

The Swedish Army 1939-1945 - Experiments with airborne units

Introduction

At the outbreak of war, the transport capacity of the Swedish Air Force was severely limited, but the need to be able to supply the many airfields that were built around the country was, on the other hand, great. Correspondingly, one was very naturally inspired by the German airborne operations, so it was natural that gliders also came into the picture in Sweden.

Lg 105 - A Swedish glider

The Aircraft Materiel Command prepared a list of requirements and AB Flygindustri in Halmstad was given the task of constructing a glider. The company already had experience from assembling foreign civilian gliders and two different types saw the light of day - a smaller aircraft of the type Fi-1 (in the summer of 1943) and a slightly larger aircraft of the type Fi-3 (March 1944). The Fi-3 was the answer to the air force's requirements, and was given the type designation Lg 105 (*cargo glider*).

However, neither project was particularly successful, and only six of each type were built. The trials with the gliders were characterized by accidents, and the prototype for the Lg 105 also crashed on 24 April 1944 during a load test at an altitude of 1,500 m. The pilot lost his life when his parachute did not fully open.

The air force's interest in the project cooled and further production of the 70 units that had originally been planned was discontinued. Around the turn of the year 1944-45, the first two gliders, out of a total of five that managed to be completed, were delivered to squadron (*flottilj*) F 14 in Halmstad.



*An Lg 105 glider, photographed in Malm-slätt, 1944.
From Fi-3 Rediviva.*

This Swedish *glider* had a crew of 2 men and could transport 10 fully equipped soldiers, or a load of 1,250 kg.



*An Lg 105 glider and a converted B-5 bomber, photographed in Malm-slätt, 1944.
From Fi-3 Rediviva.*

30 aircraft of the type Northrop 8A-1, bearing the Swedish designation B-5, were converted to be able to tow the gliders.

It is reported that the Swedish defense staff wanted some gliders to be ready for deployment by 30 April 1945, and it is a possibility that this order must be seen in connection with the intended operations in Denmark and Norway, where the element of surprise could be of decisive importance. Further information about the case is not available.

Shortly after the end of the war, the Swedish defense staff judged that time had run out for gliders.

Further trials and production thus stopped. AB Flygindustri tried to interest civilian buyers in the case, but quickly gave up, as there was not exactly a shortage of used transport aircraft at this time.

Plans for Swedish paratroopers

Inspired by the German use of stormtroopers, paratroopers and airborne units, Sweden also began to assess the possibilities.

With storm pioneers it was easier than with the units that depended on the limited transport aircraft capacity and already in 1940 the first storm pioneers, consisting of soldiers from Jönköpings-Kalmar Infantry Regiment (I 12) and Göta Ingenjörkår (Eng 2); both units were part of the 1st Infantry Division, which was later assigned tasks in connection with Operation Rädde Själland.

Each parachute company was to be equipped with:

9 mm pistol m/39: 40 9
mm maskinpistol m/37-39: 90 6,5 mm
automatgevær m/40: 24 6,5 mm let
maskingevær m/37: 11 47 mm mortar m/
40: 3 80 mm mortar m/29:
1 20 mm maskinkanon m/
40: 2

The overview has been prepared on the basis of Source 1.

With regard to paratroopers, a directive was drawn up on 27 August 1941 for how a possible parachute battalion should be organized and the plans should have been included in the debate leading up to the Defense Regulation of 1942, but as far as is known, without having been promoted. The Air Force apparently opposed having to provide the necessary aircraft.

A parachute battalion was to consist of 595 men, all volunteers, organized into a battalion staff and three companies.

Each paratrooper, in addition to his personal equipment, had to bring food (freeze-dried) for two days and explosives; total weight of equipment approx. 26 kg, whereby the soldier's total weight was approx. 100 kg.

The plans for Swedish paratroopers are put into practice

An actual Swedish ground military parachute training did not begin until after the war and the first jumps took place on 21 March 1951. After this, the commander of the first paratroopers, Nils Ivar Carlborg, who had completed his training in the USA in 1948, could report to the inspector general: "Supreme, *Swedish fallskärmsjägerutbildning begemmwad*"!

Sources

1. Fi-3 Rediviva - History of the glider, pictures and drawings as well as plans for building a new copy in full scale.
2. Lg 105 - AB Flygindustri Fi-3 (1944-1945) by Lars Henriksson.
3. Lg 105 - 1944-45 from the website of the Swedish Military Historical Library.
4. The location of the air force wings, fra hjemmesiden Swedish military aviation.
5. Fallskärmsjägarskolan's historia, from the Swedish Defense website.

Postscript - Lg 105 glider data



Lg 105 glider. From Source 1.

Wingspan: 16.5 m	Transport: 250 km/t
Length: 9.7 m	Free flight: 350 km/h
Height: 3.3 m	On landing: 80 km/h
Max. speed:	
Crew: 2 Load:	
1,250 kg	

The nice computer-animated drawing shows the glider's paint job, which was gray-green on the top and light gray-blue on the bottom. The marking was the Swedish national cockade on the underside of the wings and on the side of the body. The plane had no other identifying marks.

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