

# About Danish infantry 1932-1941, Recoil works company

## Recoil works company

The recoil works company consists of:

- Chief and command group
- 4 platoons on platoons and 4 recoilless rifle platoons.

The recoil rifle groups in the 4th platoon are equipped with recoil rifle feet and are called *tripod groups*.

The recoil plant company is approx. 220 men.

## Command group and train

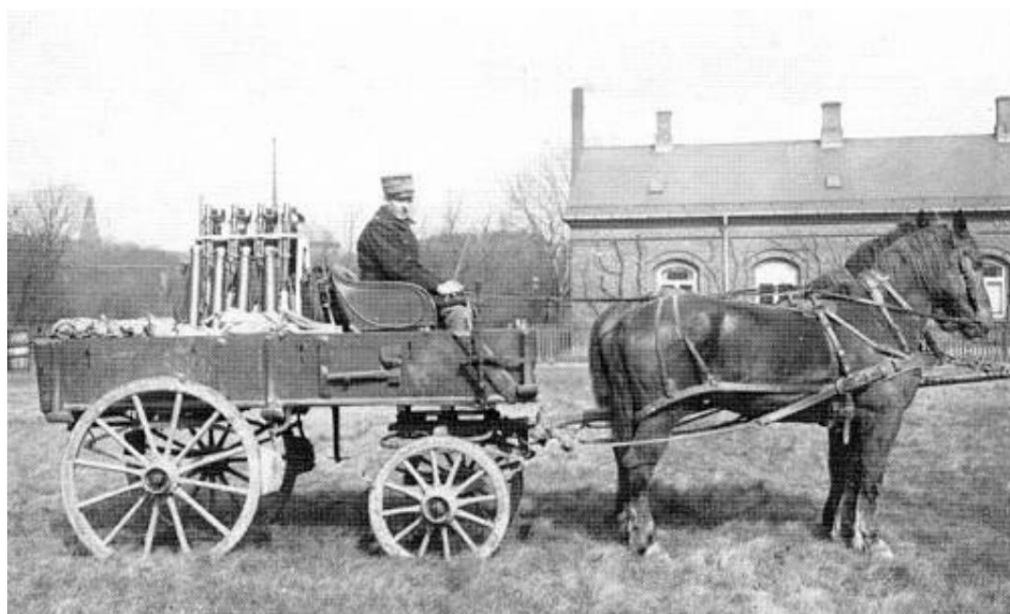
### command group

- 1 group leader
- 2 patrol leaders
- 8 gunners (patrolmen) 2
- company observers 3 reserve
- horn blowers 7 orderlies, of
- which 3 on bicycles 1 wagon
- driver 1 watchman
- 

### train

- 2 fencing wagons (horse-drawn)
- 1 kitchen wagon (truck) 2 luggage
- wagons (trucks)

In addition, coachmen and motor vehicle drivers.

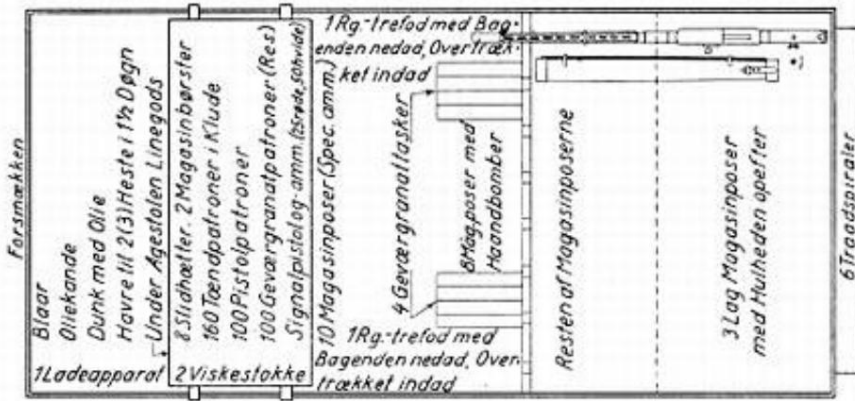


Fencing wagon [1](#)).

The carriage is a wooden carriage M.1909 and the driver is wearing uniform M.1910.

