

Scrapbook - Cycling soldiers

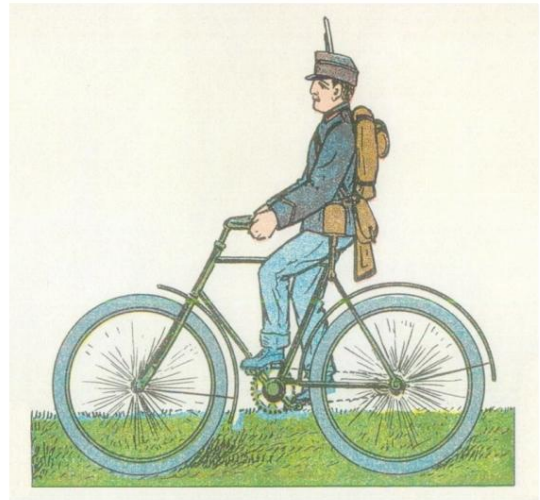
Introduction

The present scrapbook depicts something as rare as Danish soldiers on bicycles and is the only scrapbook with this exact motif that I know of.

The sheet was published by Adolph Holst, in the series Danske Bilder, and is believed to have been produced during the First World War. The source for the sheet originates from the National Museum's 3rd Department in Brede and has been kindly made available by Hans Snitker.

While the artist has been significantly better at rendering bicycles than people, it must be noted that the coloring of the figures in particular leaves something to be desired.

But these are left unsaid, so what can be deduced from the motives?



What does the sheet represent?



An actual cycling regiment first saw the light of day with the Army Order of 1937, when the 6th Regiment (Odense) was set up as a cycling regiment¹. Prior to this, since 1925, cyclist drones had been included in the Gardehusarregiment and later the Jutland Dragoon Regiment².

The first officially introduced bicycles in the Danish army bear the model year 1903, when an experimental company was set up at Jægersborg Kaserne, but otherwise Danish cycling soldiers from the period are probably best known from the volunteer recoilless rifle corps (mostly the Home Guard of the time), which had their heyday from 1908 to 1919.

Although the volunteer corps would perhaps be a more spectacular subject, the soldiers on the cut-out sheet look quite similar to soldiers from the Security Forces, as they appear in the photograph below.

Danish infantryman in uniform Model 1910. From Source 2.



Personnel of the 11th battalion under the Security Force 1914-1918, in 1910 uniform and with triangular cartridge cases. The corporal wears 1910 insignia. Cykli stone on the right wears the older uniform. Text and image come from Source 1.

Also the two soldiers in the background are wearing "the older uniform", which is Model 1889.

However, the caps on the cycling Danish soldiers on the clipping sheet have been given the same color as the uniform coats.

¹ See [The Danish Army 1932-1941 - The Cyclist Regiment](#).

² About the cavalry's cyclist squadrons, see [About Danish cavalry 1932-1940, Part 1](#) and [Supplement to Part 2](#).

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One has to wonder that those who have been responsible for coloring the figures have not ensured that the soldiers' boots stand out black.

Correspondingly, the coloring of the cyclists' pack also leaves something to be desired, and especially the coat's lack of black color is clearly wrong.

The position of the figure may seem somewhat special today, but in the period was the way in which one mounted a bicycle, or *cycled* to stay in the orthography of the period.

However, despite the artist's care in rendering bicycles, the bicycles do not show the hand brakes of the authorized bicycles.



The cutout sheet measures approx. 30 x 50 cm and contains the three figures shown here in different combinations:

1st row Three soldiers sitting on bicycles	2nd row Two cycling soldiers, one soldier sitting on a bicycle and one on foot with bicycle
3rd row Two cycling soldiers, one soldier sitting on a bicycle and one on foot with bicycle	4th row One soldier sitting on bicycle, one soldier on bicycle and three on foot with bicycle



Personnel of the Cyclist Company at Jægersborg Barracks in 1903. The Army's Trial Company dressed in 1903 uniform and equipped with bandoliers for carrying ammunition. Text and image from Source 1.

Copenhagen County Rifle Corps As mentioned, one of the volunteer recoilless rifle corps could also be a theoretical model, but if this is the case, where are the recoilless rifles?

The unit that, in terms of uniform, comes close to the most cut-out sheet is the Copenhagen County Rifle Corps, which was established in February 1909.

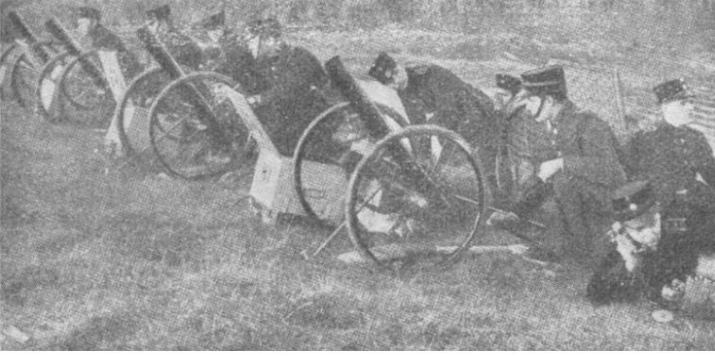
Source 5 describes the corps' uniforms as follows: Dark blue single-breasted coat of arms with green edges and yellow arms buttons, dark blue hat with a green cord going around and Danish cockade with a seven-pointed star with the Danish coat of arms. Dark blue trousers.

