

## The Napoleon Series

### **Officers of the Anhalt Duchies who Fought in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1789-1815: Anhalt-Köthen, Karl Georg Lebrecht, Prince of**

By [Daniel Clarke](#)

Karl Georg Lebrecht, Prince of Anhalt-Köthen was born on August 15, 1730, in the capital of his father's principality Köthen, Anhalt-Köthen. He was the son of August Ludwig, Prince of Anhalt-Köthen and Christine Johanna Emilie Countess of Promnitz. Karl married Luise Charlotte of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg on July 26, 1763, and had five children. One of them, Karl Wilhelm, served as a minor ranking Prussian officer in the early French Revolutionary Wars, but died of wounds he had received at the Battle of Wattignies on November 8, 1793, about three weeks after the engagement took place.

Karl first embarked on a military career when he entered the Danish army as a cavalry Captain in the Garde du Corps in 1750. But, after only one year of service, he transferred to the Prussian army with the same rank and commanded a squadron in the 3rd Cuirassier Regiment, Leib, or von Katte. In Prussian service Karl would hardly see any fighting, because his father died in August 1755 and he all but officially resigned from the army to govern his principality.

However, with the Seven Years War just beginning, he contributed much in terms of funds and supplies to the Prussian army which took its toll on his people. To counter this he introduced wide ranging agricultural, educational and religious reforms to make his principality more attractive to those who might have wanted to immigrate there from other kingdoms. Still, before he left the army he was elevated to the rank of Colonel and 25 years later to Generalmajor from December 1780. With this latter rank he was also given permission to wear the uniform of the 6th Cuirassier Regiment, von Hoverbeck. During these years of semi-retirement from the Prussian army he had remained a keen soldier, and played very minor roles in the War of Bavarian Succession, 1778-1779, and later the Prussian intervention in The Netherlands in the months of September and October 1787. It was after this, in June 1788, that he was made a Generalleutnant.

Having served alongside Austrian troops during 1787 in The Netherlands, Karl switched military allegiances and entered Austrian service as a Feldmarschalleutnant in June 1789. He then proceeded to join the army commanded by General-feldmarschall Ernst Gideon Baron Laudon (1717-1790), which was engaged against the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. Between September 15 and October 8 Karl commanded part of the forces besieging the city of Belgrade, which turned in to an Austrian victory over the defenders. Just over a week after the siege had ended, Karl died in the village of Semlin (Zemun)—then a town just outside the city of Belgrade, but now one of its districts due to modern-

day expansion—of a fever he had had contracted during the operations on October 17, 1789.<sup>1</sup>

Placed on the Napoleon Series: August 2017

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<sup>1</sup> Montag, Reinhard, “Karl Georg Lebrecht Fürst von Anhalt-Köthen”, *Lexikon der Deutschen Generale: Die Generale der Königl Preußischen Armee*, <http://www.lexikon-deutshegenerale.de/biografien/preussen>, accessed 09/4/2017; König, Anton Balthasar, *Biographisches Lexikon aller Helden und Militärpersonen*, Band I, Berlin, Arnold Wever, 1788, pages 16-17; Straubel, Rolf, “Er Mochte nur Wissen, das die Armee mir gehoret”, *Friedrich II und seine Offiziere*, Berlin, BWV - Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2012, pages 116, 254, 687, 703-706; Siebigk, Ferdinand, “Karl Georg Lebrecht, Fürst von Anhalt-Köthen”, *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Band I, Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, Band 15, 1882, pages 227-228; Siebigk, Ferdinand, *Das Herzogtum Anhalt: Historisch, Geographisch und Statistisch Dargestellt*, Dessau, A. Desbarat, 1867, pages 229-230; [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 133-134