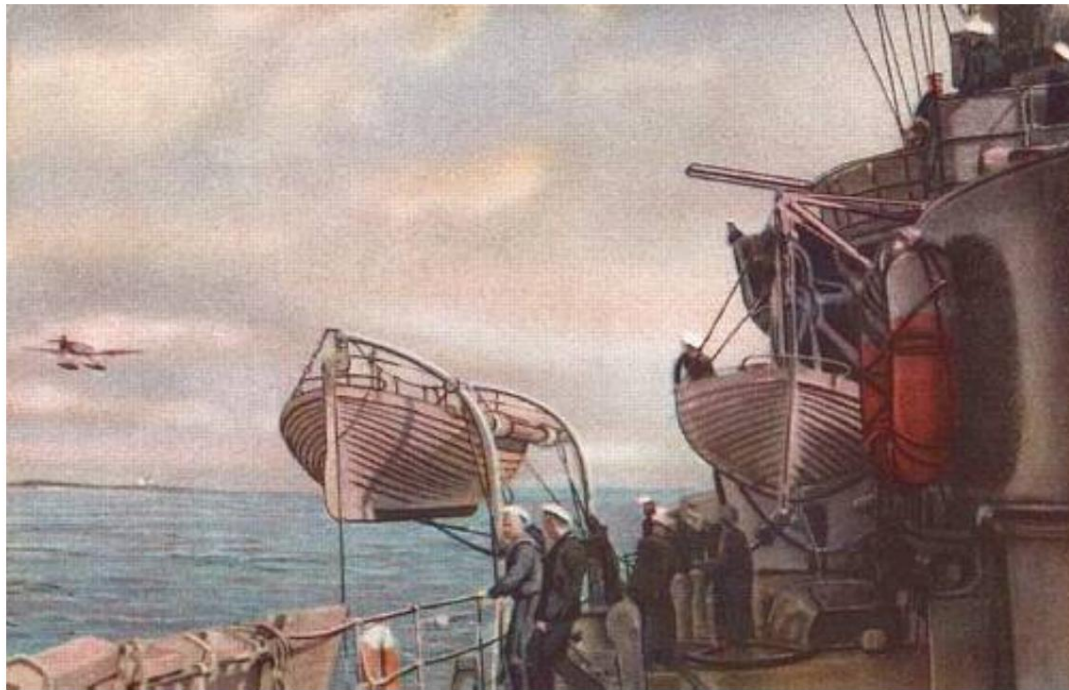


The Swedish Navy 1939-1945 - The Navy

Introduction

The Swedish fleet in 1939 consisted of a small number of modern units and a large number of older units. A major modernization and new building program was initiated during the war and in 1945 the Swedish navy was definitely a force to be reckoned with in the Baltic Sea.



Clear ship! Ready for battle!

From a roughly contemporary Swedish postcard found for sale on the Internet.

The description must be seen in the context of the Swedish plans for intervention in Denmark in 1945 and focuses on the parts of the fleet that could conceivably be deployed in connection with Operation Rädde Danmark.

The following overview, which is primarily based on information in Sources 3 and 4, summarizes the development. It should be noted, however, that the calculation does not completely fit across, but it gives an impression of the development.

The Swedish designations of the time - *jager* and *wood boat* - have been retained. The Swedish term *jager* corresponds to destroyer, while *wood boat* is best translated as guard vessel or patrol vessel.

