

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

Introduction

Information, in English, regarding the Danish resistance to the German invasion on April 9th, 1940 seems to be scarce. I have written the following article, in order to help filling this gap.

The Danish Forces at the border

The Danish forces at the Danish-German border consisted of:

In SØGAARDLEJREN (Camp Søgaard) (4th Battalion)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1st, 2nd and 3rd Infantry Company (bicyclists), armed with light machine-guns and a number of tripods. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4th Company (motorcyclists), armed with 4 x 20mm auto cannon, and 4 x light machineguns in tripods. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 heavy company (from 2nd Battalion/Fodfolkspionerkommandoet), armed with 6 x 20mm auto cannons, and 5 x light machineguns in tripods.
In HADERSLEV (from 3rd Battalion)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 infantry company, armed with 7 light machineguns and 3 light machine-guns in tripods. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 heavy company, armed with 4 heavy machineguns and 2 medium mortars. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 anti-tank company (2nd Regiment), armed with 4 x 37mm anti-tank guns and 4 x 20 mm auto cannons. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 artillery battery (8th Artillery Battalion), with 4 x 75mm field guns.
In TØNDER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The NCO School of Fodfolkspionerkommandoet, grouped into a 20 mm auto cannon platoon (with 2 guns and 1 light machinegun), 1 bicycle platoon (with 4 light machineguns), 1 infantry company (Fodfolkspionerkompagni) with 4 platoons (each with 4 light machineguns in tripods).
In SØNDERBORG (3rd Battalion)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 infantry companies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Army NCO School (Sergent- og Oversergentskolen)
In SOUTHERN JUTLAND	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 anti-aircraft batteries (14th Artillery Battalion), armed with 8 x 75 mm anti-aircraft guns and 9 x 20 mm auto cannons

4th Battalion

Detachments	Cyclist Platoons	Cyclist Sections	20 mm guns (from Motorcycle Company)	LMG (from Motorcycle Company)	20 mm guns (from Anti-tank Company)	LMG (from Anti-tank Company)	Total All raks	Units/4th Battalion
Korskro	1		1	1			115	1st Company
Bredeved	1		1	1				
Gaardeby	1				1	1	130	3rd Company
Perbøl		1						
Oksekær					1	1		
Vilsbæk	1							
Kliplev	1	1						
Lundtoftebjærg	1				2	1	50	2nd Company
Bjærgskov (Battalion reserve)	2		2	2			120	+ HQ
Kværs	2						68	
Hokkerup		2			1	1	34	
Rønshoved		2			1	1	28	
Total	10	6	4	4	6	5	545	

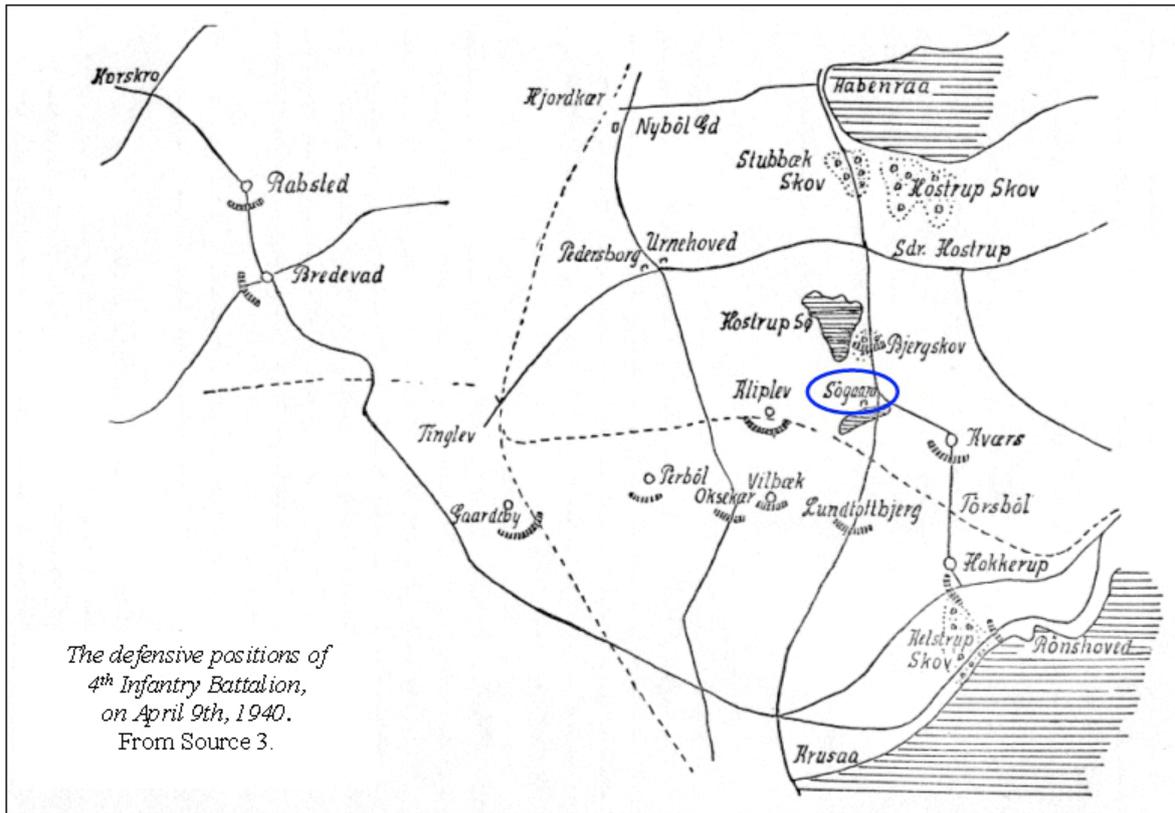
The 4th Battalion were heavily engaged in the early hours of April 9th.

The battalion was grouped into various detachments, as shown in the tables.

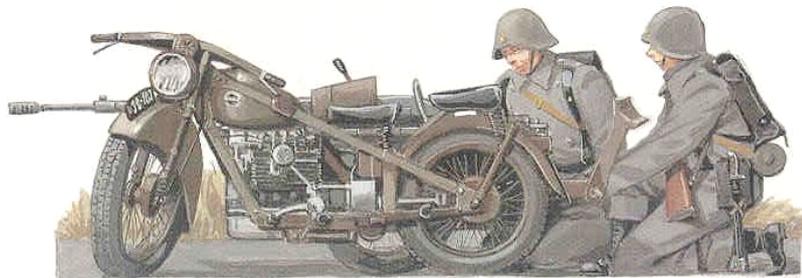
The troops went on full alert at 13:30 on April 8th, and were held ready to take up positions in event of a German invasion.

A thorough reconnaissance had been made regarding the positions, but in order not to provoke the Germans, all digging and fortification had however been strictly forbidden.

At 04:17 the alarm was sounded, at the troops left their barracks at 04:35, heading for their positions.



The Korskro and Bredevad Detachments



Just a few minutes ahead of the arrival of first German troops, the *Bredevad Detachment* took up positions at 06:30.

German armoured cars and motorcyclist were observed 300 metres to the south, and the 20mm auto cannons commenced firing, disabling the armoured car in front.



German infantry dismounted and attacked on foot, accompanied by 3 armoured cars.

Heavy fighting followed, with dead and wounded on both sides, and a further 2 armoured cars were put out of action.

At 07:15 a large German motorized column marched from TINGLEV towards BREDEVAD, thus preventing the detachment here from retiring. It was consequently disarmed by the Germans.

Danish soldiers and a disabled German armoured car at BREDEVAD.
From Source 2.



