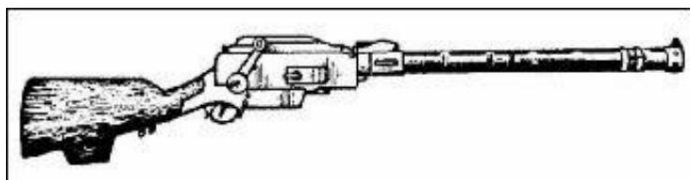


About Madsen recoilless rifles in Spain, Finland and Estonia

Introduction



A Spanish website belonging to *the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores* (Source 1) states that a number of Madsen recoilless rifles were used by the Republican Army during the Spanish Civil War, but at present I unfortunately do not have any further information on the matter 1)

Ib Hansen, who previously worked for the Danish Industrial Syndicate, has told me that from 1904 to 1935, from the Spanish side, approx. 20 recoilless rifles for various trials, but that the weapon system as such was not officially introduced into the Spanish army.

Weapons from Finland

Source 1 states that the weapons originally came from Finland, which used the weapon system from 1921 to 1936, when it was replaced by the Finnish light machine gun, the 7.62mm Lahti-Saloranta M/26.

Arms from Estonia

Source 3 states that the Madsen recoilless rifle was originally used by the Finnish cavalry and cyclist units, but later also introduced in the infantry. At the end of 1928, there were 729 Madsen recoilless rifles in the Finnish army. The Finnish model designation was *Pikakivääri M/20*.

Source 1 states that the Madsen recoilless rifles were sold to Estonia in 1936 2), and that many of these ended up in Spain. Source 2 states that 612 Madsen recoilless rifles were first sold to Estonia in 1937, where they were changed to the English .303 inch (7.7 mm) caliber. Additional approx. 60 recoilless rifles were sold to the American arms trading company Interarmco in 1959-1960.

The Estonian army had originally received approx. 600 Madsen recoilless rifles of English caliber 3). ___ Source 4 further states that the recoilless rifles were originally ordered from England during the First World War, but that they could not be delivered due to a Danish ban on the export of weapons to belligerent countries.



Soldiers from the Estonian Army and Navy. Reproduced from a postcard from the 1930s. From Photos from Estonia (Estonian Arms).

Immediately after the First World War, an export permit of 900 units was granted from the Danish side. 7.7 mm Madsen recoilless rifles for England.

Some of the weapons were lost during the sea transport to Estonia and some came to England as experimental weapons. The rest (about 600) were delivered to the Estonian army.

In 1939, the 7.7 mm Madsen recoilless rifle was still part of the Estonian army, cf. Source 5.

Sources

1. Fuerzas Armadas de la República, Fusiles ametralladores (Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores).
2. Light Machine Guns, Part 2 (Finnish Army 1918-1945).
3. Light Machine Guns, Part 1 (Finnish Army 1918-1945).
4. Hotchkiss Pack Saddlery (Forum Society of the Military Horse).
5. *Taschenbuch der Heere* by Kurt Passow, JF Lehmanns Verlag, Munich 1939.

Per Finsted

Notes:

- 1) The drawing of the Madsen recoilless rifle originally comes from a Russian website -[yyyyyyyyyyyyyy](#) [yyyyyyyyyy](#). 2002 - which is no longer available.
- 2) Possibly exchanged for several thousand Mosin-Nagant rifles Model 1891. See *Captured Mosin Nagant Rifles, Part 1: 1914 -1919* by Kevin Carney & Robert W. Edwards, Lt. Col., USAF (Ret) (Mosin-Nagant.net)
- 3) In June 1919, 16 of these recoilless rifles were used by the Danish-Baltic Auxiliary Corps/Compagnie Borgelin; see my review of the book *For Dannebrog's Ære - Danish volunteers in Estonia's and Latvia's freedom struggle 1919*.