

The Napoleon Series

Officers of the Anhalt Duchies who Fought in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1789-1815: Anhalt-Dessau, Johann Georg, Prince of

By [Daniel Clarke](#)

Johann Georg, Prince of Anhalt-Dessau was born on January 28, 1748, in Dessau, in the Principality of Anhalt-Dessau. He was the fourth child of Leopold II, Prince of Anhalt-Dessau and Princess Gisela Agnes of Anhalt-Köthen. He was himself unmarried.

Johann, who was the second son born to his parents, was initially pushed into a religious career and he became a Canon (Priest) at Magdeburg Cathedral in Prussia. However, in November 1768 he was taken from this existence and became the Lieutenant Colonel of the 8th Infantry Regiment, von Queis, which garrisoned the city of Stettin (Szczecin) on the Oder River. Needing military experience, Johann was allowed a period of leave and he joined the Russian army which was fighting the Ottoman Empire in 1769. But, he had returned to his regiment by November of the same year. In January 1772 he was promoted to Colonel and commander of his regiment. Later, in the late 1770s, he participated in the War of Bavarian Succession in the army commanded by general Heinrich, Prince of Prussia (1726-1802), where he became a Generalmajor in early 1779. However, he was forced to resign his rank that September due to illness.

Nearly a decade after his retirement, Johann was made a Knight of the Black Eagle on January 27, 1789, by King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia. Then, two months later, he was brought out of retirement as a Generalleutnant in March as well. Holding no active field commands, Johann was still promoted to General der Infanterie on April 1, 1808, at the request of King Friedrich Wilhelm III, before Johann resigned for a second time. After resigning, his brother, Leopold III, Duke of Anhalt-Dessau, wanted him to become ruler of Anhalt-Dessau so that he could live in England with his mistress, but Johann refused, and he spent the last years of his life in Vienna, Austria, where he died on April 1, 1811.¹

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¹ Lilienstern, Ruhle von, [No article title found], *Militar-Wochenblatt*, Beihefte Nr. 24, Berlin, Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Son, 1839, page 27; Siebigk, Ferdinand, *Das Herzogtum Anhalt: Historisch, Geographisch und Statistisch Dargestellt*, Dessau, A. Desbarat, 1867, page 261