

Military transport in 1913

Introduction

After the publication of my article On railway transport of the Army's units in the 1930s, Lars Christensen, Ishøj, has been kind enough to provide me with two older articles from Jernbane-Bladet, which describe the army's mobilization exercise in 1913 from a railway point of view.

Both preparation and implementation of such an extensive undertaking, where more than 50,000 men are mobilized to meet at various Zealand departments - in the course of 8 hours - gives an exciting insight into an effective planning apparatus, the likes of which has hardly been seen since in this country.

The articles are reproduced with minor editorial adjustments. The drawings of the railway equipment come from Tommy Nilsson's website www.jernbanen.dk.



Pedestrians board DSB letter QF 35176 at Copenhagen Central Station, 1912 1).

The mobilization exercise in 1913

(From Jernbane-Bladet no. 12/December 1962)

In the course of time, Jernbane-Bladet has been requested by several readers to write a little about the efforts of the railways in increasing the security forces at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

Attempts have been made to find information about the running of special trains on that occasion, but it has turned out that this was not the case, as the summons then took place over a longer period of time, so there was nothing that

the trains rolled day and night for that reason.

Instead, we have chosen to write a little about the use of the fields at the largest combined military exercise that has been held on Zealand. The Great Alert Exercise held on 11 September 1913 saw the army gather 20 cohorts for a two day exercise. The purpose of this exercise was a kind of trial mobilization for the troops on Zealand.

Alarming

At 06:03 the alarm was initiated at the Central Station, where the then chief assistant Looft, the later well-known station master here, himself pasted the first alarm poster on the station wall, after which the first trains with summonses were calmly awaited.

Here in Copenhagen, over 35,000 people were to meet. With the Korsør train at 7:17 a.m., quite a few people were expected, but they were disappointed. Of the conscripts, the train carried only one soldier. He had boarded the train at a station between Roskilde and Valby.

The train from Roskilde at 07:32 brought 12 conscripts. The Jutland connection at 08:12 also only had very few people called. With the next train from Korsør at 08:20, approx. 100 soldiers. The Masnedsund train, which arrived at 09:00, brought well over 300 conscripts. Korsørtoget at 09:28 something over 500 soldiers.

A little over 400 men arrived from Frederikssund by train at 09:35. And so it went all morning, each train carrying a few hundred conscripts.

Nordbanegården 2) —

It was lively here. At 07:30 Holtetoget brought 20 summonses. At 07:52 the Helsingør train steamed in via Hillerød with 200 men. At 08:39 again a train from Holte with 350 soldiers.

Nordbanen's special train arrived at 09:14. It was North Zealand's train with a connection from the Frederiksværkbanen in Hillerød - the Gribskovbanen had, according to tradition, been running too late, and the connection had not reached Hillerød. There were approx. 1000 men with this train.

Main station

While Nordbanegården drew in the conscripts from Nordsjælland in a steady, strong stream all morning, it was only really busy at Hovedbanegården when the trains from Korsør at 11:50 and 11:58. from Frederikssund and Kalundborg 12:12 arrived at the platform.

We don't know how many were on these trains, but there were thousands, and the following trains from Masnedsund at 12:16 - and 12:30 from Korsør and at 13:30 from Frederikssund. There were so many with these trains that it was impossible to count them. It swarmed with men with waders and suitcases, it tumbled up the stairs, filled the station hall and in mighty columns wandered out into Bernstorffsgade. But everything went well.

The railway station filled and emptied with men.