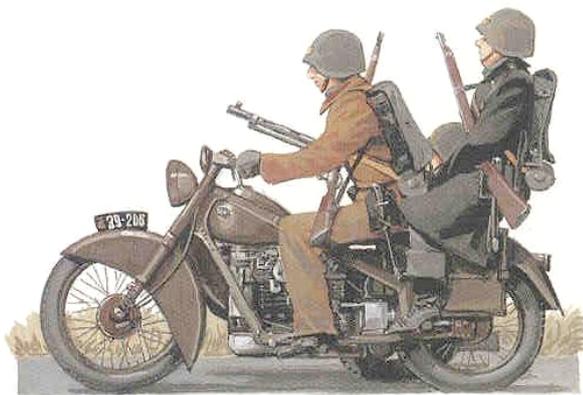
The *Korskro Detachment* made a halt in RABSTED, which was occupied at 06:45.

From two captured German dispatch riders it was learned that a German armoured unit was marching from KORSKRO, and that BREDEVAD had already been captured.

The detachment resumed the march via secondary roads, and learned about the cease-fire when they reached HELLEVAD (approximately 18 kilometres to the north-east).

At BREDEVAD Privates Poul Søgaard and Peder Jørgen Andersen were killed, and Sergeant J. Løvgreen, Corporal B.A. Larsen and Privates P. Jespersen, N.E. Bak and C.J. Hansen were wounded.

The Gaardeby, Perbøl, Oksekær, Vilsbæk and Kliplev Detachments



The detachments from 3rd Company drove off from their quarters, situated in KLIPLEV, and reached their positions before the German troops.

The *Gaardeby Detachment* however was the only one from 3rd Company which saw action.

It arrived at their positions at 04:45 and made a roadblock with various implements from a nearby farm.

Two German armoured cars observed the roadblock (at 05:30) but drove off before the detachment could open fire. In order to avoid being outflanked, the auto cannon were ordered into a new position.

A little later more German armoured cars turned up, and started shelling the gun crew, which desperately were trying to get the gun into its new position. Finally they succeeded, and opened fire on the armoured cars, presumably scoring some hits.

Before further action could take place, the detachment was ordered to evacuate their positions and move to the north.

The Lundtoftebjerg Detachment

The 2 auto cannons and the light machinegun from the anti-tank platoon arrived at their positions in the nick of time, and at 04:50 a column of armoured cars, motorcycles and other vehicles arrived. From improvised positions the auto cannons opened fire, disabling 2 armoured cars. When the enemy motorcyclists dismounted they were fired up from the light machinegun.



Stray bullets started a fire in a farm building. The smoke slowed down the German fire.

Some time after 05:00 the Germans mounted an attack, supported by terrain-going vehicles (type unknown), and the anti-tank platoon withdrew towards AABENRAA.

The bicycle platoon took up positions at the railway bridge, approximately 1.5 kilometres to the north of the anti-tank platoon. Shortly afterwards, the German column continued its advance and reached the platoon. Fire from armoured cars and low flying fighter planes forced the platoon to make a fighting withdrawal. One section was taken prisoner, but the platoon commander and two sections escaped.

From the bicycle platoon Private Karl Gunnar Jørgensen was killed and Private H. Hansen was wounded.

The Kværs Detachment



The 2 platoons from 2nd Company arrived at their position at 05:05 and started digging in, just south of KVÆRS.

Shortly after, heavy firing was heard from LUNDTOFTEBJÆRG, and the platoons were attacked by low flying German fighter planes.

No enemy troops were observed before 08:00 when German armoured cars showed up in the rear of the positions. The platoons were disarmed in KVÆRS.

The Hokkerup and Rønshoved Detachments



The detachments took up their positions at 05:10 and 05:20.

At HOKKERUP an improved roadblock was erected in great haste, and at 05:30 German armoured cars and motorcyclists attacked the position. The auto cannon opened fire, thus hitting the first 3 armoured cars in the column.

The German motorcyclists dismounted and attacked. The attack was supported by a 37 mm gun (perhaps a 3.7 cm FLAK 36), which however was quickly dealt with, by two direct hits on the gun, from one of the auto cannons.

The Danish positions were also attacked by low flying fighter planes.

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

Sergeant C.H. Vous and Private J. Jørgensen were killed; Second-lieutenant A. Olsen and Privates B.I. Jensen and L.O.M.K. Jepsen were wounded.

Before reaching their positions the *Rønshoved Detachment* was attacked by low flying fighter planes. Upon learning that the *Hokkerup Detachment* had surrendered they withdrew towards SØNDERBORG, arriving at 10:15.

The Bjærgskov Detachment



German Pz I.

From [Niemiecka Broń Pancerna 1933-1945](#).

The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-colonel S.E. Clausen, and the battalion reserve - 2 bicycle platoons (from 1st and 2nd Company) and a motorcycle platoon (from 4th Company) took up positions at BJÆRGSKOV, around 05:00.

The platoon from 1st Company was positioned along the southern edge of the wood, with the auto cannons and machineguns further to the north. The platoon from 2nd Company was in the northern part of the woods.

At 06:30 enemy armoured cars showed up 300 metres south of the wood. The front sections were ordered to fight their way back towards the auto cannons, which very soon started firing at the armoured cars.

One armoured car drove over one of the auto cannons, and the gunner Private Bjarne Christian Poulsen was killed. One armoured car however, was damaged.

The Danish troops were scattered in the woods during the fighting, and the woods were finally surrounded by German armoured cars and tanks (unknown type, but perhaps a Pz I or Pz II), thus forcing the Danish soldiers to surrender.

Privates M.L. Andersen, J.C. Fredensborg , B. Jørgensen and stretcher-bearer H.Finseth were wounded.

Further developments - at Sdr. Hostrup and Aabenraa

At 05:40 the CO ordered the platoon from 2nd Company towards STUBBÆK SKOV (4 kilometres south of AABENRAA).

At SDR. HOSTRUP the bicycle platoon was attacked by low flying fighter planes; Private Frode Peter Christensen was killed, and Corporal H. Mathiesen and Privates E. Hindsgaul and J.M. Vestergaard were wounded. Having reached their positions, the platoon sustained heavy automatic fire. It seemed likely that the Germans were preparing to attack, and consequently the platoon withdrew, through AAABENRAA towards KNIVSBJERG.

The anti-tank platoon from the *Lundtoftebjerg Detachment* was ordered to AABENRAA and took up positions in the southern outskirts. Shortly afterwards a column of about 15 enemy vehicles drove up along the Highway 10.



One of the auto cannons in the outskirts of Aabenraa, just before the German column arrived.
From Source 2.

The auto cannons fired at the German vehicles, disabling the leading tank and scoring hits on other vehicles in the column. The Germans fired back, and the motorcycles withdrew under heavy fire towards KNIVSBJERG, where they meet with the bicycle platoon.

At KNIVSBJERG the CO ordered the platoons towards HADERSLEV and to take up positions in the northern part of this town. When German tanks later arrived, it was however impossible to fight, due to a large number of civilians crowding around the Danish soldiers. War was still novel to the Danes, and most people were unaware of the actual situation ...

In conclusion

Part 2, dealing with the other infantry units in HADERSLEV, TØNDER and SØNDERBORG will follow.

Most of the text regarding the various detachments is an abridged translation of Source 1, whereas the tables regarding the composition of 4th Battalion derives form information from various sources, including the 3 mentioned.

For information regarding Danish army uniforms refer to [The Danish Infantry Uniforms and Equipment through-out The Past 200 Years](#); for information regarding organization (in wargame format) refer to [The Danish Army 1940](#).

