

About reserve horn players and reserve trumpeters 1932-1946

Introduction

In organizational information about the Army in the 1930s, you find, among other things, the term reserve bugler (in the infantry and engineer troops) and reserve trumpeter (in the cavalry and artillery). The soldiers' function is to convey the respective commanders' orders and to play music during parades and on the march.

One can rightly ask the question why they are called *reserves*, for who are they reserves for?

The designation appears to have originated with the Army Regulations of 1922 as a designation for conscription hornblowers and trumpeters. I have not been able to find any direct explanation of the term, but my best bet is that *reserve* should be understood in relation to permanent employee. These are therefore conscripts who, when called up, are selected for the functions, as opposed to soldiers who were permanently employed in the functions.

The horn replaces the drum as a means of signaling

In 1851, under the influence of the experiences from the Three Years' War (1848-1850), the signal horn was elevated to a signaling instrument everywhere in the Infantry. Until then, the signaling instrument of the Infantry had been the drum¹⁾, while only hunting units had used the signal horn. After the Three Years' War, the infantry's tactics changed, after which all units used light infantry tactics. The units now operated scattered over greater distances, where a drum signal could not be heard clearly enough. (Source 1.)

Spare horn blowers



*Reserve horn blower in field uniform,
approx. 1941.*



*Spare horn blower
from Lifeguard, in red
gala, approx. 1941.*

Around the year 1900, the drum was reintroduced, but now only as a musical instrument, and some cheap, flat tin drums were bought in Germany, with German-painted reifers (= edges).

It is these drums that we see used by the 1930s reserve horn players along with a horn (tuned in B) [2](#).

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In the Royal Guards, marching drums of an older model, with a deep drum shell and Danish-painted reifers, were retained - for parade use [3](#). —

Both drawings are by Ove Meier and originate from the clipping sheet Denmark's Army and Navy, approx. 1941.

Conducting the signal horn, drum and whistle

Signalhorn

The photographs come from Source 3.

Carried on the chest with the shortened banner over the left shoulder, the mouthpiece slanting upwards to the left.

The banner is placed on the outside of the other equipment. The mouthpiece must be firmly attached to the horn so that it cannot be lost.



Guidance of horn.



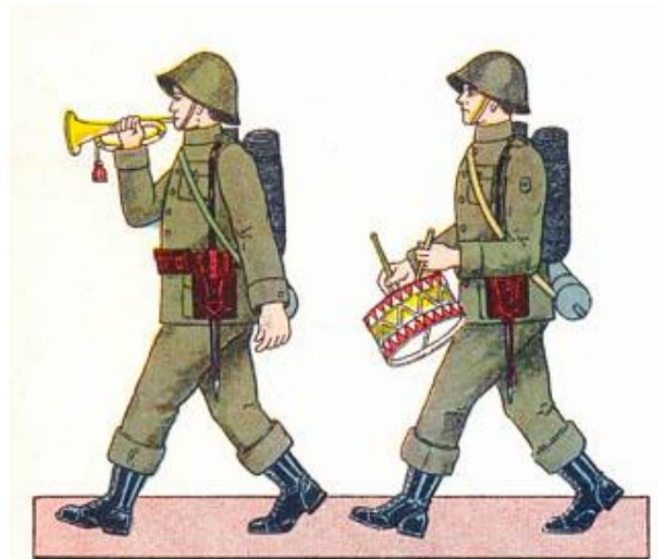
Readiness (1)



Ready setting (2).



Command: Blow!



Spare horn blowers, approx. 1937 4).—

Source 3 states that if the blowing is carried out by several people, simultaneity in the movements must be striven for. Correspondingly, it is stated that the signals are blown unanimously if they are blown by several and - in the case of marchers - are accompanied by a marching drum.

Furthermore, it is stated that when setting up on several joints, approx. 1 meter distance between the joints, so that the horn can be handled freely.

The drum

Normally guided in the carrying hook of the shoulder strap (cover and carrying strap from now on). The shoulder strap is placed over the right shoulder before the thornyster is put on. The drumsticks are inserted into the specially designed straps on the shoulder strap or under the waist belt. During longer marches, the drum can be carried alternately in the right or left hand, which then grasps the thigh brace.

When preparing for battle, the drum and drumsticks are placed on the fencing cart 5).

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Starting position for drumming.



