

The Organisation of the Royal Danish-Norwegian Army 1808-1814

Hans Tino Hansen, Denmark

Part 1. The Infantry

The Danish-Norwegian army of the Napoleonic wars is one of the lesser known armies of that era. Unfortunately there exists no English text source for a detailed description of this subject even though there have been made some specific articles as e.g. the ones on Stralsund 1809 and Boden 1813 by Mr. Torstein Snorrason in Tradition magazine in the 1970s, and a good one on the Danish Auxiliary Corps 1813 by Siren B. Andersen in Miniature Wargames no.87 1990. Besides these there are only a few more, but they are generally at least incorrect in its description. It is my intention to give an organisational overlook in order to give a clear picture of this army. My description covers only the period after the British attack on Copenhagen in 1807 as the army was reorganised as a consequence of the militia's failure to General Wellesley's troops. For a description of the militia see my article on the subject in the Journal of the Napoleonic Association no.61988

The 107,000 men strong Danish-Norwegian Army was divided into the Danish and the Norwegian army. The army was based on national service and each regiment had its own recruiting area usually corresponding to the regiment's name. The private soldier served for 6 years in the line and then 8 years in the reinforcement. The soldiers of the old line units served full time, while the reinforcement soldiers only were called in for exercises. Because of the war these were though in service most of the time and only sent home for the harvest. As a consequence the reinforcement battalions and companies were able to maintain as high a level of training as the original line, which was displayed at Stralsund 1809 and during the campaign of 1813. In Norway each regiment had a contingent of militia incorporated in each company, and here even the company had it's own local area. The only units which recruited from all of the kingdom was the two guard regiments, the Royal Artillery Corps and the Engineers. There existed also some enlisted units; the Marine Regiment, the Guide Corps, the Altona Jaeger Grenadier Company and the two first Norwegian regiments - these were composed of native enlisted soldiers except for the Marine Regiment which included a foreign element as well.

To the force of the regular army came the coastal and

island militia of 60,000-70,000 men as well as the volunteer and civic guard units totalling around 20,000 men.

Command

The commander-in-chief was King Frederik VI, who was very interested in army affairs and was nominal, as well as actual, commander of the army.

To serve him he had the General Staff, which consisted of the Adjutant-General Staff and the Quartermaster-General Staff. This institution had extremely large power - both military and political - during the war and could be compared to the status of the German WW1 "Grosser Generalstab" or the British "War Cabinet". To serve the field staff officers and to produce maps the General Staff had the elite Guide Corps of 6 officers, 16 NCOs, 4 trumpeters, 2 craftsmen and 28 guides.

Denmark was divided into several general commands each under the command of a general officer. Norway was formally under the command of Fieldmarshal Prince Carl of Hessen-Cassel and further divided into two commands: Sondenfaeldske and Norden-fjaedske (South and North). In practice the commander of the South Command, which was the most important area, also had the overall command e.g. General Prince Christian August of Sleswig-Holstein in 1803-1809.

Infantry

The infantry consisted of the guard, the line, the light and the garrison infantry.

The small guard regiment - Livgarden til Fods - had one battalion of four companies with 116 all ranks each. 12 of the privates were sharpshooters and armed with rifles, when not on guard duty. Total 494 all ranks.

The infantry of the line consisted of the following regiments (Norwegian units marked with N)

