

The Swedish Navy 1939-1945 - The coastal artillery

Introduction

In *Aid to Denmark - Military and political relations 1943-1945* (Source 1) the Coast Artillery's intended effort in connection with Operation Save Denmark is stated thus:

Coastal batteries Equipment	Location
2 mobile batteries 3 pcs. 21 cm guns Höganäs and Klagshamn	
5 mobile batteries 3 pcs. 15 cm guns Höganäs (2), Ålaboderne (1) and Klagshamn (2)	
2 fixed batteries 4 pcs. 15 cm guns Helsingborg and Trelleborg 1)	—
1 fixed battery	4 pcs. 57 mm guns Viken

The batteries' tasks during the operation were to support:

- the land-military operations on Zealand with long-range missiles partly support the navy's
- blockades of the northern and southern entrance to Øresund.

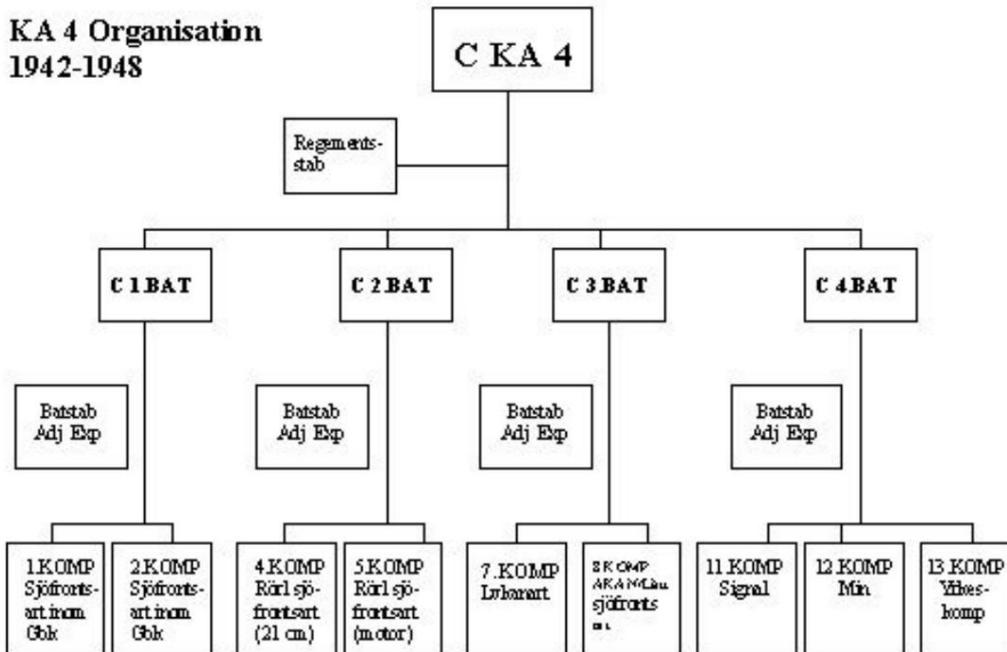
This article will refer to the Swedish coastal artillery based on this information.

Organization and tasks

In 1902, the coastal artillery became an independent type of weapon under the Navy, which then consisted of *the Royal Fleet* and *the Royal Fleet. The coastal artillery*.

Units (1943)	Assignments	Naval Districts
Royal Vaxholm Coastal Artillery Regiment (THE 1st)	Stockholm's Coastal Defense	South Coast Marine District
Royal Karlskrona Coastal Artillery Regiment (THE 2nd)	Blekinge's Coastal Defense	East Coast Marine District
Royal Gotland Coastal Artillery Corps (THE 3rd)	Gotland Coastal Defense	Gotland Marine District

**KA 4 Organisation
1942-1948**



Royal Ävlsborg Coastal Artillery Regiment (KA 4) organization 1942-48.
From Source 5.

The coastal artillery regiments manned those of the coastal defences

- fixed and mobile batteries anti-
- aircraft and searchlights
- mine barriers.

Coastal defense land military forces came from the army.

The fixed batteries were partly built before the war in areas that were previously assessed as critical, primarily to secure the navy's base areas.

The mobile batteries could either be deployed in support of the fixed batteries or in the defense of areas that an enemy would use in an invasion.

