

## The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - The armored unit which never came to be

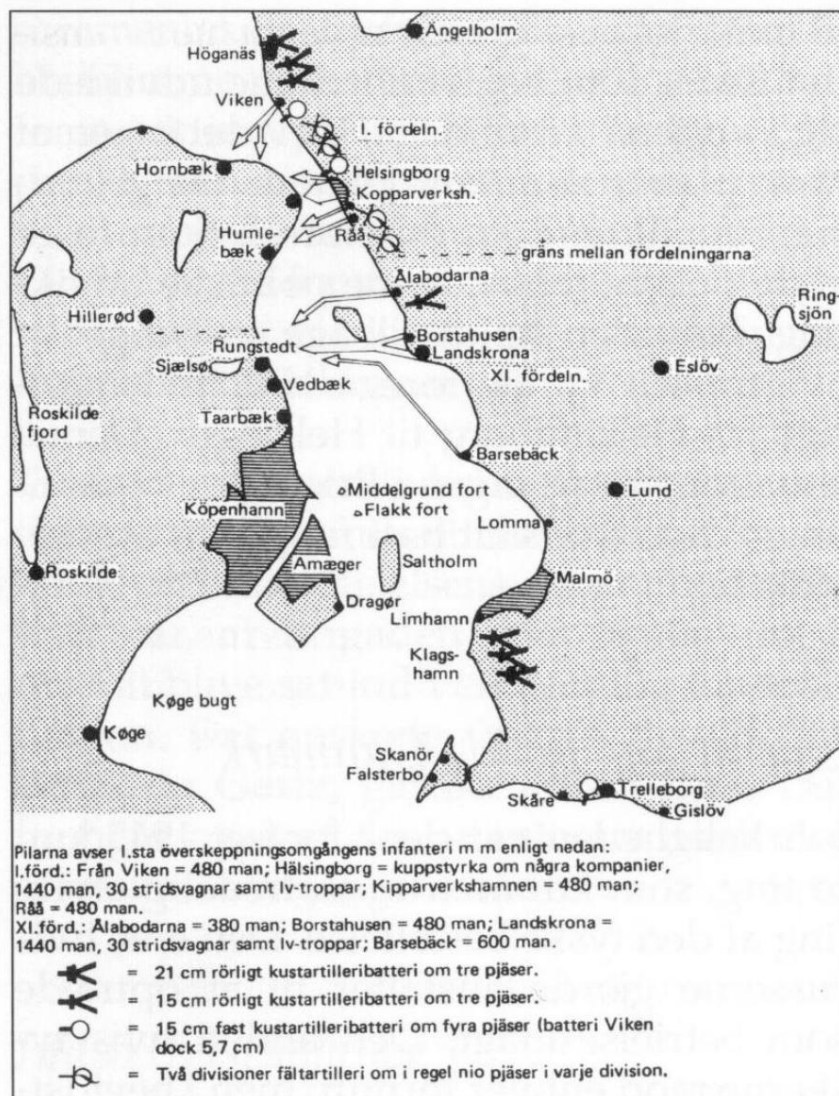
### Introduction

The brigade never had an actual armored force at its disposal, but preparations for this had been made, and only the unconditional surrender of the Germans on 5 May 1945 meant that the formation did not take place.

10 officers from our two cavalry regiments received their first real tank training at the Swedish Armored Troops partly at the *Royal Södermanland Pansarregemente - P 3* - in Strängnäs, partly at the *Royal Skaraborgs Pansarregemente - P 4* - in Skövde, both of which had tanks M 40 and M 41 with 37 mm cannon and M 42 with 75 mm short cannon.

After the *Guards Hussar Regiment* over 200 years (Source 1).

### "Operation Save Denmark"



Deployment plans for Operation Rädde Danmark, dated 4 May 1945.

From Kilde 2 after "Help to Denmark" by Ulf Torell.

Around the turn of the year 1943/1944, the Swedish side began to consider the planning of a military intervention in Denmark, if the situation after a German capitulation necessitated this.

The rapid Russian advance along the Baltic Sea coast at the beginning of 1945 worried the Swedish government and they would thus be ready to get ahead of the Russians.

Danish politicians also looked at the situation with concern and on 20 March 1945 the Swedes were asked to prepare an intervention in Denmark.

One of the events that could trigger an intervention would be a threatening Russian "liberation" of Denmark - a situation that would be avoided at all costs. Another situation could be a last desperate German final on Danish soil.

As things now developed, the planning did not go beyond the writing table stage and thus did not lead to the relocation of military units or other visible preparations.

The planning complex was called *Operation Rädde Danmark*, abbreviated *RD*. Some elements in the plan for a landing on Zealand and/or Bornholm were designated *RDS* and *RDB* respectively.

From the Swedish side, they operated with the deployment of up to three divisions, at full military strength.

The plans envisaged the involvement of the Danish Brigade, which was to be reinforced with Swedish volunteers; a model that the Swedish side had used in the Finnish Winter War in 1939-40. On both the Swedish and Danish (Brigade's) side, administrative measures were taken to recruit volunteers and lay down equipment for them.

These preparations included both the Brigade's Air Force (see my paper *Den danske Brigade i Sverige 1943-1945 - Brigadens Flyverstyrker*) as well as plans to equip a "Danish" tank squadron. The tank material was to be laid out in the area east of Helsingborg.

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### The planned tank squadron This squadron

was to consist of 18 tanks and it was here that the mentioned cavalry officers would have played a role if necessary. As is well known, the major political situation developed in such a way that none of the planned measures became necessary - and the tank squadron never saw the light of day.

