

The Napoleon Series

Officers of the Anhalt Duchies who Fought in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1789-1815: Anhalt, Heinrich Wilhelm von

By [Daniel Clarke](#)

Heinrich Wilhelm von Anhalt was born on December 24, 1734, in Capelle (Zörbig), in the Principality of Anhalt-Dessau. He was the son of Wilhelm Gustav, Hereditary Prince of Anhalt-Dessau and his second wife Henriette Marianne Schardius, and was therefore a half brother to both Albrecht Count Anhalt (1735-1802) and Friedrich von Anhalt (1732-1794). His first marriage was to Caroline Friederike von Wedel in 1768 and they had two children, while his second marriage was to Sophie Gericke in 1797.

In April 1752 Heinrich became a 2nd Lieutenant in the 22nd Infantry Regiment, Moritz von Anhalt-Dessau, and by the time the Seven Years' Wars began in Europe in 1756 he was an aide to Generalleutnant Johann Dietrich von Hülsen. Later he was also an aide to both generals von Syburg and von Zieten beginning in 1758. At the Battle of Liegnitz (Legnica) on August 15, 1760, Friedrich II, King of Prussia promoted him to the rank of Captain on the field, and made Heinrich a Quartermaster-Lieutenant. A short amount of time later, in February 1761, Heinrich was promoted to Major, made Chef of the Foot Jäger Corps (Jägerkorps zu Fuß) and also given the Pour le Merite for bravery. Another year later, in July 1762, Heinrich was elevated to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel—again having been promoted on the field of battle, this time at Burkersdorf (Burkatów) on July 21. A year later, in 1763, he became the head of what seems to have been the Adjutant-Generals Department, which was responsible for army reports, budgets and building projects such as new barracks. Once the war had ended, Heinrich became a Colonel in May 1765. By 1766 he was Chef of the Mounted Jäger Corps (Feldjägerkorps zu Pferde) and Quartermaster-General of the entire Prussian army. Heinrich would remain in this latter capacity until 1781, during which he was promoted to Generalmajor in May 1770 and took part in the Bavarian War of Succession in 1778-1779.

During the last mentioned conflict, Heinrich was court-martialed and sentenced to three months in prison. However, the Prussian monarch, perhaps showing how important Heinrich was to him, reduced this by half to six weeks personally. But, it seems after his release Heinrich was involved in a riding accident, where he fell with his horse and suffered a head injury of some severity. This injury meant that he was unfit for field service, and Heinrich became the garrison commander of Breslau (Wroclaw) and later Chef of the 38th Infantry Regiment, von Falkenhayn, in 1781. Another year later and he was promoted to Generalleutnant in May 1782, became the Chef of the 2nd Infantry Regiment, Alt-Stutterheim, the governor of Königsberg (Kaliningrad) and Inspector-General of Infantry in East Prussia. As a side note, just before his death in August 1786,

Friedrich II, King of Prussia called Heinrich to him and presented him with a gold snuffbox as a token of his appreciation of his services to him.

In October 1786 Heinrich retired from the service of Prussia with a healthy yearly pension of 4,000 Thalers, and went to the estate he had bought near Plaue in the Thuringia. Later he went to the town of Ziesar, Prussia. However, the royal family of Prussia held him in such high regard that, on May 20, 1798, King Friedrich Wilhelm III elevated him to the rank of General der Infanterie. Heinrich died at Ziesar on December 10, 1801.¹

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¹ Lippe-Weisenfeld, Ernst Graf, 'Heinrich Wilhelm Graf von Anhalt', Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, Band I, Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, 1875, pages 463-464; König, Anton Balthasar, Biographisches Lexikon aller Helden und Militärpersonen, Band I, Berlin, Arnold Wever, 1788, page 50; Straubel, Rolf, "Er Mochte nur Wissen, das die Armee mir gehoret", Friedrich II und seine Offiziere, Berlin, BWV - Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2012, pages 5, 15-17, 29, 101, 150, 173, 287, 321-323, 355, 364-367, 396, 412, 429-431, 474, 497, 589, 605-606, 622, 651, 666, 673, and 706; Montag, Reinhard, "Heinrich Wilhelm von Anhalt", Lexikon der Deutschen Generale: Die Generale der Konigl Prußischen Armme, <http://www.lexikon-deutsche generale.de/biografien/preussen>, accessed 09/4/2017; [No Author found] "Die Fürsten aus dem Hause Anhalt in Brandenburgisch-Preußisch Kriegsdiensten", Zeitschrift für Kunst, Wissenschaft und Geschichte des Krieges, Band 10 (Volume X), Berlin, Posen und Bromberg, 1827, page 128