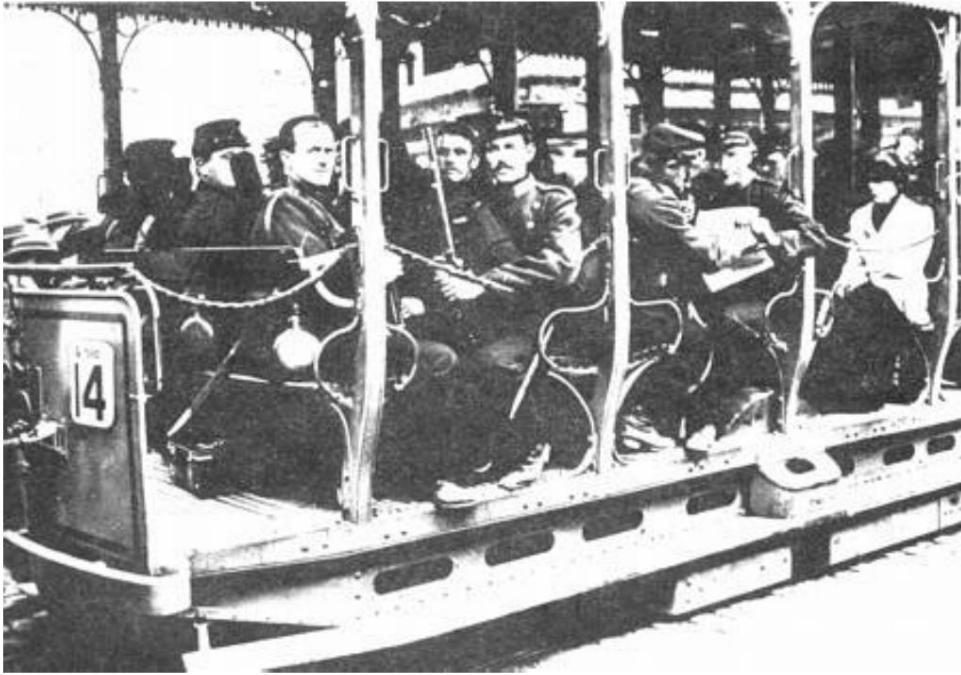
The course of the alert here shows that the performance of the courts will manage to power a real mobilization. Already shortly after noon, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the force in Copenhagen was met and ready to march.

Enghave Station

At Enghave Station it was quiet in the morning, but at noon large pick-up trains arrived with a large number of conscripts who disembarked here and went to Frederiksberg Castle, where the 3rd, 18th, 22nd, 32nd and 42nd. Battalion was to meet.

Nørrebro

The Serpent Line transported several thousand to the station at Nørrebro, where the tramways took over further transport.



*The picture is not from the mobilization exercise in 1913, but from the following year - Soldiers from the Security Forces, 1914.
From Chakoten no. 1/1975.*

In the various garrison towns in the province, the alerting exercise for railways went completely satisfactorily, and it must be stated that neither the civilian passenger car traffic nor the goods traffic experienced significant delays during the exercise.

In a real mobilization there will be no civilian rail traffic at all while the army is massing.

On Zealand

In Næstved, 4,000 men met. A similar number in Vordingborg. In Holbæk, 3,000 men. And in Slagelse well over 3,000 men, as well as a similar number in Roskilde.

Assessment of the progress of the exercise

Senior assistant Looft, who was currently boss at the Central Railway Station, stated that the State Railways were extremely satisfied with the course of the exercise. There have been no significant delays. A total of 11 pick-up trains with conscripted soldiers had arrived at the Central Station, and there had been approx. 1,000 men with each train.

Closing

This is what has been gleaned about the runways' efforts during the largest joint military exercise to date, even though it is now almost 50 years ago. Today, it would hardly be any different, since you must now count on both air attacks from the enemy, as well as fifth column people. But it is still uncertain...



Infantry company on the march, 1913.
From FOV Newsletter No. 9/May 2003.

Military transports on the South Sea Islands

(From Jernbane-Bladet no. 2/February 1963)

The article was originally published in March 1959 in the staff magazine Ekspressen, which was published by the Railway Association's Nykøbing F. department.

A 45-year experience

The editors have also invited me to write about an episode from my railway days and recalling the old saying that "When the devil grew old, he went to a monastery", or in our new busy, driven time: "When the man grew old, he wrote his memories"!

I am going to begin with the first 10 years of 1900, when our defense, just as later, and also in our day, was vigorously debated. The result was that almost all Zealand cities had their garrisons transferred from Funen and Jutland. Among other things, got Vordingborg garrison. New forts were built around Copenhagen and on Zealand. Among other things, Masnedøfort and Hårbølle battery [3](#) on Møn.

When it was all finished and Kaiser Wilhelm began to rattle his saber south, it was decided in the then Ministry of War (a terrible name now) that in the year 1913 a trial alarm should take place of repatriated cohorts and remonte horses, and it should take place between the harvest and the beet campaign and at the same time as the autumn maneuver west of the Great Belt.

Preparations

At that time I was a student on the 34th Traffic Assistant course at the Railway School at Klostervang in Roskilde. We were 16 students. 4 from the 1st District and 12 from the then 2nd District. We were told that during the alert exercise we would be assigned to Zealand-Falster stations, and had to choose the place, since we had family, acquaintances or the like, and I should just mention that I chose Eskilstrup, where my parents lived and current station manager A. Rasmussen, Nyborg, was in Nykøbing, because he had an aunt or something like that who had something to do with the then hotel "Stad Nykøbing".



