

The Danish Army on April 9th, 1940, Supplement to Part 2

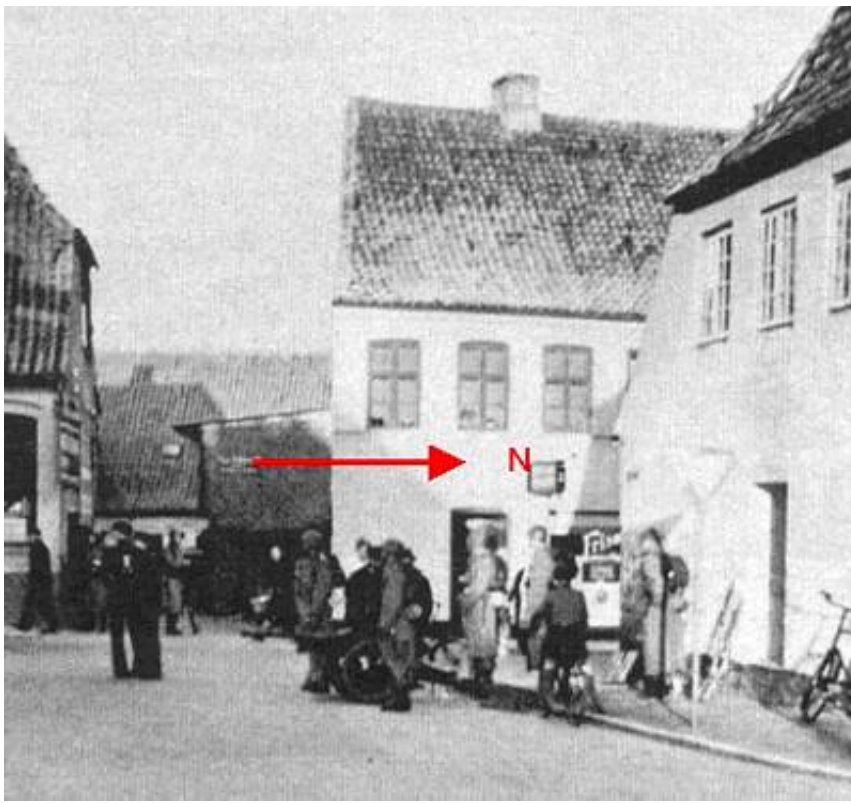
Introduction

After publication of Part 2 in the series on *The Danish Army on April 9th, 1940*, I have been able to get some additional information regarding the fighting in Southern Jutland.

Haderslev - Additional information



German tanks under fire from 20 mm auto-cannons behind the roadblock in Sønderbro Street, Haderslev. Painted by Th. Toft Andersen (From Source 2) [1](#).



The 37mm anti-tank gun in Haderslev. From Source 2.

The painting, made according to information from eyewitnesses, shows the roadblock made from dumping wagons and the two Danish auto-cannon sections.

The auto-cannons are firing at the German tanks (arriving from south), seen in the background of the painting.

Between the auto-cannons and the German tanks is the 37 mm anti-tank gun (seen just in front of the leading tank), situated at the corner of *Sønderbro Street* and *Hertug Hans Street*.

The photo is taken from *Hertug Hans Street*, with *Sønderbro Street* marked by the red arrow.

