

# Wild von Hohenborn, Adolf

By [Michael Geheran](#)



## Adolf Wild von Hohenborn (1860-1925)

This portrait of German general Adolf Wild von Hohenborn is on an Imperial Association for the Aid of German Veterans (Reichsverband zur Unterstützung deutscher Veteranen e.V.) postcard from 1920. The text reads: "War Minister Wild v. Hohenborn." Wild von Hohenborn was minister of war between 21 January 1915 and 28 October 1916.

Meyer, Albert: Adolf Wild von Hohenborn, postcard, n.p., 1920; source: Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AdolfWildVonHohenborn.jpg>.

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Wild von Hohenborn, *Adolf*

Prussian general and Minister of War

Born 08 July 1860 in Kassel, German Confederation

Died 25 October 1925 in Hohenborn (Zierenberg), German Reich

## Summary

Adolf Wild von Hohenborn served as Prussian war minister from January 1915 to October 1916. He is best known for his role in the Judenzählung (Jewish census), a census of Jewish soldiers in the German army conducted by the war ministry to investigate unsubstantiated allegations of Jewish shirking.

## Table of contents

[1 Military Positions Early in the War](#)

[2 War Minister](#)

[Selected Bibliography](#)

[Citation](#)

## Military Positions Early in the War

At the outbreak of the war, Adolf Wild von Hohenborn (1860-1925) was given command of the 30<sup>th</sup> [Infantry](#) Division, participating in the battles at Nancy-Epinal and the Aisne in September and October 1914. He was subsequently transferred to the [Eastern Front](#) in November 1914 to become chief of staff of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army, a post he held for just eight days, before serving a brief stint as deputy to [Erich von Falkenhayn \(1861-1922\)](#) on the general staff. On 21 January 1915, Hohenborn was appointed Prussian war minister. Despite his long-standing friendships with Falkenhayn and [Wilhelm II, German Emperor \(1859-1941\)](#), he was dismissed on 29 October 1916 after the formation of the Third [Oberste Heeresleitung \(OHL\)](#), mainly as a consequence of his personal rivalry with Field Marshall [Paul von Hindenburg \(1847-1934\)](#). Hohenborn had also voiced opposition to the *Vaterländischer Hilfsdienst* (auxiliary service law), a central tenet of the Hindenburg Program that called for all non-military men between the ages of seventeen and sixty to be conscripted for work in the [armaments industry](#). Following his dismissal from the war ministry, Hohenborn served as commander of the XVI Corps in the Argonne for the remainder of the war.

## War Minister

In his capacity as war minister, Hohenborn launched an official inquiry into the number of Jewish soldiers serving in the front lines on 11 October 1916 – the so-called [Judenanzählung](#) (Jewish census). The investigation was ordered in response to unfounded allegations that Jews were evading frontline service; it called for a census to determine the number of Jewish soldiers serving at the front in proportion to those stationed behind the lines in non-combat roles. Hohenborn's [anti-Semitic](#) views were undoubtedly a decisive factor in authorizing the census, as his predecessors in the war ministry had largely ignored anti-Semitic denunciations until then in an effort to preserve the spirit of the [Burgfrieden](#). Yet his decision must also be viewed against the backdrop of the Hindenburg Program, which demanded a systematic culling of the home-front and rear-area support units of much needed manpower for the front lines, as well as pressure from anti-Semitic circles in the army and the *Reichstag* to substantiate claims of Jewish shirking. Although the results of the census refuted the initial

charges against the Jewish war record, the fact that they were never disclosed to the public fueled anti-Semitic rumors of Jewish cowardice after the war.

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## Selected Bibliography

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- [Wild von Hohenborn, Adolf, Reichold, Helmut / Granier, Gerhard \(eds.\): \*\*Adolf Wild von Hohenborn. Briefe und Tagebuchaufzeichnungen des preussischen Generals als Kriegsminister und Truppenführer im Ersten Weltkrieg\*\*, Boppard am Rhein, 1986: H. Boldt.](#)

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## External Links

- [Rathenau, Walther: \*Deutschlands Rohstoffversorgung, Berlin 1916\* \(Bayerische Staatsbibliothek\) \(Book\)](#)

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