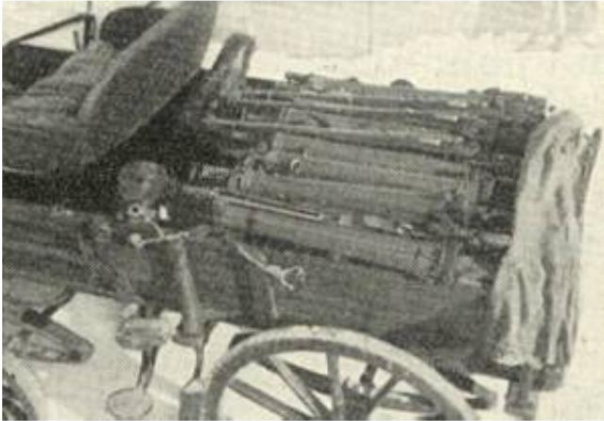
The picture is either from immediately before or very early in the current period.

### Pakning af Fægtningsvogn



Rekylgevæerne og Vekselpiberne anbringes ovenpaa Magasinposerne, som Tegningen viser; Kolben og Vekselpibens Laag bagud — Haandbøjlen opad; Mundingsstøtten mod Vognbunden.

Fencing cart packing. From Source 1.



The packed fencing cart. From Source 1.



Kitchen wagon (horse drawn), 1930 2).

The kitchen wagon is from the 2nd Company of the 18th Battalion.

The soldiers also show examples of uniforms M.1910, M.1915 and M.1923, as well as combinations thereof.

It was only towards the end of the period that the companies' kitchen and baggage wagons were motorized.

## Handguns and functional equipment

All personnel in the command group and at fencing training are equipped with M.1889 rifles. Patrolmen each have 2 cartridge bags (40 cartridges each), while others carry 1 cartridge bag. 20 cartridges in the driver's compartment for the wagons are armor cartridges.



*Patrolman.*



*Observer.*



*Spare horn blower.*

From Source 1.

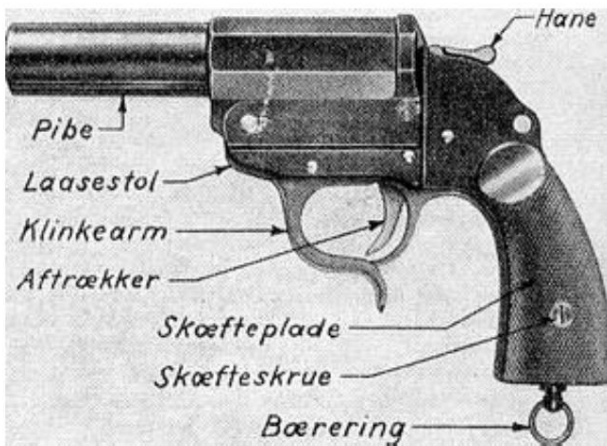
Company observers 1 and 2 are equipped with binoculars - observer 1 has double-prism binoculars; observer 2 has single-prism binoculars. The observers in the platoon troop of the recoilless rifle platoons and the tripod platoons are not equipped with binoculars.

The rifles of the reserve buglers are carried on the fencing wagons until "ready for battle," when they exchange their drums for the rifles.

## Signal equipment



Example of using a signal gun. From Source 9.



Signal gun M.1940. From Source 8.

The recoil control company has 2 signal guns, each with 20 white, 20 red and 20 green and 20 with 4 red balls. The signal pistols can, as shown in the example, be given to a forward patrol, for use in alarming.

Providers 2, 4 and 5 in the groups are equipped with a single-man strip (worn on the waist belt, to the right of the cartridge bag). The single-man strip is used to mark out against own airmen of the front line of the infantry.

### The recoil value divisions (1st - 3rd division)

#### Sharing strap

#### 4 recoil rifle groups, each with

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 platoon</li> <li>● leader 1</li> <li>● second-in-command 4</li> <li>● rifle grenadiers 2</li> <li>● orderlies, of which 1</li> <li>● marksman 1 platoon</li> <li>● observer 1 watchman</li> <li>●</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 squad leader and 8 men:</li> <li>● 1 recoilless gunner 1 helper</li> <li>● 5 suppliers 1 hand grenades</li> <li>●</li> <li>●</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

#### Ammunition

Each man carries 1 cartridge bag of 40 cartridges, but the helpers only 10 cartridges.