Colour illustrations

The colour illustrations of the Danish Army used in this article are drawn by Christiaan Würgler Hansen and derive from a sheet (A4 format) which came as enclosure with the magazine Chakoten, in the early 1990'ies.

Today, the sheet is sold at The Royal Danish Arsenal Museum in Copenhagen. Further, some of the drawings are available as postcards too.



Text to colour illustrations of Danish soldiers

1	Nimbus motorcycle with 20mm M.1933 auto cannon. The soldiers are dressed in the grey M.1915 uniform and greatcoat.
2	Bicycle infantryman. Over the grey M.1915 uniform the soldier carries the black M.1910 greatcoat.
3	Nimbus motorcycle with 8mm light or heavy machinegun. The driver wears an khaki coloured motorcycle suit.
4	Light machinegun team, with black greatcoats M.1910 over the grey M.1915 uniform.
5	Kneeling infantrymen, with black greatcoats M.1910 over the grey M.1915 uniform.
6	Kneeling officer, in the yellow-brown M.1923 uniform
7	A Private, a Captain and a Private in uniforms which could have been worn on April 9th, 1940.

Sources

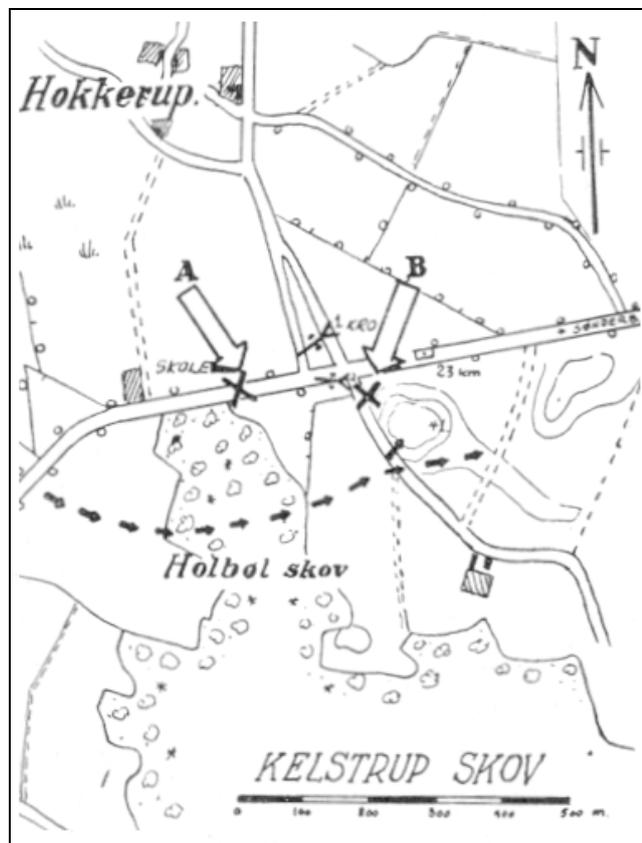
1. *Den danske Hær IV, 9. april 1940* by Helge Klint og J. Leisner, Sixtus Publications, Copenhagen 1978.
2. *Soldaterne den 9. april 1940* by Kay Søren Nielsen, The Royal Danish Arsenal Museum, Copenhagen 1990, ISBN 87-7233-847-4.
3. *9. April skildret i breve fra danske soldater* edited by Arne Stevns, København 1940.

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.

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.

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

Legend:

A	The roadblock where the German armoured cars were shot up.
B	Sergeant Vous was mortally wounded here.
→	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 ...



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 20 mm auto-cannon at HOKKERUP, as painted by Anna Maria Mehrn. From Source 2.

The soldiers are (left to right) - Corporal F. Jensen, Privates 533/Eliassen¹ (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.

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.

