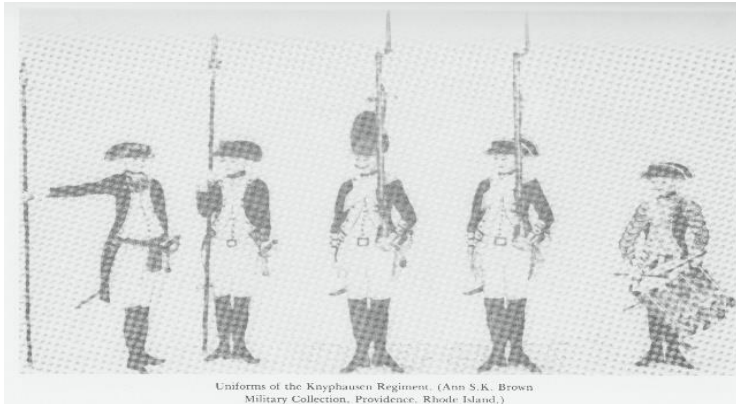


Andreas Wiederhold, 1731 – 1803.

An interesting mercenary officer was Johann Andreas Wiederhold, born 1731 in Spangenberg, just south of Kassel, Hessen. He joined the Wilhelm von Knyphausen Regiment around 1775 and went to fight the rebels in the US war for independence. Andreas is shown to have had two daughters from an extramarital relationship; that may have encouraged him to leave. Andreas' brother, Franz Thomas Wiederhold, became a sergeant under General Bischhausen, and likely served the British as well, but I could not find specific information, other than that he was married and had already 6 children between 1763 and 1775 and a 7th child in 1779.

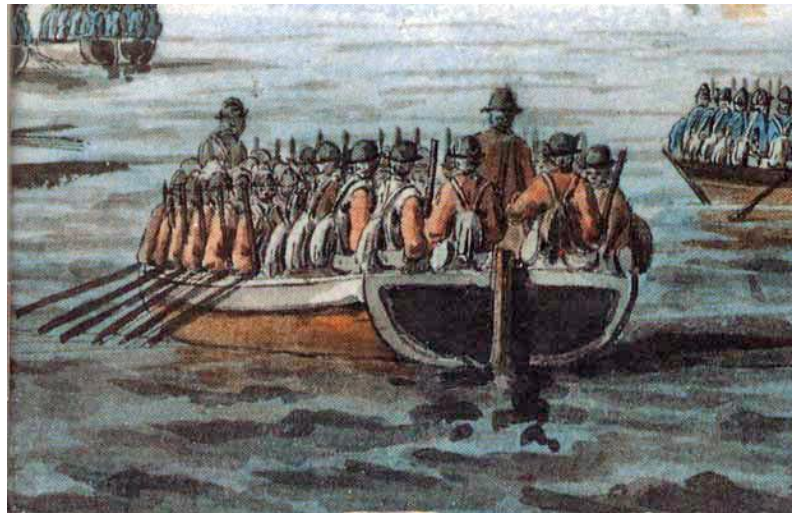


Uniforms of the Knyphausen Regiment. (Ann S. K. Brown Military Collection, Providence, Rhode Island.)

Known as Andreas Widerhold he became captain of a corps of fuseliers in the Knyphausen Regiment, composed of 21 officers, 60 non-commissioned officers, 5 surgeons, 22 drummers, and 525 riflemen and fuseliers, one of 21 units comprising two divisions. Fuseliers were equipped with the more responsive flint-lock rifles, often used to protect artillery and assigned to guard duty.

The entire first and second Hessian divisions, totaling nearly 12,000 men, were provided by the Leibprinz Friedrich II. of Hessen Kassel (1720-1785) to his uncle King George III. of Great-Britain (1738-1820) in accordance with a treaty signed 2 January 1776 [Heckert:80, p 215] in order to put down the rebellion in the colonies, who declared to be the United States of America. He shipped out of Germany in April 1776 in a fleet of 48 ships, leaving England around May 1, and, after a stormy crossing, [Piel in Burgoyne:08] landing 15 August 1776 on Staten Island. Most of New York, specifically Brooklyn and Manhattan, was then in hands of the rebels.

