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A Prussian Attaché's Critique of the True Austrian Army

Regarding Kraft zu Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen's biographical information, both English and German Wikipedia pages can be utilized; however, the German Wikipedia page cites an *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (ADB) article by a Prussian colonel, Bernhard von Poten, that includes the most information. Von Poten wrote various ADB articles about Hanoverian and Prussian officers and he elaborated on Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen's biography to a greater degree than Wikipedia pages; thus, a fair portion of the following information can be found through von Poten's article. Born on January 2nd, 1827, Kraft zu Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen was the son of Prussian cavalry general and future Prussian Prime Minister (served March 17th – September 23rd, 1862) Adolf zu Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen (1797 –1873). Kraft's grandfather, Friedrich Ludwig zu Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen (1746 –1818), was a Prussian infantry general who participated in the Napoleonic Wars and the War of Liberation. Early in his life, the young prince trained to be an artillery officer because it was the least expensive branch (his grandfather had accumulated a debt for the family that his father Adolf had tried to pay off).¹ Furthermore, throughout his training, it became increasingly obvious that Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen had a knack for artillery.

Although present in Berlin during the 1848 revolution, his first prominent role for the Prussian military came in 1854; Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen traveled to the Vienna embassy as a Prussian attaché. Given that the Crimean War was being fought at that time, Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen performed a rather critical role for the Berlin government. Prussia had signed a defensive pact with Austria and the Prussian prince relayed information regarding Austrian troop movements and reported on the strength of the Austrian Army.² Thus, his observations on the state of the Austrian Army listed on GHDI are noteworthy given that he was actually performing

¹ Von Poten, Bernhard. "Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, Kraft Prinz Zu." Historische Kommission bei der königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften. *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Vol. 50, Duncker & Humblot, 1905, pg. 444.

² Craig, Gordon A. "Military Diplomats in the Prussian and German Service: The Attachés, 1816-1914." *Political Science Quarterly*, no. 1, 1949, Vol. 64, pg. 67.

his duty as an attaché and was covertly sizing up the Austrian Army. In truth, he interviewed a substantial number of Austrian officers, such as Clam Gallas and Franz Liechtenstein, to discover that many had limited tactical knowledge despite the distinguished reputation of the Austrian Army. Furthermore, the artillery prince even hinted at the backwardness of the regular soldiers by claiming that two had asked if any gambling was attached to the infamous Kriegspiel. He furthered his revealing report by claiming that many of the Austrian servicemen were foreigners, be it indebted Germans or Englishmen. Later, he mentioned his initial surprise that the notorious Austrian cavalry seemed slow and lacked stamina, yet further inspection revealed that multiple branches of the Austrian Army were weakened by complex orders and insufficient supplies.

Following his attaché service, Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen continued his career in the artillery and participated in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars. He successfully commanded troops at Koniggratz, Sedan, and Paris. In 1879 he retired and began his military writing career in Dresden. During this time, he wrote his memoir *Aus meinem Leben* among other literary pieces. In this memoir, he mentioned his attaché experience that the GHDI source excerpted. He died on January 16th, 1892.

His memoirs from 1848 to 1856 were posthumously published in a first volume in 1897 by Arved von Teichman. The only discrepancy between the Wikipedia pages and von Poten's article was that the former didn't clearly explain why *Aus meinem Leben* had such a profound gap in publication dates between the first and second volume (1897 to 1905). Von Poten writes that Arved von Teichman had contradicted Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen's intentions for his memoirs, which delayed the publications.³ However, von Poten never mentions what Hohenlohe's intentions were, but the translated version of the ADB page claims Hohenlohe had great self-esteem; a guess can be von Teichman simplified reports that may have been exaggerated by Hohenlohe. *Aus meinem Leben* would encompass four volumes where volumes two through four were respectively published in 1905, 1906, and 1907. These volumes would be edited by Walter von Bremen and each had a specific time period. The second volume spanned Hohenlohe's service under King Frederick William IV from 1856 to 1863. The third volume spanned the wars in 1864 and 1866. The fourth volume then focused on the Franco-Prussian War. In 1915, a jubilee edition of *Aus meinem Leben* was published by Walter von Bremen to commemorate the

³ Von Poten, Bernhard. "Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, Kraft Prinz Zu." ADB, pg. 444.

