

The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - Uniforms

Introduction

It was a mention in Knud JV Jespersen's book on the Brigade (Source 2) that led me on the trail of the (defunct) Gaelic magazine MILITARY HOBBIES, which in its March-April issue from 1990 had an article by an Englishman named RS Kidd. The article should, among other things, contain a color plate and it sounded undeniably interesting.

As I am not familiar with sources that describe the Brigade's uniform in any comprehensive form, I therefore opted out of a summary description of the Brigade's uniform in my previous papers on The Danish Brigade.

I have now succeeded - via the Internet - in obtaining a copy of the magazine in question (Source 1), and with this as a starting point I seek to make up for a missing uniform description. The plan itself could perhaps have been more beautifully drawn, but as it is, as far as I know, the only one of its kind, one cannot allow oneself to be too picky.

Background

During the Brigade's first training (police training, as it was called to obscure the intentions), the soldiers wore a cover uniform (drejstøj) made of canvas, a field hat (ski cap) and a cape (trench coat). Ski trousers and a uniform-like coat of arms were used for winter use. As a practice uniform this attire was serviceable, but it was not suitable as a field uniform.

The brigade's leadership also feared that the German side would not recognize the uniform as precisely the military uniform that was supposed to provide the soldiers with protection according to the Hague Convention of 1907 - in other words, show that they were regular combatants and not criminals¹. In order to counteract this situation, it was therefore decided that everyone in the Brigade should be equipped with an armband. For reasons of discretion, these armbands were sewn by the brigade staff's female office staff.



The brigade armband, as it was subsequently named to distinguish it from the *freedom fighter armband*, is of thin red fabric, 11 cm wide, with 23 mm wide white edging. In the middle is an embroidered label 6x3 cm with a crown and the name "DANMARK" in white.

Principle sketch: Brigade armband. Own production, i.a. based on Source 1.

In connection with the transfer to Denmark, part of the brigade armbands were exchanged for freedom fighter armbands, but both types can be seen in photographs of units in Copenhagen 6 May 1945. See "The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - 1st - 4th Battalion, Part 3" for a more detailed description of the armbands and examples of the use of both types.



The field police detachment was the only unit to wear its own armband, namely a freedom fighter armband, with the letters P and D, which must stand for police detachment, sewn on. It is probable, however, that this armband was first put on after the force took up its service on the Border.



Principle sketch: Field police detachment's armband. Own production, with inspiration in Source 2.

Two members of the Field Police detachment, in collaboration with an English soldier, search German soldiers at the border in May 1945. From Source 1, which has the Imperial War Museum in London as its source.

¹ The term originates from *Memo book for use in the field, during exercises and war games* by HH Jørgensen, N. Olaf Møllers Forlag, Copenhagen 1936.

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Explanation for uniform plate

- A. First Lieutenant, 2nd Battalion.
- B. National cockade, worn on the field cap, cf. figure A.
- C. The brigade badge; in principle as the helmet mark on Stålhjelm Model 1923.
- D. Group Badge (Officers); was worn as a collar badge, cf. Figure A.
- AND. Shoulder pat for a First Lieutenant of the 4th Battalion.
- F. Orlogsgast in naval uniform of Swedish model². The cap band with ORLOGS FLAADEN, the national cockade and the brigade insignia is a special Danish characteristic.
- G. Freedom fighter armband, with metal shield. Why the mark is rendered with a golden glow is not known; they also samples I have seen are all equipped with a silvery mark.
- H. Helmet mark, worn on both sides of the steel helmet, often almost invisible due to the helmet netting.
- I. Shoulder pat for a Lance Corporal of the 3rd Battalion.
- J. Corporal of the 5th Battalion.
- K. Field kitchen lot. It is difficult to decipher the color of the shooting bow exactly, and it can thus indicate belonging to a ten Staff Company (crimson red) or 1st Battalion (red). Lotte wears the Brigade Armband.
- L. The central field of the Brigade armband.

Shooting loops

The brigade adopted a system of shooting loops (on the shoulder pads) - bright red, red, white, light blue, yellow, green and black:



The system is known from the Danish Uniform 1923, where the colors were worn as subdivision badges - a circular underlay for the department badge, which was worn over the right breast pocket. The order in this period was bright red, white, light blue, yellow, green, violet and black for the 1st - 7th subdivision. Violet is thus not used in the Brigade, as Pionerkommando doet, which should have been the 6th subdivision, got black as its color - the traditional pioneer color.