1939 (1936 scheme)	Access	take off	1945 (1942 scheme)
Coastal fleet: 4 armored ships (newer) 1 aircraft carrier 1 minesweeper 8 destroyers 10 submarines 4 wood boats (newer) 4 minesweepers 2 mother ships	Built at Swedish shipyard: 1 minesweeper 11 destroyers 19 submarines 12 minesweepers (larger) 24 minesweepers (smaller) 15 motor torpedo boats 3 merchant ships	Phased out: 1 armored ship 2 destroyers 6 submarines 1 motor torpedo boat 12 wood boats (older)	7 armored ships (4 older) 4 cruisers 24 destroyers 26 submarines 42 minesweepers 20 motor torpedo boats 16 wood boats (older) 6 depot and special vessels
Local forces:	Purchased abroad:	Tab:	Under construction:

4 battleships (older) 1	4 destroyers (See Postscript)	1 destroyer (sunk and scrapped) 2	2 cruisers 2
armored cruiser 7	6 motor torpedo boats	destroyers (sunk and salvaged) 2	fighters (larger)
destroyers		submarines (sunk) 1)	
6 submarines 14 wood			
boats (older) 2 minesweepers			

Operation Save Denmark

The Swedish Navy's contribution to Operation Rädde Danmark I, the landing on Zealand, was:

- Securing the northern and southern entrance to Øresund, in cooperation with the Coastal Artillery Securing and
- escorting the invasion fleet itself, in cooperation with the Air Force Transport of the invasion force,
- primarily on fishing vessels, merchant ships and ferries.

The task was quite significant and a number of different studies were carried out over time on how the task could best be solved. International experiences from similar operations were available to the extent that they were available in the trade press. One of these in particular came to cause problems in the planning work, namely the command relationship between the commander of the naval forces and the land forces.

The Chief of the Naval Staff, Commander E. Anderberg, during a lecture on 20 February 1945, emphasized the Western Allied principle of the senior naval officer commanding the entire invasion fleet until the Army Commander had set up his headquarters ashore. The Navy's responsibility and strong involvement in the prior planning work was another significant factor that was highlighted.

The Swedish model was not as precise and the competence conditions were not clearly defined. The overall responsibility for the naval and land military planning work rested with the commander of I. Militärområde (military region), Major General Hans af Klercker, whose military function was presumably commander of III. Army Corps, and thus head of the operation's land forces. The naval officers were relegated to the role of advisors, which they did not accept willingly.

Disposition of fleet units

Assignment

Naval units

The northern approach to Øresund (by Gothenburg Squadron)

