pistolas y Revólveres de la Republicana Production de Guerra), Robert W.D.Ball (Mauser Military Rifles of the World, 5th Edition), Juan Sopena Garreta (Historia del Armamento Español, Vol.II), Leonardo Antaris (Star Firearms), Ludwig Olson (Mauser Bolt Rifles), John Walter (Rifles of the World), and Luc Guillou (Mauser Fusils et Carabines Militaires), with some observations and specimens from my personal collection.

I hope this work will be of some use to the collector and bring some degree of pleasure to the casual reader. I will start this story with the Mauser Modelo Español rifle and then I will review its variants: carbines, musketoons, short rifles, etc.

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Miami, Florida, June, 2014

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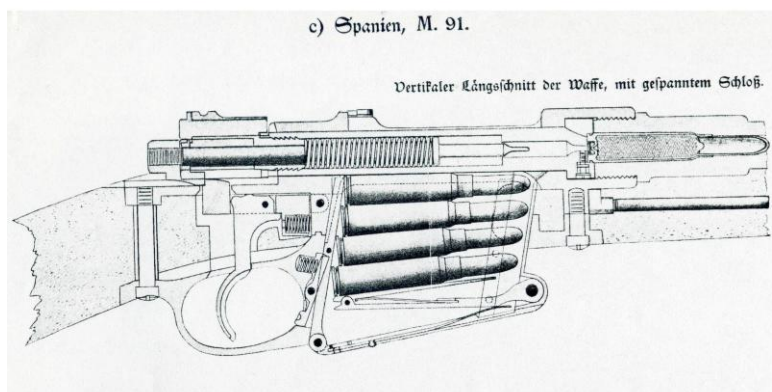
CHAPTER 1

THE EXPERIMENTAL M.1890-92 TRIALS RIFLE, THE M.1892 AND M.1893 “MAUSER MODELO ESPAÑOL” RIFLES.....AND..... THE M.1891 ARGENTINE RIFLE.

In 1890 the Spanish Armed Forces, armed since 1871 with the very reliable but already obsolescent Remington rolling block single shot system, were searching for new armaments and, through their Portable Firearms Mixed Commission, directed by General Don Bernardo Echaluze y Jauregui, became interested in two new designs: the German Gewehr M.1888 or “Kommission Gewehr” in 7.92 mm caliber, the product of a design commission with a mixture of Mauser and Mannlicher features, and the Belgian M.1889 Mauser in 7.65 mm caliber; Initially one specimen of each model was obtained followed by twenty more of each for trials.

The M.1889 Belgian Mauser was the design preferred by the Commission and another 1,000 units were ordered for more extensive trials; These 1,000 guns (specimen SN 996 in my collection), in 7.65 mm caliber, upon being delivered to Spain by its manufacturer Mauser Oberndorf, were already an evolved version of the Belgian model, having shed their barrel jackets, and were practically identical to the M.1890 Turkish Mauser, with a few additional internal modifications.

These 1,000 rifles were issued to the Saboya No. 6 Infantry Regiment and the No.19 Battalion of Cazadores de Puerto Rico (Chasseurs, Jagers) and were submitted to a month long trial where half a million cartridges were expended. This rifle has been called by some authors the “**Modelo Experimental de 1891**” or the “**Modelo Experimental 1890-92**” and by Mauser Oberndorf itself, the “**SPANIEN M.91**”, and constitutes the initial phase in the development of the rifle finally adopted as the “**Mauser Modelo Español de 1892**” after more than a year of improvements and modifications, which included five new patents obtained by Mauser (please see Barceló Rubí, second edition, page 336 for the technical details).



Mauser Oberndorf blueprint of the “SPANIEN M.91”

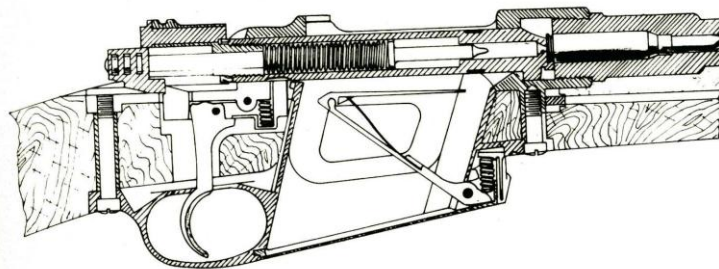


M.1891 experimental rifle ,“SPANIEN M.91”, cal 7.65 mm, SN 996.

According to this author Paul Mauser traveled to Madrid in July of 1892 taking with him a sample rifle and carbine already featuring the improvements and modifications required by the Mixed Commission, but still in 7.65 mm caliber; Shortly thereafter in September 1892 he sent two more samples already in the 7 mm caliber requested by the Commission, plus another rifle and carbine in the original 7.65 mm caliber.

