

# SKIRMISH AT FJELKINGE 1710

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(Translation - Dan Schorr)

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In the beginning of the winter campaign of 1709-1710 in Scania during the Great Northern War several hard battles and skirmishes took place around Kristiansstad. The capture of this city was one of the objectives of the Danish invasion corps. Scania's largest river, the Helgea, protected the city. The river ran in a southerly direction through eastern Scania and emptied into the Baltic at Åhus.



Early on the morning of January 23rd 1710 Danish cavalry captured an important crossing at Torsebro after a short, but intense fight. Following this skirmish the Danes continued their march along the eastern bank of the Helgea towards Kristiansstad, which was now cut off. During the advance towards Kristiansstad three Swedish deserters appeared and reported that the Swedes had abandoned the city. The Swedish corps, which consisted of 3 cavalry regiments and 3 infantry battalions had withdrawn in the direction of Sölversborg. The Danish commander, Reventlow,

ordered General Rodsten to set after the enemy with his dragoons (Livregimentet dragoner). Rodsten's orders were to overtake the Swedes, and stop them until the cavalry (1.Sjællandske, 2.Fynske, and 3.Sjællandske cavalry regiments) could assemble and come to his assistance.

Rodstens dragoons raced forward and overtook the enemy rearguard 10 kilometers southeast of Torsebro near Nosaby. The rearguard had occupied and fortified a house close to the road, which they blocked with some gateposts. The Danish cavalry rode over the gateposts and past the house without paying attention to the musket fire. The rearguard, which was now cut off, surrendered. The dragoons then continued forward against the Swedish main body, which retired to the main road to Blekinge. When the Swedish leader, Göran Gyllenstjerna, saw, however, that he was only followed by 3 squadrons of about 200 men, he ordered his troops to take up a position in a field west of Fjelkinge. Hjërta's Västgöta Cavalry Regiment occupied the first line with all of the

squadrons in line under Colonel Cronberg. Lewenhaupt's and Gyllenstjerna's cavalry regiments were in column behind the center. A battalion of infantry was in the rear in a position located next to the road over which the Danes were advancing.

This display of strength surprised Rodsten. He sent an adjutant back to the Commander-in-Chief with a request for assistance as quickly as possible because the enemy stood in order of battle. Reventlow immediately ordered General Dewitz forward with all of the cavalry he had with him. He let Rodsten know he should advance on the enemy without concern for the Swedish numerical superiority and if the Swedes wavered, constantly stick with them. Shortly afterwards Dewitz arrived with reinforcements, and the Danes attacked from both sides with great force. The Swedish squadrons were defeated and retreated behind the infantry who received the Danish cavalry with salvos. The Danish cavalry did not stop, but continued to pursue the defeated Swedish cavalry. General Dewitz rode over to the surprised infantry battalion. He called on them to lay down their arms if they wanted quarter otherwise they would be cut down. The infantry did not have to think about it twice, and they threw down their arms. Later many of them regretted their haste and in resentment destroyed their weapons. Approximately 500 infantry were taken prisoner. Only three officers escaped. In the meantime the Danish cavalry attacked the Swedes with such violent force that they brake and fled in panic. The pursuit stretched over several kilometers. The rearmost Swedes were cut down to prevent the rest from stopping and reforming.

It was now dark and General Reventlow ordered recall to be blown. He feared that the Danish squadrons would mistake each other in the darkness. Besides the 500 infantry, 36 cavalry were taken prisoner as well as 4 colors, 3 standards, a set of kettledrums and the whole Swedish train. The Danish loss amounted to a few dead and wounded cavalymen. After the Danish corps reformed, Reventlow advanced the same evening to Ljunby east of Kristiansstad. Here a large store of provisions together with an noncommissioned officer and 9 men fell into Danish hands. A few Danish cavalymen began to plunder in Ljunqby. When Reventlow got word of this he immediately sent one of his adjutants to the scene of the crime, but the guilty parties were gone. The inhabitants did not know to which regiment they belonged. Reventlow therefore allowed the farmers to estimate the losses which they placed at 38 Riksdaler and which the General promptly paid. During the night 16 Swedish cavalymen deserted, the next day 22 more deserted, and the following day 5 more. The disorganization of the Swedes was so complete that some fled to Småland and others to Karlskrona. The Danish cavalry had by their courageous and bold attack caused the Swedish cavalry to be completely unusable in 3-4 days.

Unfortunately, General Reventlow did not get the opportunity to use this obvious possibility for a quick victory over the Swedish main army. Fredrik IV's hesitation and fumbling was to blame for this. On 3 February the Danish corps turned about and withdrew back to the area around Helsingborg.