*Glossy image from
the 1940s 4).*

The order was that we should have our kit-bag or suitcase ready with clothes for 8 days, and we should leave a few days before the A-day. We would be notified through the watchman's bell that was on the first floor of the school. It would ring the alarm signal right up until the plume was at the bottom, whether it was day or night. We discussed for a few days about when it should happen, and then agreed that it would happen at dawn - all "wars" usually start in the morning.

The railway official in the picture may not be Danish.

We waited and waited - but then on Monday morning, September 8, 1913, the signal sounded and we were not long in getting dressed. At the breakfast table were our free passes and the lunch pack, and at six o'clock we set off across Zealand. Those of us going south took train 65 (currently 119), and then we waited and waited again. Service all day - we didn't want to miss being present when the envelope with the blue alert poster had to be opened. After all, everyone was aware that it was about to happen. Those who had to attend had been summoned and were ready. The wad was packed.

The announcement system was not great then, no radio and no telephone newspaper. We just knew that the church bell had to ring, and what little phone there was was used. You heard nothing but what you cheated on the telegraph and through the train staff, but it was always something.

We got, among other things, to know that station master Garde Hansen, Orehoved, was the traffic manager for Lolland-Falster, that two K machines would be transferred to Orehoved and one Fs to Nykøbing F. No passenger cars, but bench cars of the letter HA -HD-HC, and otherwise had to wagons of letter KA-KK- KD (open wagons) are used, and possibly Lollandsbanen's carriages were to be brought through to Orehoved.



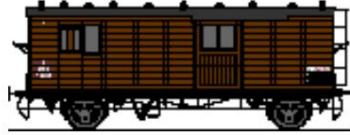
DSB letter K.



DSB letter HA.



DSB letter HC.



DSB letter HD.



DSB letter KA.



DSB letter KK.



DSB letter KD.

The continuous express trains to Hamburg and Berlin were not allowed to be delayed (trains 74, 73, 92 and 93 - current 120, 145, 160 and 101). There were two ferries available, namely THYRA and ALEKSANDRA, while DAGMAR was probably not there.

It is understandable that the situation could become tense, as from Lolland-Falster approx. 6,000 men and a few hundred horses. Most soldiers from Stubbekøbing, however, had to take the steamer to Masned Sund.

The alarm goes off

Then it happened on Thursday 11 September at 06:15. Already from 04:00 there was an alarm and at 05:00 a heightened alarm, and several cities, e.g. Vordingborg already raised the alarm at 04:00, but it was a mistake.

Already with train 80 at 07:20 (Lollandsekspressen), which stopped in Eskilstrup and Nr. Alslev, there were 200 soldiers, and with 07:33 from Nykøbing F. there were 400. It wasn't until 10 o'clock that the big crowd came. At 10:00 a special train left from Nykøbing F. with 900 and again at 10:18 a train from Lollandsbanen with approx. 1,000.

From Stubbekøbing-Nykøbing-Nysted Banen (private railway) north and south came approx. 300, which was sent to Orehoved by train at 12:10 and 13:27. At noon there were gathered approx. 4,000 men in Nykøbing F., who were going on to Zealand. The train consisted of 11 passenger cars and 10 freight cars with soldiers and horses, but then it ebbed away. The last ones never made it, but that was their own fault.



DSB Litra FS.

It could not be avoided that empty trains had to be sent from Orehoved back to Nykøbing F. a couple of times that morning. The FS machine could only take approx. 200 t, and there were also delays on the passenger trains, but everyone took it in good spirits and the weather was brilliant.

In Orehoved, the soldiers stormed the two small ferries, and several had to wait there. But they got the time to go along

to consume the food brought along, supplemented with "høkerbajere", which cost only 12 øre, and the square in front of the ice house in Orehoved was a big party place.

The homecoming

The repatriation took place on Friday 12 September 1913 in the afternoon, and then the picture was reversed, but to a lesser extent, as part of the conscripts had to stay inside for normal autumn manoeuvres. At 18:00 there was a train from Orehoved to Nykøbing F. with 1,600 men. It drove on to Lollandsbanen at 19:15. At 20:00, a train with 1,500 men and the stones (?), a rather large train according to the concept of the time, left. At 22:32 and 23:15 two trains with 400 men, for which Lollandsbanen had to borrow 9 carriages from DSB. The next morning it was all over, and then it had to be cleaned up during Sunday.

There was sometimes a long wait in Vordingborg and Orehoved on the way home, and several of those sent home made the trip on foot across Masnedø to the ferry to Orehoved. If there was no train there, they went on. I know someone who got to Orehoved that way and from there continued on foot to No. Alslev, where he had acquaintances with whom he spent the night. The next day he continued to Eskilstrup, but he was a land post on a daily basis!



Match referees, 1913.

From FOV Newsletter No. 9/May 2003.