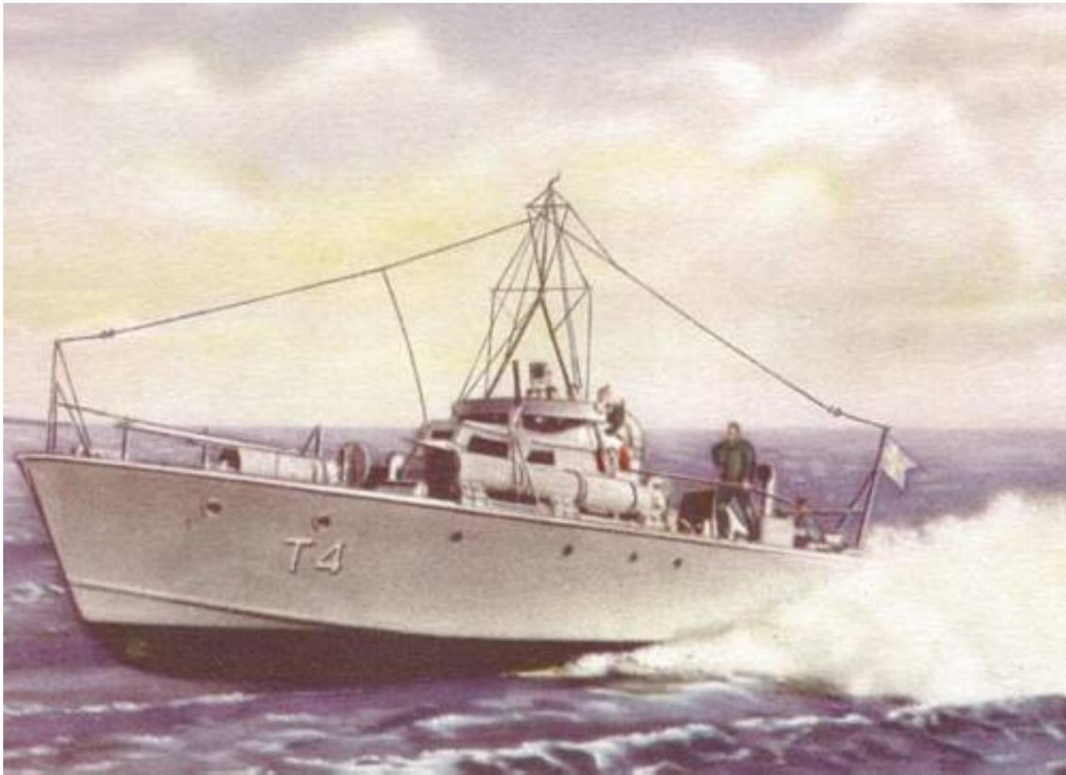
- 2 fighters
- Some motor torpedo boats

Close support

- The coastal armored ship Oscar II
- Coastal armor ship Tapperheten 7
- destroyers
- 6 motor torpedo boats 4
- larger minesweepers 12
- smaller minesweepers

The southern approach to Øresund

- The armored ship Sweden
- The battleship Gustav V
- Armored cruiser Queen Victoria 4 fighters
-



The motor torpedo boat T 4.

From a contemporary postcard found for sale on the Internet.

A surprise coup against Helsingør, with the landing of some companies from motor torpedo boats, was a central element in the land military staff's plan, while the navy was not seen with the same enthusiasm in making vessels available for this risky operation.

In connection with Operation Rådta Danmark II, the landing on Bornholm, the fleet's units were thought to be deployed as follows:

- 4-6 fighters
- A number of torpedo boats, wood boats and minesweepers



The coastal armored ship Oscar II.

From an approx. contemporaneous fleet postcards, found on the Internet.

The force could possibly be reinforced with a group of armored ships from the Coastal Fleet.

My sources do not state which units were specifically intended to be included in the operations against Bornholm.

The close support

Among the vessels that were to participate in the close support were two older coastal armored ships Oscar II and Tapperheten.

Oscar II was in service from 1903 to 1947.



The coastal armored ship Manligheten (sister ship to the Valor).

From a contemporary naval postcard found on the Internet.

The coastal armored ships Manligheten and Tapperheten were of the Ären class, from 1903.

As far as is known, the Valor had a less inclined bow.

Data	Oscar II	The bravery	T 4
In service	1905-1950	1903-1947	1940-1949
Main armament	2 x 21 cm guns 2 x 21 cm guns 10 x 57 mm guns 45 cm torpedo tubes 2 x 45 cm torpedo tubes 4,495 tons	8 x 15 cm guns 10 x 57 mm guns 2 x 45 cm torpedo tubes 3,735 tons	6 x 15 cm guns 2 x 45 cm torpedo tubes 2 machine guns 20 tons
Shift			20 tons
Length	95,6 m	89,7 m	18,3 m
Width	15,4 m	15 m	4,7 m
Draft	5,5 m	5,3 m	1,5 m
Fart	18 knob	16,5 knob	40 knob

