

The Napoleon Series

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

By [Daniel Clarke](#)

Georg Hoppe was born on April 8, 1783 in the small village of Zehmigkau (Zehmigkau, part of Südliches), in the Principality of Anhalt-Dessau. Due to his parent's background—they were most likely poor farmers—Hoppe received little education.

Hoppe enlisted in the Anhalt-Dessau Jägerkorps in the early years of the 1800s. However, his determination meant that by 1807 he had gained enough knowledge to be promoted to Unterleutnant (literally Under-Lieutenant, or 2nd Lieutenant). With the Anhalt battalion Hoppe served briefly in Poland during 1806-1807 and in 1809 took part in the war with Austria, fighting in the Tyrol at the Engagement of Oberau (Franzensfeste) on August 4 and later the skirmishing around the town of Hall (Hall in Tirol) on August 13. Following the fortunes of the battalion to northern Spain in 1810, Hoppe, by this time, had been promoted to Premierleutnant (1st Lieutenant).

Another change in Hoppe's circumstances was that he had been moved into a desk job as the battalion's quartermaster, most likely in the city of Girona. It was because of this Hoppe had the good fortune not to be captured at the Battle of La Bisbal on September 14, 1810. This also meant that in the spring of 1811 he returned home when the remnant of the battalion was recalled to replace its losses, having been attached to the 6th Rheinbund (Schwarzburg-Reuss-Waldeck) Infantry Regiment after the disastrous battle.

Also, because the majority of the company commanders had been captured, along with the battalion's Lieutenant Colonel, new senior officers were needed. Hoppe was therefore promoted to Captain and given command of the hastily organising unit at the age of 28. When the battalion was fully organised and joined with the battalion from the principalities of Lippe to once again form the 5th Rheinbund (Anhalt-Lippe) Infantry Regiment, Hoppe was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in February 1812 to command the regiment. During Napoleon's ill-fated invasion of Russia during that year, Hoppe served in general Joseph Morand's (1757-1813) division of Maréchal Augereau's XI Corps. Hoppe saw no combat as he was first stationed in Berlin, Prussia, and in June was sent to Danzig (Gdansk), although the battalion and regiment suffered heavily from desertion and disease.

In fact these latter maladies reduced all of the Rheinbund Regiments in the division to such an extent, that they were amalgamated into a single, two-battalion regiment under the command of the Saxon Colonel August Karl Baron Eggloffstein (1771-1834) in January 1813, with Hoppe commanding one of the battalions. Also in January Danzig was taken under siege by a Russian army, and the slim regiment began its service in General Benjamin Gault's (1772-1813) brigade. Throughout the siege Hoppe proved himself to be an excellent combat leader, and was praised by the garrison commander

General de Division Jean Rapp (1772-1821) for his actions during a sortie in early June 1813. It was because of this that Hoppe received the French Legion of Honor.

After the siege ended in January 1814, the officers and men of the German contingents whose states were now allied against France were allowed back to their homelands. Hoppe quickly returned to Dessau and found himself with the rank of Colonel by February. With this rank he was put in command of the newly raised Anhalt-Dessau-Köthen Infantry Regiment that numbered nearly 1,000 men. This formation consisted of a regular, or line, battalion composed of men from the former garrison of Danzig and prisoners of war who had been released, and a Landwehr Battalion which was commanded by Captain Moebes. Hoppe's regiment, along with the other units raised in the Anhalt duchies, made their way to the headquarters of the 3rd German Corps commanded by general Karl August, Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach (1757-1828), which was operating in The Netherlands and Belgium. He, in late March, directed Hoppe to take his regiment to the fortified Belgian city of Tournai, which was garrisoned by other small German contingents commanded by the promoted Colonel-Brigadier August Karl, Baron Eggloffstein of Saxe-Weimar. Here, on the last day of March and the first one of April, French General de Division Nicolas-Joseph Maison (1771-1840), who commanded all French forces in the region, bombarded and sent skirmishers against the city walls in order to distract the Allies while he withdrew from Belgium to Lille in France. This was Hoppe's first and only action during the campaign, but it brought him the Russian decoration of the Order of St. Anne.

When Napoleon returned to France from the island of Elba in 1815, Hoppe once again took command of the Anhalt-Dessau-Köthen Infantry Regiment. The regiment formed part of the Thüringian Brigade and helped to besiege the fortresses of Mézières and Charleville in northern France from July until September. In December Hoppe and his battalion were de-mobilised and returned home. After the Napoleonic Wars Hoppe would continue to serve the Dukes of Anhalt, until his death on April 6, 1833.¹

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¹ Siebigk, Ferdinand, 'Georg Hoppe', Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, Band XIII (Volume 13), Duncker & Humblot, Leipzig, 1881, pages 114-115; Nafziger, George F, The Armies of Germany and the Confederation of the Rhine, 1792-1815, Volume I, Privately published, 1993, pages 2-7, 25; Nafziger, George F, The Armies of Germany and the Confederation of the Rhine, 1792-1815, Volume II, Privately published, 1993, pages 38-39, 48; 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 12-17; 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 28, 84, 109, 140, 153, 224; Rapp, Jean, Memoirs of General Count Rapp, First Aide-de-Camp to Napoleon, London, Henry Colburn and Co., 1823, pages 288-290; Beaulieu-Marconnay, Carl Freiherr von, 'August Freiherr von und zu Eglloffsteimn', Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, Band V (Volume 5), Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, 1877, pages 680-682; Nafziger, George, The End of Empire: Napoleon's 1814 Campaign, Solihull, UK, Helion & Co., 2015, pages 61-62, 368-369; Bucher, Ludwig Ferdinand, Der Feldzug des Dritten Deutschen Armee-Corps in Flandern, Leipzig, Hermann Costenoble, 1854, pages 57-58, 96-97, 207-211; Smith, Digby, The Greenhill Napoleonic Wars Data Book, London, Greenhill Books, 1998, pages 558-559; Hein, Bernhard, "Geschichte des Dessauer Militärs", Dessau Geschichte, http://www.dessau-geschichte.de/dessau_geschichte_militaer.php, accessed May 6, 2017