

# The Danish soldier's uniform and other personal field equipment in the 1864 campaign

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## The qualitative and quantitative state of the holdings

The uniform (and in general the "personal equipment", nowadays mainly constituting what is called "standard equipment"), which was regulated for our soldiers during the 1864 campaign and for several troops during the stay at and in front of the Dannevirke position in the winter of 1863 -64, measured both by the yardstick of the time and later times, can be described as adequate in its norm, although a single deficiency stands out strongly, while at the same time it can be said that the existing deficiencies in the stocks at the time of the mobilization were no greater than they could be covered, and was covered within a reasonable time, which, however, should not escape the fact that, especially in January-February 1864, late allocation of funds exposed certain parts of the army's personnel to unreasonable hardships.

When the reasons for the weakening of the troops' physical resistance, which became a significant factor in the decision about Dannevirke's escape, had to be laid bare, this entire group of equipment, together with the catering problems, was subjected to a very thorough investigation, the results of which came to be found in the "Rigsrådet's Folketingsudvalgs Report" of 18 August 1864." This report's disclosure of unfortunate dispositions, respectively more tangible qualitative and quantitative deficiencies in the army's equipment, as well as the proposals contained therein for the most expedient distribution and utilization of the available opportunities, however, provoked a very careful account of 24 October so from the head of the army's Intendant , general intendant UC v. Schmidten.

From his statements, it appeared that almost all deficiencies had to be attributed to money that had been assigned too late; however, he emphasized that almost all troops had gone to the theater of war reasonably equipped with everything that belonged to the norm of the time. On the other hand, it came to light that a lack of dynamism, initiative, imagination and joy of responsibility on the part of many troop members had caused the forces far greater suffering than inadequate equipment, and that certain tactically incorrect dispositions had also contributed to these hardships.

## Preparations that were the subject of great interest

A brief review of the entire munitions status of the army at the beginning of mobilization at the end of the year 1863 may give an impression of assets and liabilities on this account.

The review only includes the "outfit", i.e. the equipment, the equipment, the soldier has at his disposal of a purely "passive" nature to protect himself from the weather and the field, to some extent also the rigors of the battle itself. It will thus be everything that relates to his uniform, underwear, toilet cleaning and catering supplies, his personal rest equipment and the means of packing and carrying for this. This group therefore does not include weapons with accessories of any kind or other "active" material.

The soldier's passive equipment will always be and has always been more "in the wind" than the active one, for the sole reason that the soldier's relatives are naturally more interested in his chances of survival and possibilities of not "suffering" too much during a campaign than in his active performance as a soldier, and in the population there will naturally also be a greater insight into clothing and catering conditions than into the actual military subjects.

These things will always give rise to discussion and did so much more both during and after the campaign in 1864, as this was a winter campaign, with the resulting large demands precisely for the muzzle.

A fair assessment of the conditions must include an assessment of what had been determined as necessary for our soldiers to carry in terms of clothing, etc., in the field compared to corresponding norms, partly in our opponents, partly in other European armies, all on the basis of the technical conditions of the time (and to that extent also tactical) options.

Exceptionally, the idea can be carried forward to the present day with the experience gained in the meantime, especially in such cases where neither economic, technical nor tactical difficulties can be said to have stood in the way.

## **The problems of the infantry demanded the most attention**

In 1863/64, the army's *ordre de bataille* was heavily dominated by infantry. In August 1863, the strength of a mobilization had been calculated at approx. 45,000 combatants + 3,000 non-combatants - train drivers, nurses, officer attendants and "military workers". During mobilization, there would be a lack of mouthpieces and generally "passive equipment" for approx. 20% of this strength - for non-combatants to 100%.

Of the 45,000 combatants, 35,000 men were infantry, the rest divided between 1,5000 cavalrymen, 4,500 artillerymen and 500 engineer soldiers.

Even in the autumn months, there were no means other than the ordinary ones to build up the missing stocks, and they could only barely keep up with the wear and tear of the serving peace forces.

It wasn't until mid-December 1863 that the first extraordinary grants came, and the military depot (the term at the time for what we today call "the Defense Materiel Directorate") could start the large-scale procurement works that were necessary to immediately cover the worst missing. But - as so often before and so often since - the money came so late that the opportunities to remedy the deficiencies were limited. It was not so much, as in 1914 and 1939, the supply of raw materials from outside that failed, as the country's poor industrial capacity, which asserted itself the moment the demands exceeded what the tailors and shoemakers could perform. Thus, the provision of 10,000 Tornyster intendants caused the greatest difficulties - as the total capacity of the others was 300 per month to begin with - later approx. 2400.