Name	Btms	Organisation	Strenght
Kongens Regiment	4	A	3340
Kronens Regiment	4	A	3340
Danske Livregiment	4	A	3340
Norske Livregiment	4	A	3340
Prins Christians Regiment	4	A	3340
Fynske Infanteriregiment	4	A	3340
1ste Jyske Infanteriregiment	4	A	3340
2det Jyske Infanteriregiment	4	A	3340
3die Jyske Infanteriregiment	4	A	3340
Dronningens Livregiment til Fods	4	A	3340
Slesvigske Infanteriregiment	4	A	3340
Holstenske Infanteriregiment	4	A	3340
Oldenborgske Infanteriregiment	4	A	3340
Marine Regimentet	3	B	2062
Kobenhavnske Infanteriregiment	3	C	1989
" " " (1810)	3	C1	2571
Langelandske Infanteribataillon	1	D	827
Sondenfaeldske Infanteriregiment (N)	4	E	2860
Nordenfaeldske Infanteriregiment (N)	4	E	2860
1ste Akkershusiske Infanteriregiment (N)	2	F	2190
2det Akkershusiske Infanteriregiment (N)	2	F	2190
Oplandske Infanteriregiment (N)	2	F	2190
Telemarske Infanteriregiment (N)	2	F	2190
1ste Trondhjemske Infanteriregiment (N)	3	G	3147
2det Trondhjemske Infanteriregiment (N)	3	G	3147□
Vesterlenske Infanteriregiment (N)	3	G	3147
Bergenhusiske Infanteriregiment (N)	4	H	4264
1811:			
Sondenfaeldske Infanteriregiment (N)	4	I	2868
Nordenfaeldske Infanteriregiment (N)	4	I	2868
Oplandske Infanteriregiment (N)	4	I	2868
Telemarske Infanteriregiment (N)	3	J	3108
Vesterlenske Infanteriregiment (N)	3	J	3108
Bergenhusiske Infanteriregiment (N)	3	J	3108
1ste Trondhjemske Infanteriregiment (N)	3	K	3112
2det Trondhjemske Infanteriregiment (N)	3	L	3108

General notes: Musketeer companies had drummers and fifers; while Jaeger and sharpshooters had hornblowers.

The Danish Line infantry regiment had four battalions of 5 companies, each. The 1st Battalion had 1 grenadier and 4 musketeer companies, while the 2nd-4th Battalion had 1 Jaeger and 4 musketeer companies. The company strength was 165 all ranks. The battalion strength including staff was 833. Total 3,330 all ranks. (A)

The enlisted Marine Regiment had three battalions of four musketeer companies. Company strength was 169 all ranks. Total 2062 all ranks. After a period of huge vacancies the regiment was disbanded and put into the Kobenhavnske Infanteriregiment in November 1810. (B)

The Kobenhavnske Infanteriregiment had three battalions of 4 companies. The 1st battalion had 1 grenadier and 3 musketeer companies. The 2nd-3rd battalion had a Jaeger company and three musketeer companies, each. The company strength was 164 all ranks. Total 1989. (C)

In November 1810 the regiment received a new organisation and had now three battalions of 5 companies, each. The 1st battalion (Called "Marinebataillon") had 5 musketeer companies, the 2nd had 1 grenadier and 4 musketeer and the 3rd 1 Jaeger and 4 musketeer companies. The company strength was 169 all ranks. Total 2571 all ranks. (C1)

The two Norwegian enlisted regiments had four battalions: two enlisted of 5 companies and two national battalions of 6 musketeer companies, each. The composition of the enlisted battalions was as 1st - 2nd battalions in a Danish regiment. The enlisted company strength was 92 all ranks. A national company had 159 all ranks - 50 privates were militia. Total 2860 all ranks. (E)

In 1810 the Oplandske Regiment was elevated to an enlisted regiment. The three enlisted regiments had now two enlisted battalions of 1 Jaeger and 4 musketeer companies, each, and two national battalions with 1 Jaeger and 5 musketeer companies. The strength of an enlisted company was 93 all ranks. The national companies were organised as prior to 1810 with 159 all ranks except that the Jaeger coy had an additional hornblower and 160 all ranks. Total 2868 all ranks. (I)

The national regiments had two enlisted grenadier companies and a varying number of national battalions of 6 musketeer companies, each. The grenadier company had 133 all ranks. The grenadier companies were combined two and two into grenadier battalions as was custom in many 'German inspired' armies. The national battalion and companies were as for the enlisted regiments. (F-G-H)

In June 1810 the two Akkerhus regiments were converted to light infantry and the five remaining units got a new organisation.

Each regiment had two enlisted companies (1 Jaeger and 1 musketeer) and three battalions of 1 Jaeger and 5 musketeer companies. An enlisted company had 112 all ranks. The national companies had 159/160 all ranks. Total 3108 all ranks. The 1ste Trondhjemske Infanteriregiment had two enlisted companies, two national battalions as above and a skier battalion of 6 skier companies. A ski company had 160 all ranks. To this add the battalion horn-blower and the battalion surgeon. (This battalion was also known as 2det Nordenfjældske Skiloberkorps). (K)

