

## The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - Panzervärnskompagniet etc.

### Introduction My

paper *The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - The armored unit, which never came to fruition*, piqued my interest in investigating the case further, and in that context it is also relevant to mention another of the Brigade's units, just like the Panzervärnskompagniet.

### Education at Swedish units

In February 1944, it was decided that five Danish cavalry officers were attached to *the Royal Södermanland Armored Regiment (P3)*, which had a garrison in Strängnäs.

It was about: Lieutenant Colonel Frits Berg Alten, rhythm masters EAB Reesen Steenstrup and Poul Jorck-Jorckston, Captain Lieutenant Vasco West da Costa Carneiro and First Lieutenant LR Ravnsbøl<sup>1</sup>.

From the start, certain restrictions applied to the training, namely that the Danish officers were not allowed to become more familiar with the regiment's tanks; they only had to follow the training of motorcyclist units, motorized infantry and anti-tank. The main purpose, namely tank training, could not thus be met. However, this restriction was lifted after only one month, apparently following Danish pressure.

The five officers - in Swedish uniform, but without rank insignia - could thus follow the regiment's officers' course on an equal footing with their Swedish officer colleagues between 12 April and 23 September. However, there were still certain restrictions on sharpshooting and in relation to dealing with the conscription units.



Pansarkursen vid P 3 1944 på motorcykelmarsch. Stående från vänster: kapten Gunnar Fagraeus, fänrik Per-Åke Arehag, löjtnant Allan Sjöberg, löjtnant Ravnböl, Danmark, fänrik Arthur Wassborn, löjtnant Bertil Lovén, löjtnant Jan Westrin, ryttmästare Yorkstone, Danmark. Sittande från vänster: löjtnant Carneiro, Danmark, ryttmästare Steenstrup, Danmark. I kursen ingick dessutom överstelöjtnant Alten, Danmark. Fotograf okänd.

From Source 1. *Ritmester Jorck-Jorckston's* name has, however, become *Yorkstone*.

Information about the training of the Danish officers came to the attention of German intelligence sources, and the German military attache complained that the Swedes were training officers from a warring nation. The head of regional defense refuted the complaint. He stated that Denmark could not be considered a belligerent and that it was all about a handful of officers who could not be employed in any other way. The presence of Danish officers at *P3* and *P4* was motivated by the fact that they were trained in the service of a modern armored unit, with a view to setting up Danish armored units after the war.

<sup>1</sup> During the Brigade's transfer to Denmark, Lieutenant Colonel Frits Berg Alten, Captain Lieutenant Vasco West da Costa Carneiro and First Lieutenant LR Ravnsbøl were available at the brigade staff, while Master EAB Reesen Steenstrup was available (as a train officer) at the Regiment and Poul Jorck-Jorckston commander of the Armored Company. From *Handbook for the Army 1946*, reproduced in Source 5.

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### The tank squadron It was

not occupational therapy that was the purpose of the training, but a clear desire that an armored unit could, if necessary, support the Brigade's operations in Denmark. This wish was put forward by Lieutenant General Knudtzon in early September 1944, when he expressed a wish for armored and aircraft support in the event of an operation in Denmark. He stressed that from the Danish side, both politically and militarily, there was a desire for Sweden to make tanks available for possible clean-up operations in cities, e.g. Copenhagen.

The number of tanks was set at a maximum of 18, but a minimum of 5. The Danish cavalry officers, together with the crew, could, if necessary, man the 5 tanks, while the remaining crew had to be Swedish.

At a meeting on 12 September 1944 in the Swedish defense staff, the Brigade was informed that the Swedish side was considering setting up a voluntary Swedish tank squadron, equipped with 22-ton tanks (= *Stridsvagn m/42*). It was emphasized that it was a purely internal matter and that the Swedish government was not aware of the matter at the time<sup>2</sup>.