## **The muzzle regulations of 1863**

The basis for the entire equipping plan was a uniform regulation published in 1863, which detailed in detail what each individual soldier had to be equipped with when he went into the field.

The lists did not vary very much from type of weapon to type of weapon, although the cavalrymen had to be provided with several cases for the smoking and guarding of the horse, which the infantryman was in any case completely exempt from.

It will therefore be reasonable, with the above-mentioned predominance of infantry that characterized the army, to go through the main points of the infantryman's outfit.

Such a review is greatly facilitated by the fact that in 1864 there were no "specialists" in the regiment - everyone was dressed, equipped and trained the same, the only ones who noticeably deviated from the norm were the officers, who did not wear "issued" clothes, but let their private tailors uniform them and let their attendants carry what they needed in the regiment during march, rest or bivouac for comfort, namely a cloak and a blanket, a "travel bag" - what in our day would be called a shoulder bag or knapsack - with toiletries, extra socks and some stationery as well as a "tejne" - a wickerwork basket with a lid - in which the officer's "natural food", bread, wine bottle, eating and cooking utensils were brought. The guard, together with the hornblower, was actually the infantry units' only "specialist" not armed with rifles!

# The composition of the mouthpiece

The uniform regulations of 1863 established for the infantryman a field uniform consisting of the following uniform parts:

- field hat [1](#)), blue, low-padded with shadow
- coat of arms, double-breasted, dark blue with red collar
- mirror two pairs of trousers light blue cloak, black/grey
- black leather belt black, half-length boots, which the soldier
- himself had to bring to his meeting at the army and maintain
- himself.

**a. Toilet and grooming supplies** included all matters for the care of the person, clothes and leather, including footwear. But the regulations do not mention anything about shaving equipment, although expressly a mirror! The soldier had to - as was the case even today - take care of these matters himself, some of which had been handed over to him at the meeting as a recruit. That only a minority had these things at their disposal when they were called upon for mobilization goes without saying.

The uniform regulations stipulated that each soldier should always be provided with an extra set of soles and patches with the necessary repair tools to be able to carry out soles and rear patching. This regulation testifies to the many skills that the primitive peasant society of the time, from which the army's soldiers were recruited, mastered. Later times have, as might be expected, centralized this part of the mouth ring's maintenance in the field.

**b. The catering supplies** included only a field bottle (glass with leather cover), a spoon, a folding knife and a schnapps bottle. One can hardly count a "bread bag" made of white canvas carried over the right shoulder in a leather strap under a black canvas flap as belonging to this group, since said bread bags were used for many things other than bread (and other catering), which is why they are listed under packing and guide means as an aid to the tower's capacity.

## c. Rest equipment

did not appear in the regulations. According to the opinion of the time - and it persisted for a long time - one did not think of giving the soldier a blanket to wrap himself in at night in the winter, when the cloak, which served this purpose in the summer, was worn permanently fitted, as one for the Danish climate tailored winter uniform.

However, this lack led to a series of improvisations.

The severe cold that set in in December-January 1863/64 meant that partly through "Det militaire Vardepot" and partly through private collections, the army at Dannevirke received a certain quantity of blankets, which, however, was far from equivalent to the troop strength. While the quartermaster maintained that they were "barracks equipment" and were to remain in the camps and establishments that served for occupancy, most battalions considered both the provided and privately donated blankets the personal clothing of the soldiers in question, which is why in several infantry units they were strung about the thorny nest when you moved out, in order to be able to enjoy them on field guards and in bivouacs, where they were, after all, even more welcome than indoors, where there was, however, shelter from rain, snow and wind.

In addition, certain non-combatants could not be issued a cloak and were therefore regulated (temporarily) with a blanket instead. This side of the mouth ring was therefore characterized to the highest degree by non-uniformity.

Individual tent flags were not introduced, neither by our opponents nor by us [2](#)) - although First Lieutenant E. Bretton of the 18th Infantry Regiment had already in 1862 at his own expense published an elegantly illustrated "battle script" that vigorously agitated for the introduction of such flags. At the same time, one went

another submits in "Tidsskrift for Krigsvæsen" strongly for the same idea - designed in a different way; but approximately 3 generations had to pass before we equipped our soldiers with raincoats that could be used as tent parts (1948).

