

The Napoleon Series

Officers of the Anhalt Duchies who Fought in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1789-1815: Santorini, Anton von

By [Daniel Clarke](#)

Anton von Santorini was born in the German city of Mainz, which at the time of his birth was the principlet city of the Bishopric of Mainz. As such it is probable that his early military experiences were with one of the four infantry battalions that this state provided to the Holy Roman Empire, during the early years of the French Revolutionary Wars. No information could be found about his family or other relations.

Santorini first appears in the records as a Captain and the commander of the 5th Company of the Anhalt Infantry Battalion in late May 1806. This company was the most mixed of the five companies, and contained soldiers from all three principalities. With his men he entered southern Poland during in 1806, before returning to the Anhalt duchies later in 1807. During 1808 the battalion underwent a reorganisation and was increased from five to six companies, with Santorini becoming the leader of the newly formed 6th Company. The battalion then remained in garrison in the three principalities until the beginning of 1809.

When war began to look increasingly likely between France and Austria at the beginning of 1809 the battalion was ordered to Würzburg, where it joined other Rheinbund formations that were gathering in the city in April. Combining with the battalion from the Lippe principalities, the unit was named the 5th (Anahlt-Lippe) Rheinbund Infantry Regiment. Remaining in the rear areas of the French army, Santorini would spend time in Regensburg before moving on to the city of Passau at the beginning of May. Here the regiment would remain until the beginning of July and was occupied in the building of fortifications around the city. When the month of July began the division, which was commanded by a General Rouyer, joined the corps of Maréchal Lefebvre. Its task was to suppress the insurgency in the Tyrol and Vorarlberg. During the two-week campaign that began in August, Santorini fought at the Engagement of Oberau (Franzensfeste) on August 4, and just over a week later, on August 13, in the skirmishes around Hall (Hall in Tirol) in the Tyrol. After these brushes with the insurgents, the division spent the rest of the month in the city of Salzburg. At the beginning of September the command was ordered to Vienna where it arrived on September 21.

Two days later, on September 23, Napoleon himself reviewed the division and the 5th (Anahlt-Lippe) Rheinbund Infantry Regiment. On the previous day a general order was issued that stated all Rheinbund regiments would organise their battalions along French lines. Included in this was the need to have the equivalent of a Chef de Bataillon, which most of Napoleon's German regiments did not have. So, one of the reasons for this review was for Napoleon to choose officers suitable for this task. When the Emperor came to the Anhalt Battalion and spoke to the regimental commander, Colonel Chambaud-Charrier of

Anhalt-Dessau, the colonel presented one of his captains whom he thought was a good candidate. After speaking to and asking questions of the captain, Napoleon decided he wasn't the man he was looking for, partly because the officer had served against him in 1806. Chambaud-Charrier's second choice for the position was Santorini, who stepped forward and was interviewed in his turn. Clearly Napoleon liked what he heard and Santorini was raised from Captain to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and commander, or Chef, of the Anhalt Battalion—or, perhaps, as it should be properly called, the 1st Battalion, 5th (Anahlt-Lippe) Rheinbund Infantry Regiment.

After the review the regiment remained in Vienna for sometime, until ordered back toward Germany in mid-October. However, neither the men of the regiment or the rest of the division got to spend the winter in their homelands, as they were directed through France and into northern Spain. Crossing the Pyrenees in early March 1810, Santorini and the regiment joined other formations that were gathering around the city of Girona. Maréchal Augereau commanded the force that had formed around the city, and after a few days it marched south to Barcelona. While the Maréchal continued southward to Tarragona, Santorini, the regiment and the 4th Rheinbund (Saxon Ducal Houses) Infantry Regiment were posted to the town of Manresa, some miles west of Barcelona. Here, on April 5, a Spanish force sent out from Tarragona to disrupt the army's supply lines assailed them, and forced the two regiments, commanded by a General Schwarz, to retreat toward Barcelona. They were followed by the local militia who had come out to join the pursuit, and the Anhalters and their cousins from the Lippe principalities lost about 250 men near the village of Matorel alone. Gaining the safety of Barcelona and its garrison, Santorini and the regiment rested a few days, while Maréchal Augereau's command gathered in the city after withdrawing from Tarragona. The united force then marched back to Girona during April.

Returning to Girona, the regiment became occupied with garrisoning small villages just south of the city and southeastwards on the coast. The task was to prevent all communication between the regular Spanish forces in Catalonia and the British fleet operating out at sea, and also to engage local guerrilla bands and protect supply convoys heading to and from Barcelona. After a few months of directing the regiment in these operations—Colonel Chambaud-Charrier had replaced General Schwarz in command of the brigade—Santorini fell ill and was taken to the military hospital in Girona. Here, on August 23, 1810 Santorini succumbed to the disease that was afflicting him and died.¹

Placed on the Napoleon Series: October 2017

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; Nafziger, George F, *The Armies of Germany and the Confederation of the Rhine, 1792-1815, Volume I*, Privately published, 1993, pages, 1-2; Zeidler, L., *Der Spanische Feldzug des Bataillons Anhalt im Jahre 1810*, Zerst, Germany, Friedrich Romer, 1844, pages 3-18, 25-35, 52-55, 72-75; 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; Oman, Sir Charles, *A History of the Peninsular War, Volume III: September 1809 to December 1810*, London, Greenhill Books, 1996, pages 290-297; 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