Brigadier in Hjørring, immediately after the Liberation.
From Source 4.

² Based on sources consulted so far, it was my opinion that the naval uniforms were of a Danish model, see The Danish Flotilla, Part 1. The information that it was a Swedish naval uniform comes from RS Kidd's article.

This also shows that the cockade had to be particularly large. As far as I can determine, the Navy's standard cockade was used, which was somewhat larger than the Brigade's cap badge, which is why it may be appropriate to draw attention to the size ratio.

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Source 4 states that here, and in the following photograph, it is the 2nd Battalion's 3rd Company. However, a closer study of the sky desloops reveals that some of the individuals wear a combination of a dark and a light band, while others only have a light band. But an explanation for this combination is not known.

The 2nd Battalion, which had Captain ETCA von Freiesleben as its commander, was assigned guard duties at military and other installations in Copenhagen and Northern Jutland in connection with the Brigade's deployment in Denmark.



Brigadier in Hjørring, immediately after the Liberation.

Insignia The

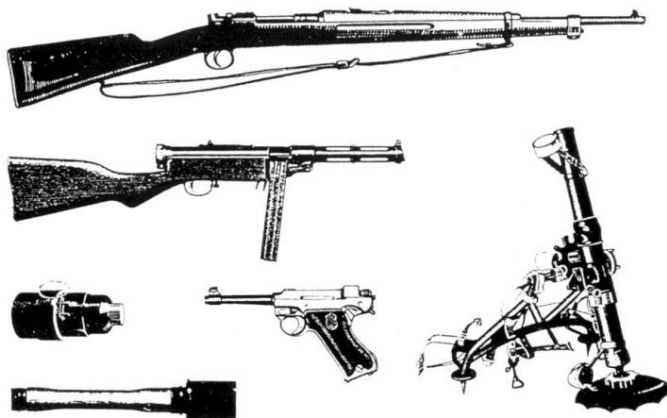
insignia were in principle like the Danish ones of the time, only shown with Swedish distinctions (from 1923 and 1939 uniforms).

Corporals and lance corporals, who according to the Danish system wore their fabric angles on their forearms, wore golden metal angles on their shoulder pads.

Master Sergeant	Two silver colored beams
Sergeant	A silver beam
Corporal	Two golden angles
Corporal A	golden angle

It is not clear how commanders of the officiant group were distinguished.

Personal equipment and light weapons



Examples of the personal equipment, uniforms and handguns can be found in these articles:

- Equipment 1st - 4th Battalion, Part 2
- Uniforms 1st - 4th Battalion, Part 3
- 1st - 4th Battalion, Part 4
- Lotte uniform Field Kitchen Lotteries
- Sanitetskompagniet Field
- Armband Police Detachment 1st - 4th
- Light weapons Battalion, Part 1

Swedish weapons in Danish service. From Source 4.

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The Danish designations of the weapons are: 6.5 mm rifle M.96 S, 9 mm machine gun M 37/39 S, 9 mm gun M.40 S and 47 mm mortar M.40 S. The hand grenades are the Swedish Spränghandgranat m/39 (with shaft) and Spränghandgranat m/40 (sand visibly). The Danish designation of the hand grenades does not appear in the sources.

The Swedish field uniform Model 1939



The Swedish field uniform Model 1939 was made of grey-brown fabric. It replaced the gray field uniform Model 1910 and the gray-brown Model 1923 of the interwar period.

Model 1939 was used by the entire Swedish army, except for the Home Guard (Hem värdnet), for which a special uniform of roughly the same cut was produced.

Swedish infantryman, in uniform Model 1939. From "Soldatinstruktion för Infanteriet", 1939, from which the degree signs also originate.

The Swedish rank insignia, of golden brass, were worn on the epaulettes, with a system of stars for the officer ranks and angles for non-commissioned officers.

Note that Swedish sergeants only carried two angles.



From Source 7.

Corresponding insignia were used in the Brigade, as the *Group badge for officers* from the Danish model 1923 uniform was added to the officers' uniforms.



Uniform 44, Swedish model

An actual field uniform appeared in the summer of 1944. It was made of Swedish uniform fabric, the same type as the Swedish Model 1939 uniform, but the uniform jacket of a different cut. With its short jacket, it was reminiscent of the English battle dress from 1937, and the soldiers therefore immediately christened it the *Montgomery uniform*.

