

The Napoleon Series

Officers of the Anhalt Duchies who Fought in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1789-1815: Anhalt-Bernburg-Schaumburg-Hoym, Wilhelm Ludwig, Prince of

By [Daniel Clarke](#)

Wilhelm Ludwig, Prince of Anhalt-Bernburg-Schaumburg-Hoym was born on April 19, 1771, in Schaumburg Castle, near Balduinstein, in the Principality of Anhalt-Bernburg-Schaumburg-Hoym. Wilhelm was the son of General der Infanterie Karl Ludwig, Prince of Anhalt-Bernburg-Schaumburg-Hoym (1723-1806), who served in the Dutch army and was the ruling prince of the Principality of Anhalt-Bernburg, and Amalie Eleonore of Solms-Braunfels. He was himself unmarried.

As he was only 21 years of age when the French Revolutionary Wars began in earnest during 1792, Wilhelm was fast-tracked through the grades of the Imperial Austro-Hungarian army to that of Lieutenant Colonel of the 1st Infantry Regiment, Kaiser. He and his regiment joined the Austrian Army of the Rhine commanded by General der Kavallerie Dagobert Sigmund Count Wurmser (1724-1797), in the autumn of 1793. With this command he fought in the clashes along the Weissenburg Lines from October of that year into February 1794. During these clashes Wilhelm served in the division commanded by Generalmajor Johann Conrad Friedrich Knight Hotze (1739-1799). As such he was part of the defeated Allied force under Hotze at the Battle of Wörth on December 22, 1793. Wilhelm's only service during the years of 1794 and 1795 was during the Austrian defeat of a part of the French Armée du Nord at Le Cateau on March 29, 1794. Here three French divisions pushed the Austrian infantry regiments out of the town, before the supporting Austrian cavalry launched a counter-attack that drove the French off in panic.

For the campaign of 1796, Wilhelm was part of Archduke Charles' (1771-1847) Army of the Lower Rhine, and he played minor parts in the affairs at Altenkirchen on June 4, Wetzlar on June 15 and Uckerath on June 19. On September 3, 1796 Wilhelm took part in the final major battle of the 1796 campaign at Würzburg. Here he was part of Generalmajor Wilhelm Georg Friedrich, Prince of Orange-Nassau's (1774-1799) brigade of Feldmarschalleutnant Paul Baron Kray's (1735-1804) division. This formation was the last element of the Austrian army to reach the field, and it managed to outflank the French left to drive their army from the field. Kray's division also attacked the French rearguard at the villages of Dipbach and Heiligenthal. After pursuing the defeated French, Wilhelm's regiment became part of the besieging forces of the fortress at Hüningen commanded by Feldmarschalleutnant Karl Joseph Alois, Prince of Fürstenberg (1760-1799). The siege lasted from that November until February 1797, and Wilhelm was possibly involved in the storming of the French bridgehead on east bank of the Rhine on December 3, 1796. The only action of note in which Wilhelm took part in during 1797 was in Germany at Diersheim on April 20-21. Here French forces under general Jean-Victor-Marie Moreau (1763-1813)

tried to cross the River Rhine. The Austrians made several attacks on the French bridgehead during April 20, but had lost the village by mid-morning. On the morning of April 21 more attacks were launched, but they all failed, and the Austrians had to retreat. A short time later the Treaty of Campo Formio was signed after Napoleon defeated the other Austrian armies in Italy, which brought the war to an end.

However, after his good service, and also the promotion of the regimental commander, Wilhelm became a Colonel in May 1797 and the new leader of the 1st Infantry Regiment, Kaiser. When war broke out in the spring of 1799, Wilhelm was again part of Archduke Charles' army in Germany. This time he served in the division of Feldmarschalleutnant Franz Baron Petrasch (1746-1820). Along with other Austrian regiments, his command launched a number of attacks on General Jean-Baptiste Jourdan's (1762-1833) French defences around Hoßkirch and Ostrach at the battle of the latter name on March 21, the first major battle of the campaign.

Under a week later Wilhelm would be dead.

On the morning March 25, 1799 at the Battle of Stockach, the French army under Jourdan attacked both Austrian flanks, with the heaviest assaults falling on the Austrian right. Wilhelm, who was detached from his brigade with his regiment on the Austrian right at the time of the initial French assaults, fought hard to thwart French progress during the morning. Later in the day, he led his men forward in one of the counter-attacks on this hard-pressed flank to re-capture the woods outside of the town to the northwest. The advance, along with other such attacks—which had been started by Archduke Charles himself trying to lead some Grenadier Battalions forward—moved up the Post Road that ran through the woods and had to cross a clearing. Here the French, under General de Division Joseph Souham (1760-1837), had put their line of defence on the opposite side, which included a number of cannon. Charging across the clearing at the head of his men, Wilhelm was struck in the chest either by a musket ball or a piece of case (canister) shot and died within a few minutes.¹

Placed on the Napoleon Series: July 2017

¹ Wurzbach, Constantin, Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich, Volume 1, Vienna, Kaiserl. Konigl. Hof und Staatsdruckerei, 1856, page 41; Phipps, Ramsay Weston, The Armies of the First French Republic and the Rise of the Marshals of Napoleon I, Vol. II - The Armée du Moselle, du Rhin, de Sambre-et-Meuse and de Rhin-et-Moselle, USA, Pickle Partners Publishing, 2011, page 73, 91-93, 96; Dodge, Theodore A., Warfare in the Age of Napoleon, Volume I: The Revolutionary Wars against the First Coalition in Northern Europe and the Italian Campaign, 1789-1797, Driffield, United Kingdom, Leonaur Ltd an imprint of Oakpast Ltd, 2011, pages 298-301; Dodge, Theodore A., Warfare in the Age of Napoleon, Volume II: The Egyptian and Syrian Campaigns & the wars of the Second and Third Coalitions, 1798-1805, Driffield, United Kingdom, Leonaur Ltd an imprint of Oakpast Ltd, 2011, pages 106-115; Longman, T. N., Debrett, J., A Full, Accurate and Impartial History of the Campaign, from the Beginning of January 1794 down to the Present Time, London, Plymsell and Young (Publisher), 1794, pages 36-37; Angeli, Moritz Edlen von, Erzherzog Karl als Feldherr und Heeresorganisator, Volume II: Erzherzog Karl in den Feldzügen gegen Frankreich von 1799, Vienna, Wilhelm Braumuller, 1896, pages 88-89; Rickard, J, Battle of Würzburg, 3 September 1796, (23 February 2009), http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/battles_wurzburg.html, accessed 09/4/2017; Rickard, J, Siege of Huningue, 26 October 1796-19 February 1797, (17 February 2009), http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/siege_huningue.html, accessed 09/4/2017; Rickard, J, Battle of Diersheim, 20-21 April 1797, (26 February 2009), http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/battles_diersheim.html, accessed 09/4/2017