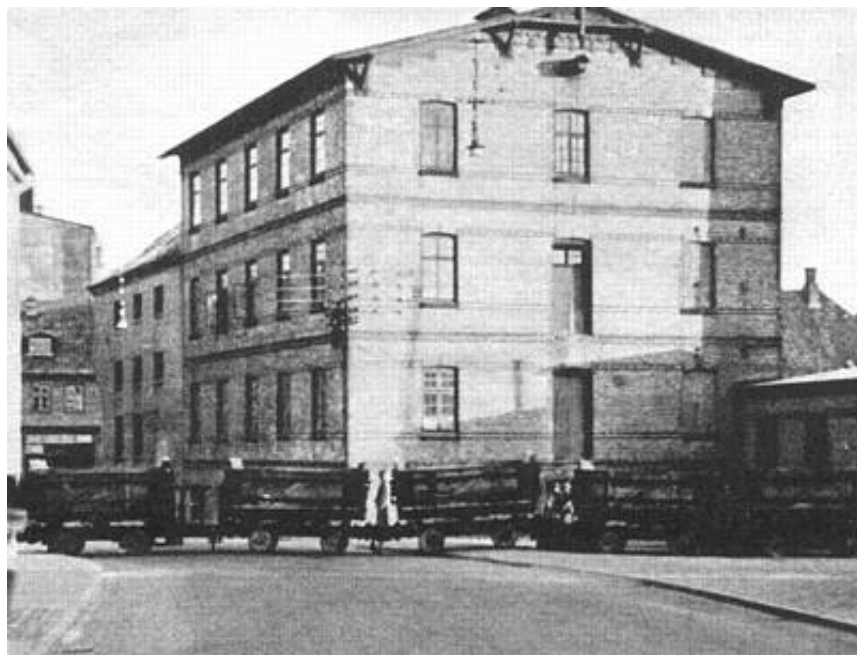


The 37 mm anti-tank gun brought back to the scene of the fighting.

Mr Bertel Lygum Berthelsen - former Private 391/Berthelsen - in the present day (1990) surroundings [2](#).

Due to various urban developments in *Haderslev* since 1940, it is not possible match the scene exactly.

Despite being hit five times - in the right foot, hand, thigh and elbow (by machinegun bullets), and in the right shoulder (by a 20 mm armour piercing shell) - Berthelsen regained his health after three months in hospital.



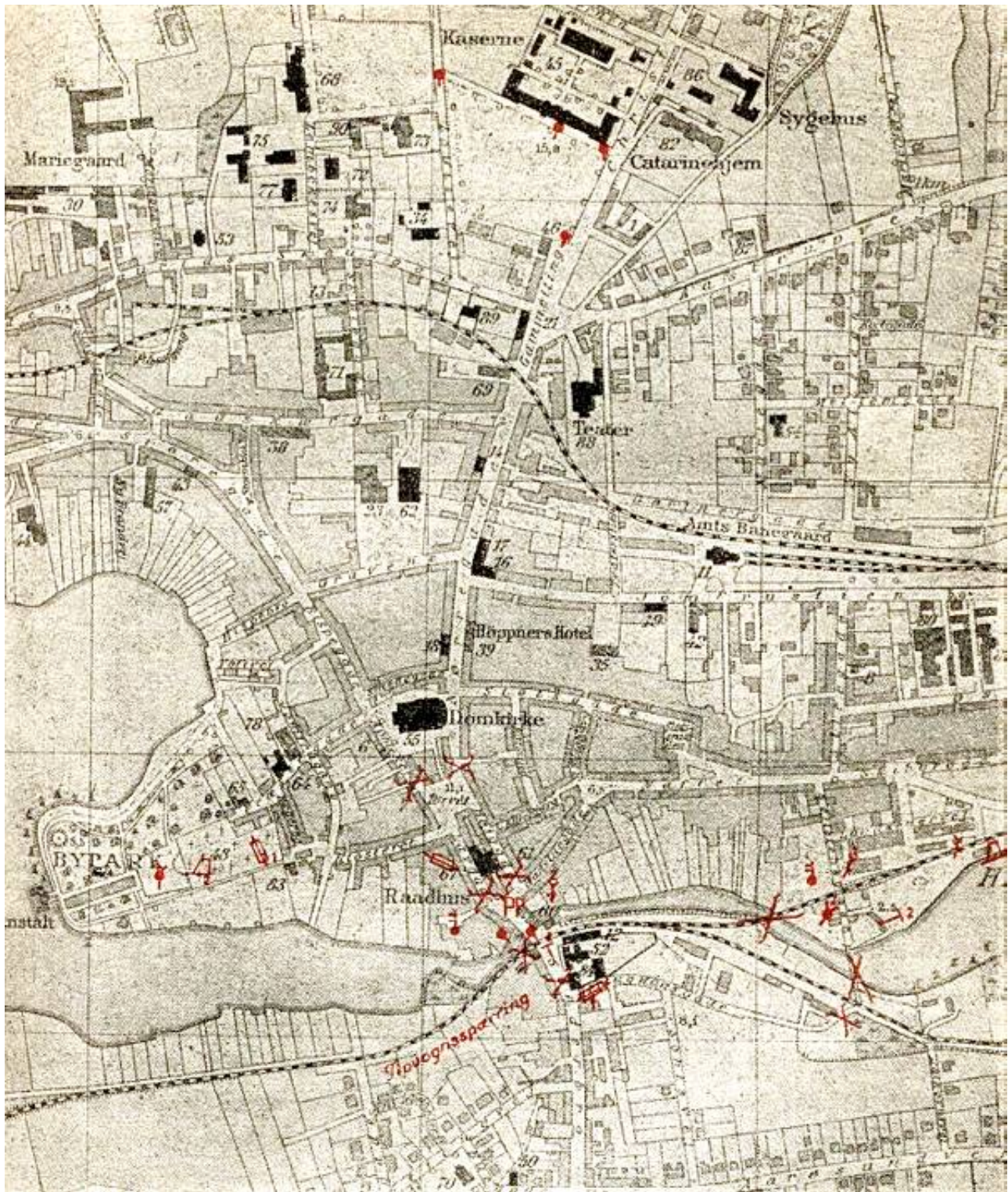
The roadblock on Sønderbro Street (seen from the South), just minutes before the fighting. From Source 2.