Source 1 shows on page 153 a picture of the brigade commander, General Knudtzon, in which he wears a leather waist belt with an accompanying diagonal belt. Whether this leather clothing originates from the general's Danish uniform or from Swedish holdings is not known.

The cut of the uniform was also reminiscent of the German Model 1944 uniform, whose short jacket i.a. came about as a result of a shortage of uniform fabric. The lack of fabric was great in Sweden and it was therefore rationed. From the Swedish side, they did what they could to meet the Danish needs, but even when the Brigade was transferred to Denmark at the beginning of May 1945, not all brigades were equipped with the correct uniform; the lowest priority units, e.g. The Motor Vehicle Command and the Fire Command still wore the ski pants and canvas jackets that were also used in the training camps.

In the spring of 1945, the Brigade was ordered to acquire and lay out equipment for two regiments (2 x 5,000 men), which it was anticipated would be created after the Brigade's transfer to Denmark. The much-needed uniform fabric had been released by the Swedish authorities, and the production of uniforms had begun when Peace came. It was thus not possible to have these uniforms completely ready when the Army called up personnel in the summer of 1945; only the required number of boots were completely in place.

Swedish captain of the artillery, in uniform Model 1939. From "Soldier's Instruction for the Infantry", 1939.



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Armed to the teeth, the just-returned soldiers - the vanguard of the 1st Battalion - are seen on the quay in Helsingør, 5 May 1945.

This reproduction of one of the classic images from Brigadier comes from Source 1; can be found in an annotated edition in "1. - 4. Bataljon, Part 2."

The photograph gives a good impression of the brigadier uniforms and their personal equipment.

Sources

1. *DANFORCE, The Danish Brigade 1943-45* by RS Kidd, MILITARY HOBBIES, March-April 1990.
2. *The Brigade - The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945* by Knud JV Jespersen, Gyldendal, Copenhagen 1993, ISBN 87-00-14924-1.
3. *Some experiences and memories from the Danish Brigade's material acquisitions* by captain, weapons engineer, Einar Lund and captain HC Engel, Dansk Artilleri-tidsskrift, 5th issue, October 1946, pages 155-189.
4. *Swedish and English equipment in the Danish army* by Ole Niemann, Gyldenløve (published by the Queen's Life Regiment Soldiers' Association), December 1998. The material appears to be a compilation of the author's articles *Swedish weapons and equipment in the Danish Army 1944 - approx. 1950* and *English equipment in the Danish army after the occupation period* published in *Våbenhistorisk Tidsskrift*, no. 1/1998 and no. 7/1997 (published by Våbenhistorisk Selskab).
5. *Textbook for Army Privates, Part 1, Temporary Edition, Common for all weapons, corps and departments*, Copenhagen 1946 and 1950.
6. *Swedish weapons in the Danish army 1946* by Captain IV Vorsling, Dansk Artilleri-tidsskrift, 4th issue, August 1946, side 105-122.
7. *The Danish Brigade* edited by Niels Grunnet and Bent Demer, H. Hirsprungs Forlag, Copenhagen 1945.
8. *The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945* by KV Nielsen, published by The Danish Brigade Association, 1985, Copenhagen 1985, ISBN 87-981346-4-7.

Conclusion

With RS Kidd's plate and the other information in the same article, a natural conclusion has been added to my presentation of the history of the Danish Brigade in Sweden, and thus this special chapter in the history of the Armed Forces.

RS Kidd completely fails to mention the Brigade's Flying Forces and their special uniform. To partially cover this gap, I refer to "Brigade's Flying Forces."



Pilot badge w/36.
From "[Silver Vingar & Gold Vingar.](#)"

However, not all aspects of the air force's uniforming are fully explained. Used e.g. Swedish pilot wings or Danish and, if so, was the difference between pilots from the Army and the Navy maintained?

There are thus still unclear points in the story, so perhaps this is not my last paper on the Brigade after all...

Per Finsted

The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943-1945 - Uniforms, Supplement

Introduction

In my paper on the uniforms of the Brigade I wrote that I was not aware of how officers were distinguished. I can now make up for this shortcoming somewhat, although the partial answer raises a number of further questions.

Group badge for officers



Officiant O. Christensen, platoon leader for 1st Platoon, 2nd Company, 4th Battalion. From [the Brigade Association's website](#).