As mentioned, the Austrians and Prussians did not use them either, but introduced them in the 1890s. By 1864 they were the norm in France and in certain parts of the British Army.

#### **d. The combat equipment**

This group of protective agents against the effect or the consequences of the enemy's weapons effort, which nowadays includes protective equipment of such vital importance as helmets, masks against volatile gases, salves with liquid ABC warfare agents, obscuring nets, bandage packs, penicillin, etc., were in 1864 for the infantry limited to a canvas binder with "charpi" - a form of dispute - which the wounded soldier had to stick into a wound in order to thereby try to stop the bleeding. It was not until immediately before the First World War that our soldiers had individual dressing packs sewn into their uniforms.

The helmets of the cavalry - more precisely those of the dragoon regiments - were, however, means of protection on an equal footing with the steel helmets of our day, only with the more modest task of protecting the cavalryman's head against saber cuts - for which they were otherwise excellently suited.

The personal mark, which today also forms part of this group, was not known in 1864.

#### **e. Mouthing, packing and guiding means**

These consisted - as today - of a larger packing material - the thornyster - and a smaller one - the bread bag (see above). With these two cases, all non-prepared personnel were rationed. The mounted crew had the so-called mantle sacks of more or less water-absorbing cloth strapped to the back of the saddle for extra clothes, toilet, cleaning and catering items.

As mentioned, the provision of the necessary number of turrets caused considerable difficulties. There was no actual approved type, as they simply used the stock of frameless sealskin truncheons that originated from the First Schleswig War and the time before that, supplemented with captured calfskin truncheons of the German/Holstein model. When in January 1864 the aforementioned 10,000 pieces had to be applied for in a hurry. further provided, one had to give up almost all demands for a model that could be equated with the two types in use and settle for what was called, in the language of the time, "a kind of travel bag with 2 shoulder straps". Today, one would say "backpack" (without actual cloak attachment options).

All 3 models were, however, equally applicable [3](#) in the packing system that the army had adopted immediately before and in the main implemented during the Three Years' War to replace the previously used way of carrying the infantrymen's and hunters' equipment and ammunition packing materials.

For the mounted or vehicle-marching troops, no real packing problems existed, carrying nothing but a blank weapon plus a field bottle and a bread bag.

The packaging system itself was the brainchild of the Brandenburg major Vierschow.

The main principle in this was that the thornyster carrying strap was connected to the waist belt at the front, which thereby gained so much support that it was possible to place in it a few bags for rifle ammunition, sidearms and a field bottle, thereby - apart from the bread bag strap - avoiding having 1 constricting and oppressive straps across the chest. This further achieved that you got a pack that did not slide down in front of the soldier during rapid movements, because its main weight on the back (turret) and the main weight in front (the cartridges) kept each other in balance over the shoulder.

This carrying system, which in its original form was used at home right up to and including World War II, had the disadvantage, however, that as soon as the turret was laid - and this was something that people liked to do, since its

main contents were not things the soldier needed every day - then the support for the heavy weights of the waist belt was gone. And evacuation without Thornyster was, among other things, during Dybbøl's siege the usual for the infantry.

If the cloak was not worn - that is, during the day in the warm months of the year - it was worn rolled in a horseshoe shape over the top of the tower. Since the turrets from the Three Years' War were not equipped with options for fastening the cloak along the sides, as the cloak in 1848-51 was worn rolled up in a puddle on top of the turret, a so-called "cloak carrier strap" was used, which gripped the two ends of the cloak and held them in until the sides of the turret by means of a connecting strap that was stretched out between them along the bottom of the turret 4).

This method of cloaking, which was in use in the army right up to 1938, was very flawed and slow to use, which, by the way, only appeared on a single occasion - when alerting the resting troops on the Als on the night of June 29.

## **Both the system and the holdings gave rise to few complaints**

A critical review of the regulations gives us neither the latter nor the other areas the right to harsh criticism - although a few individual points must be highlighted. It was and had to be a significant weakness of the whole system that it was completely left to the soldier to provide himself with underwear (in 1864 this now included nothing more than a shirt and a pair of stockings - undershirts and trousers were unknown) and especially with the boots belonging to the "under-armor", on which the soldier's ability to march and therefore to fight completely depended, not to mention his health.