The British (red) and Hessian (blue) troops were assembled and brought on flat-bottomed boats to Long Island. On 26 August 1776 an attempt was made to capture General Washington and his forces in their fort on Brooklyn Heights, known as the Battle of Brooklyn. Aided by fog, General Washington and most of his troops were able to escape to Manhattan, while the Hessians lost about 300 men. Andreas' regiment left from Hell's



Gate (between Astoria, Queens and Randall's Island), Long Island on 7 October 1776. They encountered U.S. rebel troops on October 18 in East Chester (now the Bronx), where they had marched to join the cannons that had been off-loaded by Admiral Howe, brother of the British Commander General Howe. On 28 Oct 1776 Andreas participated in the battle of White Plains [AW tagebuch].

Subsequently the troops marched North to White Plains, crossing into the Bronx at Kings-Bridge (Knightsbridge in 1713) north of Marble Hill, now buried after a new waterway from the Hudson to the Harlem River was built. They attacked Fort Washington, just built in June 1776 a few blocks North of what is now the Manhattan end of the George Washington Bridge. After capturing the Fort on Nov.16th the British and Hessian troops could cross the Hudson river to New Jersey, capture Fort Lee, and chase the revolutionaries south. It was assumed that there would be now a winter break in the fighting, and several Hessian regiments, including Andreas, settled in at Trenton. Much detail is documented in the diary he started then, which has been published and also translated by Bruce E Bourgoyne as *Defeat, Disaster, and Dedication*; Heritage Books, 2008. The diary is an important document in the war of US Independence.

However, on 26 December 1776 the 3 Hessian regiments, including Andreas, who had assumed guard duty, were captured by General George Washington's troops and taken across the icy Delaware river to Newtown. The senior officer, Colonel Johann Gottlieb Rall was wounded and died soon after. It appears that then Andreas took on a leading role. He was invited to join George Washington for dinner on 28 Dec. 1776 and they discussed the failures that had led to the British defeat there. George Washington was sufficiently taken with the discussion that he permitted Andreas to ride back to Trenton, where his landlady had kept his clothes, writings, and writing material. His diary was also saved and he continued recording events around him. Andreas returned, and then marched with the other German prisoners via Philadelphia to In on 21 June 1778 [Heckert:80, p224] . The Americans treated their prisoners-of-war relatively well, placing them under local supervision in various towns and villages. Many were assigned to work, and a fraction of them stayed in the US, forfeiting their military pay. The British, with the excuse that American soldiers were traitors to the crown, did not treat the captured rebels well. Many rebels were placed in the hulls of abandoned ships and thousands died [[Prisoners of war in the American Revolutionary War; US Wikipedia 2017](#)].

From 20 Dec 1777 to 1 March 1778 the Hessian officers were held in Fredericksburgh, where Andreas and some others were able to rent rooms and take care of their own needs [A.W. Heckert: The German American Diary,; MS copy at p195]. There Andreas hosted a delegation of 16 American ladies, including George Washington's sister and some cousins [Widerhold diary from Univ.of Minnesota]. From 8 May 1778 to September 1779 he was kept in Philadelphia, a town that Andreas considered a `confluence of riff-raff "and equal to "Sodom and Gomorrah in the exercise of all vices". In September 1779 Andreas was exchanged for US prisoners of war, and boarded a ship, the `Triton', to sail to Quebec. But the ship lost its mast in a storm and then was further damaged by its cannons coming free and rolling about. As the British captain of the ship was preparing to escape in some lifeboats he ordered by Andreas and the other German prisoners to stay in their cabins so that they would help control the ship. His [dramatic and perilous journey has been well documented](#) in a 1884 book by Edward J. Lowell about the Hessians in the revolutionary war. After 10 days drifting about the wreck was captured by American `privateers' and all survivors were taken to Reading, Pennsylvania

