

## The Napoleon Series

### **Officers of the Anhalt Duchies who Fought in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1789-1815: Hartmann, Johann Andreas Wilhelm**

By [Daniel Clarke](#)

Johann Andreas Wilhelm Hartmann was born in 1756 in the Principality of Anhalt-Dessau. There is no information concerning his family relationships.

At an early age he joined the French army as a private soldier, most likely in one of its German foreign regiments. When the French Revolutionary Wars began in 1792 he returned home to civilian life for a short time. In 1794 he joined the Anhalt-Dessau Jägerkorps as a Sergeant, and was only promoted to Lieutenant in 1801.

After the Anhalt duchies joined the Confederation of the Rhine in 1806-1807, Hartmann was promoted to Captain and took command of the 2nd Company of the Anhalt Infantry Battalion. Along with the rest of the battalion under the command of Colonel Chambaud-Charrier, Hartmann marched into Poland that summer to join their French allies, but saw no fighting. Between 1807 and the beginning of 1809, the battalion remained in the Anhalt duchies garrisoning the principle towns of Bernburg, Dessau, Köthen and Zerbst, the capitals—or former capital, in the case of the latter—of the three small principalities.

In February 1809 half of the battalion went with Chambaud-Charrier to France, which meant that when orders arrived in March for the other half of the battalion to march for Würzburg, it did so with Hartmann leading it. Combining with the battalion from the Lippe Principalities in General de Division Marie-Francois Rouyer's (1765-1824) Division, Hartmann marched the unit to the town of Donauwörth on the Danube River. Here, on April 25, Chambaud-Charrier finally rejoined what had become the 5th Rheinbund (Anhalt-Lippe) Infantry Regiment, and Hartmann resumed his position as a company commander. During the war with Austria that spring and summer, Hartmann helped to build fortifications around the city of Passau from early May until the end of July, and later, in early August, went with the division into the Tyrol and Vorarlberg to suppress the insurgency there. Here, on August 4, Hartmann fought the insurgents at the Engagement of Oberau (Franzensfeste) some ten kilometres north of Brixen (Bressanone). With the advance guard of Saxons under heavy attack, the Anhalt Battalion moved to their aid and counter-attacked, sustaining a few casualties. However, the next day a retreat was ordered to Innsbruck and by August 13 the regiment was at the town of Hall (Hall in Tirol). Here Hartmann was involved in some minor skirmishing, before moving on to Salzburg. Leaving this city on September 1, Hartmann and the regiment reached the Austrian capital Vienna on the 21st of the month, and two days later Napoleon himself reviewed the men. Leaving the city during October, the regiment made its way up the Danube River back to Germany, where all thought they would be spending the winter with their families.

However, Chambaud-Charrier and his officers knew that they were in fact going to journey across France and into Spain to fight in the war there.

Crossing the Pyrenees into Spain in early March 1810, Hartmann marched toward Girona, Catalonia, and the surrounding area. From here he marched south to the city of Barcelona with the regiment, which served in Maréchal Augereau's VII Corps, and could be found garrisoning the village of Manresa at the end of the month. During the early days of April a Spanish force sent from Tarragona attacked the village and its garrison of the Anhalters and the 4th Rheinbund (Saxon Ducal Houses) Infantry Regiment. Driven from the village on April 5, the two regiments retreated toward Barcelona and were constantly harassed by the local militia, who inflicted heavy losses of about 250 men near the village of Matorell just a few miles from the safety of the city walls. After these events Hartmann and the regiment marched back to Girona, where they could be found at the beginning of May

It was in this general area, south of the city in the villages of La Bisbal, Sant Feliu de Guixols and Palamós, that Hartmann tried to intercept messages between the Spanish commanders in Catalonia and the British navy out at sea, and led small expeditions against any Guerrillas operating around and about. He persisted with this service until the end of August 1810, when orders arrived from Leopold III, Duke of Anhalt-Dessau recalling Colonel Chambaud-Charrier to the principality. Also included was a special order promoting Hartmann to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and battalion commander, as the former officer in that position had died in hospital in Girona of disease. It can be assumed that with the departure of Colonel Chambaud-Charrier, Hartmann then took overall command of the regiment. Unfortunately for Hartmann he would not enjoy his new position for long. On September 14 a Spanish force commanded by General Enrique O'Donnell (1769-1834) attacked La Bisbal, while another Spanish detachment captured Sant Feliu de Guixols. After some resistance in a small castle, the French brigade commander, along with the 5th (Anhalt-Lippe) Rheinbund Regiment, which had also withdrawn to its safety, surrendered later that evening. Of the 1,800 officers and men who were captured, Hartmann was among them.

He was taken to the coast and put aboard a British ship of the line, which took him first to a prison in Palma, Majorca, and then to Britain. It seems that Hartmann was only taken from Palma to Britain during the autumn of 1811, and that the soldiers who were transported along with him were imprisoned in and around Edinburgh, Scotland. But, he and at least some of the officers with him were taken to the small town of Thame, near Oxford. This is because in February 1812 a Mr. C. Smith, a prisoner-of-war agent, wrote a note in support of Hartmann and his honourable character: "I hereby certify that Mr Hartmann, a French war prisoner, lives under my prospect at Thame in Oxfordshire, and that he is bound by his honour to observe the above conditions conscientiously." By the end of 1812 a number of the captured officers were struggling financially, and resolved to write to their Prince and ask for help. Perhaps due to his character, Hartmann did not sign the letter that was sent asking for this assistance, which arrived in Dessau on December 6 that year. In January 1813 these officers received their answer. Leopold III, Duke of Anhalt-Dessau sent a package containing the cash that they were requesting and,

interestingly, Hartmann received the largest amount, 50 Reichsthaler, while the two captains received 29 Reichsthaler each.

Hartmann remained in rural Oxfordshire until the end of hostilities, when he received his official papers to say that he was no longer considered a prisoner of war. Once he received these documents he was told to go to London and thence to the port at Harwich in Essex. From there he boarded a ship with other released German prisoners and sailed to Holland, where he arrived on April 23, 1814. After this he traveled to Anhalt-Dessau where he seems to disappear, as he was not one of the officers who commanded units from the Anhalt Duchies during 1815. At this time no date or place of death could be found.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nafziger, George F, *The Armies of Germany and the Confederation of the Rhine, 1792-1815, Volume I*, Privately published, 1993, pages 1-2, 16; Rawkins, W. J., *Armies of the Confederation of the Rhine, The Rheinbund Contingents 1806-1813, Part 2: Anhalt, Lippe, Reuss, Schwarzburg, Waldeck, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Oldenburg & Frankfurt*, <http://www.thehistorybookman.webeden.co.uk>, pages 12-15; Gill, John H., *With Eagles to Glory: Napoleon and his German Allies in the 1809 Campaign*, Barnsley, Frontline Books, an imprint of Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2011, pages 388-394, 397-400, 402-405; Zeidler, L., *Der Spanische Feldzug des Bataillons Anhalt im Jahre 1810*, Zerbst, Germany, Friedrich Romer, 1844, pages 3-18, 82-84, 93-108, 110-123, 129, 138-139, 157-162, 195-197, 209-211, 213-218, 222-223; Oman, Sir Charles, *A History of the Peninsular War, Volume III: September 1809 to December 1810*, London, Greenhill Books, 1996, pages 290-297, 497-499; Sañudo, Juan, *Anhalt-Lippe Infanteria Regimiento No 5, No 1,116, Base de Datos sobre las Unidades Militares eb la Guerra de la Independencia Española CD-ROM*, Ministerio de Defensa, 2007