The anti-tank gun section consisted of: Cornet Vesterby (section commander), 305/Hansen (gunner), 391/Berthelsen (loader), 308/Bonde and 313/Hansen (ammunition numbers) [3](#)). The section commander and the gunner were seriously wounded; the section commander died almost instantly, whereas the gunner died of his wounds in hospital later the same day. The three others survived, but were all wounded.

The anti-tank gun disabled two German tanks and was later smashed by another tank. Despite his wounds, 391/Berthelsen remained at the gun, luckily escaping being smashed himself when the gun was run over by a German tank.

Positions in Haderslev April 9th, 1940

(from Source 2)



Each square is approximately 500 x 500 metres.

Regimental Command Post

Battalion Command Post

Company Commander

Section, with light machinegun

Section, with light machinegun (in tripod)

Guard or single soldier

Medium machinegun section

Medium mortar section

37 mm light anti-tank gun section

20 mm auto-cannon section

Road block



Note: A figure behind a symbol describes the number of weapons.

Cease fire



Colonel A. Hartz (with steel helmet and cane) negotiating with General Wittke, surrounded by various staff officers [4](#)).

Around 08:00, the news of the Government's decision to cease all resistance, reached Colonel A. Hartz, Commanding Officer of The 2nd Regiment, by telephone.

A white flag of truce was shown and the firing died down. Colonel Hartz was then taken to the German headquarters where he negotiated cease fire terms with the German General Wittke, probably the commander of the German 170th Division.

On his way to the negotiations, the Colonel saw the huge German column halted on the road south of Haderslev, and the column presented ideal targets for artillery fire. As mentioned in Part 2, The 1st Battery of 3rd Artillery Battalion was in position to the north of Haderslev. Due to fog however, it was not possible to observe targets south of Haderslev, and it has been decided not to use the guns against the southern part of the town. Consequently, the battery had orders to cover only forces retreating from *Haderslev*.



After the battle - Danish soldiers at the roadblock in Sønderbro Street, passing Private 108/Hansen who was killed while serving a 20 mm auto-cannon, one of which is seen to the right.
From Source 2.

At Haderslev Barracks

When the battalion left in the early hours of the morning, a small force was left behind at the Barracks, with Lieutenant-colonel H.C. Hansgaard in command. While the terms of the cease fire were negotiated, the German column made way through the roadblock at Sønderbro Street and continued their march. The news of the cease fire had however not reached the troops, guarding the Barracks.



Danish soldiers at Haderslev Barracks, April 9th, 1940.
From Source 3.

While the rest of the battalion took up positions in the southern part of Haderslev, the Barracks had been scene for busy activities.

A number of civilian lorries were received according to the mobilization instructions, and used to motorize the regimental supply units.

The supply column left the Barracks at 07:30, and took up positions in Vesterskov (north of the town).



A view towards south, from the Barracks.
From Source 2.

Lieutenant-colonel Hansgaard had minutes before received the order (from Jydske Division) to cease fire and when the fighting around the Barracks began, he was about to drive forward to Colonel Hartz, in order to deliver the message. At the same time, the staff tried to reach Colonel Hartz, by phoning various shops next to regimental command post.

The Barracks was situated next to the main road leading towards north (to Kolding). (Refer to the map of the town to see the position of the Barracks - *Kaserne*, in Danish).

The civilians in the picture are probably listening to the fighting in the southern part of the town.