Prussian victory over the Austrians. The first volume of *Aus meinem Leben* is only held by German libraries, but a scanned version is available on archive.org. I couldn't find any information about the whereabouts of Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen's papers, so I presume they were destroyed. Arved von Teichman didn't mention where he got the notes in order to create the first volume. Despite the greater number of volumes edited by him, Walter von Bremen didn't mention any information regarding the notes' location. Further research yielded no details on whether he destroyed them or gave them to a family member. However, original works from his grandfather have been stored in the Hohenlohe-Zentralarchiv in Neuenstein, Baden-Württemberg.⁴

⁴ Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, "Hohenlohe-Zentralarchiv Neuenstein," accessed November 14, 2018, <https://www.landearchiv-bw.de/web/47260>.

Annotated Bibliography

Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, Kraft zu. *Aus meinem Leben: Vom Revolutionsjahr 1848 bis zum Ende des Kommandos in Wien 1856*, ed. Arved von Teichman und Logischen. Berlin, E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1897, vol. 1, pg. 257-259, 280-82. *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/ausmeinemlebena02unkngoog>.

Original volume that can be found through archive.org. I used it primarily to look up the pages that GHDI listed to confirm their presence. Otherwise, the fact that this book hasn't been translated and it has a "gothic" script, I couldn't do much else.

Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, Kraft zu. "General Order" from *Letters of Strategy*. *New York Times*, Oct. 02, 1898, pg. 21.

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/95606202?accountid=14522>.

Listed in the "Current Literature" section of the *New York Times*, this excerpt underscores the backwardness that prevailed in the Austrian Army. According to Hohenlohe, the Austrian Army tended to issue long-winded notes that he felt hampered the officers' understanding and initiative; indirectly, Hohenlohe warned the Prussian Army to refrain from such long orders. The fact that Hohenlohe was mentioned in an American paper during the year of the Spanish-American War allowed American readers to familiarize themselves with military tactics and the artillery prince.

Von Poten, Bernhard. "Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, Kraft Prinz zu." *Historische Kommission bei der königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften. Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Vol. 50, Duncker & Humblot, 1905, pg. 444-446.

https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/ADB:Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen,_Kraft_Prinz_zu.

Von Poten provides a well-rounded biography of Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen that gives the most information regarding the prince. Starting off with his birth, von Poten launches his article by diving straight to the military background of the Hohenlohe-Ingelfingens. The most important part of this biography is that it corroborates the prince's presence in Vienna in 1854 and mentions that he acted as an attaché for the Prussian government; moreover, von Poten notes that Hohenlohe performed quite well in the Battle of Koniggratz and Sedan, which heightened the prince's reputation in the army.

Times [London, England] correspondent. "Prince Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen's Memoirs." *Times* [London, England], Nov 03, 1906, pg. 7.

<http://find.galegroup.com.proxy.library.ucsb.edu:2048/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=ucsantabarbara&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=CS119075683&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>.

Listed under the “Colonial and Foreign Intelligence” section, a *Times* correspondent summarized a part of Hohenlohe’s *Aus meinem Leben* (vol. 4). During the Franco-Prussian War, Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, Moltke, and von Roon played a critical part in prompting King Wilhelm I to attack Paris instead of hesitating. Rather than face an irregular number of French troops, King Wilhelm I listened to the three officers and allowed Prussian forces to attack Paris. The critical aspect was that Hohenlohe could voice his opinion along two Prussian greats and persuade the king. Given that Hohenlohe actually bombarded Paris as a result, he can’t be considered an arbitrary Prussian officer in the Prussian military. Furthermore, English readers were able to familiarize themselves with Hohenlohe thanks to this article.

Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, Kraft zu. *Aus meinem Leben. Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1848-1871. Jubiläumsausgabe in einem Bande zur 50 Jährigen Wiederkehr von Deutschlands Einigungskriegen*. Berlin, E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1915, ed. 2, pg. VI-VII.