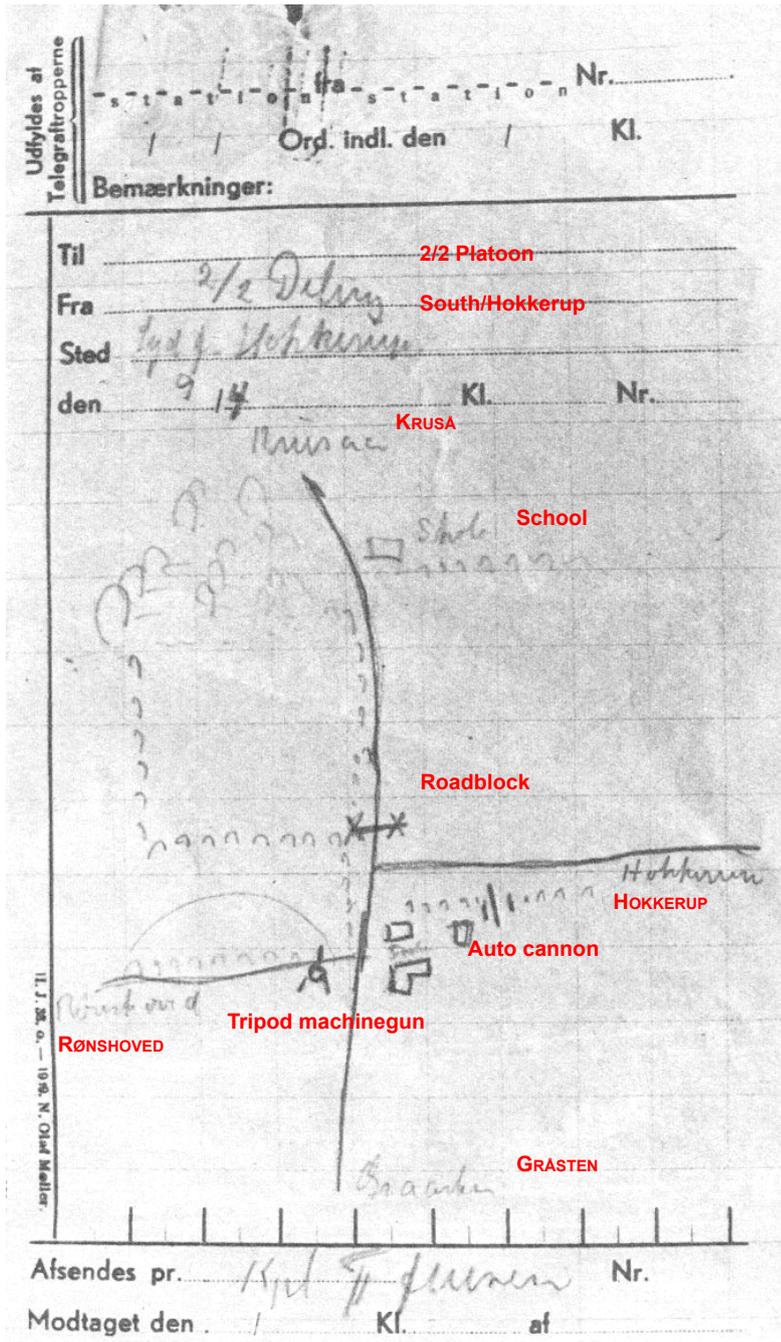
After the battle



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

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

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

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

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

Introduction

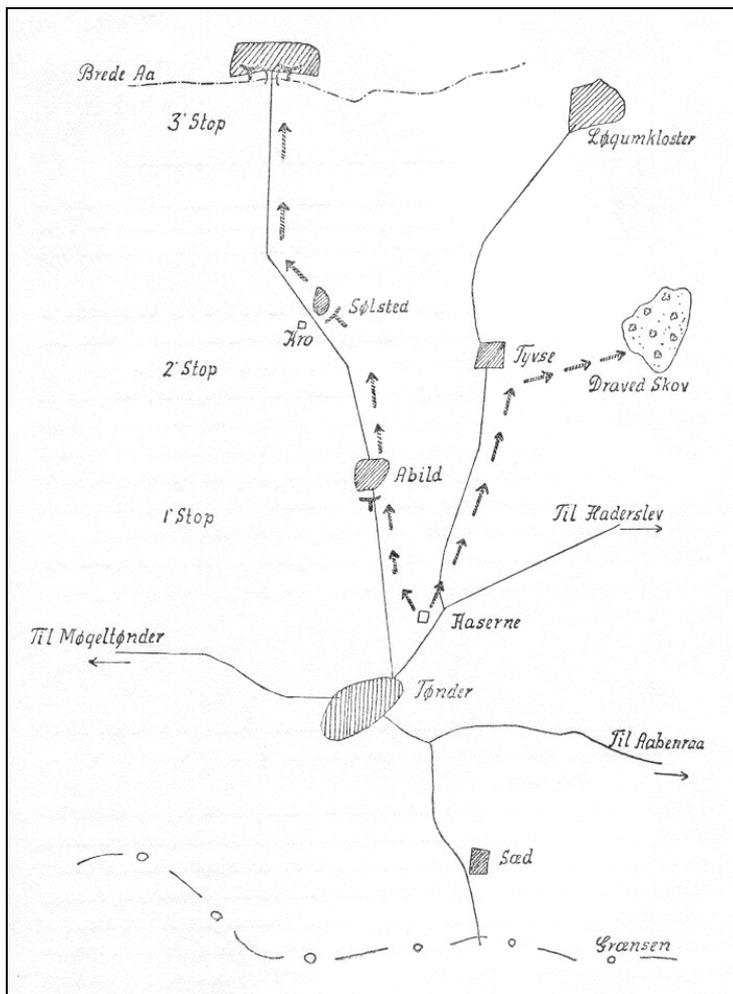
This is Part 2 of an article dealing with the fighting in the southern part of Jutland in the early hours of April 9th, 1940, where Danish forces resisted the German invasion - to the very best of their ability, but with little consequence as to the German progress.

The units in Tønder

The garrison in TØNDER consisted of:

- ☒ The NCO School of Fodfolkspionerkommandoen, grouped into a 20 mm auto cannon platoon (with 2 guns and 1 light machinegun) and 1 bicycle platoon (with 4 light machineguns).
- ☒ 4th Company from 1st Fodfolkspionerbataljonen with 4 platoons (each with 4 light machineguns in tripods).

Just 10 minutes after the alert at 04:30 the troops were ready to leave the barracks. However, 2 German armoured cars were already at the gates. The troops escaped by a back passage, leading to the north.



Sketch showing the retreat of the units in Tønder, 9th April, 1940. From Source 1.

The 4th Company headed for TYVSE where it took up a defensive position.

Later, it learned about the Government's decision to cease fire.

Due to the risk of attacks by low flying German fighter planes, the company marched into cover in DRAVED SKOV.



The mobile units

The mobile units of the NCO School made for BREDEBRO, and made a number of attempts to hold back the Germans during the march.

Improvised road blocks were erected in ABILD, covered by 1 auto cannon and 1 bicycle section. Before everything was ready, German armoured cars and motorcyclists turned up. The auto cannon now headed for BREDEBRO and the bicyclists scattered into the countryside.

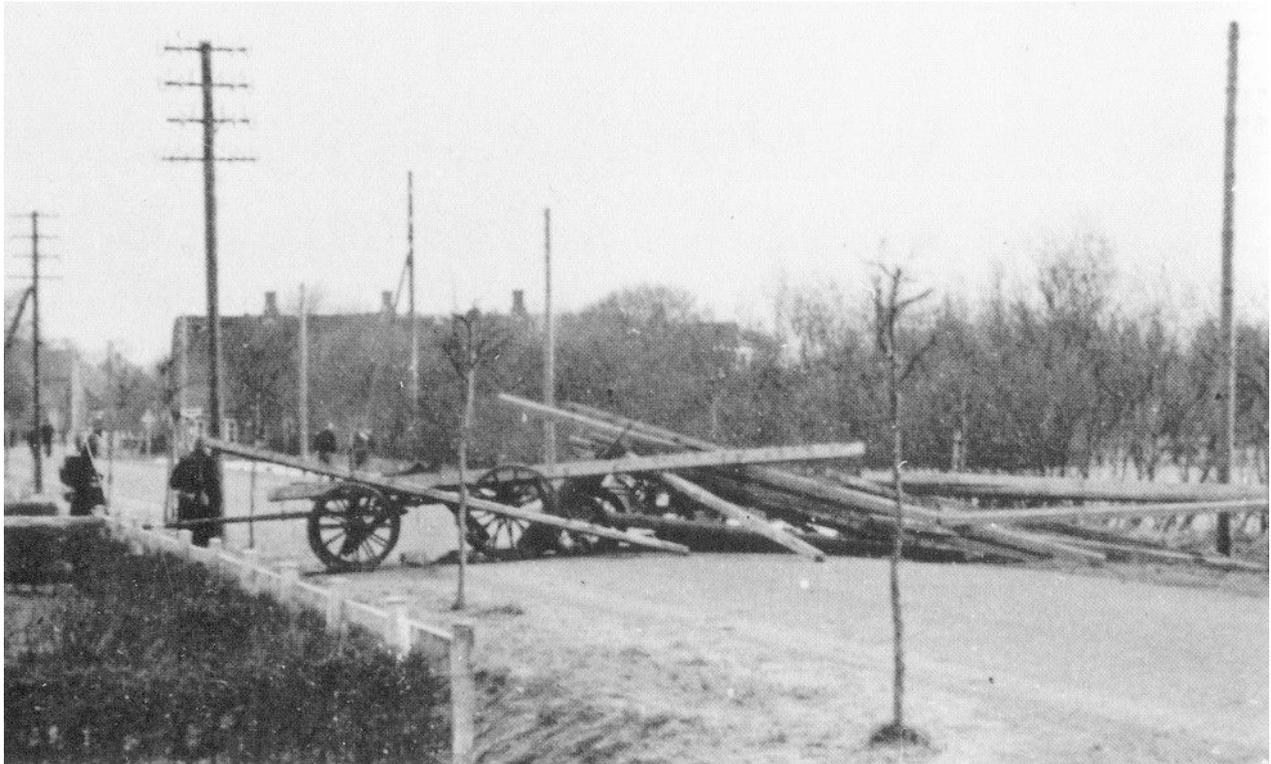
A second attempt was made in SØLSTED, where a more effective road block was built. The second auto cannon covered the road block, and when the German armoured cars drove up, the one in front was hit and drove into a ditch. The next one was hit too, but it was still able to use its gun.

A number of road blocks were build in BREDEBRO, and the auto cannon from ABILD was put into position to cover the road.

However, shortly after the arrival of the troops from SØLSTED, a large German armoured car unit turned up in BREDEBRO, in the rear of the Danish positions (at about 08:00). After a short fire fight to the south and northeast and further attempts to resist the enemy were futile.

During the retreat, the units from TØNDER were constantly treaded by low flying German planes; when the advance was halted in SØLLING, the planes attacked the Danish units with bombs and machineguns.

Unlike the other actions on this day, no Danish losses were reported from the TØNDER units.



