

The Napoleon Series

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

By [Daniel Clarke](#)

Christian Kitzinger, or Kizinger, was most likely born in either the Principality of Anhalt-Dessau or Anhalt-Köthen during the latter part of the eighteenth century. No information could be found about his family relationships.

Kitzinger's first military service was most likely with the small Anhalt-Dessau Jäger Korps, which was formed during the mid-1790s. When the combined infantry battalion of the three duchies was formed in 1807 for service as part of the Confederation of the Rhine under the command of Colonel Chambaud-Charrier, Kitzinger was made a Lieutenant in the 1st Company, which was led by a Captain Barth. As such he accompanied the battalion into southern Poland that year, but saw no combat. In 1808 the battalion was reorganised, and its company strength was increased from five to six. Also in this year Kitzinger was promoted to Stabscaptain (Staff Captain), and seems to have served in the new 6th Company in some capacity.

With the company he fought against the Austrians in 1809 as part of the 5th (Anhalt-Lippe) Rheinbund Infantry Regiment. The campaign began slowly, as after the regiment had spent a few days in Regensburg it moved to the city of Passau during the first week of May, where it remained until the end of July building fortifications. Leaving the city with the regiment and heading south into the Tyrol, Kitzinger fought in the skirmish around the hamlet of Oberau (Franzensfeste) on August 4, and just over a week later on August 13 in the skirmishes around Hall (Hall in Tirol). After these engagements the division the regiment was attached to withdrew to Salzburg. Kitzinger then remained in the city for the rest of August and the early part of September, before the division was ordered to the Austrian capital of Vienna. He arrived in the city with his regiment on September 21, and two days later, on September 23, Napoleon himself reviewed the whole division. During this review Napoleon decided that he wanted to make the organisation of the Rheinbund regiments much more like that of a French infantry regiment. As such he promoted a number of officers to the rank of lieutenant colonel, or the equivalent of a French chef de Bataillon. Within the Anhalt Battalion he decided to promote Captain Santorini, commander of the 6th Company. Due to these circumstances Kitzinger became a regular Line Captain and took over command of the company.

Staying some time in Vienna, near to the end of October the regiment was sent along the Danube River back toward Germany, and home. However, the officers were informed part way through this journey that the regiment and division were being re-directed to fight

in Spain the next year. Kitzinger, therefore, passed through the Pyrenees and into Spain in early March 1810. Arriving at the city of Girona, the regiment immediately headed south with the VII Corps to Barcelona. Resting for a days, the regiment was sent to the village of Manresa as a flank guard in late March, when the corps moved southward again to besiege Tarragona. Here, on April 5, a Spanish force sent north to disrupt the Allied supply lines attacked the village, and the Anhalters and the other Rheinbund regiment were forced retreat back toward Barcelona. They were pursued all the way by the local Somatènes, who inflicted many casualties on the column, particularly near the village of Matorell.

After this episode, Kitzinger left Barcelona with the regiment and returned to Girona. Arriving in the area at the end of April or beginning of May, Kitzinger found himself with the task of chasing down any guerillas operating in the vicinity and escorting supply trains. These somewhat mundane missions continued on until September 14. On this day most of the regiment found itself in close proximity to the village of La Bisbal and its small castle. During the day a Spanish force under general Enrique O'Donnell (1769-1834) surprised the German regiments in the area and captured many of the officers and men serving in them. One of these was Kitzinger, who along with most of the regiment, had retreated to the small castle to seek refuge from the much larger Spanish force, where they were forced to surrender in the evening.

Like most of the officers and men who were captured that day, Kitzinger was transported to the coast and put aboard British ships that then took them to the island of Mallorca. Here the officers and most of the men were imprisoned in and around the city of Palma, although a few men seem to have ended up on the prison island of Cabrera. Late in 1811 the German troops imprisoned on Mallorca were taken aboard British ships once more and taken to Britain, more specifically Edinburgh, Scotland. While the men remained in the city, the officers were taken south over the border into England, and would spend the rest of the war in the village of Thame in the county of Oxfordshire. At the end of April 1814, Kitzinger, along with the other officers from the battalion captured at La Bisbal, were given their parole papers and told to go to the port of Harwich northeast of London. From here they sailed to a port in The Netherlands and worked their way back to their homes in the Anhalt Duchies.

Back in the Anhalt duchies, Kitzinger does not seem to have joined the regular Anhalt-Köthen Infantry Battalion as a commander of one of its four companies. However, with the return of Napoleon from Elba in 1815, Kitzinger returned to active service and took command of the Anhalt-Köthen Landwehr Battalion, which numbered about 500 men. But, unlike in 1814 when the battalion was attached to the regulars and campaigned in The Netherlands and Belgium, Kitzinger and his men were kept within the borders of the three principalities and saw no combat. After the defeat of Napoleon and the end of the campaign in the autumn of 1815, the landwehr were stood-down and the men returned to their homes.

With the end of the Napoleonic Wars Kitzinger seems to have remained in the service of the Anhalt Duchies. He was later promoted to Major and Stadtcommandanten, literally town-commander, and commanded the garrison of Dessau, as well as providing much first-hand detail for Ludwig Zeidler's book *Der Spanische Feldzug des Bataillons Anhalt im Jahre 1810*. At the present time there was no information that could be found to trace Kitzinger's history beyond this brief paragraph.¹

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¹ 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, 20; Nafziger, George F., *The Armies of Germany and the Confederation of the Rhine, 1792-1815, Volume I*, Privately published, 1993, pages, 6-7; 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 IV-V, 3-18, 26-27, 83-84, 106-108, 155-161, 197-198, 210-220; 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; Hein, Bernhard, "Geschichte des Dessaur Militärs", *Dessau Geschichte*, http://www.dessau-geschichte.de/dessau_geschichte_militaer.php, accessed May 7, 2017