This is the jubilee edition that was published by Walter von Bremen and commissioned by Hohenlohe’s daughter. This version condensed all four volumes of the original *Aus meinem Leben* and focused primarily on noteworthy battles and military operations during Hohenlohe’s service. This edition was published a few months after the beginning of World War I; given that the selections for this edition were mainly militaristic, it likely reflected the war fever during this time. Nevertheless, the attaché period in 1854 that GHDI excerpted didn’t get into this edition.

Craig, Gordon A. “Military Diplomats in the Prussian and German Service: The Attachés, 1816-1914.” *Political Science Quarterly*, no. 1, 1949, Vol. 64, pg. 65-94.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2144182>.

From pages 65 to 68, Craig emphasizes the importance of attachés. Given that military men were prone to safeguard their own military’s interests, they were best for the attaché role compared to professional diplomats. Craig names Christian von Massenbach (a Prussian soldier) who felt that Prussian officers destined for high command were the

most suitable for attaché service, which emphasized the capability of Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen. Further use of Massenbach revealed that attachés played a critical role in determining the character of future allied/opposing leaders. This meant Hohenlohe's interviews of Austrian officers most likely underscored his attempts to size up future Austrian leaders. This source also cites Hohenlohe's *Aus meinem Leben* (vol. 1) where Craig emphasizes the prince's importance in relaying information to the Prussian government following its alliance with Austria during the Crimean War. Craig stresses Hohenlohe's dependability as he gained additional military information from the press and court gossip (prior attachés tended to just dance). Lastly, Craig heightens the prince's role by stating he created intelligence methods that future successors utilized as their model.

Craig, Gordon A. "The World War I Alliance of the Central Powers in Retrospect: The Military Cohesion of the Alliance." *The Journal of Modern History*, no. 3, 1965, Vol. 37, pg. 336-344. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1875406>.

On pages 336 and 337, Craig argues that the lack of coordination between the German and Austro-Hungarian armies began well before World War I. Craig uses Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen to begin his argument, which echoes the prince's remarks on Austrian ineptness. Furthermore, Craig mentions the Kriegspiel incident where Hohenlohe shockingly noted Austrian criticism of the war game's lack of gambling. Lastly, Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen was considered quite outwardly calm to the Austrian levity while future German officers became belligerent in response to Austrian nonchalance to war preparations.

Vagts, Alfred. *The Military Attaché*. Princeton University Press. 1967, pg. 19-20.

The importance of Vagts's piece is his direct explanation of how Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen reported to the Prussian government. Vagts writes that Hohenlohe received orders from the Chief of the General Staff [Karl von Reyher] to refrain from demanding communications with officers already assigned to legations. Furthermore, Vagts explained that Hohenlohe's true superior was the minister plenipotentiary (unnamed) and this minister supposedly read all of the prince's reports prior to relaying them. In his reports, Hohenlohe commonly addressed them "To the Royal Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of War." Lastly, Vagts cites both *Aus meinem Leben* and Craig's 1949 article

about attachés. However, information regarding the whereabouts of the original documents still came up empty given that *Aus meinem Leben* mentions nothing about the location of Hohenlohe's notes.

Through this source exploration, it became increasingly clear that Kraft zu Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen actually stood as a significant Prussian figure despite his lack of presence in most history books. After being stationed in Vienna, Hohenlohe acted as a lifeline for Prussian interests within the Danube kingdom; without the proficient reports from Hohenlohe, Prussian officials may have remained under the delusion that the Austrian Army constituted a pristine, well-organized force; the fact that Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen acted surprised after witnessing the conditions of the Austrian forces underscored the high regard that Prussians gave to Austrian forces. Furthermore, the appointment of Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen as the attaché for Vienna revealed the trust that the Prussian military placed in the prince. Given that attaché roles were primarily for well-ranked officials and reserved for promising figures, Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen's rather unknown, but crucial role became increasingly obvious as this research progressed. Lastly, Hohenlohe's astute reports were practically confirmed when the Austro-Prussian War revealed the great Habsburg Empire's weakness, which laid the foundation for a future unified Germany.

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