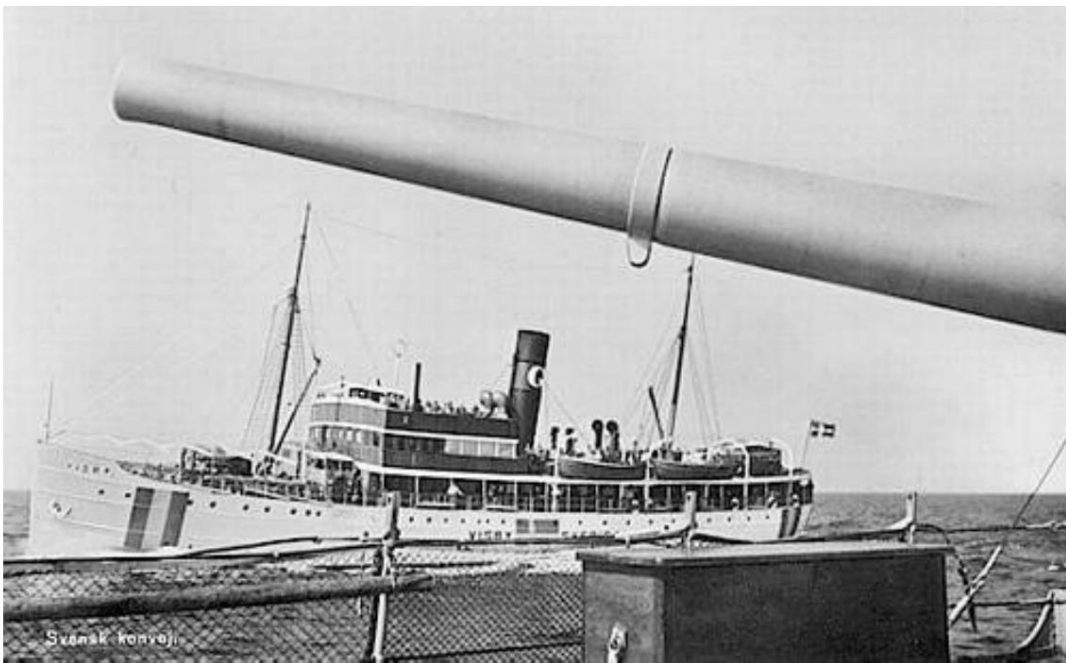
Data for the motor torpedo boat T4 refers to the image shown previously.

The invasion fleet

An actual plan for the transport of the invasion force itself does not exist, but one can form an impression of the possible dispositions from a planning document from September 1944 (Source 1), where one of the scenarios envisioned a three-pronged effort that also included a diversion maneuver in Køge Bay.

Ports of shipment	Fishing vessels	Transport needs	Local support/escort	Landsättning/maarland
Mölle, Höganäs and Viken	63		2 fighters 2 minesweepers	Hornbæk and Helsingør
Helsingborg, Kopparverken and Raa	48	1 division (-)	10 wood boats	Carpenter's stone
Ålabodarne, Borstahusen, Lanskrona and Barsebäck	75		1 auxiliary cruiser 3 minesweepers 1 motor torpedo boat 6 wood boats	Tårbæk
Lomma and Malmö	90	1 division (-)	2 fighters 6 minesweepers motor torpedo boats wooden boats	Flakfort and 4 Middelgrundfortet 7
Limhamn and Klaghamn	36		4 minestrygere motor torpedo boats 4	Dragør and Kastrup 2
The Falsterbokanalen	68		minesweepers 2 motor torpedo boats 3 wood boats 1	Køge
Scania, Trelleborg and Gislöv	50	cyclist regiment 4	minesweepers 2 motor torpedo boats wood boats	Mossed 9
Total	430	2 divisions (-)	4 fighters 1 cyclist regiment 1 auxiliary cruiser 19 minesweepers 9 motor torpedo boats 35 wood boats	

As the planning progressed, the diversion maneuver was withdrawn, and forces were concentrated on the other two landings, with the greatest focus on Helsingør.



Swedish convoy.

From a contemporary naval postcard found on the Internet.

In connection with the planned operation against Bornholm, the transport fleet was to consist of just over 100 fishing cutters.

The following should appear from the text on the back:

Under the protection of the navy's cannons, Swedish shipping runs safely within our sea borders between different parts of the country.

The operations against Zealand included a further 800 storm boats (*överskeppningsbåt m/33*), which were to transport the soldiers ashore. See more about these boats in *The Swedish Army 1939-1945 - The engineer troops*.