In 1912, the Copenhagen County Rifle Corps had a strength of 197 men, who were equipped with 3 rifles, 100 Model 1889 rifles and 40 Model 1867/96 rifles. At this time, the corps had 13 bicycles.

The corps was divided into the following formations: Recoil Company, Hand Grenade Section, Nordre Birks Section, Roskilde Section, Depot, Music Corps and Sanitation Section. In 1913, a cavalry division also existed.

At its peak, the Copenhagen County Rifle Corps had: 24 recoilless rifles, 300 Model 1889 rifles, 105 bicycles, 2 motorcycles, 1 automobile and 8 "hand grenade howitzers".

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Copenhagen County Rifle Corps - Hand grenade howitzers. From Source 5.

Source 5 mentions that these hand grenade howitzers, designed by an engineer Aasen, had a range of 300 m.

Academic Rifle Corps For the record,

it should be mentioned that the cut-out sheet cannot represent the Academic Rifle Corps, as the corps' field uniform Model 18813 consisted of a dark green uniform jacket with crimson edging, sleeve and collar mirrors. Black pants and boots. The headgear? A black student cap.



*Recoil rifle group from the Academic Rifle Corps.
From Source 5.*

Korps Westenholz

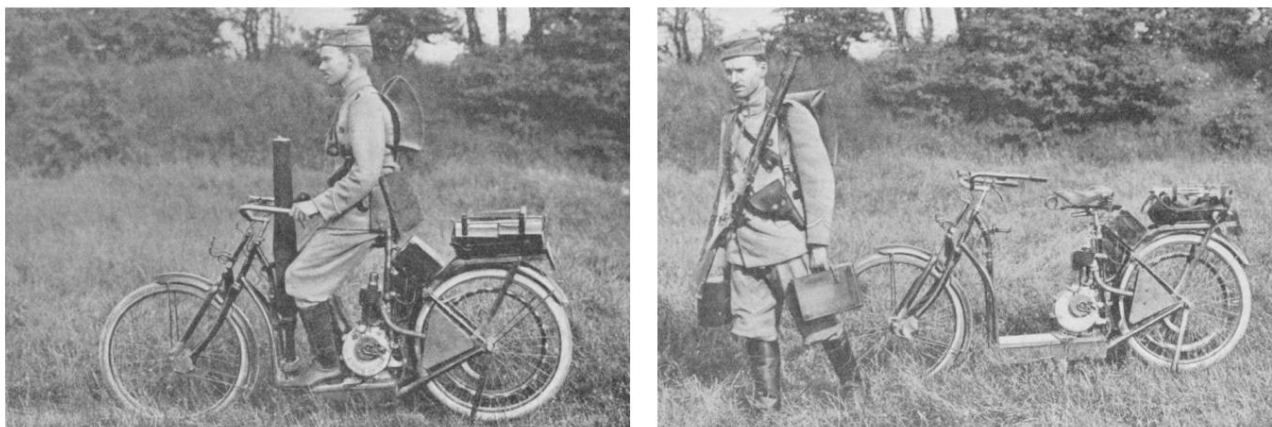
Similarly, it can be ruled out that the sheet represents Korps Westenholz, which was a motorized corps, and probably the most exclusively equipped of the volunteer corps.

Korps Westenholz was established in the winter of 1908-09 and at its peak was equipped with: 50 recoilless rifles, 9 rifles Model 1889, 15 pistols Model 1910, 10 pistols Model 1880/82, 60 motorcycles and 3 automobiles.

³ The draftsman Rasmus Christiansen showed in [Uniform Plancher - Supplement to Danish Uniforms for the Army and Navy](#), from 1916, two excellent color plates of the Academic Rifle Corps' uniforms.

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The uniform of the corps was: a two-breasted gendarme blue coat with accompanying short trousers, storm cap with the corps' mark KW. In addition, the volunteers had a set of rubber coveralls.



*Recoil gunner from Korps Westenholz.
From Source 5.*

Conclusion

It must be remembered that cut-out sheets were toys, and not the exact reproductions of uniforms that we might demand as collectors today. Exactly what the clipping sheet's cycling soldiers represent cannot therefore be said with certainty.

The meaning is perhaps also simply that it should represent "cycling soldiers", a purpose the sheet must be said to live up to fully.

Sources

1. *Danish Uniforms 1900-1990 - The Army and the Air Force* by Bjørn A. Nielsen, Tøjhusmuseet, Copenhagen 1992, ISBN 87-89022-26-2.
2. [Danish infantry uniforms and equipment over the last 200 years](#) by AN Hvidt, approx. 1960.
3. *The Guard Hussar Regiment 1912-1937, with a summary of the history of the regiment from 1762-1912* by Colonel Alf Giersing, Det Hoffenbergske Etablissement, Copenhagen 1937.
4. *The Danish Volunteer Corps - Historical presentation published by the Central Committee for the Volunteer Corps* by dr.phil. Viggo J. von Holstein Rathlou (ed.), Aarhus and Copenhagen, 1930.
5. *Academic Rifle Corps and its successors 1866-1966*; anniversary publication published by the Academic Shooting Association, København 1966.