The picture shows collar badges, which must be assumed to be the Danish group badges for officers.

Unlike the group badge worn by the officers, the officiant's collar badge does not appear to be identical to the corresponding Danish Model 1923 badge.



Group badge for officers, Model 1923.
From Source 1.

The "Swedish" mark, although it can be difficult to pin down exactly, appears to be lozenge-shaped, not circular.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to see the distinctions on the shoulder flaps, so this part of the "enigma" is still open.

Officiant Christensen wears the Brigade's rifle badge and machine gun badge over his left breast pocket. Furthermore, a smaller circular mark is worn, which unfortunately I cannot identify. A perhaps similar mark that appears on the RS Kidd's uniform planche (Figure J) is referred to as an unspecified insignia.

Sources

1. *Textbook for Army privates, 1. Part, Temporary Edition, Common for all weapons, corps and departments*, Copenhagen 1946 and 1950.

Per Finsted

¹ Appendix 1 to "1st - 4th Battalion, Part 1" shows the detailed organization of 2nd Company in 4th Battalion.

The Danish Brigade - Uniforms Supplement on Swedish department marks and degree signs

Introduction

In connection with a question from a reader of Chakoten's website, Søren ?, I have received three plates that he previously received from a collector of stamps from the Danish Brigade.

The plans can nicely supplement the material about the Brigade's uniforms, which is already available on the website, although there are still a number of unanswered questions.

One thing you have to keep in mind in connection with the Brigade's badges is which part of the Brigade's history you are dealing with, as the uniform changes between periods. The history of the brigade's uniforms can be roughly divided into three periods - before the mobilization, the mobilization and the transfer to Denmark and the effort in Denmark.

Department badges The

following badges originate from *Soldatistruktion för infanteriet, 1944* (a Swedish counterpart to the Danish textbook for the army's privates) and were found on the website "[Pansarcentralen](#)" ([Thorleif Olsson](#)), Uniform w/39.

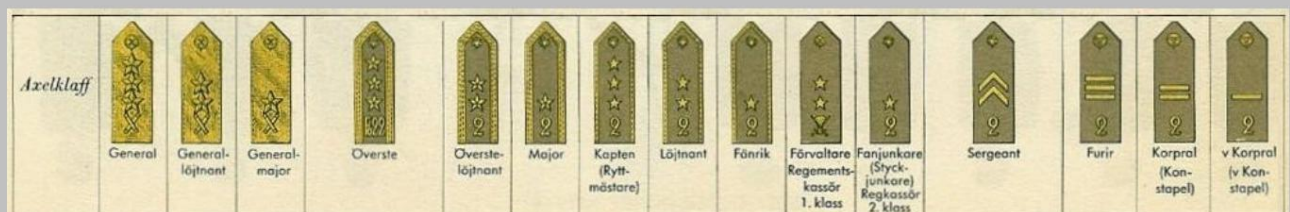


Some of these marks can be recognized from the three plates supplied by Søren. Not all service boundary marks appear on the Swedish plate, but on the other hand from Søren's plates. The Danish Brigade was primarily an infantry unit, a too strong infantry regiment, so not all brands are relevant in connection with the Brigade.

The Swedish badges came in two sizes, a larger one for use on shoulder pads and a smaller one for use as collar badges. To what extent the large or small version of the marks were used is not clear.

On the Danish uniform - Uniform 44, Swedish model, as it was later designated - the Swedish department insignia were worn on the shoulder pads in the staff and certain parts of the supply troops (e.g. the brigade's press quarter), while as far as is known not in the combat troops (infantry battalions) or the combat support troops (pioneer command). Certain parts of the supply troops (the Motor Vehicle Command and the Fire Command) were not equipped with Uniform 44 when they were transferred to Denmark, but used canvas jackets and ski pants, and it is not known whether department insignia were worn on the canvas jackets.