20 of the group leaders' cartridges are armor cartridges.

Supply 1-5 carries 2 recoilless rifle magazines of 20 cartridges each; the magazines are carried in a 2-magazine bag, in the waist belt.

## Handguns and functional equipment

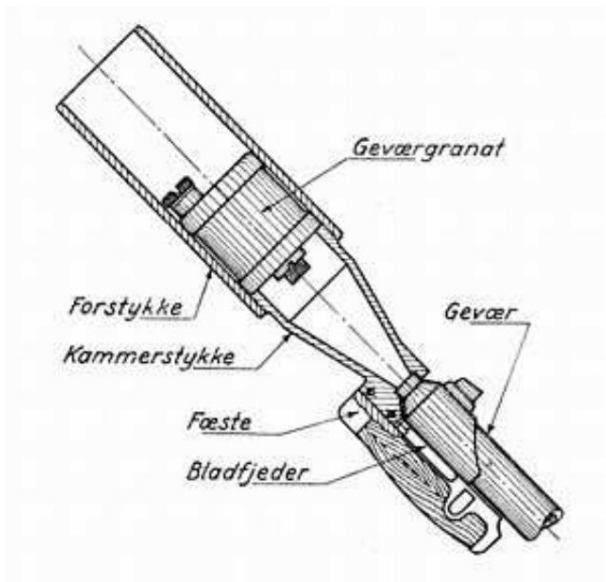


*Marksmanship.* From Source 1



*Rifle grenadiers. Lifeguard 1933.* From Source 6.

The company has 4 snipers, 2 of which are equipped with sniper rifle M.1928 (reminiscent of rifle M.1889); others have rifle M.1889. The sharpshooters carry 2 cartridge bags of 40 cartridges each.

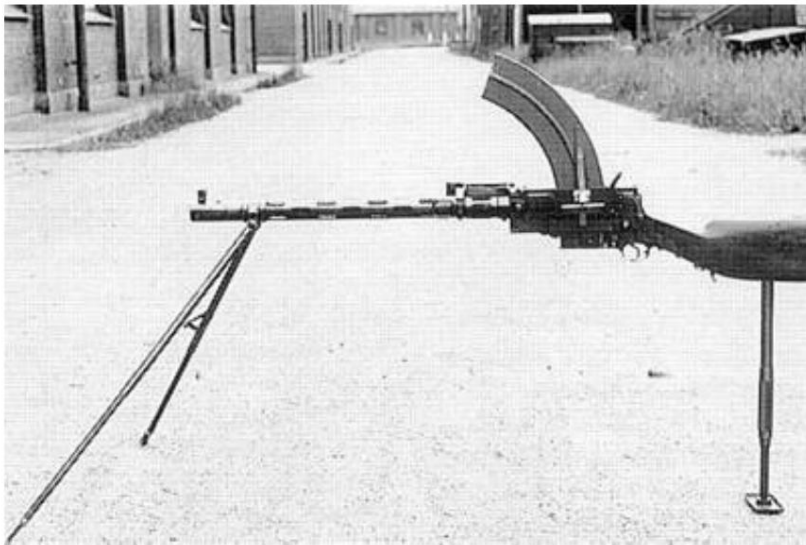


51 mm grenade cup M.1923. From Source 2.

Rifle grenadiers have largely the same activity as hand grenades, only they can start their activity somewhat earlier in the fight, as the rifle grenade has a longer range than the hand grenade/grenade.

Most of the time, the rifle grenadiers have to shoot in hiding from a position where they cannot see the target themselves. One rifle grenadier can then be tasked with observing the impacts and guiding the other rifle grenadiers.

The rifle grenadiers carry a rifle grenade bag, with a grenade cup and 10 rifle grenades, when "ready for battle".



Recoil rifle M.1924. From Source 8.

The recoilless rifle weighs 10.25 kg.