On November the 30th 1892 the 6.5 mm rifle offered by Mannlicher was eliminated and the ***“Mauser Modelo Español 1892”*** officially adopted.

In Spain there was only one known specimen of this rifle, in the collection of the Artillery Museum , later the Army Museum in Madrid , where it stayed until it was somehow lost, and unfortunately remains lost to this day.



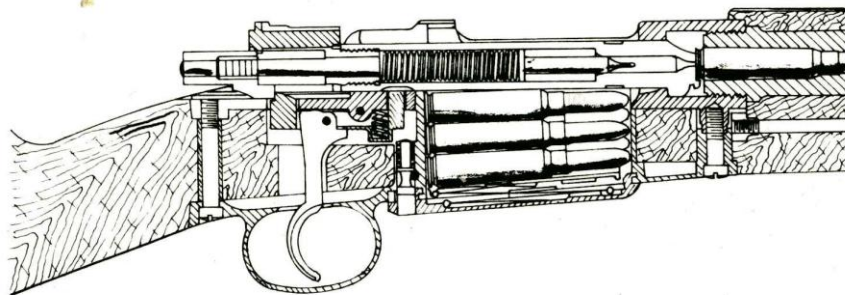
The “Mauser Modelo Español 1892”, of which at this time there is no known specimen (J.Sopena).

Another trials specimen in 7.65 mm caliber is in the U.S. Army Weapons Collection, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, and specimen number 2, already in 7 mm caliber, is known to reside in a private collection in the US; The scarcity of this model is due to the fact that one year after its adoption, which included an order for 70,000 rifles and 18 million cartridges for the Army, and 400 rifles (M.1892 carbines?) for the Navy, the Spanish Government decided to substitute it for a more advanced model, the **“Mauser Modelo Español de 1893”**; This new model had a double stack magazine and other mechanical improvements, including details such as the shape of the magazine’s cartridge elevator, designed in order to block the forward movement of the bolt once the magazine was empty, and a flat or rectangular bottom of the bolt head, in order to facilitate feeding of the round into the chamber, a characteristic exclusive of Spanish Mausers.



Observe the difference in the shape of the bolt heads; From left to right M.1893 Spanish bolts made by Loewe, FN, and Oviedo , while on the right a German Gewehr 98 bolt.

This **Mauser Modelo Español de 1893** is the famous “Spanish Mauser”, faithful instrument of the Spanish Armed Forces in the war of 1895 in Cuba, the war of 1898 or Spanish American War, the Rif and Moroccan campaigns, and the Spanish Civil War, and continued in service until being replaced by the M.1943 “Mosqueton”; Its bayonet, similar to the German M.1871/84 was manufactured by Simson & Cie, Suhl, Germany, and with very slight anatomical and esthetic differences, by the Toledo Factory in Spain; Personally, I have found that, often, the Spanish made bayonets will not fit the German made rifles properly, and vice-versa.



Blueprint of the M.1893 Mauser Modelo Español (J.Sopena).



M.1893 Mauser Modelo Español made by Loewe,Berlin, and its two M.1893 bayonets, German and Spanish made.



The two models of the M.1893 bayonet : Above the Toledo made version and below the Simson & Cie , Suhl produced specimen.

Only 30,000 units of the M1893 Spanish Mausers were actually made by **Mauser Oberndorf** (specimen number A1781 in my collection, dated 1896) as the great majority, 221,800 units, including 14,069 for the *Infantería de Marina*, marked "**Ma**" and dated 1,894, were contracted to **Ludwig Loewe Berlin** (specimens C1936 dated 1894 and G7617 dated 1896, in my collection); (For an interesting anecdote on the last shipment by Loewe to Spain please see my article, "The Spanish Philippine Bayonet and its rifle", website www.catalogacionarmas.com).

Apparently the **DWM** concern (Deutsche Waffen und Munitions), Ludwig Loewe's continuation, produced, starting in 1897, an uncertain number, maybe as many as 40,000 more M1893 rifles for Spain, many of them also marked "**Ma**" for the Navy; The highest known serial number to date (Robert Ball) is C9955 and in the US there are less than ten known specimens (s/n C4490 in my collection).



Left : DWM marking on an M.1893 rifle modified with the scalloped cut-out on the left side rail to facilitate stripping the cartridges into the magazine , and the safety hole on the bolt head, as seen in the M.1916 Musketoon ; Right: “Ma” marking on specimen sn 660 made by Loewe. (photo courtesy L.Scibilia)

It is believed that the Belgian **Fabrique Nationale, FN**, also made a certain number, perhaps 14,000, M1893 rifles and carbines for Spain in 1896, coinciding with the Cuban insurrection of 1895; At that time FN was a subsidiary of Ludwig Loewe and the contract was transferred to them; These FN made M.93 rifles lack any Spanish acceptance or national markings but they do exhibit all the exclusive details of the M1893 Modelo Español, including the flat bottom of the bolt head (specimen number 4971 in my collection); Also in some specimens the original FN rear sight has been substituted by an Oviedo made rear sight (Robert Ball) which constitutes circumstantial, although convincing, evidence of their use by Spanish troops; However I am not aware of any FN made rifles having been actually captured in the Spanish American War and subsequently been sold by Francis Bannerman & Company of New York, who purchased most, if not all, the Spanish weapons captured in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.