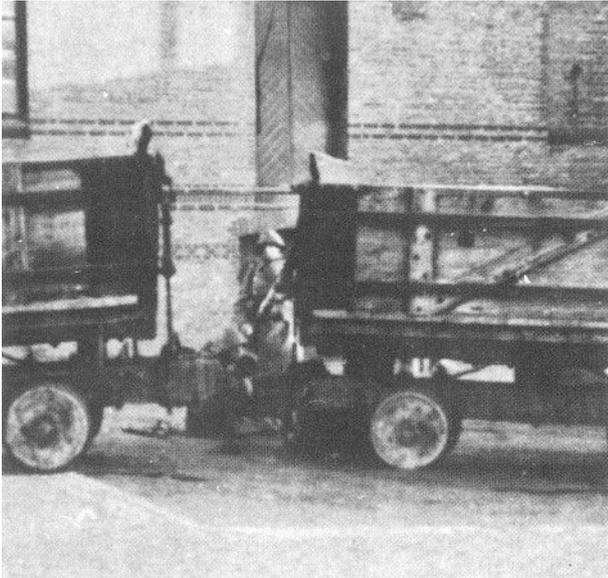
*The road block in SØLSTED.
From Source 2.*

The units in Haderslev

The garrison in HADERSLEV consisted of units of 3rd Battalion (Lieutenant-colonel H. Elmgren) and various supporting units:

- ☒ 4th Company (CO: Captain Otto Olsen), armed with 7 light machineguns and 3 light machineguns in tripods.
- ☒ 5th (heavy) Company (CO: Captain P. Bosse), armed with 4 heavy machineguns and 2 medium mortars.
- ☒ Regimental Anti-tank Company (2nd Regiment) (CO: Captain E. Nielsen), armed with 4 x 37mm anti-tank guns and 4 x 20 mm auto cannons.
- ☒ 1st Battery/8th Artillery Battalion (CO: Captain Kjartan Pedersen), with 4 x 75mm field guns.

The units (approximately 400 men) were alerted at 04:15. The infantry units took up positions in the southern part of the town, covering the two routes leading to the north. The battery took up positions to the north of the town.



From the 4th Company, a platoon was detached to help making ready the Regimental transport (it joined the company, just before the end of the fighting), and a further 30 men had various guard duties at the HADERSLEV BARRACKS.

Thus, only 3 infantry sections and 3 infantry sections, with light machineguns in tripods, did actually participate in the fighting soon to follow.

This small force was soon joined by 5th Company and the Regimental Anti-tank Company.

The two main roads were barred by road blocks, one made from some nearby dumping wagons and two others by timber.

Dumping wagons made into a roadblock, and guarded by an auto cannon, Haderslev, 9th April 1940. From Source 2.



At about 07:30 the forces 4th Battalion (See [Part 1](#)), retiring towards the north, moved through the road blocks, soon to be followed by German units, headed by tanks.

German tanks in Haderslev. From [Dansk Militærhistorie](#). (The tank in front is presumably a Pz II, followed by a Pz I.)

The photo was taken just minutes before the tanks encountered the main road block.

Among the heroic deeds performed this morning was the action of one of the anti-tank guns from 5th Company.

In order to get the best, and longest, field of fire, it was positioned on a street corner, against a white wall, and without any cover. The gun was commanded by Cornet Frode Vesterby, with a crew of four men.



*A classic photo from April 9th, 1940 - The 37mm anti-tank in HADERSLEV.
From Source 2.*

At 07:50 the German tanks drove up against the anti-tank gun, which promptly fired at the leading tanks.

The German tanks took up position side by side and fired upon the gun. The gun fired 3 times, scoring 3 hits - 2 hits on the tanks, and 1 in the tracks on one of the tanks.



The fire from the tanks killed Cornet Frode Vesterby and Private Hans Christian Hansen (gunner). The rest of the crew - Privates Bertel Lygum, Berthelsen, I. Bonde Christensen and Georg P. Hansen - were all wounded.

Soon after, a German tank smashed the gun.

After the battle - The 37mm anti-tank gun in HADERSLEV. From [Dansk Militærhistorie](#). (Please follow the link to see photos of the scenery today and of the gun which is on display at The Royal Danish Arsenal Museum, in Copenhagen.)

2 auto cannons and 1 light machinegun at the road block (made by dumping wagons) now opened fire on the Germans.

At 08:00 the order to cease fire was received by the units in action, and while the garrison commander - Colonel A. Hartz, (Commanding Officer of 2nd Regiment) - negotiated the practical terms with a German general (probably the commander of the German 170th Division) - the German forces cleared the road block and headed for the Barracks.

The units at the Barracks resisted the tanks and armoured cars with small arms fire (anti-tank bullets however), halting the Germans only for a short while. At 08:15 the order to cease fire reached the units at the Barracks, and the fighting in Haderslev was over.

Further to the dead and wounded mentioned above, Privates Oluf Arthur Hansen and Niels Møller Schmidt were killed (one manned one of the auto cannons at the road block and the other was on air scouting duty at the Barracks; he was killed by a stray bullet from a tank). Corporal Erik Krogh and Private R. Christensen (at the road block) were wounded.

The Field Battery



A 75mm Field Gun M.1902, from 1st Battery, 8th Artillery Battalion, April 1940. From Source 5.

The 1st Battery of 3rd Artillery Battalion was garrisoned in HADERSLEV. The battery was motorized and armed with 4 x 75mm field guns. The Battery Commander was Captain Kjartan Pedersen.

At 04:30 the battery was ordered into position to the south of HADERSLEV.

However, due to the infantry forces already there, this was impossible.

Consequently the battery received orders to take up position to the north of the town, in order to support the units retreating from HADERSLEV to the north. The battery went quickly into position, and Captain Petersen set up his observation post south of the battery positions, and began calculation data for supporting the units in HADERSLEV. However, due to heavy mist in the area, observation was impossible.

Captain Petersen began to reconnoitre positions from where the guns were able to support the withdrawal. While doing so, his liaison officer at the infantry battalion informed him about the cease fire.

Thus, being prevented from performing his supporting task, he then ordered the battery to retire to the north, in order to join the Danish forces at VEJLE Å (the main defensive position planned by Jydske Division). At 09:30 he joined the rest

of the 8th Artillery Battalion (i.e. Battalion HQ and 3rd Battery), situated in the town HØJEN (some 70 kilometres to the north).

Postscript



The garrison in SØNDERBORG did not take part in the fighting on April 9th, 1940.

The anti-aircraft batteries in Southern Jutland

Two of the anti-aircraft batteries stationed in SOUTHERN JUTLAND engaged attacking aircrafts. In ESBJERG a 75mm anti-aircraft gun scored a hit in one plane and at LØGUMKLOSTER a 20mm auto cannon scored a probable hit.

The third battery, in RØDEKRO, was not involved in any fighting, but send out two patrols of mobile anti-aircraft guns, to cover their retreat to the north.

For pictures of Danish anti-aircraft artillery in 1940, please refer to the following articles (in Danish only):

[Luftværnsartilleriets indsats i neutralitetsforsvaret 1939-40](#)

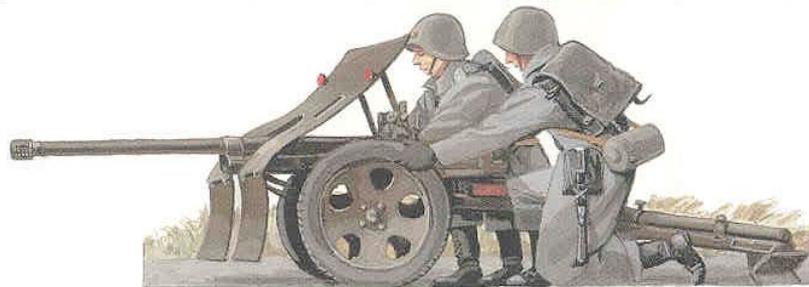
[Dansk luftværnsartilleri 1940, Del 1](#)

[Dansk luftværnsartilleri 1940, Del 2](#)

Sources

1. *Den danske Hær IV, 9. april 1940* by Helge Klint og J. Leisner, Sixtus Publications, Copenhagen 1978.
2. *Soldaterne den 9. april 1940* by Kay Søren Nielsen, The Royal Danish Arsenal Museum, Copenhagen 1990, ISBN 87-7233-847-4.
3. *9. April skildret i breve fra danske soldater* edited by Arne Stevns, Copenhagen 1940.
4. *Feltartilleriet i Aarhus 1881-1969* by P.E. Niemann, Zac Publication, Copenhagen 1981, ISBN 87-7348-047-9.
5. *Årets største begivenheder i billeder - det bedste fra "Den danske Kamp" 1940-1943* af Carl Næsh-Hendriksen, International Billedreportage A/S, Bogforlaget Dana, Fruens Bøge.