The only reason the system was unusable was that, even if he met with serviceable boots on mobilisation, the military authorities had in any case to provide compensation if boots broke during the war, and compensation for underwear etc. had to be prepared as well.

During the mobilisation, they were aware of this situation, but most of the cases lacked a proper response to quickly arising demands. During the entire war, the boot difficulties were almost greater than the difficulties with the actual uniform matters - again a result of Denmark's low industrial capacity at the time.

Only during the First World War did the army itself take over the soldiers' supply of boots, but you had to have the Second World War behind you before the same was the case with underwear and socks, and only in very recent times has the scheme been extended to the (clothing) polishing equipment, thus that in the 100th year of the 1864 campaign, the soldiers themselves are only required to "take care of" their toilet supplies (which, in terms of replacements in the field, must also be prepared in the army itself).

## **The lack of one-person cookware and cutlery**

In another area, the chosen line for the muzzle standard had to cause difficulties. In contrast to our opponents, the Danish soldier did not have any kind of individual eating or cooking utensils. And this despite the fact that the experiences of the Three Years' War, especially in the winter of 1850/51, had strongly highlighted the necessity of this item of clothing.

In the 1830s, there had been a series of heated discussions in the military trade press about whether cooking in a one-man or ten-man vessel would be preferable, and this unhappy either-or, which even then should have been decided by a both-and, was ended up with the abolition of an initial stock of one-man cooking pots. During the Three Years' War, the troops complained that they never had the cooking utensils ready when they moved into bivouac or in the evening, they had to wait for the arrival of the training with associated night work to get the food cooked; just as the access to brew a hot drink outside the official cooking hours and when posts and patrols were out on their own led to the use of the then tin field bottles, which were largely destroyed by this use. But apart from the tin bottles being replaced with glass bottles (in 1852), which did not allow boiling, nothing came of complaints and wishes between the two wars.

It must seem completely unfathomable to most people that they had not already clearly realized at the time what a morale-boosting and discipline-preserving asset easy access to a hot drink at all hours of the day meant and means to soldiers of Danish character.

While the scavenging of today's dinner portion by 10 different mouths from the same ten-man kettle has largely fallen naturally to the primitive soldier type of the time - the method was used in the army in certain troop units right up to 1916 (!) - the miss of the one-man kettles has been more than palpable, as the kettle, who always "was with the troops" when the kitchen training either could not reach the many scattered advance posts in front of the position or for tactical reasons had withdrawn and did not benefit the bivouacing troops behind the position - especially after the outbreak of hostilities on 1 February. During the retreat, where troops and equipment were totally separated - in some cases for almost 1 week - the loss [5](#)) was also palpable, and a general hunt for all portable pots and pans in Sundeved was the result.

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During the siege of Dybbøl, the distribution of hot beer, which was initiated every morning to the freezing troops who spent the night in the uprooted and tattered positions, caused the greatest difficulty - but it was not until 1889 that the one-man kettles began to be introduced, for the time being only for the infantry, the other guns didn't come until 1916!

## **The missing uniform parts - seen in its larger context**

The difficulties that quickly and mercilessly reared their head when the army moved to a war footing did not get very old.

There are many examples of an army moving out with its equipment in the finest order, only to quickly see the splendor crumble away. In 1864, one can almost speak of the opposite, as the intendant succeeded with astonishing power in a short time to remedy all significant deficiencies, partly through several skilful improvisations. The most serious thing was that almost all non-combatants had to go to the theater of war in civilian clothes! In the case of the artillerymen, it took some time before everyone had a cloak - a not insignificant piece of clothing for an artilleryman during a winter campaign. But the soldier of the time, who, thanks partly to the occupational distribution of the population and partly to the "position" permit, was dominated by a hardy rural type, has hardly suffered as much as one of today's welfare citizens from the comfortable life of a big city would have suffered in that situation.

The fact that in some cases Faroese shirts or less pompously equipped "dress shirts" (single-breasted short uniform shirts in contrast to the coats of arms) were worn under the permanently applied cloak has hardly been a disadvantage apart from what it has meant psychologically for the soldier not to be in actual uniform when he (in the neighborhood, for example) took off his cloak. But by spring, when the cloaks were shed, all these defects had been smoothed out.

There has been considerable controversy over the "light blue cloaks", which for many decades after the campaign were still at the center of public criticism of the equipment of the troops in 1864.