The recoil rifle includes:

- magazine M.1924 with 20 cartridges
- coupling support muzzle support air
- target sights water bag M.1929 tool bag
- 2 interchangeable pipes
- 
- 
- 

The picture shows the recoil rifle with support leg and butt rest in extreme positions, which i.a. used in a kneeling installation position.



*Recoil gunner and assistant. From Source 10.*

The recoil rifle's guide means include:

- rifle strap
- interchangeable barrel holster, with carrying
- straps back leather harness butt support bag
- 2-magazine bag.
- 
- 



*Vignette.*

## **Ready for battle**



*Group leader at the recoilless rifle group.*  
From Source 1.

**The recoilless rifle group includes...**

**The following from the fencing carts...**

Group leader  
1 magazine bag

Recoil rifle shooter  
Recoil rifle

Helps 1 1  
change pipe (with holster) and 1 magazine pouch

Supplies 1, 2, 4 and 5 1  
magazine pouch

Supplies 3 2  
magazine pouches

Hand grenades  
1 magazine bag and 1 magazine bag with 10 grenades

Each magazine bag contains 5 magazines of 20 cartridges each. The group thus has an additional 900 cartridges for the recoilless rifle.



*Recoil rifle shooter.*



*Helps.*



*Provide 1.*



*Supplies 2, 4 and 5*

From Source 1.



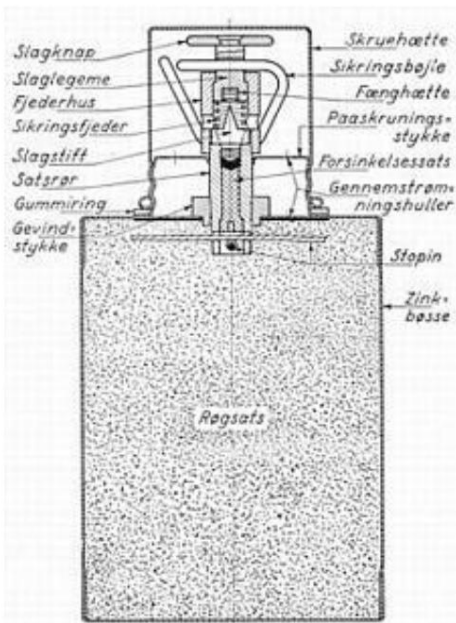


Exercise in hand grenade throwing. Lifeguard 1933. From Source 6.

The assistant is equipped with an infantry carbine M.1889; other riflemen have rifles M.1889.

The nearest guard is in the process of throwing the grenade, the other ignites the hand grenade by hitting it against the left hand.

Judging from the functional equipment (2 magazine pouches) these are supplies, rather than hand grenades.



Smoke grenade M.1932. From Source 2.

The hand grenade's warheads work in all directions up to a distance of 15 m from the point of detonation; it should usually be thrown from cover where the thrower can duck down to avoid the explosive pieces being thrown backwards.

The hand grenade has a good effect within approx. 4 m from the detonation point and works almost exclusively by the force of the detonation.

The smoke hand grenade is a container the size of the hand grenade and is filled with a strong smoke-producing substance. When the bomb is ignited and thrown, it develops a dense smoke screen lasting several minutes.

It is used to blind the enemy or to hide one's own movements. Special smoke patrols can be tasked with laying out smoke in large quantities.



