

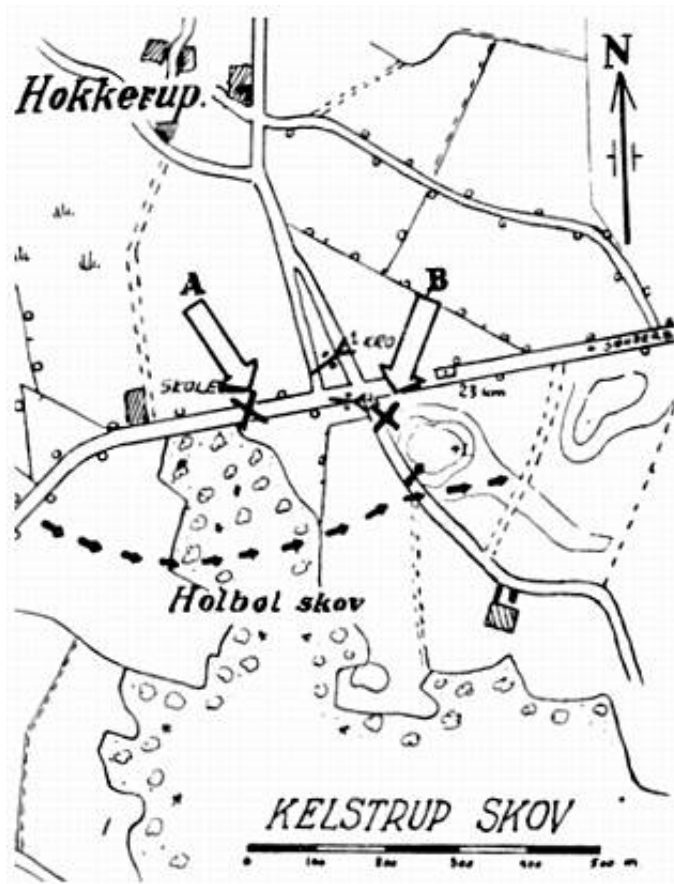
The Danish Army on April 9th, 1940, Supplement to Part 1

Introduction

After publication of Part 1 in the series on *The Danish Army on April 9th, 1940*, I have been able to get some additional information regarding the fighting around Hokkerup.

The Hokkerup Detachment

Although only a small-unit action, the fighting at Hokkerup symbolizes the fighting spirit shown by the Danish soldiers on April 9th, 1940.



The action of the Hokkerup Detachment, 9th April, 1940.
From Source 1.

Some time before this fateful morning, the positions had been reconnoitred, but according to Government instructions - in order not to provoke the Germans - none of the positions had been prepared in any way, e.g. by digging.

The Danish units at Hokkerup were 2 cyclist sections from 3rd Platoon, 2nd Company, 4th Cyclist Battalion and 1 20 mm auto cannon section and 1 light machine gun section from 2nd Platoon, Anti-tank Company (*Afværgekompagniet*), 2nd Battalion, Fodfolkspionerkommandoet, giving a total of approximately 30 men.

Legend:

A The roadblock where the German armoured cars were shot up.

B Sergeant Vous was mortally wounded here.

The arrows marks the German line of advance towards the Danish positions.

Dispositions

The right flank position consisted of the auto cannon section (with motorcycle and ammunition motorcycle) and one cyclist section. Lieutenant H.J. Højerslev (4th Cyclist Battalion) was in command of the detachment and was on the right flank.

On the left flank, Second Lieutenant A. Olsen (2nd Battalion, Fodfolkspionerkommandoet) was in command, and he had with him the light machinegun section and one cyclist section, with Sergeant Vous in command.

When the detachment reached Hokkerup at 05:10, various farm implements were used for the roadblock which was erected in great haste.

The sections now took up their positions, but due to hedges etc. the machinegun had a very narrow field of fire. None of the sections had a real route of retreat; the positions made it possible to hide, but gave no cover.

The fighting begins

On their march towards Hokkerup the detachment had already encountered low flying German fighter planes and this continued during the next hour or so. Further, a number of high flying German planes passed the Danish positions.

20 minutes later, a German column approached the positions...



The 20 mm auto-cannon at Hokkerup, as painted by Anna Maria Mehrn.

From Source 2.

At 05:30 the German column stopped at the roadblock (A) and the corporal ordered the gunner to open

fire: "First car, three shots!"

Each shot slammed into the armoured car, which promptly ditched (B).

The soldiers are (left to right) - Corporal F. Jensen, Privates 533/Eliassen [1](#)) (No. 2) and 573/Nørholt (No. 1).

Next to the gun is the pair of wheels used for gun transport, when the gun was not mounted on the sidecar.

The next two cars were hit this way, when suddenly the gun jammed. However, as cool as if on the shooting range, the jam was fixed.

Now the battle raged. German motorcyclists following the armoured cars dismounted and the light machinegun on the left flank now opened fire. A German 37 mm gun was brought into position, but was soon silenced by the auto cannon, having fired one shot only.

The Germans being around 100 men heavily outnumbered the Danish soldiers. Covered by 8 machineguns, light mortars and armoured cars they moved quickly through Holbøl Skov and attacked the Danish positions from the south, and later from behind.

Private 584/Jørgensen (Fodfolkspionerkommandoet) was killed during the hand-to-hand combat which followed and Sergeant Vous (4th Battalion) was mortally wounded. Further Privates 207 Jensen and 209 Jepsen (both from 4th Battalion) were slightly wounded.