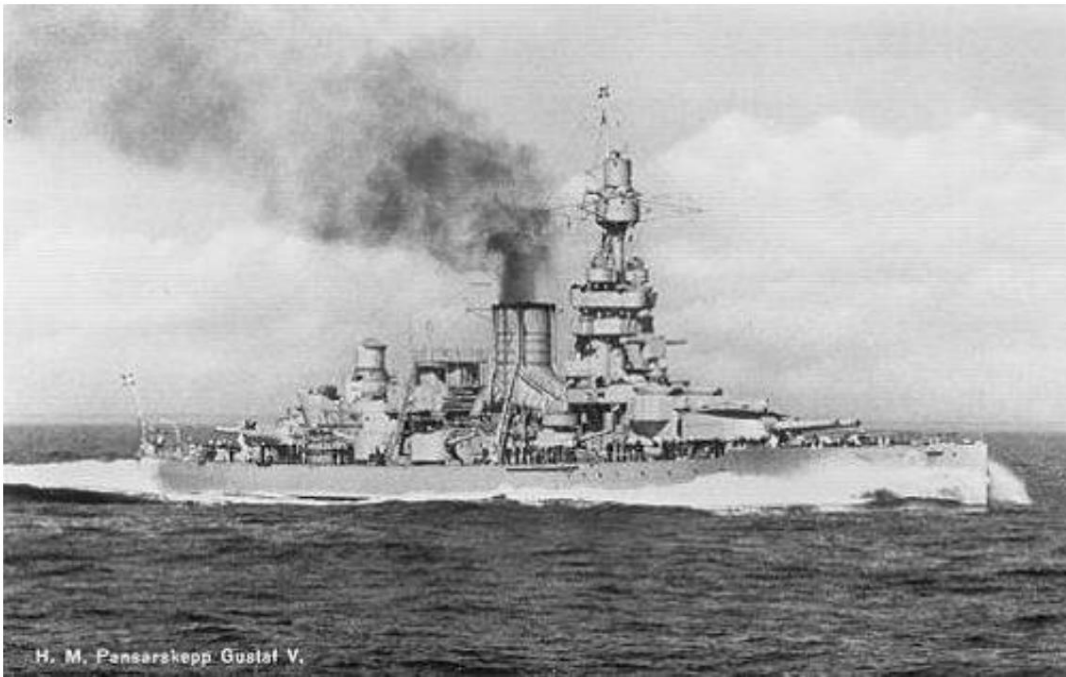
The southern barrier

The units that were supposed to close the Øresund to the south consisted, among other things, of 3 armored ships of the Sverige class - Sverige, Gustaf V and Drottning Victoria.



The armored ship Sweden.

