

5th Artillery Division, circa 1939

Introduction

This image originates from a series of postcards - published around 1939 - with the period's artillery and artillerymen as motifs.

As stated in the picture, it was taken in Jægerspris and it gives an exciting insight into the vehicles of a light motorized artillery division.



5th Artillery Department

Looking under a magnifying glass, the license plate on the far right vehicle is revealed and it reads 5-005. Number plates in the series 5-000 to 5-999 belonged to the 5th Artillery Division (Source 1), which was garrisoned in Holbæk (Source 3).

It is therefore likely that the image depicts this particular unit, photographed during a shooting exercise in Jægerspris.

In the foreground is a passenger car of the Ford V-8 Mercury type and the part of the artillery tractors is, as far as I can tell, also of the Ford make. Enthusiasts may find pleasure in identifying the individual types...

About organization and vehicle allocation

A war-strength light motorized artillery division should - around 1936 - have the following vehicles at its disposal (Source 2):

	Afdeling					Batteri				Batteri				Batteri				Vognlinie			I alt
	Stab	Afdelingstrop	Fægtningsstræn	Forsyningstræn	Bagagestræn	Batteritrop	Kanonlinie	Fægtningsstræn	Bagagestræn	Batteritrop	Kanonlinie	Fægtningsstræn	Bagagestræn	Batteritrop	Kanonlinie	Fægtningsstræn	Bagagestræn	Kommandosektion	Benzinsektion	Ammunitionssektion	
Personvogne	4	2				3	3			3	3			3	3			4	1	1	30
Lastvogne		5	4	2	1	1	7	4	1	1	7	4	1	1	7	4	1	7	7	8	73
Kanontraktorer							4				4				4						12
I alt	4	7	4	2	1	4	14	4	1	4	14	4	1	4	14	4	1	11	8	9	115

Given the situation of the army in the 1930s, this was probably more often a situation familiar from regulations and organizational charts, rather than from everyday life.

For comparison, Source 1 contains the following figures regarding the 5th Artillery Division's vehicle allocation:

Køretøjer ved 5. Artilleriafdeling	Personvogne	Last- og specialvogne	Motorcykler	I alt
April 1939	8	12	3	23
Maj 1940	18	48	13	79
April 1942	11	48	13	72

Some of the tasks which in 1936 were expected to be solved by passenger cars have probably been taken over by motorcycles (sidecar machines). Furthermore, the mutual distribution of vehicles between subdivisions may have changed compared to the 1936 figures, just as new types may have been added.

My currently available sources do not state how the 5th Artillery Division was framed - with two batteries the numbers are fairly consistent, but with three batteries, a high degree of improvisation has been necessary.

Postscript

As a supplement to the above picture, I recommend a visit to the Danish Military History website, which, among other things, also has a couple of photo series showing the 5th Artillery Division in practice, around 1940.

Sources

1. *The automobile in the army 1908-1983* by Frank Pedersen, 1983.
2. *Memory book for use in the field, during exercises and war games* by HH Jørgensen, N. Olaf Møllers Forlag, Copenhagen 1936.
3. *Textbook for Army Privates, Part 1, Temporary Edition, Common for all weapons, corps and departments*, Copenhagen 1946.

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