

The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - Field kitchen lots

Introduction

One of the, by Danish standards, military innovations that saw the light of day at the Brigade was the Brigade's Lottekorps. A total of approximately 300 women were included in the Brigade, divided into sanitary lots, office lots and field kitchen lots.

In January 1944, the committee - Danske kvinders Hjælpetjeneste - was formed in Stockholm, which became the umbrella organization for the lots, and the brigade commander, General Knudtzon, was very positive about the committee's proposal to establish a force of female helpers who could free up male personnel for combat duties.

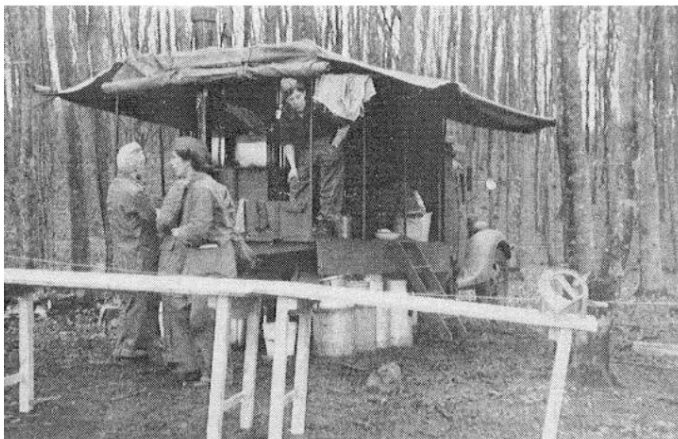
The movement was inspired by the Swedish Lottekorps, whose beginning dates back to 1924, when the movement *Landstormskvinnorna* saw the light of day.

The movement was supposed to support Land Stormen, which was a kind of precursor to *Hemvärnet*, through collections and bazaars, among other things. At the beginning of the war, the organization had just over 26,000 members. Per On 1 January 1943, the movement split off into an independent organization - *Riksförbundet Sveriges Lotta kårer* - and at the end of the war the number of members was 110,000 in 1945. Sanitary lots, office lots and field kitchen lots were among the functions, but also for the signal service, the supply service and the air defense, the lots fulfilled important functions.

The field kitchen lots

The committee had negotiated with the Swedish Lottery Chief, *Generalskan Maja Schmidt*, about support for the training of the Danish Lottery and an actual training was put in place in March/April 1944. The training took place in Stockholm, Malmö, Helsingborg and Gothenburg¹, primarily with the help of Swedish Lottery managers.

In the Brigade's layouts, the lots received elementary training in, among other things, military decorum. The lots were not armed, but it was considered essential that they were able to operate a pistol and a machine gun. As part of the training, the actual catering of the crew was also included.



Field kitchen trolley and collapsible kitchen table.
From Source 1.

various cupboards and tables, which were not included in the Swedish version, as were the accessories - knives, spoons, buckets etc. - deviated from the Swedish norm.

Kitchen trolley equipment

¹ At some of the training sites, the lot were trained on actual *goulash guns*, but such were not part of the Brigade's field kitchen equipment. The training was carried out in a combination of evening classes, weekend and week courses, not unlike the training pattern known from the Home Guard.



Lotte distributes food to the 3rd Battalion.
From Source 4.

The field kitchen lots really got their due in April 1945, when they, together with the Brigade's other personnel, were assembled in Scania. Here they were organized into kitchen teams consisting of 5 kitchen lots, of which the most suitable was selected as team leader. Each team was assigned a kitchen wagon, with a male engine wagon driver. The team leaders had received additional theory teaching on kitchen service and field kitchen hygiene.

The kitchen wagons

The brigade had over 35 kitchen wagons of the same model that were used in the Swedish army; each wagon was equipped with a stove, boilers, etc. Furthermore, the Brigade itself had furnished 10 lorries in a similar way (with the kitchen equipment that was used in the relocations). All kitchen trolleys were equipped with

The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - Field kitchen lots

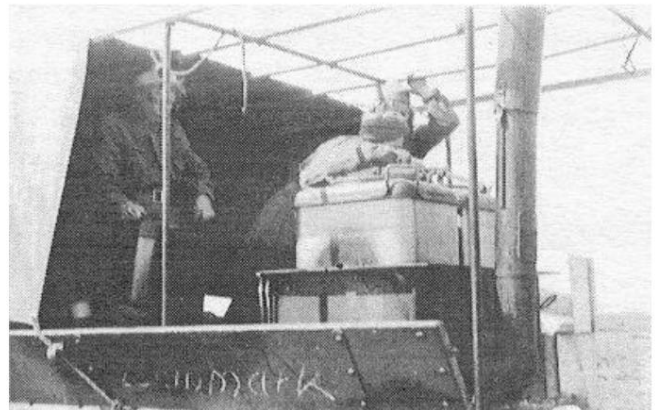
Cupboard + stove 1
table 2 pcs. 62 l pots
8 pcs. 24 l pots 8
insulating boxes 5
pads for insulating
boxes 7 cooking racks 1 frying
pan w/hood 1 radiation screen 1
cutting board 2 wooden spoons 1
fine sieve 1 colander 1 sieve 2
large whisks