Andreas was again exchanged for US prisoners in Nov 1780. He sailed back to Europe 15 August 1785 and returned to Hessen. He married a much younger wife in Spangenberg 1802 and died in Kassel, having become inspector of the military arsenal there, in 1803. [AW Versch.Orte, Helmarshausen WV06, Dd p.1]. A grandson, Paul, emigrated to the U.S. around 1880. No descendants of Paul are known.

The genealogy entries for him are found in [Verschiedene Orte Vol.1. WV06 Helmarshausen](#) as IX 3.

He is listed as Andrew Weiderhold, Captain, Knyphausen in a booklet listing the names of over 2,500 British, German, and Loyalists Officers on the Establishment in North America, 1755-1782, page 44. The page number refers to the detailed entry in full book. Now you can stay at [Baron Knyphausen's property](#) in Eltville am Rhein near Wiesbaden, Hessen, Germany.

Sources

Andreas Wiederholdt: Tagebuch des Capt. Wiederholdt, Vom 7 October 1776 bis 7 December 1780; transcribed by M.D. Learned and C. Cosse; The McMillan Company, series Americana Germanica, abt 1865, reprinted 2015. I received a rebound copy of the original from Alfred Wiederhold's Library, donated by Jürgen Wiederhold (*1940), July 2022.

A translation of his diary is published as Bruce E. Bourgoyne: Defeat, Disaster and Dedication, The Diaries of the Hessian Officers Jakob Pier and Andreas Widerhold; Heritage books, 2008.

WIEDERHOLD, CAPTAIN ANDREAS. [1776] Hessian officer who served with the Knyphausen Regiment during the capture of Fort Washington; The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. XXIII. Philadelphia, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1899.

There are extensive references in Glenn Beck et al.: Being George Washington, the Indispensable Man, as You've Never Seen Him; Threshold Editions, 2011.

George Otto Trevelyan: The American Revolution. Part II, Vol.2; Longmans, Green, and Co, 1903. It presents the view from the British side, see page 88.

Edward J. Lowell: [The Hessians and the other German auxiliaries of Great Britain in the revolutionary war/20 Wiederhold's Voyage—an Episode](#)—September, 1779; in *THE HESSIANS and the other GERMAN AUXILIARIES OF GREAT BRITAIN IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR*, 1984, Harper & Brothers, New York (available on-line] describes the perilous voyage after Andreas' release in September 1749 from being held as a prisoner-of-war.

Other Wiederholds in the U.S. revolutionary war

Of the about 30,000 mercenaries in all ranks about 12,000 settled in the US [C.W. Heckert: The German American Diary, 1980]. Other Wiederholds listed are

2. [Wiederhold, Bern.Wm.](#) 2nd Lieut. Germ. Reg du Corps, page 37 (1757-1810), returned to Germany, participated in the 1790 battle of Bergen defending Frankfurt, and later joined the Portuguese army, becoming a general there. Some of his descendants wound up in California.

Wiederhold, ____ - Lieut, German Gen. Officers, page 2; likely another reference to Bern.Wm. W.(1757)

3. Wiederhold, Johann Georg of Niederbeisheim – 10km east of Homberg (*1723/1724) as a deserter after being captured in Sep 1778 and his capture is also listed on [LAGIS-Hessen].
4. Wiederhold, Joseph Henry. 2nd Lieut. De Angelli, elpage 47 . He stayed in the US. I matched him to Jost Henrich Wiederhold, *1754 from Kassel, very likely. In 1792 married Magdalena Wagner in Berks county, PA. [Gary D. Weathrholt: *The family of Jacob Weatherholt*, 1760-183270[Indianapolis, 1994]

I have not checked other names.



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