Command: Strike!

Source 3 states that the drum must not be carried on the back, as the equipment can very easily cause damage to the drum skins. However, special rules apply to the Lifeguard in on-duty dress.



In a set of correction sheets (dated January 1969) to an unspecified regulation there is a *Guide to the treatment of marching drums*. Figure 22 (picture on the left) shows here the special way of carrying that the Life Guard can use when *carrying (transporting) the drum after the music is finished*.

Source 3 also mentions the flute as a musical instrument, but shows no pictures of it. An illustration of flute-playing hornblowers, which as far as is known was the pre-1922 term for reserve hornblowers, can be seen on the cover of the booklet *Here come the Danish soldiers from 1915*.

The flute

The flute is held in the right hand, with the tuning fork downwards. In a straight position, the arm is held out to the side. During the use of other instruments, the flute is worn tucked on the chest between the 2nd and 3rd button of the coat of arms; if the cover is fitted, the whistle is inserted between the 1st and 2nd button.

When fencing takes place, the whistle is placed on the fencing cart when the delivery from the cart has ended, or on a similarly suitable vehicle.

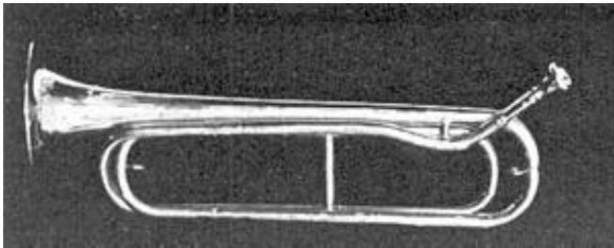
Reserve trumpeters



Trumpeters from the Guard Hussar Regiment [6](#) and 4th Dragoon Regiment [7](#)., approx. 1912

The trumpets are equipped with signal trumpet Model 1891, with straight mouthpiece.

From the clipping sheets Danske Bilder Nr. 340 (Guardhussars) and 341 (Dragons), Alfred Jacobsens Forlag.



Signal trumpet Model 1909, tuned in E flat [8](#). [__](#)

Conducting the signal horn

The Model 1909 signal trumpet is very similar in design to the signal horn, but has a bent mouthpiece to protect the trumpeter from having his teeth damaged if the horse hits its head.



Guide of the signal horn (1).



Ready position, upside down.



Command: Blow!

The signal trumpet

The *photographs come from Source 3.*

The signal trumpet is carried on the back - if the carabiner is on the back then above and free of it - in a tight band role over the left shoulder with the mouthpiece slanting downwards to the right.

In the case of horse-drawn batteries, the trumpet is carried in a trumpet sleeve on the saddle.

The length of the banner is regulated by inserting the nozzle into the banner. Both mouthpiece and tuning fork must be attached to the signal trumpet.

Source 3 mentions the use of the signal horn for both riders and cyclists, and even shows images of the latter.



Guide of the signal horn (2).



Readiness, secluded.

However, the function of reserve trumpets is not mentioned in the *Regulations for the Rytteriet, Cyclisteskadronen* (1938), while the function of reserve horn blowers is mentioned in the *Provisional Exercise Regulations for Foot Folk Cyclist Companies* (1938) and Source 6.

Whether the cyclist squadrons actually had reserve trumpeters cannot therefore be determined with certainty, just as Source 3 does not mention a special use of horns for cyclists.

Whether the reserve hornblowers at the 6th Regiment (Cyclist Regiment) have used the way the Infantry or the Cavalry conduct their signal horn, cannot therefore be determined on the present basis either.

Closing



Spare horn blower, approx. 1946.

From Scrapbook:
Danish soldiers - 1946.

The war functions of the Reserve Hornblowers and Reserve Trumpeters ended with the Army's internment on 29 August 1943.

Although the 1937 scheme continued as the organizational framework for the Army until 1950, the auditory signal instruments must be assumed to have had only a ceremonial significance in post-war defence.

However, published per 8 October 1945 correction sheets to the regulations for the Army's Horn and Trumpet Signals from 1936 (Source 3). The corrections primarily update the regulations with the organizational changes that the 1937 scheme brought about for the cavalry as well as the establishment of the Foot Scout Command, but have evidently waited purely bureaucratically for the end of the war.

The regulatory signals for *armored car* attack [9](#)) and *air attack* [10](#)) are thus still valid, but have hardly been intended to be used seriously.