My currently available sources do not provide information about which tank type/types, if any, would have been involved, nor about the squadron's intended organization.

### Swedish organization<sup>1</sup>

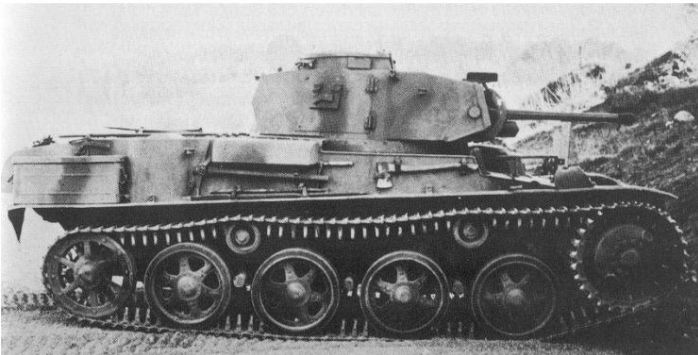
After the 1942 organization, an armored battalion consisted of 3 light and 1 heavy squadron as well as a supply and maintenance element. With regard to the composition of the squadrons, we currently only have information from the 1941 organization, from which it appears that a light tank squadron in 1941 consisted of 5 tanks (4 Stridsvagn m/37 and 1 Stridsvagn m/40).

A proposal for a possible organization of the "Danish" squadron could therefore be: staff (3 tanks) and 3 platoons (5 tanks each).

### Possible equipment

In the following, pictures are shown of the types of tanks that were in the two armored regiments where the Danish officers were trained.

On the website [Tanks - Armored Warfare prior to 1946](#), there is an excellent overview of the development of the Swedish armored troops and the different types of armored vehicles and tanks at their disposal.



*Stridsvagn m/40 L* is a further development of the model Landsverk L 60, which is known, among other things, from service in the Hungarian army, where it had the designation *Toldi*.

The tank had a crew of three men and was equipped with a 37 mm cannon (m/38) and 2 pcs. 8 mm machine guns (ksp m/39).

The Swedish army had over 100 units. of this model, the last of which were delivered to the units on 9 March 1942.



*Stridsvagn m/40 K* was an improved version of *Stridsvagn m/40 L*. (The K stands for *Karlstad Mekaniska Verkstad*, which built the tanks under license from *Landsverk*; the L stands for *Landsverk*.)

Armament etc. was like the *Stridsvagn m/40 L*, but the armor and engine were more powerful.

The two types are best distinguished from each other by the spare crank wheel, which was mounted behind the tower on the K version.

The Swedish army had over 80 units. of this model, which was delivered to the units from December 1943 to September 1944. The tanks were part of the 8th Armored Brigade, which was part of the forces in *Operation Rädde Danmark*.

<sup>1</sup> On the website of the *Society of Twentieth Century Wargamer* is [An Introduction to The Royal Swedish Army in WWII](#) by Ingólfur Björgvinsson, from which the information about Swedish organization comes.

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*Stridsvagn m/41* was a license-produced version of the Czechoslovak tank, which became famous in German service under the designation *Pz 38*.

Already in 1940, 90 tanks had been ordered from the Swedish side, but the order was canceled as the Germans' own need for the tanks was greater.

Instead, permission was obtained for a license manufacturing in Sweden, where 106 tanks were built by Scania-Vabis in Södertälje. The first 116 wagons (designated S I) were delivered from December 1942 to August 1943.

Another 122 were ordered; 106 was delivered with the designation S II - stronger armor and engine - from October 1943 to March 1944.

The last 16 were delivered as storm guns - *Stormartillerivagn (sav m/43)*.

*Stridsvagn m/41* was, like the other light tanks, equipped with a 37 mm cannon (m/38) and 2 pcs. 8 mm machine guns (ksp m/39). The crew consisted of four men.



*Stridsvagn m/42* was originally developed by Landsverk for the Hungarian army - under the designation *La go*<sup>2</sup>.

Based on foreign experience, an "armor committee" recommended in 1941 that the Swedish army acquire a heavy (= medium heavy) tank. It was not possible to purchase such tanks abroad, so the choice fell on the project from Landsverk.

The carriage was made longer and wider, and was equipped with stronger armour.

The tank got a short 75mm cannon (m/41), which was effective against both armored and soft targets. In addition, the tank was equipped with 4 pcs. 8 mm machine guns (ksp m/39).

In a few rounds, a total of 282 tanks were ordered, which went to the units from April 1943 to January 1945. The tank was part of the heavy tank squadrons of the armored brigades.

### Conclusion I

am planning a supplementary paper on the Swedish plans for *Operation Rädde Denmark*. A parallel set of plans *Operati on Rädde Norge* also existed; however, it was anticipated that both operations could not be carried out simultaneously.

### Sources

1. *The Guards Hussar Regiment through 200 years of Fr. Engelbrecht, AE Giersing and P. Jorck-Jorkston, Næsved 1962*. Fine it e.g. on the [Danish Gardehusarforeninger website](#).
2. *The Brigade - The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945* by Knud JV Jespersen, Gyldendal, Copenhagen 1993, ISBN 87-00-14924-1.
3. *Pansar - The History of Swedish Combat Equipment* af Didrik von Porat, Armémusei småskrifter 3, Armémuseum, Stockholm 1985, ISSN 0280-7254.

<sup>2</sup> This vehicle did not enter service in the Hungarian army - as a tank - but the undercarriage, which is an extended version of the Landsverk L 60 - or *Toldi* in Hungarian terminology - probably later became the undercarriage for the Hungarian air defense tanks *Nimrod*. Source 3 is the only place I have read about the Hungarian Lago project.