1 small whisk 1
meat grinder 1
bread machine 1
can opener 1 grater 4
slicing knives 4 slicing
forks 2 funnels 1 meat
ax 11 buckets 1 slotted
spoon 2 palette knives
3 pcs. 3 dl spoons 3
pcs. 2 dl ladles 11 tin
plates

9 mugs
2 pcs. 2 l
measure 1
ironing board 1
water dish 9 whisker
pieces 3 padlocks 4
stove hooks 6 herb
knives 3 potato
peelers 1 wood ax 4 milk
jugs Various rags and
brushes 2 tubs 1 red
spirit lamp 1 carbide lamp

It was thus a small, mobile restaurant kitchen, but when you consider that a kitchen trolley had to be responsible for catering for approx. 150 men at all 24-hour meals, so it probably hasn't been too much.

The service at the field kitchen wagons was described in a special instruction and the menus appeared from "the little green book", which was a cookbook for lots.



*Service at field kitchen vans.
From Source 1.*

The menus

Source 1 contains a number of examples of the soldiers' meals - oat porridge, water porridge, beer bread, gruel, sweet soup, barley gruel, juice soup, fruit soup, yellow peas, beef soup, kale soup, lab skovs, goulash and white lab skovs (which had the unappetizing nickname *cement*).

The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - Field kitchen lots



When you have to prepare food for 150 hungry soldiers, the quantities must of course be somewhat larger than they are known from ordinary households - 75 l of soup, 54 kg of potatoes and 20-30 l of sauce are thus common quantities.

When you also take into account that the 62 l kettle took 1 to 1½ hours to boil, it also gives a certain impression of how much time was involved in preparing the food.

Judging by various accounts, the soldiers were quite satisfied with the food, although yellow peas, served before a railway journey lasting many hours, should probably not be recommended.

The field kitchen itself could be removed from the truck and set up on the ground. From Source 1.

The lottery uniforms

The field uniform is described as sewn according to an American model, by a Stockholm company Klaes Gillberg. The fabric was the grey-green-brown color of the Swedish army, which was also used for the Brigade's other uniforms. The uniform consisted of jacket and trouser skirt, gray shirt, blue tie and brimmed hat.



The trouser part must be said to be quite a practical (and modern) choice, and it was especially practical for the field cooks who had to move a lot up and down from their kitchen wagons.

For actual work use, boiler suits and the like were used.

Field kitchen wagon and field kitchen lots, in Denmark May 6, 1945. From Source 1.

For use in field conditions, the lots were given a steel helmet of the Brigade's usual Swedish model. Annelise Chri stoffersen quite interestingly mentions how she and her sister had tried on the steel helmets in front of a mirror to find out which angle suited them best. During one of the exchanges of fire that the Brigade was exposed to in Copenhagen on 6 May 1945, it was not the angle of the helmet that was the first thought, but rather that the steel helmet should have been somewhat larger...

End The field

kitchen lots accompanied their units during the crossing to Denmark and provided the soldiers with meals. It continued to fulfill these tasks right to the end, and was repatriated with the rest of the brigade on 10 July 1945.

When returning home, each lot received a small letter from the head of the Brigade's lots, Mrs. Ada Goldschmidt, who expressed a warm thank you for the efforts that were often made despite difficult and unknown conditions.

The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - Field kitchen lots



Catering at Axeltorv in Helsingør, on the morning of 6 May 1945.
From Source 1.

It may be about Kitchen Team 15, which was part of the 5th (heavy) Battalion, 2nd Company (Machine Gun Company).

To the left of the picture is a 20 mm machine gun M.40 S.

Sources

1. *The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - Field kitchen lots* by Annelise Christoffersen, published by Den Danske Brigadeforening, Copenhagen 1995, ISBN 87-90214-18-1.
2. *Sweden's Military Preparedness 1939-1945* by Carl-Axel Wangel, Militärhistoriska Förlaget, Stockholm 1982, ISBN 91-85266-20-5.
3. *1½ years with the Danish Brigade* by lieutenant colonel PAF Norup (chief of staff at the Brigade), Militær Tidsskrift 1947, pages 271-308 and 353-406.
4. *The Danish Brigade* edited by Niels Grunnet and Bent Demer, H. Hirsprungs Forlag, Copenhagen 1945.
5. *The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - 4. Battalion at Mogens Rosenvinge*, published by Den Danish Brigade Association, Copenhagen 1995, ISBN 87-90214-11-0.

Per Finsted



Catering at Halmtorvet in Copenhagen, May 1945.
From Source 6.

It may be about Kitchen Team 17, which was part of the 5th (heavy) Battalion, 4th Company (Machine Company).