One soldier - Private 222/Groth (4th Battalion) - made a heroic effort to stop the Germans. Despite German fire from the ground and from the air he continued to fire his light machinegun, and when the Germans were close to his position, he raised himself and let loose a whole magazine towards the attacking Germans.

The fighting is over

At 06:15 the *Hokkerup Detachment* was now surrounded and taken prisoner.

The wounded were brought to the nearby inn, assisted by civilians, one of whom had been a German soldier (medic) in the First World War. Here they were given the attention necessary by German medical personnel, but Sergeant Vous soon died from his wounds.

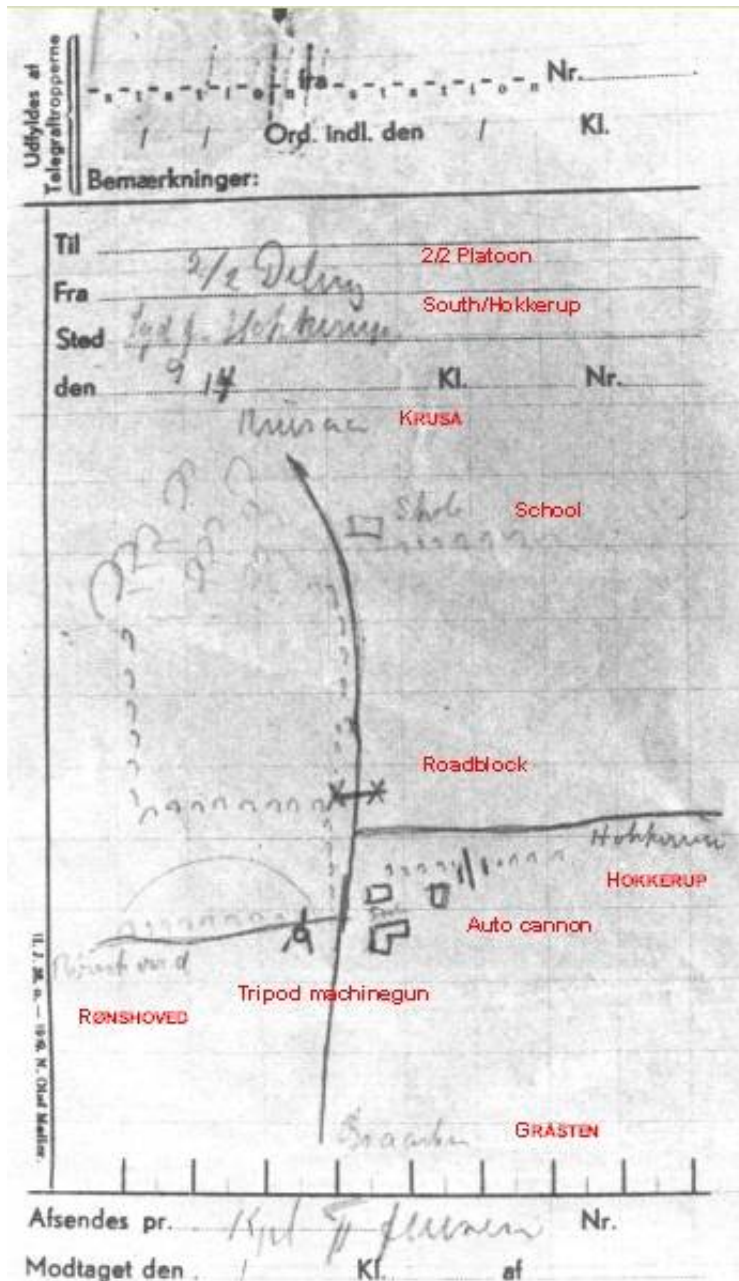
The detachment was then marched towards south as prisoners of war, but due to the cease fire they were back with their units later the same day.



*A German SdKfz 15 car damaged at Hokkerup in the early hours of April 9th, 1940.
From Source 2.*

After the battle

The photo was taken later the same day, the wreck now being a sight for the local children.



A page from the field sketchbook of Corporal F. Jensen, in command of the 20 mm auto-cannon at Hokkerup. From Source 2.

The car could have been used as a towing vehicle for the gun hit twice by the Danish 20 mm auto-cannon.

As for German losses no information exists, but from the battle reports at least 3 armoured cars, the 37 mm cannon and the above vehicle stands out.

A German colonel expressed his opinion of the Danish soldiers encountered on April 9th, as follows: *Schneidig sind sie nicht, aber frech, und schießen können sie.* (Meaning: Not smart in appearance perhaps, but they are tough and crack shots.)

Sources

1. *Kampen ved Hokkerup den 9. april 1940* by Axel Pontoppidan, Underofficerens Forlag,

Copenhagen 1950.

2. *De så det ske 9. april 1940* by Per Eilstrup and Lars Lindberg, Supplement to *Søndags-B.T.*, No. 13, March 27th, 1980.
3. *9. April skildret i breve fra danske soldater* edited by Arne Stevns, København 1940.

Per Finsted

Noter:

- 1) Based on the uniforms shown Private Eliassen was, in addition to being No. 2 on the gun, also driver of one of the motorcycles. He wears the M.1938 one-piece motorcycle suit.