During the war, the mobile batteries were given the corps artillery tasks that were envisaged in connection with Operation Rädde Denmark. As a further example of this, a number of mobile 15.2 cm cannon m/37 were deployed at the Norwegian border in 1942. As far as I can judge, this task was not part of the coastal artillery's actual tasks, but was a natural development, not least in light of the long firing range of the pamphlets.

15,2 cm kanon m/37



15,2 cm kanon m/37.

From Source 3.

9 units were originally ordered, but this number was supplemented in 1944 with a further 14 units.

The pamphlet had an effective firing range of 23 km and weighed approx. 15 tons. The grenade weighed 46 kg. One shot with charge 1 (4.8 kg/76 cm long) or charge 3 (12.9 kg/1 m long).

Because of its weight, the gun barrel and billet were transported separately, thus requiring two gun tractors to move the pamphlet. During transport, the legs of the lavette rested on a prop, while the cannon barrel rested on a two-axle carriage.

As cannon tractors, *Terrängdragbil m/ Skoda* (Skoda 6V) were used, which were later replaced by *Terrängdragbil m/ 42* (Volvo TCV).

It took the crew 2-3 hours to bring the pamphlet into position, an operation that first consisted of getting it hoisted (using a device on the platform and a boom on the transport vehicle) and then backing the cannon tube from the transport vehicle onto the platform.

The legs of the lavette were not equipped with spades, but were anchored using earth spikes.

The pamphlet was part of the Swedish coastal artillery until 1988.

The opening parade image in *The Swedish Army 1939-1945 - The infantry* shows, among other things, a 15.2 cm cannon m/37 and Skoda cannon tractors. Here you can see the device in question on the rigging as well as the boom that is mounted on the carriage of the cannon tube.



Off-road tractor with Skoda.
From Source 4.



All-terrain tractor w/42.
From the Wermland Military Historical Association.

21 cm kanon m/42



21 cm kanon m/42.
From Source 8.

In 1942, 9 units were acquired. semimobile 21 cm cannons m/42 from the Skoda factories - *210 mm Schwere Langrohrkanone 135/800* - originally intended for Turkey, which had ordered 12.

The first three pamphlets arrived in Gothenburg on March 6, 1944, and went to the Royal Älvsborg Coast Artillery Regiment (KA 4), which immediately set about training personnel for three batteries, each with 3 pamphlets.

1. and 2. Coastal Battery were included in the war organization from 1 June 1944 and 3. Coastal Battery from 29 September 1944.



21 cm kanon m/42.

From Source 8.

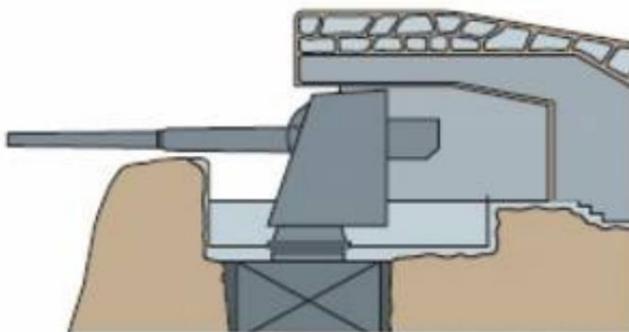
The effective firing range was 30 km. The grenade weighed 133 kg; the load 40 kg. During transport, the pamphlets were separated into three parts, total weight 33 tonnes.

I am not aware of what type of gun tractor was used, but it is a given *Terrängdragbil m/42*, which was the most powerful gun tractor of the Swedish defense.

The Pjecers were part of the Swedish coastal defense until 1982-83, but no personnel were trained after 1972.

One of the pamphlets has recently emerged from oblivion and is now on display at the Preparedness Museum near Helsingborg.

15,2 cm kanon m/98



15,2 cm kanon m/98.

From Source 11.

Trelleborg Batteri (at Dalköpinge, approx. 4 km north-east of the centre), was built in 1939. It was equipped with:

- 2 pcs. 15.2 cm guns w/98 E in casemate armor w/38 1 pc. 15.2 cm
- gun w/98 C in casemate mount w/34.

The effective firing range was approx. 8 km. The grenade weighed approx. 45 kg; charges 1 and 2 were used.

The booklet is perhaps of the type that covered Trelleborg Batteri, of which I unfortunately have no picture.

With its location, the battery did not play any role in the land military operations against Denmark, but acted as security for the southern entrance to Øresund.