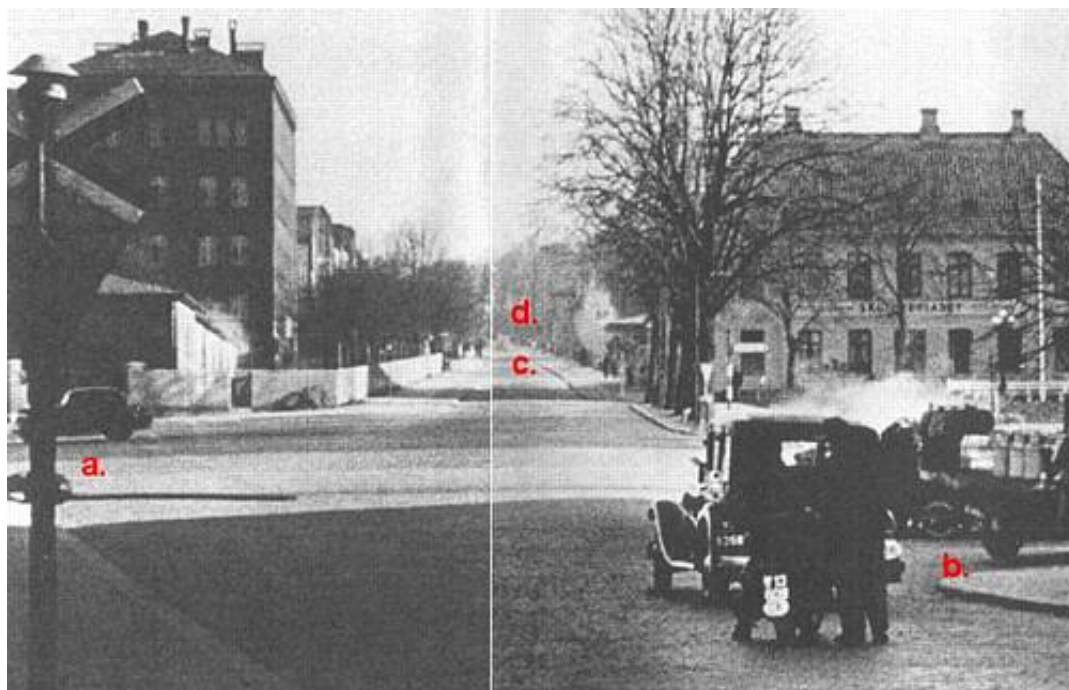


German tanks in Nørregade, Haderslev.

From Source 2.

The German column was headed by two tanks and a motorcyclist, seen here in Nørregade (according to Source 2), only seconds before being fired at by the troops guarding the Barracks.

The caption to this picture made in Part 2 is not correct. A close study of the photo reveals a traffic sign, warning for the railway crossing, thus making it possible to match the exact position of the German tanks.



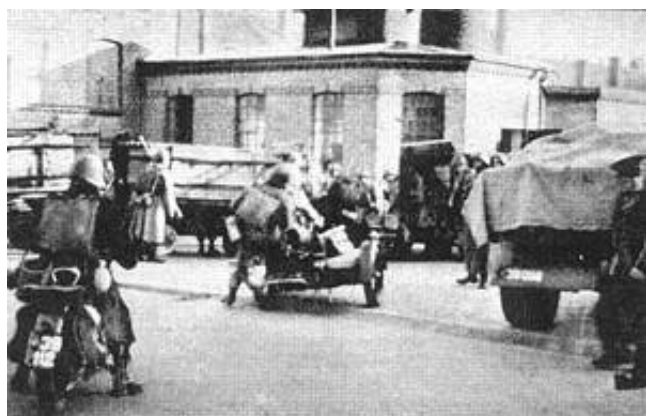
A German tank firing at Haderslev Barracks. From Source 2.

Having crossed the railway, the Germans were fired upon by the troops guarding the Barracks.

The motorcyclist was shot dead and leading tank was hit, losing one of its tracks. The tank then crashed into a house to the right.

According to Source 2, the motorcyclist and the track is seen in the left hand side of the photo (a.), just below the civilian car.

The second German tank now commenced firing at the Danish soldiers. The tank is seen to right, next to the civilian car and the milk van (b.). In the centre of the photo, hardly distinguishable, are a number of persons - Lieutenant-colonel Hansgaard and two civilian workers (c.). The lieutenant-colonel escaped unscratched, but both workers were hit.