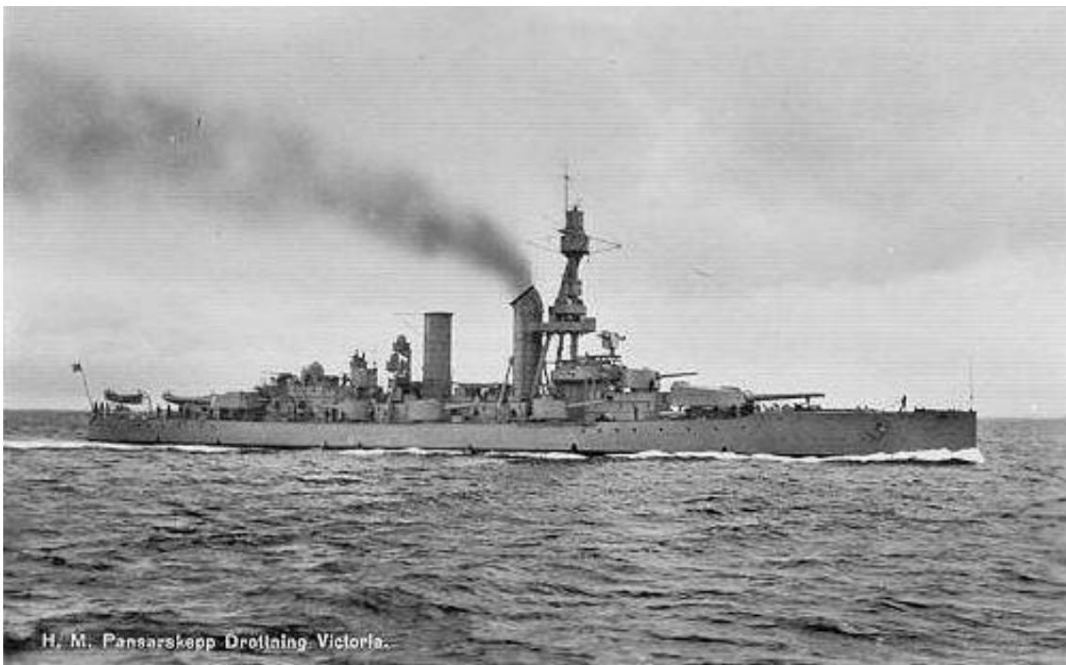
From a Swedish naval postcard found on the Internet.



Pansarskibet Gustaf V.

From a Swedish naval postcard found on the Internet.

Data	Sweden	Gustaf V	Queen Victoria
In service	1917-1953	1922-1957	1921-1957
Main armament	4 x 28 cm guns 4 x 28 cm guns 2 x 45 cm torpedo tubes	4 x 28 cm guns 4 x 28 cm guns 2 x 45 cm torpedo tubes	8 x 15 cm guns 8 x 15 cm guns 4 x 75 mm guns 4 x 75 mm guns 2 x 45 cm torpedo tubes
Displacement	6,542 tons	6,842 tons	6,842 tons
Shift			
Length	120 m	121 m	121 m
Width	18,6 m	18,6 m	18,6 m
Draft	6,5 m	6,5 m	6,5 m
Fart	22,5 knob	23 knob	23 knob



The battleship Queen Victoria.

From a Swedish naval postcard found on the Internet.



The fighters Stockholm, Klas Horn and Norden-skjöld.

From a Swedish naval postcard found on the Internet.

The northern barrier

I do not have information about which destroyers were part of the southern and northern blockade of Øresund, so the picture here is more intended as an example of the destroyer class.

The picture must be from before 13 September 1941, when an explosion [2\)](#) on board the destroyer Göteborg spread to the surrounding destroyers Klas Horn and sister ship Klas Uggle in Hårs Fjord.

The ships were subsequently salvaged. However, Klas Uggle was too involved to be repaired and scrapped.