*Tank w/42 from Scania Dragoon Regiment (P2), 1945.  
From Source 3.*

The possibilities were now to be investigated further, and an officer was to be sent to the armored regiments to discuss the matter with the regimental commanders.

In the period 14 to 19 September 1944, the Swedish captain Per Hjalmar Bauer and drill master NE Leschly (from the Brigade's operations section) visited the *Royal Skaraborg Pansarregement (P4)* in Skövde and the *Scanian Dragoon Regiment (P2)* in Helsingborg. Here, Captain Bauer, in the presence of Master Leschly, briefed the regimental commanders "about the permission that the Government has given to prepare in the deepest secrecy the formation of a heavy tank company for use by the Danish police units".

On 19 September 1944, the commander of *P2*, Colonel Nordström, announced that he had found the company commander, Lieutenant Stig Colliander, who, together with officers of the regiment, would also undertake to recruit the volunteer manpower. It was

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<sup>2</sup> Already on 14 September 1944, however, there was informal government approval of the matter.

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determined that Master Poul Jorck-Jorckston was to be the commander of the squadron, while Lieutenant Allan Sjöberg, who was course leader for the course that the Danish officers followed at P3, was to be one of the platoon leaders.

In October 1944, captain of the reserve, director N. Palme, who had been one of the main men in recruiting Swedish volunteers for the Finnish Winter War, was involved in the case and the work of registering the volunteer armored soldiers - and airmen - a task that was originally intended for the Brigade. In October, it is decided to let the necessary contracts go to press, at a printing house that was approved by the Swedish defense staff to process secret material.

At the turn of the year 1944/45, the Brigade's planned tasks are changed so that it must solve tasks after a German capitulation, rather than fight to force it. The plans will therefore not be updated further.

### Panzervärnskompagniet The

company that has given its name to this paper had master of cavalry Poul Jorck-Jorckston as its commander.

The anti-tank company consisted of:

Chief with command group (6)

• 5 divisions, each with 4 groups (5).

The company was intended to be used as an escort company for the aforementioned tank squadron and was also intended to be motorized on Swedish transport vehicles, driven by Swedish motor vehicle drivers. (Source 4). The source does not mention which type of transport vehicle was intended for the company.

The company's armament - 105 machine guns and 16 recoilless rifles (Source 6) - supports this task, while the see customer Source 5 states that the company was equipped with 20 37 mm infantry guns. Where the information about the foot folk cannons comes from is not known, but the idea that the company was thus equipped may come from the company's designation - which may not be in terms of task, but is misleading in the traditional sense - in a combination with 20 pcs. infantry guns, which were obviously in storage.

Source 6, which contains a brief account of life in the company, accompanied by experiences and other soldiers' stories, gives the impression that the company's actual task was not clear to the personnel. It is stated that the soldiers saw neither tanks nor anti-tank guns during the training, which apparently did not get beyond the recruitment stage. Source 7 thus also states that the company was not fully trained.

### Conclusion

It has been almost a number of years since I saw the now classic organizational chart found in Source 5, which is reproduced in almost all recent works on the Brigade. I wondered why the Brigade was intended to have an independent anti-tank company, when there was already an infantry gun company (1st Company) in the 5th (heavy) Battalion. With my studies of the sources listed here, I believe I have cleared up the Panzervärnskompagniet's actual function - namely to act as anti-tank gunners.

The information on the training of the Danish cavalry officers in the Swedish armored regiments suggests something of the framework for the knowledge which, in combination with English and later American experience, helped to shape the post-war Danish armored units.

### Sources

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3. *Pansar - The History of the Swedish Combat Materiel* by Didrik von Porat, Armémusei småskrifter 3, Army Museum, Stockholm 1985, ISSN 0280-7254. 4. 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.
5. *The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945* by KV Nielsen, published by The Danish Brigade Association, 1985, Copenhagen 1985, ISBN 87-981346-4-7.
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7. *The Danish Brigade* edited by Niels Grunnet and Bent Demer, H. Hirsprungs Forlag, Copenhagen 1945.