*Recoil rifle group, Lifeguard 1933. From Source 6.*

## Trefods divisions (4. division)

### Sharing strap

### 4 tripod groups, each with

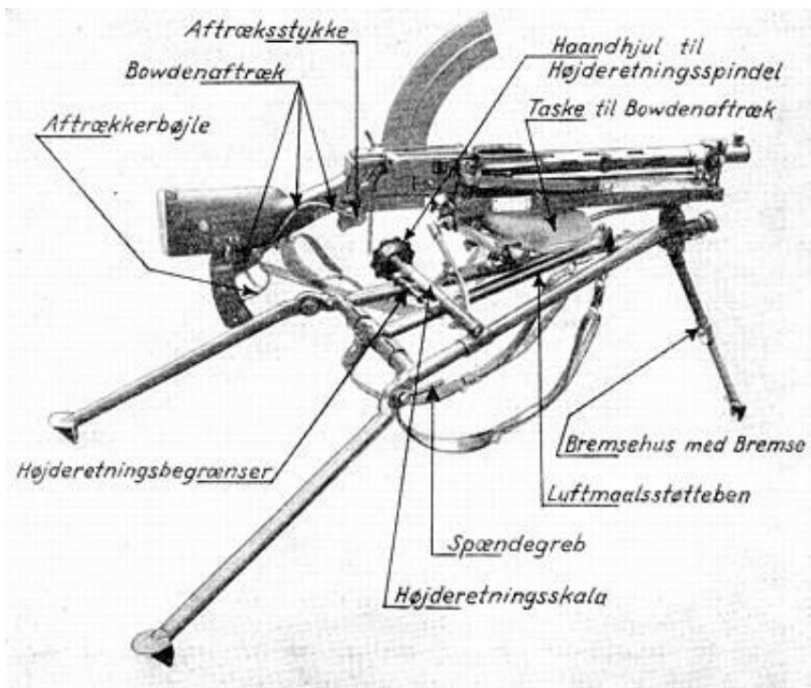
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 platoon leader</li> <li>● 1 second-in-command 4 rifle grenadiers</li> <li>● 2 orderlies, of which 1 marksman 1 platoon observer 1 watchman</li> <li>●</li> <li>●</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 squad leader and 8 men: 1 recoilless gunner 1 helper 5 suppliers 1 hand grenades</li> <li>●</li> <li>●</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

### Ammunition

Each man carries 1 cartridge bag of 40 cartridges, but the helpers only 10 cartridges. 20 of the group leaders' cartridges are armor cartridges.

Supply 1-5 carries 2 recoilless rifle magazines of 20 cartridges each; the magazines are carried in a 2-magazine bag, in the waist belt.

## Handguns and functional equipment



Recoil gun M.1924 in recoil receiver foot M.1932.  
From Source 2.

Apart from the M.1932 recoilless gun mount, the armament and equipment of the tripod platoon was quite like that of the recoilless gun platoon.

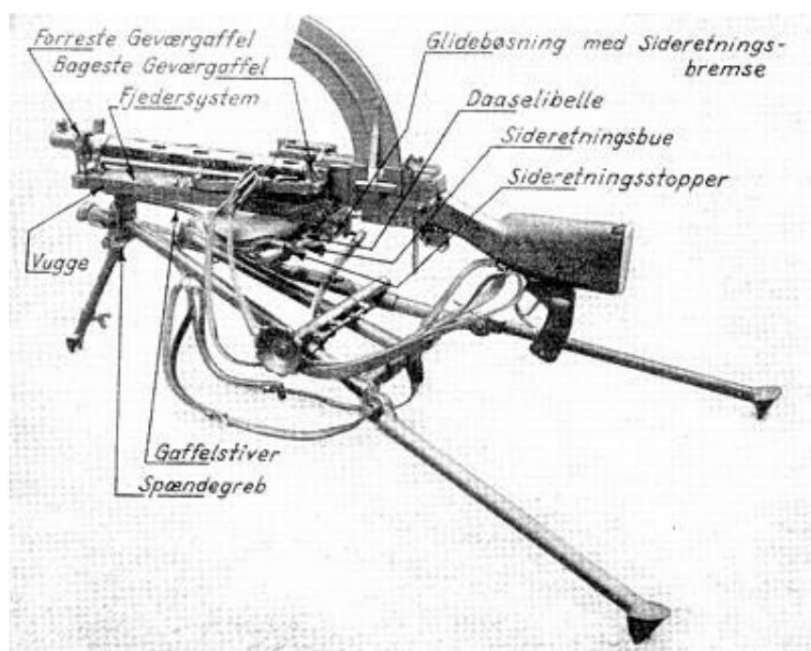
The recoil host foot weighs approx. 15 kg.

The recoil pad includes:

- air target pivot
- Bowden exhaust
- rider level

The guiding means are 2 carrying straps and a back leather.

The recoilless rifle is set up for shooting at targets on the ground or at aerial targets.



Recoil gun M.1924 in recoil receiver foot M.1932.  
From Source 2.