Per Finsted



Text to colour illustrations of Danish soldiers

1	Infantryman, with black M.1910 greatcoat over the grey M.1915 uniform.
2	Infantryman, in the grey M.1915 uniform.
3	A 37mm anti-tank gun. The crew is in the grey M.1915 uniform.

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

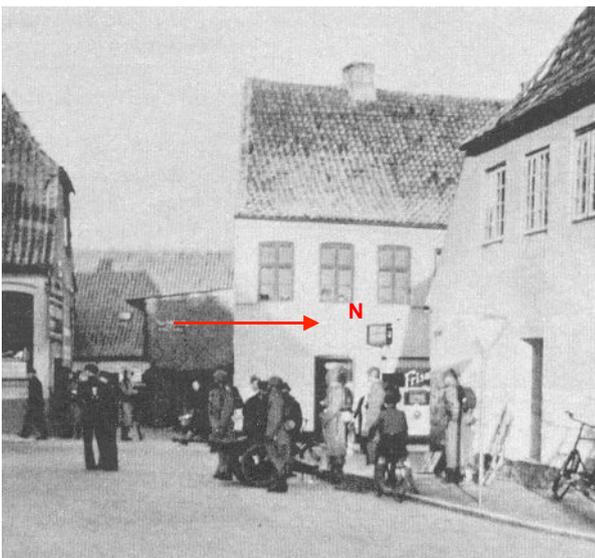
Introduction

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 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 37mm anti-tank gun in HADERSLEV. From Source 2.

The photo is taken from HERTUG HANS STREET, with SØNDERBRO STREET marked by the red arrow.

¹ The grey areas in the picture are probably reflections from a flashlight.



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

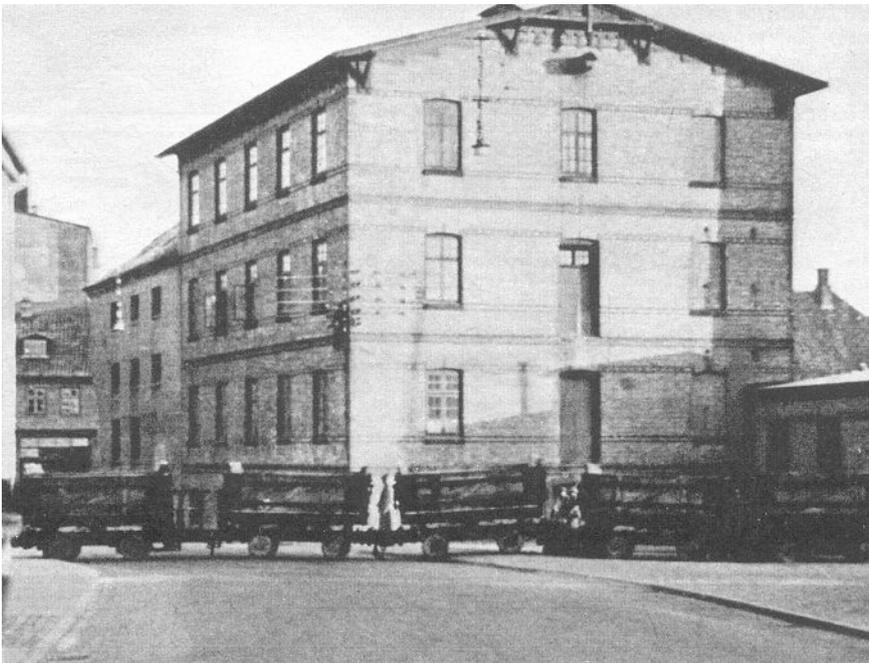
Mr Bertel Lygum Berthelsen - former Private 391/Berthelsen - in the present day (1990) surroundings².

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 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.

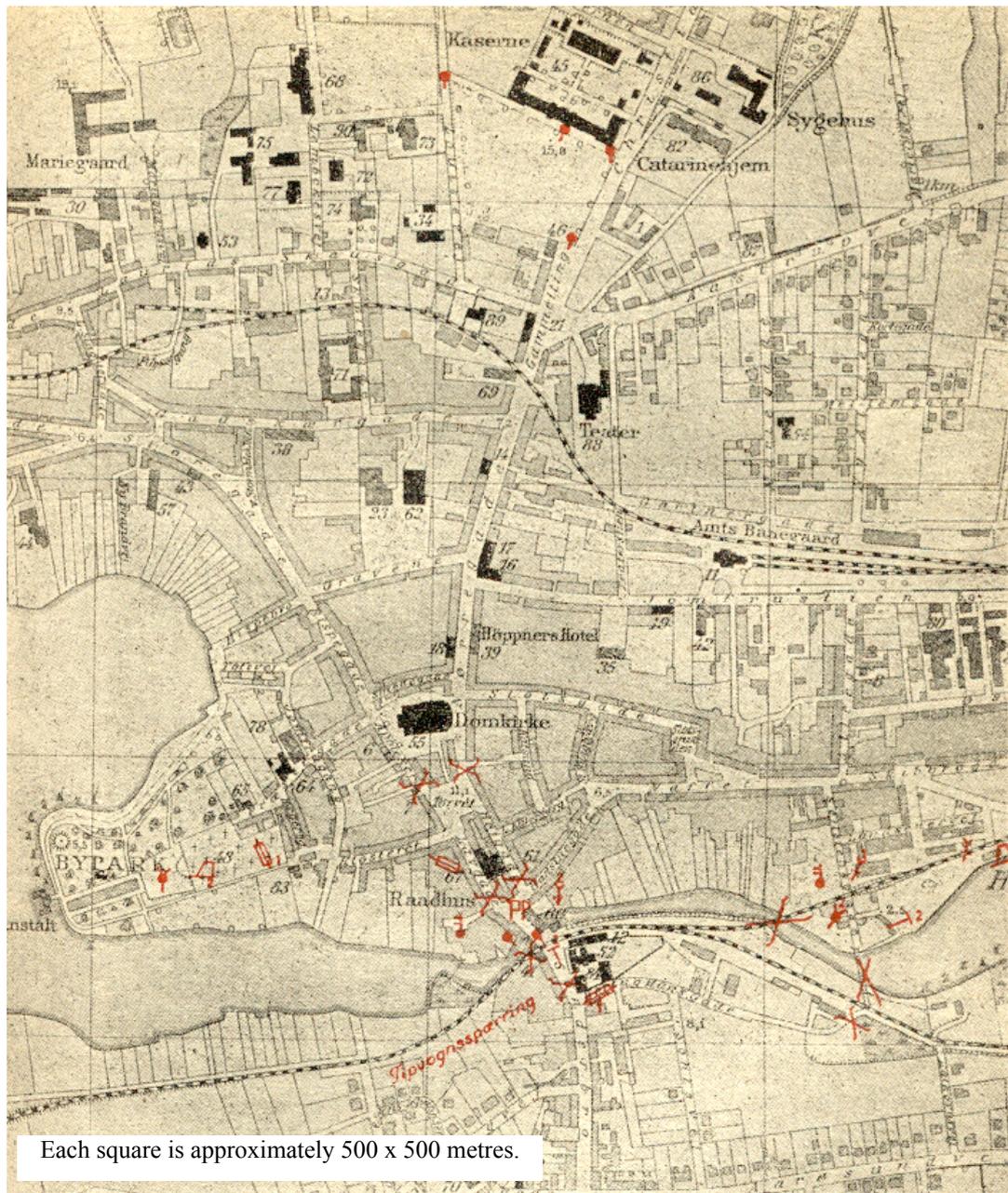


The roadblock on SØNDERBRO STREET (seen from the South), just minutes before the fighting. From Source 2.