Judging by information about displayed horns at the Tøjhus Museum (March 2005), post-war horn/signal trumpets bear 1946 as model year; it was about purchases abroad as well as Danish-made instruments.

In the case of an exhibited copy of the Model 1909 Signal Trumpet, it is also mentioned that it was reintroduced in the Army in 1968, to replace the Model 1946 Signal Trumpet.

Sources

1. *Whistles and drums as military signaling and marching instruments* by lieutenant colonel AV Arendrup, *Infanteri Nyt* no. 3, September 1963. This source contains a brief historical outline of the development from the country boys to the present day.
2. *The Royal Lifeguard's Tambour Corps* by Jesper Gram-Andersenn (ed.), *Lifeguard's Historical Collection*, Copenhagen 1988.
3. *The Army's Horn and Trumpet Signals*, Ministry of War, Copenhagen 1936. (with correction sheet as of 8 October 1945)
4. *Textbook for Infantry Corporal Schools - Equipment and Train*, Ministry of War, Copenhagen 1941.
5. *The signals of the Danish army, their texts and history* by Victor Krohn, *Musikhistorisk Arkiv*, Volume 1, Booklet 3, published by Dansk Musikselkab, Copenhagen 1933.
6. *Field equipment for Individuals*, Ministry of War, Copenhagen 1936, with correction sheets up to August 1941.



The guard parade on its way through Copenhagen, approx. 1939.

From *Militærmusikken - Blades of its history, Minder om dens men* by Niels Friis, Special edition of *Viborg Stiftstidende*, Viborg 1941.

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Postscript

The Royal Life Guards Tambour Corps was first established in 1956, i.a. under the impression of the foreign music and tambourine corps that participated in the British Military Tattoo at Rosenborg Exercise Field in 1955.

Until then, the function was carried out by six reserve horn players, of which four are seen in the picture, immediately behind (and roughly in the middle of the picture) the band:



A flutist and three drummers.

The picture can also be seen as a supplement to the mention of the Livgarden's music corps in the period 1922-1943, which can be found in my article About Danish military music in 1911-1943.

Notes:

1) Source 1 further states that *"The army's drums were laid up in a depot, where they remained until the 1920s, when the Field Master General was authorized to sell them to army personnel for a few kroner each.*

The drums then figured around the homes as misunderstood 'smoking tables' or are traded at fantasy prices at antique dealers".

2) It has not been possible to determine the model year; possibly it is 1909 as the signal trumpet of the cavalry and artillery.

3) Source 1 (from 1963) states that the rims on the infantry's marching drums must be painted according to regulations from 1.11.1834:

4) Prepared extract from the clipping sheet Alfred Jacobsen's Danish Pictures, Infantry, Series 10, No. 111, drawn by Adolph Holst. For further discussion of this cut-out sheet, see my article Cut-out sheet - The Danish Army, approx. 1937.

5) The reserve hornblower receives his rifle instead, which is transported on the fencing carriage during the march; see e.g. my article About Danish infantry 1932-1941, Rekylgæværkkompagniet.

6) Why the draftsman, possibly Adolph Holst, has chosen to render the hussar with a black streak, the story does not say anything about.

7) That the dragoon can be identified as belonging to the 4th Dragoon Regiment (garrisoned in Næstved and disbanded with the Army Order of 1922) is due to the fact that a Roman numeral IV can be seen on the figure of the sheet with standard.

8) The picture comes from *IK Gottfried - 185 years among wind instruments - Sketches of a Danish instrument maker's workshop through 7 generations* by Robert Naur, Copenhagen 1981.

9) This signal was probably introduced between 1931 and 1936, as it is not included in Source 5's list of signals, while it is part of the "repertoire" in Source 3, which indicates the following text for the signal: *Armored cars are coming in speed, take care, in the Ditch you will soon rest! We are done with you!*

10) In Source 5, the signal *aviator* signal is mentioned with the following text: *Give Attention! Watch out for the aviator!* It is stated in the notes that the signal is not written down (officially), but that it was announced by the music conductor at 1. Regiment - Chr. Ehlers - who, by order of the boss, composed it. Source 5 mentions the air attack signal (*with a different melody*) and the text: *Hi! There are aviators! Hi! There are aviators! Hi! There are aviators! Hi!*