Sagittarius' impact positions can be

- lying
- kneeling
- sitting
- standing

The kneeling and standing positions are used for e.g. shooting at aerial targets.



Rider dragonfly. From Source 2.

The rider's spirit level was a kind of spirit level, with the help of which the position of the recoil spring foot could be checked.

The rider's level was carried in the waist belt, in a pouch to the right of the cartridge pouch.

The group leader in the tripod group carries the air target sighting means for the tripod gun; these are carried on the back, in a bag with the strap over the left shoulder.



Kneeling plant positions - shooting at ground targets and aerial targets.

From Source 10.



The top image has clearly formed the basis for one of the drawings on the clipping sheet Trefodsgrupper, circa 1941.

The right-hand picture shows the recoil rifle's air target sights.



## Ready for battle



*Group leader at the tripod group.*  
From Source 1.

### **The tripod group includes...**

#### **The following from the fencing carts...**

Group leader 1

magazine pouch (special cartridges, armor-piercing)

Recoil rifle shooter

Recoil rifle

Helps 1 1

change pipe (with holster) and 1 magazine pouch

Supplies 1, 2, 4 and 5 1

magazine pouch

Supplies 3 2

magazine pouches

Hand Grenades 1

Recoil Host Foot and 1 Magazine Pouch with 10 Hand Grenades

Each magazine bag contains 5 magazines of 20 cartridges each. The group thus has an additional 800 cartridges for the tripod rifle.



*Hand grenades by the tripod group.*  
From Source 1.



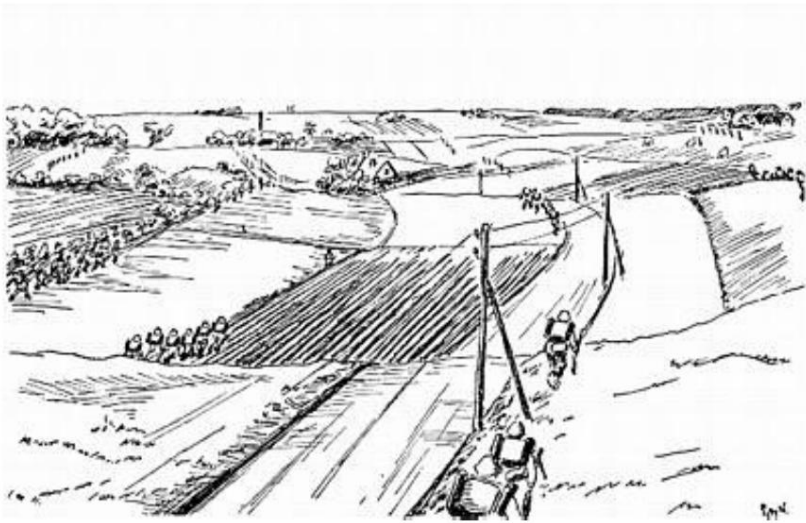
*Hand grenades by the tripod group.*  
From Source 1.

The recoil pad is carried by the hand grenadier and supplies 5.

The hand grenade carries 2 carrying straps, supply 5 carries 1 carrying strap.

On the tripod you can see the leather case, which probably contains the special Bowden trigger.

## **Formations**



*The groups advance in single column. From Source 5.*

**Deployment:** The groups/platoons are drawn apart from each other in order or single column (marching column) on further orders from the driver.

Gaps and distances depend on the situation and the terrain. In platoon deployment there are usually 200 m spacing and 100 m distance between platoons; in the case of group deployment, there are generally 50-100 m spaces and 75-125 m distance between the groups.

**Development to dispersed order:** The groups are usually developed to fencing in 2 teams (meetings). Space and distance between the groups, between the 2 teams and between the individual people depends on the conditions. The distance from the 1st to the 2nd team is usually not more than 40-50 m. Space between the people is, unless otherwise ordered, 10 paces, frequently larger. (The helpers must, however, when halting, get as close as possible to the recoil rifle shooters.)

**Front width during attack** not more than 500 meters

**Depth** no more than 800 metres, usually less

**Front width in defense** significantly greater than 500 meters, usually less

Maximum **depth** 800 metres

## The use of the weapons



*Recoil gunner and assistant. From Source 4.*

**The recoil rifle:** The recoil rifle is the most important weapon of the recoil rifle groups, and it is therefore a main rule of the fight that this weapon must be in operation as long as there is a man and a cartridge in the group.