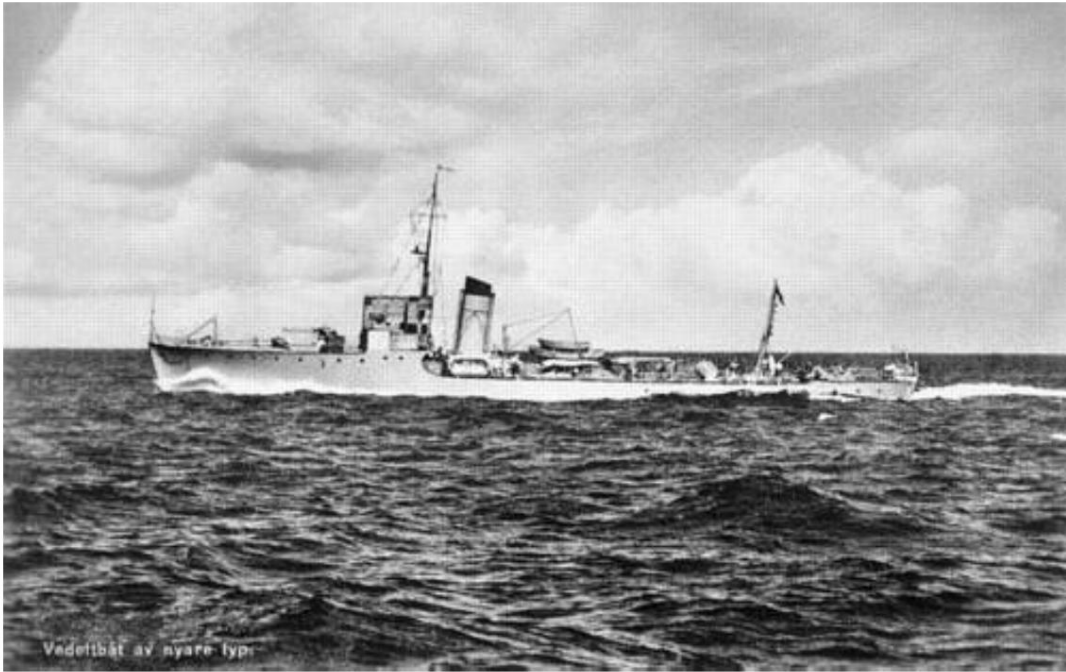
Data	Stockholm	Class Horn	Nordenskjöld
In service	1936-1964	1932-1941 and later	1927-1963

Main armament 3 x 12 cm guns 3 x 12 cm guns 3 x 12 cm guns 6 x 25 mm guns 2 x 40 mm guns 2 x 40 mm guns 6 x 53 cm torpedo tubes 6 x 53 cm torpedo tubes 6 x 53 cm torpedo tubes 1,200 tons 1,020 tons 1,000 tons

Shift

Length	94,6 meter	92,4 m	91,4 m
Width	9 m	8,9 m	8,8 m
Draft	3,8 meter	3,7 m	2,6 m
Fart	35 knob	36 knob	35 knob

Other ship types - Patrol vessels and minesweepers



Vedett boat of a newer type.

From a Swedish naval postcard found on the Internet.

The class included i.a. the wood boats the Hunter, the Privateer, the Snappan and the Watcher.



The minesweeper Arholma.

From a Swedish naval postcard found on the Internet.

The class included the following vessels:
Arholma, Landsort, Bremön, Holmön, Sandön,
Ulvön, Bredskär, Grönskär, Ramskär, Örskär, Koster,
Kullen, Vinga and Ven.

Data	The	Arholma
In service	Hunter 1932-1959	1939-1960
Main armament	2 x 75 mm guns 2 x 10.5 cm guns 2 x 25 mm guns	6 x 25 mm guns
Shift	310 tons	442 tons
Length	52 meter	56,7 m
Width	6 m	7,6 m
Draft	2,8 meter	2,1 m
Fart	23 knob	18 knob

Closing

The naval effort in Operation Rädde Denmark did not include the Swedish navy's more modern units, for example the former Flygplanskryssar Gotland 3), which in 1943 was converted to anti-aircraft cruisers, or submarines. These units were held in reserve, probably to counter a possible Russian threat from operations in the Baltic Sea.

A retired Swedish naval officer who has reviewed my material suggests that the submarines could possibly be intended for positions between the southern barrier and the German coast. Submarine operations are generally very secretive and "only a few knew (and know) where they are and what they are doing."

With regard to the possible operations, a light squadron (Source 3) could consist of, for example, 3 cruisers, 12 fighters and 18 motor torpedo boats, which, depending on the development of the situation, could be used together or divided into operational groups containing all three types of vessels. In either case, it would be necessary to supplement the squadron with an air detachment and with submarines, the number of which had to be maintained in view of the probable loss rate.