Degree sign



The Danish Brigade - Uniforms

Supplement on Swedish department marks and degree signs

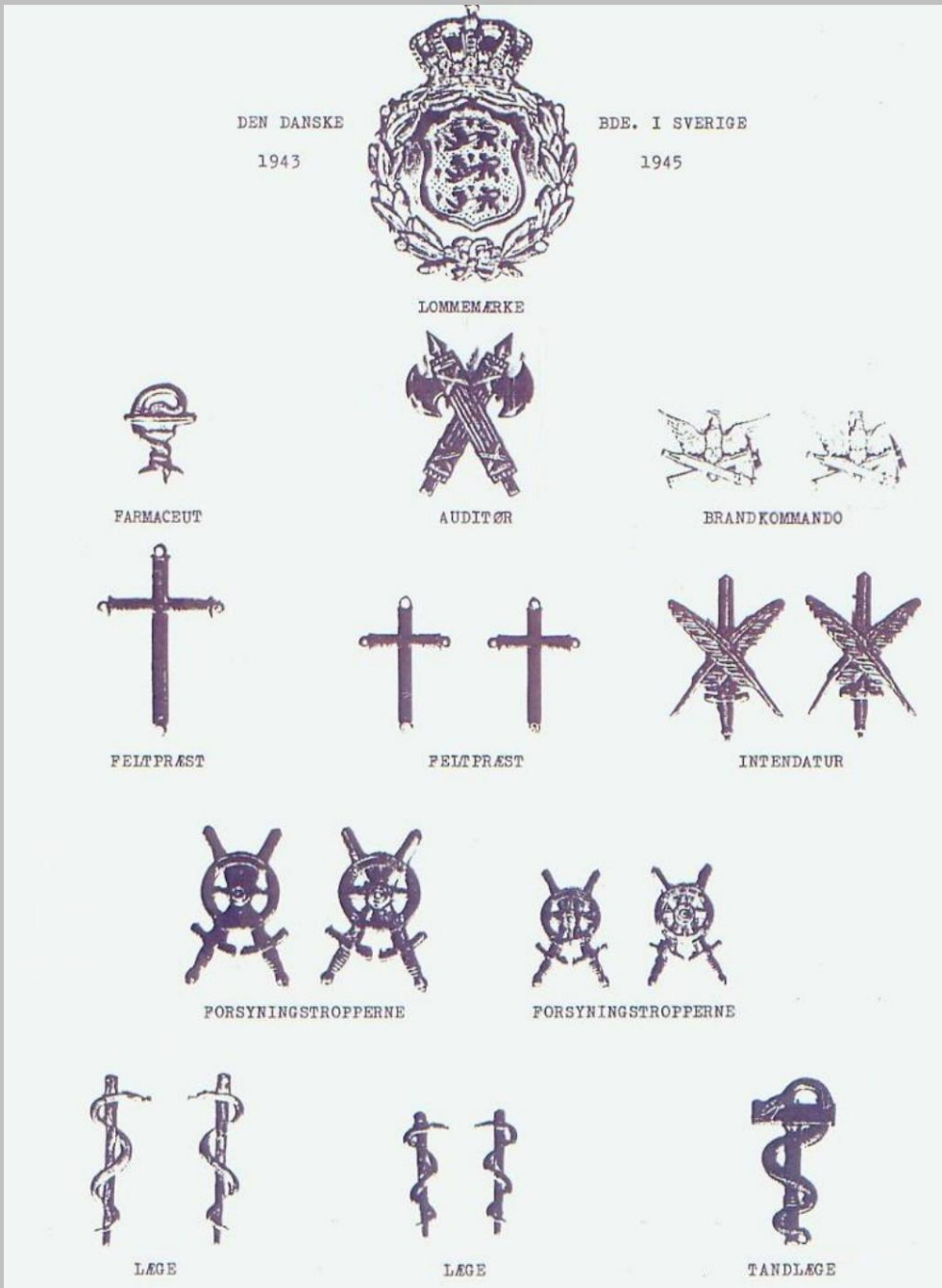
Similarly, several of the Swedish insignia are found as elements of the Brigade's insignia in Søren's plates.

However, it was not the case that the Brigade used the Swedish degree signs directly, but used elements of degree signs - stars, beams and angles - from the then - and possibly earlier - Swedish uniform system.

Thus, the shoulder rank insignia for a sergeant major was two silver bars, a sergeant had a silver bar, while a corporal and a corporal carried two and one angle respectively. Although here it appears that, in relation to the Swedish system, the insignia of sergeants and corporals had thus been exchanged, it must be remembered that sergeants and sergeants, according to the Danish 1923 uniform system, used two and one bar respectively as shoulder insignia.