² From Berlingske Tidende, Special Edition, Denmark 1940-1945, April 8th, 1990.

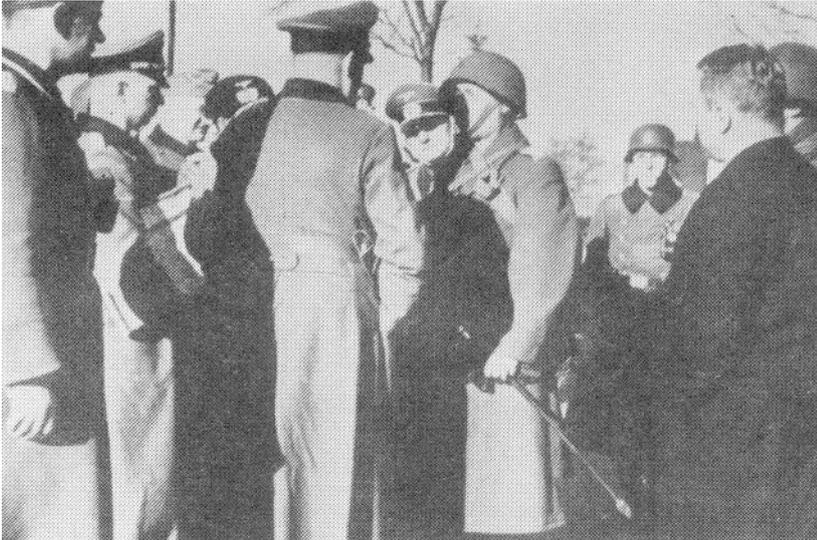
³ No. 1 (*Skytte*) aimed and fired the gun; No. 2 (*Hjælper 1*) was loader; Nos. 3 and 4 (*Hjælper 2 and 3*) were ammunition numbers.

Positions in Haderslev April 9th, 1940 (from Source 2)



	Regimental Command Post		Medium machinegun section
	Battalion Command Post		Medium mortar section
	Company Commander		37 mm light anti-tank gun section
	Section, with light machinegun		20 mm auto-cannon section
	Section, with light machinegun (in tripod)		Road block
	Guard or single soldier		<i>Note: A figure behind a symbol describes the number of weapons.</i>

Cease fire



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.

Colonel A. Hartz (with steel helmet and cane) negotiating with General Wittke, surrounded by various staff officers⁴.

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-cannons, 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

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.)

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.



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).

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



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.

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

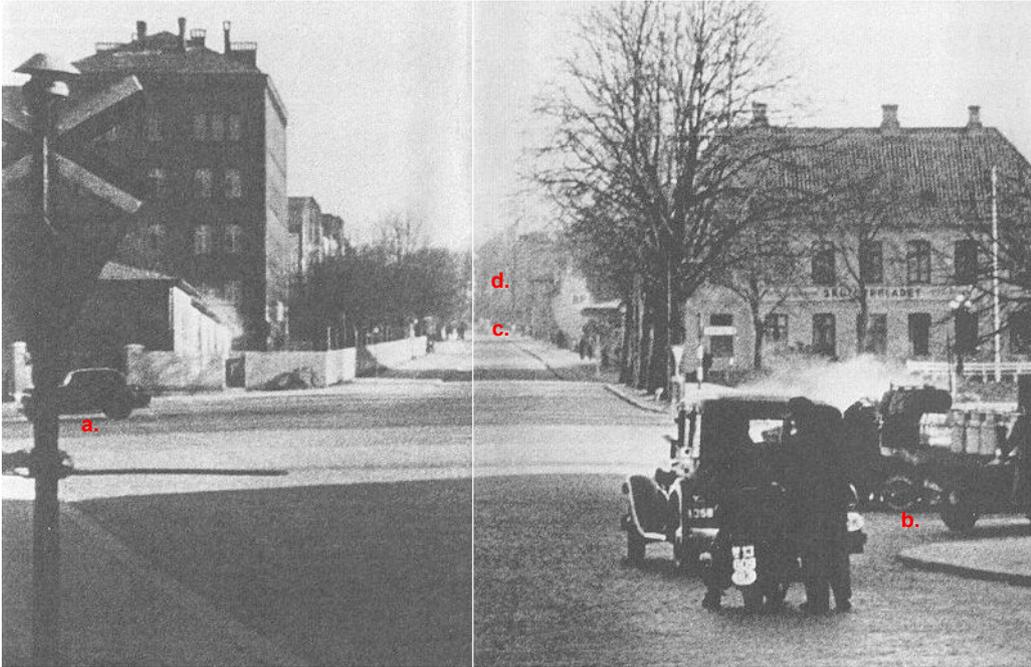
The civilians in the picture are probably listening to the fighting in the southern part of the town.



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.

German tanks in NØRREGADE, HADERSLEV. From Source 2.



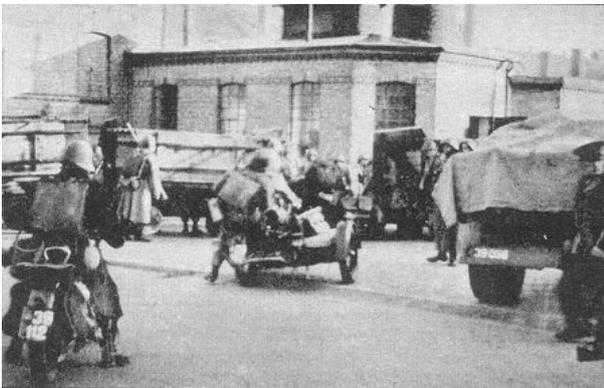
Having crossed the railway, the Germans were fired upon by the troops guarding the Barracks.

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.