Belgian markings on the bolt of M.1893 Spanish Mauser sn 4971 made by FN.



Model 1893 Spanish Mausers made by (left to right and front to rear): DWM, Mauser, Loewe, FN, and Oviedo.

In 1893 a rebellion in the Spanish city of Melilla in North Africa caused the acquisition of 10,000 rifles and 5,000 carbines of the **M1891 Argentinian Mauser** model in 7.65 mm caliber which Ludwig Loewe was manufacturing at the time for the Argentine Republic and whose government agreed to cede them to Spain. These rifles and carbines bore the Argentine national crest on their receivers and were clearly marked as **Modelo 1891 Argentino**; Specimen

number H1948 in my collection is marked with the Modelo Argentino denomination on the receiver, but lacks (never had) the Argentine crest , probably due to the fact that it had not been yet so marked at the time of its cession to Spain (I will address the Loewe M1891 Argentine and Spanish carbines later on); Once their service in Melilla was completed coinciding with the Cuban insurrection in 1895, they were sent to that island; Upon the onset of the Spanish American war in 1898 many of these M1891 Argentine Mausers plus many M1893 Spanish Mausers were captured by the American forces; The Argentinian model used the M1891 Argentinian bayonet, with a blade longer than the M1893 Spanish bayonets, and with a white metal handle; They were all made by Weyersberg, Kirschbaum & Cie (WKC), of Solingen, Germany.



M1891 Argentine Mauser 7,65 mm cal., sans Argentine crest... and its bayonet made by WKC , Solingen.

The manufacture of the **M1893 Spanish Mauser in the Oviedo Factory** began in 1896 but significant production was not achieved until 1898 (10,000 units); It continued to be made there until the 1930s with a total production of more than 500,000 units, plus many refurbishings and recompositions; Those made under the Monarchy bear a royal crown on the

chamber, which became a mural crown under the Republic, plus the FABRICA DE OVIEDO marking and the year of production



Oviedo made M1893 Mauser rifle and its Toledo made bayonet.

The Oviedo made M1893 Mauser rifle underwent very few changes during its long production life; Barcelo tells us that initially in 1896 the rear sight was *“of a curved Lange type”* and that *“later on”* (?) it was changed to a straight blade type *“as it had been in the original version”*; Personally I have never seen an M1893 rifle, whether German or Spanish made, with a Lange sight, although I have, of course, seen many M1916 Musketoons so equipped; Barcelo adds that in 1913 the rear sights of the rifles and carbines were modified upon the adoption of the new “P bullet” cartridge but does not specify what these modifications consisted of; Later on in 1933 several additional internal mechanical modifications were introduced.

In addition, some specimens of the M.1893 were modified with a safety gas release orifice, and a cut out on the left side of the receiver to facilitate the stripping of cartridges from the clip into the magazine; These improvements were part of the original design of the M.1916 Musketoon but their application to the M.1893 rifles was not a widespread official modification although it was recommended by an ordnance officer, D. Antonio Ramírez de Arellano and by master machinist D. José García Menéndez, based on studies made by them, and included changes to the locking, safety, firing and extraction mechanisms but they were actually applied to relatively few rifles.

It is also of anecdotal interest that, from 1900 until 1905, M1893 rifles were sold to private individuals for their use in the competitions organized by the National Shooting Association.

Finally, during the 1940s there was a limited ***experimental production of M1893 rifles (and M1895 carbines) in 7.92 mm caliber (8 mm Mauser)*** (specimen A232 in my collection) due to this caliber having substituted the 7x57 mm as regulation after the Spanish Civil War; However, recently two Oviedo M.93s in 7.92 mm caliber have been auctioned in the US, one marked , “R/Oviedo/1932” in a circle , “7.92” in another circle on the left side of the buttstock , and “7.92” on the left side of the receiver, and the second one marked only “7.92” on the receiver, , where the “R” most probably stands for “Reformado”(converted); They testify that experiments with the 7.92 mm caliber were conducted as early as 1,932, although to what purpose we can only at this time speculate.



Experimental Oviedo M1893 rifle, sn A232, in 7.92 mm caliber: Left: “CAL 7.92” stamped on buttstock; Right: Detail of the receiver with the safety gas scape orifice (but without the receiver cutout).

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NOTE

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