

## Vejle County Recyl Corps

## Postcard



Preben Kannik designed a long series of the Danish army's different uniforms throughout the ages.

Some of these drawings were published as postcards; some of these are still available at Model og Hobby, Frederiksborgga 23, 1360 København K.

One of the postcards shows Denmark's Home Guard - a marksman from the Vejle County Rekylgværk, 1911 and a machine gunner from the Home Guard, 1957.

Two similar illustrations are also shown on the *Home Guard poster*.

The uniform for Vejle County's Rekylgværk is thus described in the book *The Danish Volunteer Corps*, Historical presentation published by the Central Committee for the Volunteer Corps, by dr.phil. Viggo J. von Holstein Rathlou, Aarhus and Copenhagen, 1930:

Light blue jacket, pointed trousers, hat (dark blue edge), black alpine jacket (?) and coveralls. The officers first dagger, later sabre.

The corps was armed with recoilless rifle M/1903 and rifle M/1889.

The home guard soldier from 1957 is wearing uniform M/1944 and carries a machine gun M/48 (without attached magazine) on his left shoulder.

## Vejle County Recylkorps The

book *The Danish Volunteer Corps* mentions all volunteer corps that came under the Central Committee for the Volunteer Corps, which was not all - for example, the Academic Shooting Corps did not fall under this committee.

The Vejle County Recoil Corps was established on 13 August 1911 and had 52 men at the time; in 1919 the strength was 73 men (including a reserve force which was created in 1914).



*From the camp at Borris.*

As early as 18 November 1911, the corps had the opportunity to go on a long-distance voyage and sailed by steamship from Vejle and Fredericia respectively to Copenhagen, where the corps, together with the other then existing volunteer corps, had to file past the crown prince (= the later King Christian X) - on Rosenborg Training Ground.

The book mentions the following amusing incidents from the parade:

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"We had an older, very eager and very skilled canteen soldier in the corps, a good man who was respected by everyone, but he had only become a soldier in his old days, and it was a bit difficult to get the civilian form out of him. He couldn't help bowing when he paid his respects, every such one inevitably ended with an elegant, very deep bow.

Before the corps paraded past the Crown Prince, the crew was ordered to walk tight and tight by the bike and look the Crown Prince straight in the eyes, but as neither the boss nor the chairman really trusted the canteen soldier in this regard, he was strictly forbidden from both sides to stop bowing. The parade began, everyone punctually followed the order given, but when the brave canteen soldier arrived, we, who watched the march past behind the Crown Prince, saw him put on his most affectionate smile and then bow straight down on the handlebars of the bicycle. He didn't give a damn about boss and chairman who wanted him to be rude, he had to show them he had the means, and it didn't occur to him for a moment that he was in any way violating the rules of military decency.

Later, when the Crown Prince passed along the front, he became aware of the bicycle stretcher, which was the canteen soldier's mount, and expressed to the commander his wish to see it in action. A man was called forward from the platoon, and he was given an order that neither the crew nor the rest of us who stood behind the corps could hear. We saw the man mount the bicycle, and we thought that the Crown Prince would see him maneuvering the bicycle fully packed, as both he and it were. Suddenly we all froze in horror as we saw the man fall off the bike and lie down. It was not on behalf of the man that we were frightened, but on behalf of the corps. We spared him the very worst in the heat of the moment, when he could prostitute himself and the corps in such an exquisite way, and it was not mere pleasantries that were handed out when we saw him dumped from the bicycle in front of the Crown Prince, his companions and all the corps. At a beckoning from the chief, the canteen soldier now stepped forward with his stretcher. Jumping off the animal, bowing with an obliging smile to the Crown Prince was a momentary matter for the aging Jens, and now he had the opportunity to show that he could do more than bow. Like lightning and thunder, he had a bandage put on the finely dressed broken leg, had the wounded man placed on the stretcher, and drove away with his prey, smiling sweetly. Only later did it dawn on us that the man had orders to crash the bicycle, and our rage was replaced by cheerfulness and benevolence towards the one who had let himself fall so naturally that none of us discovered that it was all a comedy."

At the outbreak of the First World War, as is well known, the border with Germany was at Kongeåen, and Vejle County was thus a border area. Vejle County's Recylkorps was in the most literal sense on the front line and after the outbreak of war it was decided to move the corps' depot to Viborg, so that clothing in connection with a possible mobilization could only take place under orderly conditions.



*The shooting range in Frede.*

On 12 August 1914, the corps took part in exercises with the Army and it was decided to carry out a trial alert at the same time, which proceeded quickly and efficiently. The subsequent delivery of the equipment gave rise to another remarkable incident for the good Vejle shooters. The book further describes:

"The delivery of the equipment at the depot in Vejle gave rise to dirty rumours, which went to the effect that the shooters had collected their equipment in bundles and thrown them in front of the depot's door in order to be free to meet. So they were supposed to have slyly thrown away their equipment, broken their word, and shown themselves to be cowardly, miserable rags, and then the truth was that every man was prepared to do his duty with clenched teeth. With resentment in those days we had to find ourselves in the rumours,

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which could not be put down publicly; it tormented the management, because it was a sin for our splendid people that they should quarrel like this. Then it happened that a sergeant in the reserve in February 1919 in a restaurant in Viborg told these rumors as established facts. Fortunately, it was reported to the Vejle County Recoil Corps by a senior gunner in the Viborg County Recoil Corps, who had participated in the conversation and had absolutely refused to believe a word of it all, who immediately set in motion to silence the sergeant in question. They managed to find him, and he had to agree to give the corps an unreserved written apology as follows: "I, the undersigned sergeant of the reserve NN at X Battalion, acknowledge that, according to the statements of citizens in Vejle, I had to form that at the outbreak of war the on-site delivery of muzzleloading cases at the Vejle County Recylkorps was prompted by the fact that the shooter signed off at this time.

After I was informed by Colonel Fog that it was an ordered handover that took place, I regret my statements and apologize to the corps for this. NN"

And Vejle County's Recylkorps was just one of the 20 corps that came under the Central Committee for the Volunteer Corps... the book is thus full of stories and anecdotes, to which it is not difficult to nod in recognition as a former Home Guardsman.



*After finishing the exercise.*

Per Finsted