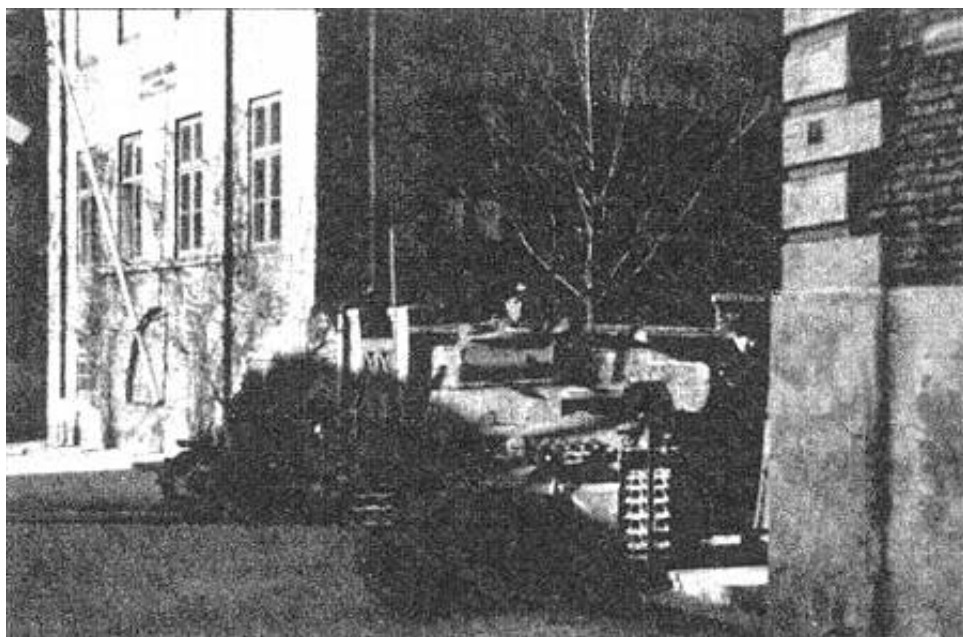
The Lundtoftebjerg Detachment and an army lorry, passing the roadblock in Sønderbro Street, earlier in the morning. From Source 2.

At the end of the centre road (but not distinguishable in the photo - d.), the anti-tank platoon from 2nd Battalion, Fodfolkspionerkommandoet, had taken up positions. The platoon was the *Lundtoftebjerg Detachment*, which had also been in action in Aabenraa, as mentioned in Part 1.

In order to support the fighting around the Barracks, the German positioned an anti-tank gun in Nørregade (at the exact same spot, previously passed by the German tanks).



German 3.7 cm anti-tank gun and ammunition vehicle, in Nørregade.



A third German tank took up position outside the Barracks, seen here next to the Court Building.

When the fighting had died down, Lieutenant-colonel Hansgaard was then driven to the German command post by a German captain.

He was met by a colonel and then the general, who informed him about the present situation and that Colonel Hartz, had already received the order to cease fire.

Local mobilization



Two of the locally mobilized soldiers in Haderslev.
From Source 3.

Around 07:00, Colonel Hartz had arranged for The Haderslev Chief of Police, Hartmann, to have the police force broadcasting (through loudspeaker vans) instructions to mobilize, especially soldiers permitted in uniform.

100 soldiers or so reported at the Barracks, and 20 were fully equipped before the fighting commenced, but all were permitted after the cease fire.

The rest, joining during or after the fighting were all rejected.

The decision to mobilize was made by Colonel Hartz, acting without official instructions.

The soldier with the bicycle is wearing the stiff version (*spidshue*, in Danish) of the field service cap; perhaps he is a NCO, but private soldiers were allowed to buy this cap as well.

In conclusion

To the Germans the Danish resistance had come as a big surprise, since they had been informed that no fighting were to be expected. Consequently they had taken no special precautions as to the tactical formation of the column.

The Germans were apparently impressed by the hard resistance put up by troops in Haderslev, most of which were called-up only three months before.

Sources

1. *Hæren, der ikke måtte Kæmpe* by P.M. Norup, Povl Branners Forlag, Copenhagen 1945.
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. *Soldaterne den 9. april 1940* by Kay Søren Nielsen, The Royal Danish Arsenal Museum,

Copenhagen 1990, ISBN 87-7233-847-4.

4. *9. April skildret i breve fra danske soldater* edited by Arne Stevns, København 1940.

Per Finsted

Notes:

- 1) The grey areas in the picture are probably reflections from a flashlight.
- 2) From *Berlingske Tidende*, Special Edition, Denmark 1940-1945, April 8th, 1990.
- 3) No. 1 (*Skytte*) aimed and fired the gun; No. 2 (*Hjælper 1*) was loader; Nos. 3 and 4 (*Hjælper 2 and 3*) were ammunition numbers.
- 4) The photo derives from the German booklet *Der Sieg im Norden* by Friedrich Heiss, Volk und Reich Verlag, Berlin 1941. (Source: *Newsletter No. 1/1991* published by Royal Danish Military Library.)