

The Hussar Company 1737-1746

Højberg
(Chakoten 1963/3)

(With notes by T. Snorrason)



In 1962, the Gardehusarregiment solemnly celebrated the 200th anniversary of the regiment's establishment by Kgl. resolution of 10 February 1762 with oberst (colonel), chamberlain and Count Moltke as commander. If one deduces from this that we have only had hussars in the Danish army for 200 years, one is however guilty of a mistake. Even if one disregards the corps of foreign hussars, who were called "hussar craftsmen", because these people were professionals and had chosen war as a craft, who were on certain occasions in the king's pay without having any real connection with the army, the time of the appearance of the first Danish hussars is set at least as early as 1737, as this year a HUSARCOMPAGNIE (the term squadron had not yet gained traction) was established as a subdivision of the LIVGARDEN TIL HEST and under the command of its commander. It should be noted that there has been an association between the Hussars and the Lifeguard on horseback since the establishment of the Hussar Company. This association was also present in 1762, as Count Moltke was at the same time commander of the hussar regiment and the Lifeguard on horseback [1](#)) and later an actual union took place of the two units under a common commander. [__](#)

With greater right than 1762, 1737 must therefore be considered the birth year of the Danish hussars. However, 1762 must correctly be regarded as the year of the establishment of the first Danish hussar regiment, although hardly the birth year of the Gardehusar Regiment that exists today, as Moltke's hussar regiment was disbanded already a few years after its establishment, and it was not until 1774 that a new hussar regiment was established in Denmark. This year is the first from which an unbroken line can be traced to the Gardehusar Regiment of today, whose "father" is therefore not Moltke: but rather von Späth, the commander of the Hussar Regiment of 1774.

The exact time for the establishment of the mentioned company must be set at the end of 1737. Prior to this, certain negotiations had taken place with Ritmester Elias Czäbler von Czäbelditz, a Hungarian in Imperial Austrian service, who with 12 hussar craftsmen had made himself available to King Christian VI, and a recruitment had taken place in Austria to bring the force up to the intended size, namely: 1 master of the march, 1 lieutenant, 1 cornet, 1 warden, 2 corporals, 1 trumpeter and 30 hussars. (Military Regulations of 1738).

Half of the hussars were to be Hungarians, half Danish and German.



Czäbler von Czäbelditz was appointed on 14 September 1736 as master of the future HUSAR COMPAGNIE (wage 60 Rdl. per month). However, it caused him certain difficulties in getting the crew together, notably because of the poor "tractamente" that was offered. The "reputable Danske Rytter with not even that respectable hussars' tractamente" in 1736 (of the rank of lieutenant from 1762), was 64 shillings a month was what was offered to a common hussar.

There were also difficulties in other ways, i.a. riding master Czäbler von Czäbelditz had to exert all his perseverance to get his salary paid by the treasury and money for the maintenance of the already enlisted people and their horses. He wrote four letters to General Løvenørn (these letters still exist) and complained about the lack of money to buy oats for the horses.

At the end of 1737, they had reached the point where provisions for the hussars' uniforming and equipment could be drawn up. The acquisition price for the full outfit was used for a common hussar at 75 Riksdaler 33 1/4 shillings, and it included according to Royal resolution of 23/11 1737 the following items:



Coat, trousers and boots (which should last 1 year).

Headgear, furs and hangings (duration 2 years).

Scarf (duration 3 years).

Chaberaque, saddle and kandar, cartridge case, saber case, cape, carabiner strap (these things were supposed to last 6 years).

Hangers and mouthpiece had to be tinned, the fitting on the carabiner strap was silver plated every two years.

Regarding the uniform, it is known (royal resolution of 2/12 1737) that the dress (i.e. the piece of clothing that is called the coat in the uniform list, nowadays the dolman) and the trousers are blue and equipped with silver galleons, whereas the hat, cloak and fur should be red. The trumpeter was not to wear a hussar uniform, but the uniform approved for trumpeters at Garden til Hest, as Czäbler von Czäbelditz must have claimed that trumpeters in foreign hussar units did not wear a hussar uniform - a view which is hardly tenable ²). The hussar company was given a standard which was produced for 30 Reichsdaler, the same sum as was used for the cavalry standards, but less than the amount sacrificed on the standards for Garden to Horse.

The concise official regulations on the uniform only give a rough idea of the appearance of the hussars, i.a. nothing is mentioned about lacing, the nature of the headdress and the appearance of the chaberaquet, so the inquisitive "uniformologist" is directed to seek additional information in available contemporaneous pictorial material.



Precisely in the years when the hussar company had its short-lived existence, the painter JJ Bruun developed a lively activity, especially with depictions of Danish castles and manors, both royal and private. His technique was gouache painting (water-soluble cover colours), and his small, somewhat naively perceived, but carefully prepared pictures can now be found around Danish manor houses, and at Rosenborg there is a representative collection. At Rosenborg and at Schackenborg there are pictures of Hirschholm Castle, and in both of these pictures a royal outfit with an escort of riders can be seen in front of the castle, which must be hussars of the hussar company, although this is not indicated. The picture at Schackenborg, about whose details regarding the hussars Sheriff Schack has given information, will be reproduced in the new Danmarkshistorie from POLITIKENS FORLAG and must according to the sheriff's information dates from 1739, while the picture at Rosenborg must date from 1740 and therefore, where there are discrepancies, the greatest value must be given. Both pictures show an escort of 1 officer (in the tête), 1 non-commissioned officer (in the queue) and 8 common hussars - which is in accordance with the provisions that a force of this size and composition should follow the reg. equipment while driving outside the residence. In both images, only the officer wears fur, in one case tucked in, in the other draped over both shoulders. Armament is for officers and non-commissioned officers saber and pistol, for commoners saber and carbine. All the horses, which are very small like real Hussar horses, are black or very dark brown.