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

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

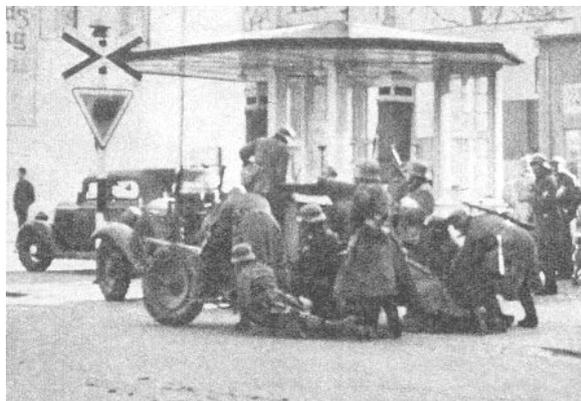
The second German tank now commenced firing at the Danish soldiers. The tank is seen to right, next to the civilian car and the milk van (b.). In the centre of the photo, hardly distinguishable, are a number of persons - Lieutenant-colonel Hansgaard and two civilian workers (c.). The lieutenant-colonel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



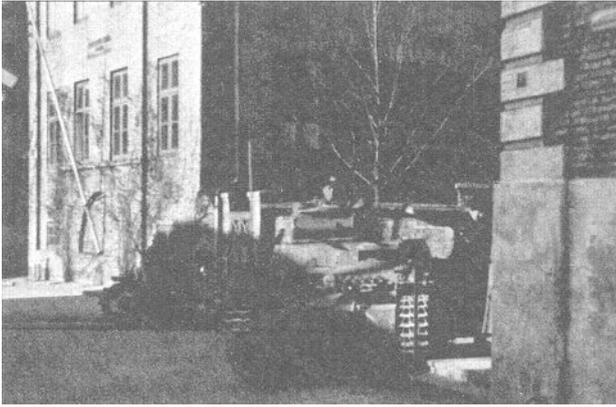
At the end of the centre road (but not distinguishable in the photo - d.), the anti-tank platoon from 2nd Battalion, Fodfolkspionerkommandoet, had taken up positions. The platoon was the *Lundtoftebjerg Detachment*, which had also been in action in AABENRAA, as mentioned in Part 1.

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

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



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.

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

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

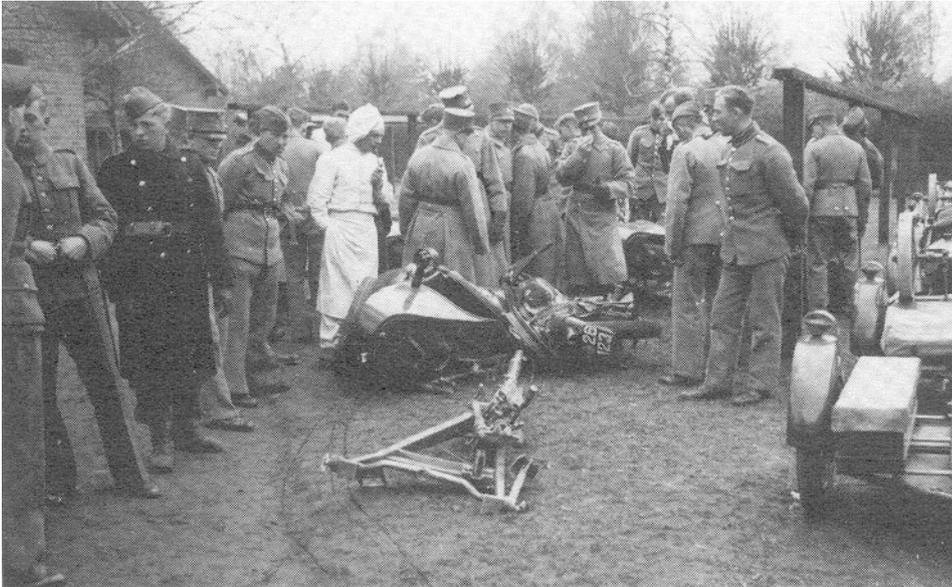
The Danish Army on April 9th, 1940, Part 3

Introduction

Perhaps the words “The German army ...” would have been an appropriate title since the contents are mainly concerned with the forces opposing the Danish Army, but in the end I decided on making the article sequel to Parts 1 and 2.

After the battle

Within hours after the cease fire, everything reverted more or less to “normal”, and soldiers, temporary made prisoners of war or otherwise disarmed, returned to their units. Abandoned and/or damaged equipment was collected and returned to the units; some items were however damaged beyond repair.



Collecting point for damaged equipment. From Source 3.

The auto cannon may be the one damaged at BJÆRGSKOV, and the collecting point may be situated near CAMP SØGAARD.

The German forces

The German ground forces crossing the border in Southern Jutland on the morning of April 9th, 1940, belonged to the 170th Infantry Division and the 11th Motor Rifle Brigade.



The German advance through Aabenraa, April 9th, 1940.

The 170th Infantry Division included the following units:

- 391st Infantry Regiment
- 399th Infantry Regiment
- 401st Infantry Regiment
- 240th Light Artillery Battalion
- 240th Anti-tank Battalion
- 240th Engineer Battalion
- 240th Signal Battalion.

(From Source 2.)

The photographer was Thomas Christensen, who lived in AABENRAA, and the photo was later published in a series of photographs from the German invasion.



A German tank in Denmark, April 9th, 1940. (Source unknown.)

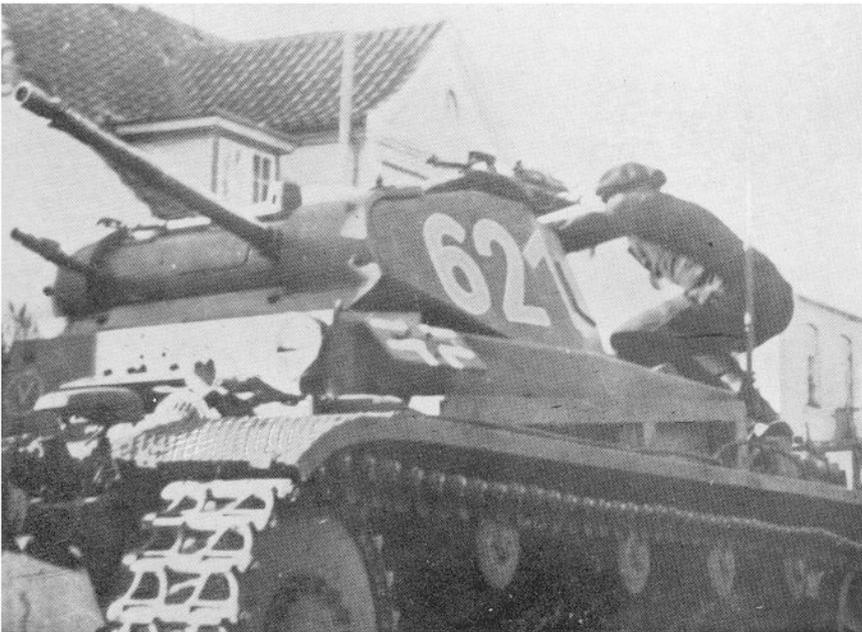
The German 11th Motor Rifle Brigade, included among other units

- ☒ 40th Special Tank Battalion
- ☒ 13th Machinegun Battalion (motorized).

(From Source 2.)

Further, according to Source 1, the Brigade included 2 motorized infantry regiments and 2 additional motorized Machinegun Battalions.

77



German light tanks in Aabenraa, April 9th, 1940.

Source 1 states the strength of the Tank Battalion as approximately 70 tanks - 40 Pz I and 30 Pz II.

This photo by Thomas Christensen is also from the "official" series.



A German column, April 9th, 1940. (Source unknown.)



*Horses and a horse drawn vehicle, loaded onto a truck, passing through Aabenraa.
From Source 1.*



*A German command post at Arnum Nykro.
From Source 1.*

I have not been able to identify the unit marking, similar to a modern “packman”. The marking is shown on the left hand mudguards on the cars and on the motorcycle sidecar.

Sources

1. *Soldaterne den 9. april 1940* by Kay Søren Nielsen, The Royal Danish Arsenal Museum, Copenhagen 1990, ISBN 87-7233-847-4.
2. *The German Forces in Demark 1940-1945 (Bibliography No. 41)* by K.V. Nielsen, published by the Royal Danish Military Library, 1990.
3. *29. august 1943 - og hvad så?* by Aage Damm, published by Landsforeningen Værn om Danmark, 1993.

Per Finsted