The 2det Trondhjemske Infanteriregiment had two

enlisted companies, two national battalions and a sharpshooter battalion (Trondhjemske Skarpskyttebataillon) of 1 Jaeger and 5 sharp-shooter companies. (L)

Light infantry

The Danish-Norwegian light infantry was a highly trained quality force with the jäger units as the elite. The 2nd battalions of the Danish units were reinforcement units. The Jaeger units were rifle armed, while the sharpshooter battalions had a special smoothbore sharpshooter musket. The Norwegian ski units had a combination of these two weapons. All units are shown below:

Name	Btn	Organisation	Strength
Sjællandske Jaegerkorps	2	A	1403
Slesvigsk Jaegerkorps	2	A	1403
Norske Jaegerkorps (N)	1	B	559
Sjællandske Skarpskyttekorps	2	C	1375
Jyske Skarpskyttekorps	2	C	1375
Holstenske Skarpskyttekorps	2	C	1375
Norske Batalion Let Infanteri (N)	1	D	957
Nordenfjældske Skiloberkorps	1	E	480
Sonden fjældske Skiloberkorps	1	E	481
Akkershusiske Skarpskytteregiment (1811)	3	F	3108
Walderske Skarpskyttebataillon (1811)	1	G	957
Bergenhusiske Skarpskyttebataillon (1811)	1	H	1116
Altonaiske Jaegergrenaderkompagni	1 coy	I	140
Sjæl. Jaegerkorps Skarpskyttekomp.	1 coy	J	168
Leirdalske Lette Infanterikompagni (N)	1 coy	K	160

The two Danish Jaeger corps had each one battalion 4 companies of 141 all ranks and one (reinforcement) battalion with 5 companies of 165 all ranks. Total strength 1403 all ranks. (A)

The Norwegian Jaeger Corps had one battalion with 4 companies of 139 all ranks with a total of 567 all ranks. (B)

The three Danish sharpshooter corps had one battalion with 4 companies of 134 all ranks and a battalion with 5 companies of 165 all ranks. Total strength 1375 all ranks. (C)

The Norwegian light battalion had 6 companies of 159 all ranks with total strength of 957 all ranks. This battalion was used for the formation of the Akkershus Regiment in late 1810. (D)

The two Norwegian ski corps had each 3 companies of 160 all ranks with a total of 480 vice 481 all ranks. (E)

In 1811 three new Norwegian light infantry units were formed from the old light battalion and line units:

Akkershusiske Skarpskytteregiment had two enlisted Jaeger companies of 112 all ranks and three national battalions with 1 Jaeger company of 160 all ranks and 5 sharpshooter companies of 159 all ranks. Total strength 3108 all ranks. (F)

Walderske Skarpskyttebataillon had the same organisation as the above battalions, but all companies had 159 all ranks. Total strength 957 all ranks. (G)

Bergenhusiske Skarpskyttebataillon had 1 Jaeger and 6 sharpshooter companies with 159 all ranks. Total strength 1116 all ranks. (H)

The third sharpshooter battalion was the Trondhjemske Skarpskyttebataillon part of the 2det Trondhjemske Regiment.

The Altonaiske Jaegergrenaderkompagni (Jaeger Grenadier Coy.) was an enlisted company raised to protect the Bank of the German Empire in Altona. It had 140 all ranks. (I)

Leirdalske Lette Infanterikompagni was an independent light infantry company attached to the Bergenhusiske Infanteriregiment with a strength of 160 all ranks. In late 1810 it

became part of the Bergenhusiske Skarpskyttebataillon. (K)

The Sjaellandske Jaegerkorps had it's own sharpshooter company of 168 all ranks.

Finally a mention must be made of the volunteer Kongens Livjaegerkorps or King's Lifecorps of Riflemen, which fought with utmost bravery in Copenhagen 1807 and was rewarded with a position in the regular army ranking in December the same year. This corps had initially 4 companies of 120 all ranks, but got a new organisation in 1809 resembling that of a line Jaeger battalion with 4 companies of 135 all ranks with a total of 550 all ranks.

Garrison infantry

The only specific garrison units were three small companies namely:

Nyborgske Garnisionskompagni in Nyborg, Denmark with 156 all ranks.

Frederikssortske Garnisionskompagni in Frederikssort fortress, Denmark with 68 all ranks.

Norske Garnisionskompagni in Akkershus, Norway with 74 all ranks.