Sources

1. *Aid to Denmark - Military and political relations 1943-1945* by Ulf Torell, General Förlaget, Stockholm 1973, ISBN 31-38-01693-1.
2. *Navy fleets of all countries*, Lehmann Verlag, Munich, around 1940.
3. *Sweden's defense - The Navy* by lieutenant colonel PA Mathiesen, Folk og Værn, no. 8, 1943.
4. The Swedish armed forces under readiness by Thomas Roth, from Försvarsmagten (the official website of the Swedish army).
5. From monitors to armored ships - from the website of the Swedish Military History Library.
6. Swedish fighters - from the website of the Swedish Military History Library.
7. Data on Swedish naval vessels by Jan-Erik Karlsson.
8. Warships of World War II - Sweden, Polish website.
9. Swedish Naval Guns - fra Naval Weapons of the World - From 1880 to Today.
10. 10. Marinhistoria by Ronny Lindsjö, published by Den svenske Marine, 1993, ISBN 91-970670-6-7.

Postscript - Fighters purchased abroad

In 1939, four used fighters (destroyers) were purchased in Italy: Puke (formerly Bettino Ricasoli), Psilander (formerly Giovanni Nicotera), Romulus (formerly Spica) and Remus (formerly Astore).



The hunter Puke or Psilander.

From postcards found for sale on the Internet.

During the voyage to Sweden - in non-combat-ready condition - they were brought up under protest and boarded in Thorshavn on 20 June 1940 by the English destroyers HMS Maori, HMS Tartar and HMS Mashona.

From the English side, it was assessed that the four older Italian destroyers would not be of use to the English fleet, which is why they were returned after a few days and the crews released. The Swedish commander, Commander Captain Torsten Hagman, after all, had little choice but to add to the English supremacy, but he was certainly not praised for his action...

On 22 August 1940, the Commander of the Swedish Coastal Fleet, Rear Admiral Gösta Ehrensvärd, issued a secret instruction which strictly forbade, under any circumstances, Swedish ship commanders to surrender their ships to a foreign power.

Read more about the case here [Jagarköpet 1940 and HMS Maori](#). In addition, the article *Swedish-British entanglements on the Faroe Islands*, which can be found in *Frihedskampens Veteraner*, no. 182, September 2005, is recommended.

Postscript - The Danish Flotilla

As a supplement to the above presentation, you can also read the report on the Danish Flotilla in Sweden, whose vessels would also have participated in a possible Swedish operation against Zealand - see more here: [The Danish Brigade in Sweden 1943 - 1945 - The Danish Flotilla, Part 1](#) , [Part 2](#) and [Part 3](#). From here you also get [an impression of how parts](#) of the possible Swedish naval operations could have progressed.

So

I thank you for good Swedish "Hjälp til Danmark" from Imre Feuer and Gunnar Kager.

Supplementary material about the Swedish defense of the period

- Operation Save Denmark
- The Swedish Army 1939-1945 - Infantry
- The Swedish Army 1939-1945 - Armored troops
- The Swedish Army 1939-1945 - Artillery
- The Swedish Army 1939-1945 - Luftvärnsartilleriet

- The Swedish Army 1939-1945 - Engineer troops
- The Swedish Navy 1939-1945 - The coastal artillery
- The Swedish Air Force 1939-1945 - Operation Rätta Danmark
- The Swedish Air Force 1939-1945 - Experiments with airborne units

Per Finsted

To note:

1) The Swedish losses are, among other things, mentioned in: Hårsfjärdsolyckan 1941 and Ubåten Ulven's minespränning on 15 April 1943 and Ubåten Illern's collision (1943).

2) The accident is surrounded by a certain mystery, and thus one source claims that the fire that spread from GÖTEBORG was caused by a Swedish aerial bomb. See more in Hårsfjärdsolyckan 1941. The official investigation concluded that it could be sabotage, although the exact circumstances could not be determined. (Source 10).

3) Read the history of this ship here: The aircraft carrying cruiser HM Flygplanskryssare GOTLAND, S 9 - Hawker Osprey (1934-1947) and World Aircraft Carriers List: Sweden.