15,2 cm kanon m/40

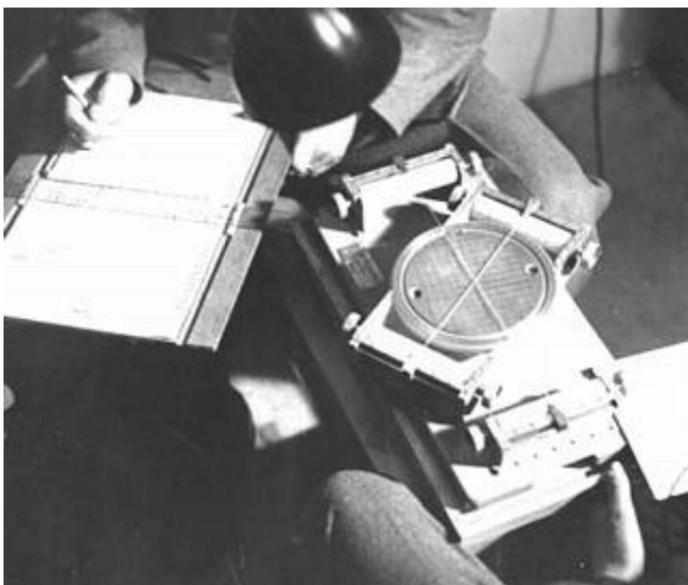


*15.2 cm Cannon w/40 from Helsingborg Battery.
From Source 8.*

On 14 April 1940, the Swedish defense chief, General Olof G. Thörnell [2](#)), applied for 2 million DKK for the construction of a battery immediately north of Helsingborg, between Viken and Hittarp.

On 25 April 1940 the funds were granted and three days later the work began. Only five weeks later the battery reported "Ready to fire".

The battery was equipped with 4 pcs. 15 cm cannon m/40, which was actually intended for the Netherlands, but was seized by the Swedish state at Bofors. The pamphlet had an effective firing range of approx. 24 km. The grenade weighed approx. 46 kg; charges 1 and 2 were used, one of the charges weighed approx. 16 kg.



From the shooting center in Batteri Helsingborg.



One of Battery Trelleborg's cannons was laid.

In addition to covering the northern entrance to the Øresund, the battery should, in the event of a German attack, i.a. shell Helsingør Station and the German headquarters at Kronborg. In addition, the battery was intended for the previous task of supporting the Swedish units that, in connection with Operation Rådda Danmark, had to go ashore on Zealand, and with only approx. 9 km between the battery and Zealand's north coast, there was plenty of range.

However, Helsingborg Batteri never fired in anger, but a total of 14 times it was practice shooting, of which eight times during the war. The last shot was fired in 1982, after which the battery was put in a moth bag, and was finally decommissioned in 1991. Today, the battery is open to the public and houses the Preparedness Museum.



Light coastal battery.

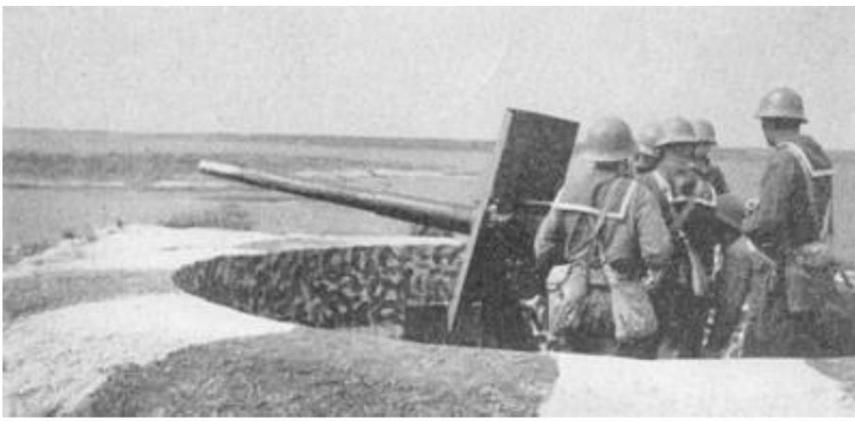
From Source 2.

A light coastal battery

The picture does not necessarily depict the Viken Battery with its 57 mm guns, but it may have appeared that way. At the front of the picture, a light gun is seen in position (possibly a 57 mm fast-firing gun m/89 B) and at the top right is the battery's command station.