These cloaks were handed out after all the grey-black ones had been handed out, and were thus used to dress the reinforcement cohorts last called up in January (soldiers of the 9th to 16th cohort sent home). When the reinforcements went to the regiments in Schleswig, they were naturally ranked in the various companies - it was only the infantry that was in question here - which they went and stood according to how many people were missing in the relevant subdivisions. As a result, these "forgetfuls", as the soldiers' slang immediately dubbed them, strongly stood out in the otherwise dark company, and they considered themselves, rightly or wrongly - something has probably been said about it according to common military experience - particularly exposed to the enemy's interest during the firefight.

Hence the fierce criticism and many bitter words about these cloaks, which, by the way, as they were newly made and of a far better cloth than the gray ones.

Seen with the eyes of our day, it seems peculiar that the Intendant of the Army, who had procured these cloaks

for roads in the midst of a period when no other cloth was obtainable, had not thought of re-dyeing it before it was processed. It seems even more peculiar that there was no exchange of the cloaks out in the regiment, so that all light blue cloaks were collected together to clothe a certain company with - and thereby avoided the danger that is always of having people in the line of fire in a from the large amount of outstanding uniform. But the myth that they were old cavalry cloaks or light blue "overcoats" from before the 1st Schleswig War had nothing to do with it.

## **The effectiveness of the mouthpiece depends on the training**

This keeping troops in physical and final shape during a campaign - especially in winter - is now not only a question of the appropriateness and presence of the material, but equally of the training of the troops in its proper utilization and, when it comes to that "passive" equipment., about their "field habits" and the ability of the drivers to improvise and take advantage of every opportunity to provide the soldiers with the protection and perhaps comfort that can be wrested from nature - especially when it is harsh and winter cold.

Here, the conditions in the army in 1864 left much to be desired, and it is clear from the investigations of the "Weakness Commission" that the hardships were significantly increased due to the inability of the troops to "fit in" and their leaders' poorly developed imagination and sense of responsibility, one could provide the soldiers with the small reliefs that make field life bearable. Many years of the cancellation of all major field-oriented exercises in a larger style, the habitual clinging to barracks establishments with the time spent on formal garrison duty and drills had destroyed the opportunities of the long training period to give - especially the infantry - a necessary field attitude to the demands of war.

The Army's Directorate had, for example, behind the Dannevirkestilling provided all necessary stocks of fuel and bivouac materials - but the ability to improvise collection and utilization of these stocks, whose presence had been announced, was not present. Even the best uniforms and cloaks cannot prevent soldiers from freezing if a company commander shrinks back from collecting the supplies of fuel and provisions that are now needed to warm up soldiers in the winter cold - and what was missing was cooking utensils (one-man kettles ) much pork could be roasted on a stick over a sentry fire, which, according to the possibilities of the time, could be lit anywhere along the fronts at night on both sides, which could not normally reach each other with the short-range guns of the time.

But all too often neither provisions, fuel, nor camp straw were picked up, even by the battalions in the areas where the supplies were, much to the understandable astonishment of the intendant. Few thought that warm food and drink in the winter cold accomplishes more than the most luxurious clothing system.

Great stocks of boards for barracks lay untouched, while alarmed troops spent the nights in snow and sleet on top of the stacks; the fear of preying on the equipment of other authorities was greater among the officers of the time than the understanding of what can be required of recklessness in war in order to keep the troops' physique and thus the morale at full height. In a few moments such stacks of boards could have become screen roofs or huts in which bivouacing troops could have found shelter.

So let this be what it will be - the judgment of the "mouth creature" itself, as it was laid, can only fall in favor of its fathers.

Observers from foreign armies and correspondents of foreign magazines who, among other things, at Dybbøl followed the army's work at close range, frequently comments on that side of the matter in highly laudatory terms.

And it was not only the soldier's exterior, but also his interior that aroused the undivided admiration of these observers.

1) The field hat replaced the chakot introduced in 1854, which was worn only by the 18th Infantry Regiment during the entire campaign.

2) however partially in Norway and Sweden.

3) as long as no rolled-up cloak or blanket was to be carried on the so-called "interrims thornyst" just mentioned.

4) The cape carrying strap in itself made it possible to carry the cape "a bandolier" over the shoulder in a rolled-up form  
- when thornysts were not applied.

5) As a curiosity, it can be stated that the Prussian soldiers had no field bottle and suffered a lot because of it and had to continue through the 1866 war before this ration prop was introduced in 1867.

Likewise, that the Austrian soldiers had no boots, but wore shoes!