The Danish Brigade - Uniforms Supplement on Swedish department marks and degree signs

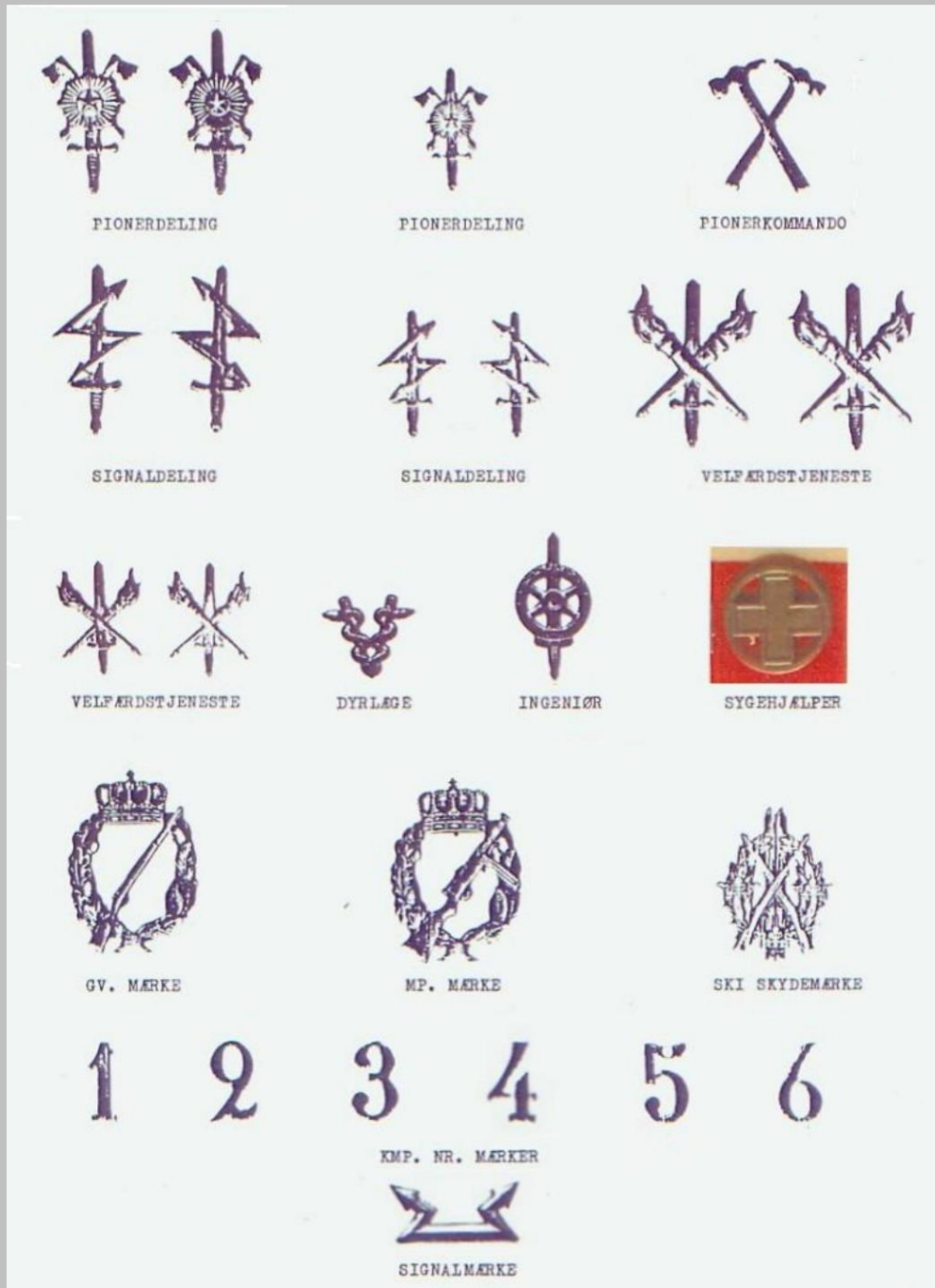
Board 1



The pharmacist was involved
Sanitation company's
Field laboratory and
Pharmacy

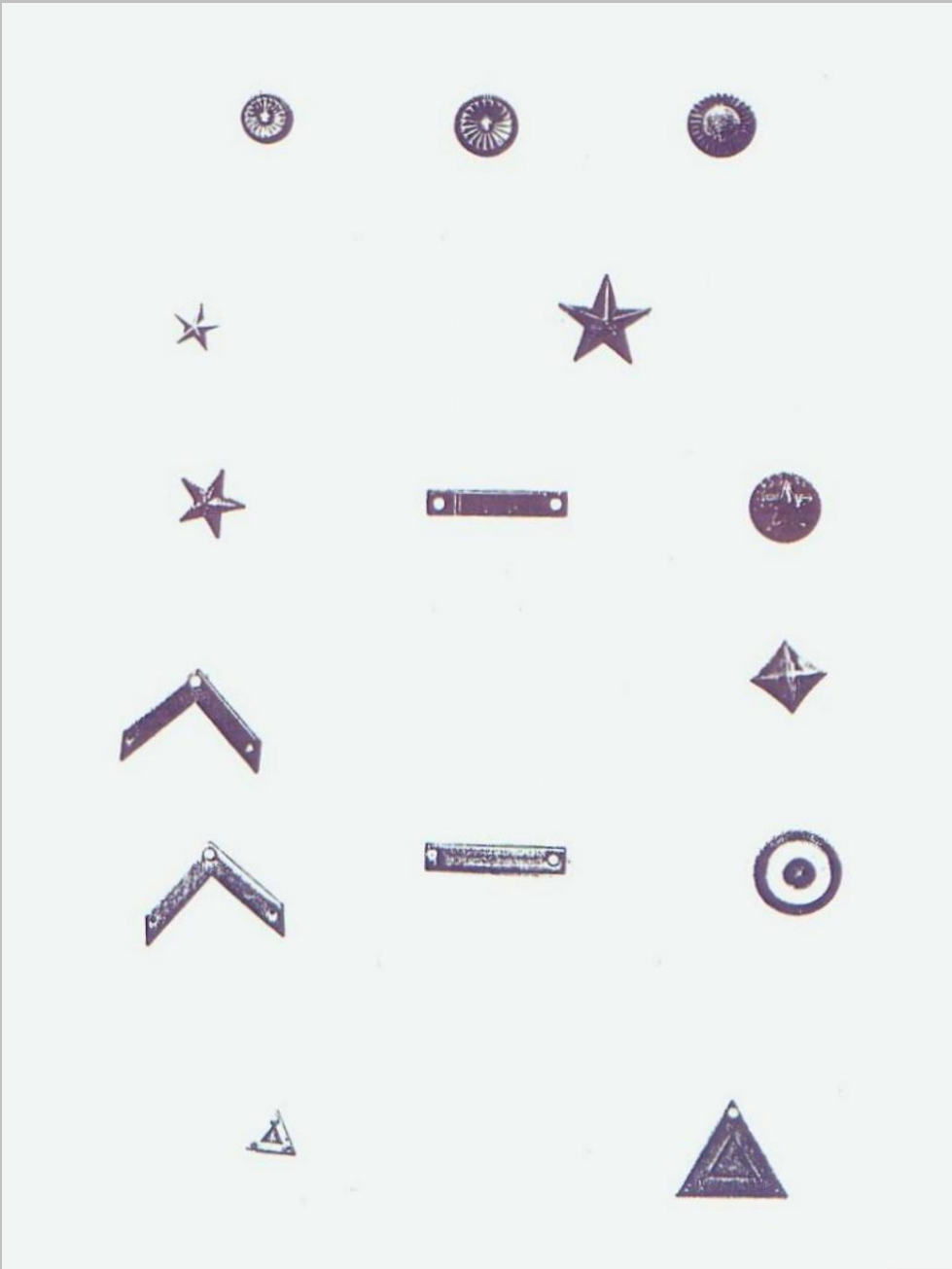
The Danish Brigade - Uniforms
 Supplement on Swedish department marks and degree signs

Board 2



The Danish Brigade - Uniforms
Supplement on Swedish department marks and degree signs

Plate 3



The Danish Brigade's uniforms and equipment

From [the Swedish Army Museum's collections](#)



Uniform jacket



Uniform trousers



Shirt



Slips



Dog sign



Cloak



Boots



Gaiters



Felthue



Steel helmet M/37 with obscuring net



Cartridge case



Bread bag



Felt bottle



Kogekar



Kogekar



gas mask



Backpack



Field spade



Rifle M/1896



Rifle M/1896



Cans of gun oil for M/1896



Bayonet



Bayonet scabbard



Bayonet holder



Barbed Wire Scissors



Climbing donkey