Assessment of the progress of the exercise

On returning to the Railway School, we railway-loving students discussed the whole situation, which we thought had been very interesting and actually instructive, yes, even the Jutnese had to admit that there was also a railway outside "Verona".

Closing

Thanks to Lars Christensen and Tommy Nilsson for their kind interest and assistance on the railway side.

Also read Sune Wadskjær Nielsen's article about the mobilization exercise in 1913 in FOV Newsletter no. 9/May 2003, which contains a few more pictures from the subsequent autumn exercise.



Guards Hussars, 1913.

From FOV Newsletter No. 9/May 2003.

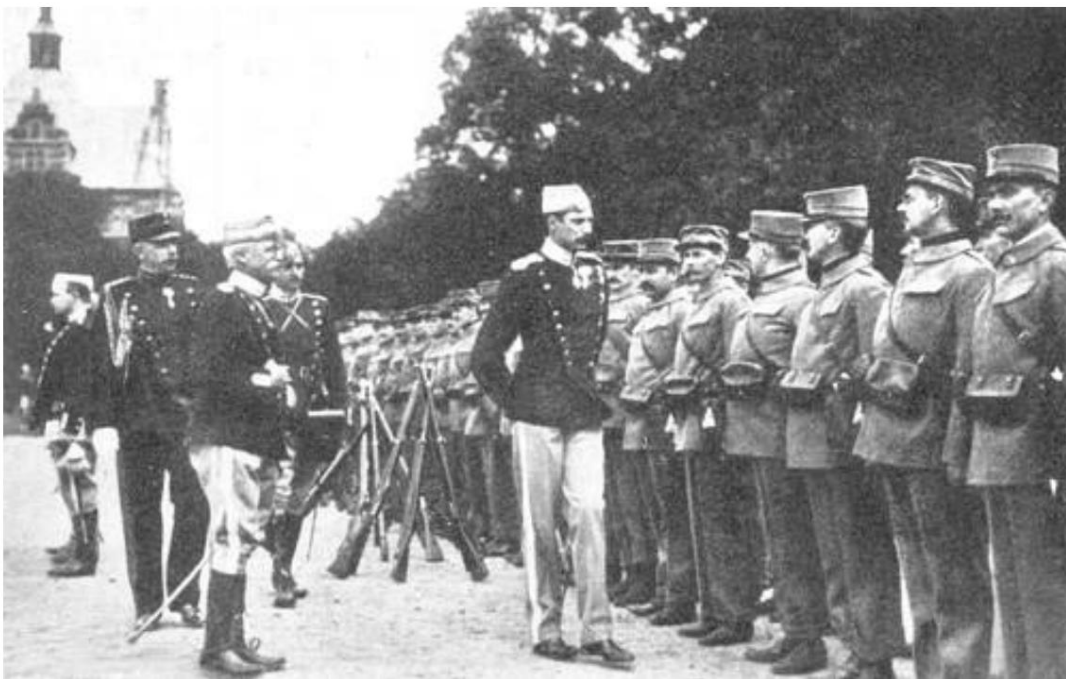
Postscript

In the *Life Guard 1908-1933* by Th. Thaulow, H.Hagerups Forlag, Copenhagen 1933, from which the following pictures also come, the following is mentioned about the exercise:

"On 11 and 12 September 1913, the alert exercise provided for in the Army Act took place.

After finishing dressing on the 11th in the morning, the 1st and 2nd Life Guard Battalion marched to Jægersborg and Lyngby.

The next day they marched back to Copenhagen, and the conscripts were sent home."



Alarm exercise 1913. HM The King inspects the 2nd Life Guard Battalion.

In the front, to the left of the King, Lieutenant Colonel M. Winge is seen.



*Alarm drill 1913. 1st Life Guard Battalion leaves the barracks.
The other half of the band followed the 2nd Life Guard Battalion.*

Per Finsted

Notes:

1) The picture has been made available by Tommy Nilsson, who has also contributed information about the train carriages.

2) *Nordbanegården* was a station in Copenhagen, where the trains to and from Helsingør and Hillerød departed and arrived. It was closed on 1 October 1921, when the tunnel between Copenhagen H and Østerport was opened. (Source: Lars Christensen.)

3) Masnedø Fort was built 1912-1915, while Hårbølle Battery was built 1914-15. Hårbølle Battery together with Borgsted Battery (established 1917) formed the Grønsund position. (Source: *Kystartilleri i Danmark*.) See also Masnedø Fort's website, including a map of fortifications on Zealand per 1918.

4) The gloss image has been kindly lent for scanning by Gert Strande Sørensen.