

The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - The Fire Command

Introduction

War experiences from Finland and Norway had shown that the Germans also took all incendiary equipment with them when they retreated from an area. In order to remedy a similar situation in Denmark, if necessary, it was therefore decided in January 1945 that a Fire Command should be set up at the Brigade, comprising both rescue and clearance services.

The fire command

The fire command consisted of: •

Chief with command group (38), 4 half-columns consisting of: Leader with assistants (4), Fire division of 3 groups of 10 men (30), Clearing division (17) and Depot division (8).

The organization and function of the fire command was modeled after the Danish CBU columns. In terms of tasks, however, there was the difference that the Fire Command was expected to solve tasks during combat and shelling, while the CBU columns solved their tasks after an air attack.



*Some of the Fire Command's fire squad vehicles, Helsingborg, 5 May 1945.
From Source 1.*

The fire command's personnel consisted of a few professional firefighters who had been recruited from among the Danish refugees, while the rest were volunteer personnel.

The force was led by a column commander, Captain EFL Brasch, with deputy fire inspector Christensen as fire chief and civilian engineer Hurwitz as clearing chief. The last two gentlemen were experienced people in their fields of work, with practical experience from Aalborg and Copenhagen respectively.

The training consisted of a 14-day basic military course (primarily military etiquette and shooting) followed by a stay with the Swedish fire services in Gothenburg, Helsingborg, Landskrona and Malmö.

These internships, which included participation in emergency operations and real firefighting, lasted until 1 May 1945, when the Fire Command was multiplied¹. The clearing platoons remained in the depot in Rydds Brunn, where the training took place.

¹ In Source 3, Salomon Tschernia mentions that the mobilization took place in a tent camp in Malmö on 4 May 1945. Here personnel should have easily handed over the uniforms - Uniform Model 1944 (Swedish) - for which they had been waiting for 2 months. However, everything was delivered, so the brigadiers had to make do with the ski uniforms (see picture) that they had used throughout the training. In addition, submachine guns and pistols were handed out. There was a problem with the ammunition, but the brigadier solved that problem themselves through friends connected to a Swedish weapons depot in Malmö. The unit - referred to as 2. Brandkolonne - in which Salomon Tschernia served, was quartered at Matthæusgade School on 6 May 1945, where they used all their "organized" ammunition in combating snipers.

The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - The Fire Command

The Fire Command was transferred to Denmark on May 5, 1945. A few days after returning home, the personnel were sent home and the Fire Command was then disbanded.

Swedish supplementary force

If the Fire Command had been needed, it could have drawn on reinforcements from a Swedish committee called *Kommitté för brandkårshjälp till Norge och Danmark*. This committee included 21 spraying units with a total of 212 firefighters (permanent firefighters and reserve firefighters).

Each spraying unit consisted of a 3-tonne truck with trailer sprayer (capacity between 1,000 and 2,000 liters per minute), 1,000 m of hose and standard fire-fighting equipment. Each unit also carried 400 liters of petrol (for the truck and the trailed sprayer). It appears that the Fire Command's spray units were equipped accordingly.

Of this strength, 10 spray units and approx. 110 men destined for action in Denmark, under the leadership of deputy fire chief Harry Stuhre from Malmö.

At a central depot, from which additional supplies could be drawn for Denmark and Norway, there were also 50,000 m of hose, a number of sprayers, transition pieces for Danish couplings (= connecting pieces of the hoses), other fire equipment and a large stock of propellants. The brigade had made agreements to be able to draw on this material if necessary.

Fortunately, however, neither Denmark nor Norway needed this Swedish brotherly help.

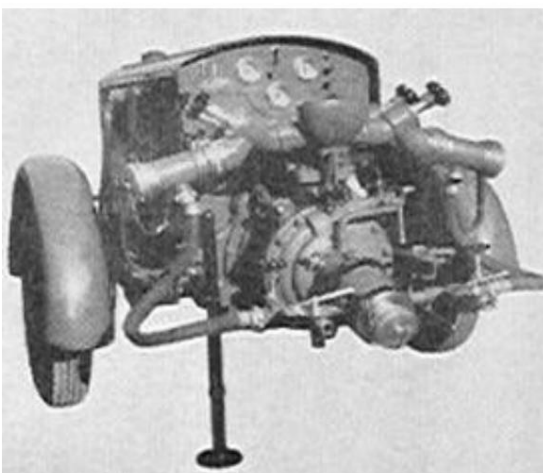
Conclusion

The Fire Command is one of the more overlooked units in the Brigade; thus, the image above is the only one I have seen of this device.

Sources

1. *The Danish Brigade* edited by Niels Grønnet and Bent Demer, H. Hirschsprungs Forlag, Copenhagen 1945.
2. *1½ years with the Danish Brigade* by lieutenant colonel PAF Norup (the brigade's chief of staff), *Militær Tidsskrift* 1947, page 271-308 and 353-406.
3. *Danish soldier in Sweden 1943-1945 - The Danish Brigade, as I experienced it* by Erik Frost (ed.), published by the Danish Brigade Association (DANFORCE), Copenhagen 1989, ISBN 87-88214-230.

Per Finsted



Swedish trailer sprayer (type API 120). From Gysinge Fire Centre.

The trailed sprayer is equipped with a 6-cylinder Volvo Penta petrol engine. The capacity is 1,800 liters per minute. Built by Aktiebolaget Pumpindustri, Gothenburg.

The trailed sprayer shown behind the fire truck may resemble this type.