Although the riders in the pictures are very small - hardly more than 2 cm incl. horse - they are, however, the most important and virtually the only source of my knowledge of the uniform, which has been as follows:

The **hat**: A red "elf hat" with a plume hanging from the back and a narrow brim with light brown fur. The officer's hat, probably with a gold lanyard 3) (?).

Coat: Light blue, short dolman without collar and turnout. If there have been notices, they are hidden by the collars of the gloves. On the chest 3 rows of probably white metal buttons, connected by white (silver) cords or gallons in a number of 10-12. A crew of cords is, of course, mostly hussar, but the outfit list expressly mentions gallons. If, in addition to the trim on the chest, there has been string or lace trim, it is not evident from JJ Bruun's pictures, but there has probably been a string or braid trim in the back seams, similar to the coat. A strange feature must be mentioned: it seems as if the front of the dolman (the part below the cords) has been red. If true, it is consistent with an uncolored reproduction of a painting depicting master rider Czäbler von Czäbelditz found in

"Gardehusar Regimentets historie", and which shows both the coat and the coat fitted with front pieces (battens) in a different colour.

Gloves: Light yellow collared gloves that hide any notices.

Trousers: Privates: Light blue trousers without crew. Officers: Red breeches with 2 silver galleons down the side.

Boots: Yellow hussar boots (with a narrow black edging at the top?). Iron or silver spurs.

The fur: Is red and medium length (to the middle of the thighs) and with brown fur trim. Crew of cords or galloons as a dolman. Presumably light blue front under chest string trim.

Hanging: Cannot be seen.

Saber case: Cannot be seen, as the riders are seen from the right side, but one is probably allowed to assume that, like the saber case of 1762, it has been blue on the front with royal coat of arms. monogram and crown in white (silver) and a heavy red border with white (silver) cord.

The cartridge bag: Can, on the other hand, be seen, hanging on the rider's right side at belt height - i.e. not on the back - probably in a strap (cannot be seen) over the left shoulder. The lid of the cartridge case is red with a white (silver) edge and kgl. monogram with crown in white (silver).

The scarf: Can't be seen, may have only been worn to stads. One can probably assume that for privates it was red/white cross-striped, similar to the sash of 1762 (officers: red/gold). The scarf is worn under the coat when it is worn.

Armament: Carbine (privates) and pistol (officers and non-commissioned officers) appear in the pictures to be attached to the right side of the saddle behind the rider, but can also very well be thought to be carried in the carabiner strap with silver-plated fittings mentioned in the list of ammunition. This has probably been light brown and may possibly be a combination of cartridge bag and carabiner strap.

Sabre: Probably with brass mount in black leather scabbard with brass fittings.



Valdrap: Privates and non-commissioned officers: red with single white edging and royal coat of arms. monogram against crown (white) in the rear-facing tips. As far as can be seen from the picture at Rosenborg, the rampart has had a peculiar shape 4), in that from its front edges a kind of bringerem of the same color as the rampart and edged with white emanates. Officers: Red with double silver edging. Between the edges a wider light blue border. The monogram on the rear-facing tips is in silver. Same peculiar shape as the privates' choice killing, but here the carrying strap is light blue.

Harness: Red or maroon. The canard decorated with brass buttons, for officers with silver buttons and a silver decoration on the canard's cross-strap.

The hussars were installed in February 1738 at Jægersborg; where the so-called "barracks" had been erected for the use of the company. As mentioned, the hussars' main task was to form an escort for the royal equipages. They were also used for postal and relay service between the royal castles. In Suhm's "New

Collections for the Danish History", III, it is said: "*They stayed, just like the Guard used to keep watch for 8 to 10 a day, they rode around the King's carriage when he drove, jogged the mob aside when they got too close, stayed and sent between the castles in hastige Ærinder and deslige*". They were hardly intended to be used for actual war service; it is significant that the company - unlike Garden til Hest in general - was not mobilized in 1742, when a war against Sweden was being considered in order to force the election of Crown Prince Frederik as heir to the Swedish throne.

By this time, von Czäbelditz had left the company, being discharged with the rank of major in 1741 on request and entering Prussian service. He was replaced by lieutenant Torchos (Hungarians), who led the company in the period 27/10 1741 - 18/3 1743 and was replaced by lieutenant Audahazi (also Hungarians), who was commander until 1746.

On 6 August 1746, Christian VI died at Hirschholm Castle, and already on the same day the Garden til Hest - including the hussar company - took the oath to Frederik V. However, the hussars did not serve long under the new king; still in the same month (31 August 1746) the company was disbanded. The common crew were dismissed with 2 months' salary as well as allowances and clothing.

Notes

1) *Not quite right. Moltke was commander of the Life Regiment Dragoons, but not of the Life Guard for Horse. (ts-2003)*

2) *Yes, it is quite correct at the time indicated. (ts-2003)*

3) *Was not used at the time. The hats are ordinary hussar hats, as they once looked to Austrian and all other hussars of the time. (ts-2003)*

4) *This form of hussar barracks is not strange at all, this is what the hussar barracks of the time looked like. See e.g. the drawings in the so-called Gudenus manuscript from approx. 1734. In between are also Austrian Hussars. It was at this troop draw that the whole of Europe became aware of the excellence of the hussar weapon, and many countries soon after established small hussar detachments. The picturesqueness and purely picturesque nature of the hussars' strange uniforms also played a role, of course. (ts-2003)*