

Unusual Breech Face on a Taurus Firearm...?

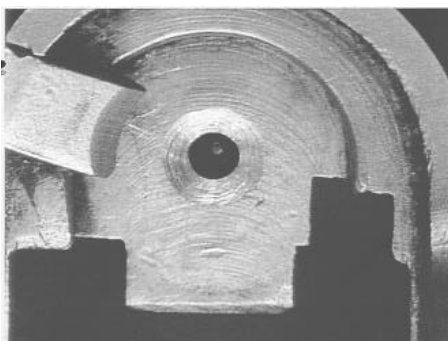
A Case Report By Richard E. Register and Glen T. Beach, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Forensic Science Laboratory, Rockville, MD

KEY WORDS: Breech face, Concave firing pin aperture, Drilling operation, Taurus PT92AFS

ABSTRACT

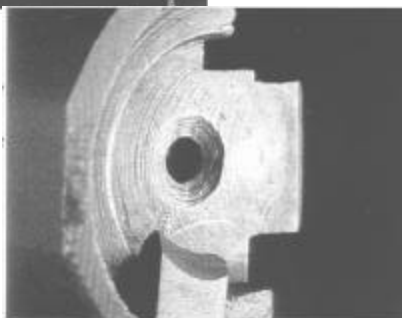
A Taurus 9mm semi-automatic pistol recently submitted to the laboratory for examination revealed an unusual concave firing pin aperture, which produced unique breech face marks on test fired

The Firearms and Tool Mark Unit of the ATF Forensic Science Laboratory - Washington, recently received a Taurus model PT92AFS 9mm semi-automatic pistol for evidence case examination. Initial inspection revealed an interesting feature not seen by examiners in the laboratory. The breech face area had an enlarged concave firing pin aperture, as illustrated in photographs #1 and #2. It was unknown at the time whether this was a new manufacturing design, a manufacturing flaw, or an attempted alteration of the breech face and firing pin.



Photograph #1

Photograph #2



Mr. A.J. Pineiro of Taurus International, Miami, FL, was contacted, and provided valuable insight to this phenomenon. Mr. Pineiro stated that this "concave firing pin aperture" does occur occasionally during the manufacturing process, in Taurus' Brazilian manufacturing plant, of "some" Taurus pistols in the PT92AFS models. The Computer Numerical Control

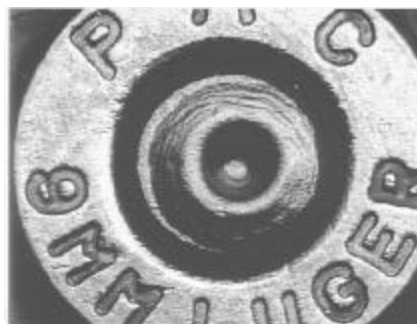
(CNC) milling machines become worn, which can cause the drilling operation for the firing pin opening to form a counter-sunk breech face feature.

Mr. Pineiro stated that this imperfection does not affect the normal operation of the pistol, but it is an unsightly cosmetic flaw. Taurus does offer to replace the slide, at no cost to the customer, if so desired.

Testing of the firearm confirmed Mr. Pineiros' statement, i.e., the pistol functioned and test fired properly. Microscopic examination of fired cartridge cases revealed an absence of the typical Taurus-style arched breech face marks, as well as the normal primer flow around the firing pin impression.

Photographs #3 and #4 show the drill marks imparted onto the cartridge case primer where toolmark identifications may be made. The photos also show the lack of general class characteristics commonly found on cartridge cases fired in Taurus and Beretta brand pistols.

Photograph #3



Photograph #4