It has great accuracy, especially at short distances, and a significant rate of fire - approximately 150 rounds per minute. It is always ready to open fire and can change targets at any time almost instantly. It is only slightly visible; it is light and can therefore quickly change places.

At longer distances - over 800 m - a large number of cartridges must be used if a good effect on the enemy is to be achieved. It is therefore usually important to first open fire at a shorter distance, if the enemy does not previously expose himself, which it is advantageous to exploit, even if it costs a lot of cartridges.

At distances of around 600 m, you can generally count on a decisive effect.



*Correctly aim  
the airplane flies straight towards or  
straight away from the gunner.*  
From Source 10.

**Tripod Rifle:** Recoil rifle in tripod can engage targets within 1,500 m with about the same effect as a machine gun.

Air targets can be fired at within a distance of 1,000 m. Shooting is normally not done with less than 4 recoilless rifles, which are assembled in a platoon. The fire is led by the platoon leader on his direct command, or by him taking up a position at one of the guns, which then becomes the fire control gun. Light trail projectiles from the fire control rifle are used for target designation.

The squad leader repeats the orders, checks their execution, observes and corrects the fire from his own recoilless rifle. The gunners must be able to direct their own fire if necessary.



*Rifleman, in kneeling approach position.* From Source 10.



**Rifle and Carbine:** The rifle/carbine is used in the firefight where necessary; it can also be used for sniping (sniping rifle M.1928) against small, important targets, for self-defense and finally with the attached bayonet in close combat.

It has great accuracy, all the way out to 800 m, but it is particularly useful at distances from 400 m and below.

The picture in the textbook has clearly formed the basis for one of the drawings on the clipping sheet Trefodsgrupper, circa 1941.

## Hand grenade and grenade

Hand grenades and hand grenades are used in close combat. They are used in the attack - especially the hand grenade - immediately before the storm, and in the defense - especially the hand grenade - to break the enemy's storm attack and for direct defense of the recoil rifle; they are also effective means of combat when clearing trenches, cavities and covers.

## Rifle grenade

The rifle grenades are intended to hit the enemy when he is in cover, or to reinforce the fire when firing over one's own troops. The longest range is about 200 m; the explosives have a good effect within 10 m of the detonation point.

## Sources

1. *Textbook for Infantry Corporal Schools - Equipment and Train*, Ministry of War, Copenhagen 1941.
2. *Textbook for Infantry Corporal Schools - Weapons*, Ministry of War, Copenhagen 1938.
3. *Memory book for use in the field, during exercises and war games* by HH Jørgensen, N. Olaf Møllers Forlag, Copenhagen 1936.
4. *Denmark's Army, Volumes I and II* under the editorship of Captain Hector Boeck, Captain SE Johnstad-Møller and Captain Lieutenant CV Hjalp, Society for the publication of cultural writings, Copenhagen 1934-1935.
5. *The Defense Book* by Colonel T. Andersen, Gyldendal, Copenhagen 1941.
6. *The Life Guard 1908-1933* by Th. Thaulow, H.Hagerups Forlag, Copenhagen 1933.
7. *Textbook for Army Privates, I1. Part, Infantry - Field Service and Fencing*, Ministry of War, Copenhagen 1940.
8. *Gardehusarkasernen on 29 August 1943* by Anders D. Henriksen, Forlaget Devantier, Næstved 1993, ISBN 87-984530-0-9.
9. *Textbook for Infantry Corporal Schools - Field Service*, Ministry of War, Copenhagen 1940.
10. *Textbook for Infantry Corporal Schools - Shooting*, Ministry of War, Copenhagen 1938.

Per Finsted

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## To note:

1) From *From Horse to Motor*, leaflet from the Tøjhusmuseet's special exhibition at Christiansborg Ridebane, 14 July - 12 August 1990.

2) From *Look straight! Conscription for debate* by Hans Chr. Bjerg, Uffe Østergaard and Hans Engell, Folk & Forsvar, Copenhagen 1999, ISBN87-987619-00.