The 57 mm gun had an effective range of 5 km. The pamphlet shot with a unit cartridge that weighed approx. 3 kg.

Viken Batteriet has thus not played an active role in land military terms, but has participated in securing the northern entrance to Øresund.



*Coastal artillerymen man a 57 mm gun.
From Source 2.*

The steel helmet is m/26.

Uniforms

Until 1942, the coastal artillery wore the same uniforms as the navy. The crew wore hatbands with the text *Kungl. Coast Artillery*.

However, the coastal artillerymen in the picture are probably wearing blue turncoats rather than marine uniforms.



*Major of the Coastal Artillery,
in field uniform Model 1942.
From Soldier's Instruction
for the Infantry, 1939.*



Coast Artillery Arms Badge.

From Source 3.

In June 1942, grey-brown-green uniforms were introduced in the Coastal Artillery, of almost the same model as the army's uniform m/39.

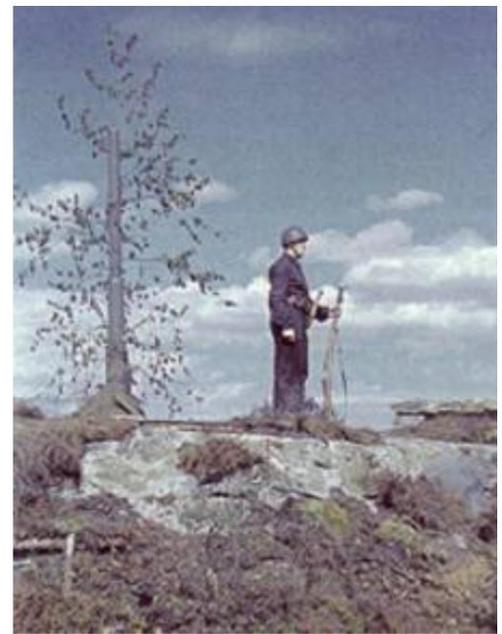
The insignia now became the same as in the army, but in the Coastal Artillery they were worn on the collar, on a red collar mirror. However, the rendering means that the collar mirrors are almost impossible to spot.

Officers and men wore the insignia of the Coast Artillery - two crossed guns, above a flaming shell, resting on a wavy line - on their shoulder patches.

Sources

1. *Aid to Denmark - Military and political relations 1943-1945* by Ulf Torell, General Förlaget, Stockholm 1973, ISBN 31-38-01693-1.
2. *Citizen's book on national defense* by Erik Malmström (ed.), General Staff, Stockholm 1939.
3. *Militärkalendern 1944*, Åhlén & Åkerlunds Förlag, Stockholm, 1943.
4. *Historic Military Vehicles Directory* af Bart Venderveen, After the Battle, London 1989, ISBN 0900913-57-6.
5. Breech-loaded Guns and Cannon used by the Swedish Armed Forces - fra Mats' Weapons Page.
6. Kustartillerets Kamratförening in Gothenburg - Excerpts from board minutes and those of the Kamratföreningen newspapers.
7. Bunkers in the West - about the coastal defense near Gothenburg.
8. The history of the 21 cm mobile coastal artillery gun Skoda model 1942. From the Preparedness Museum's Homepage.
9. Forts and Fortifications in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, especially Battery Helsingborg and The Skåne line.
10. Kustartilleriets Krigsförband, overview of pamphlets - found in a Swedish internet discussion forum below SoldF.com.
11. "This place where comfort is the least" - about the coastal batteries on Stora og Lilla Roten in the Swedish east coast.

Postscript



A pair of contemporary color photographs of Swedish coastal artillery, found on the website Svenskt Militärhistoriskt Bibliotek.



Coastal artillerymen man a range finder.

From Source 2.

On top of the many mentions of cannons, it is probably appropriate to bring an example of one of the fire control instruments used in the Coastal Artillery.

Although it may not be as spectacular as the heavy guns, the guns are worthless without proper fire control.

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 Navy
- The Swedish Air Force 1939-1945 - Operation Rädde Denmark
- The Swedish Air Force 1939-1945 - Experiments with airborne units

Per Finsted

To note:

1) The fixed battery at Trelleborg was possibly only equipped with 3 pcs. 15.2 cm guns w/98 (Source 9).

2) Olof G. Thörnell (1877-1977), Chief of Defense 1939-1944. Replaced by Helge Jung (1886-1978), chief of defense 1944-1951.