**Gustav Wachtmeister**

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| **Gustav Wachtmeister** |
| Greve Gustaf Wachtmeister.jpgPortrait of Gustav Wachtmeister. |
| **Nickname(s)** | The King's Right Arm |
| **Born** | (1757-07-25)25 July 1757[Karlskrona](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karlskrona), Sweden |
| **Died** | 20 July 1826(1826-07-20) (aged 68)[Nääs säteri](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=N%C3%A4%C3%A4s_s%C3%A4teri,_S%C3%B6dermanland&action=edit&redlink=1), Sweden |
| **Allegiance** | * Sweden[Sweden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden)
* Kingdom of Prussia[Prussia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prussia) (1778–1779)
 |
| **Service/branch** | [Swedish Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swedish_Army) |
| **Years of service** | 1770–1809 |
| **Rank** | General |
| **Battles/wars** | * [**War of the Bavarian Succession**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_the_Bavarian_Succession)
* [**Russo-Swedish War**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russo-Swedish_War_%281788%E2%80%9390%29)

[Battle of Valkeala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Valkeala)* [**Finnish War**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finnish_War)

[Battle of Ratan and Sävar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ratan_and_S%C3%A4var) |

**Gustav Wachtmeister** (25 July 1757 – 20 July 1826) was a [Swedish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swedish_people) [Army officer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Army_officer) made famous at the [Battle of Valkeala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Valkeala) in Finland in 1789 against [Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) where he was wounded by a [musket](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musket) shot to his arm, which had to be amputated. He was made the hero of the hour by King [Gustav III of Sweden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_III_of_Sweden) who was in desperate need of publicity as he tried to silence domestic opposition with a crushing victory over [Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia).

**Military career**

He was born into an [aristocratic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristocracy_%28class%29) [Swedish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swedish_people) family in 1757 and as was common for sons of [Swedish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swedish_people) [noble families](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noble_families), embarked on military life at a young age, receiving a [commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commissioned_officer) as an [ensign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ensign_%28rank%29) in 1772. In 1778 he went abroad to gain experience on campaign, joining the [Prussian Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prussian_Army) fighting [Austria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austria) in the [War of the Bavarian Succession](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_the_Bavarian_Succession) from 1778–79.

Returning to [Sweden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden), Wachtmeister's career flourished and by 1780 he had a posting as a [lieutenant-colonel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant-colonel) commanding a battalion in the provincial [Dalarna Regiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalarna_Regiment). He went on to fight against [Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) at the [Battle of Valkeala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Valkeala) and in numerous others until the war ended in 1790 without any real gain for either country.

His later conquests were mainly fought against [Napoleon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon) at [Pomerania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomerania) and against [Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) who in 1809 invaded [Sweden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden) after a [military coup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_coup) overthrew the current King [Gustav IV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_IV). The new King [Karl XIII](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_XIII) ordered Wachtmeister to attack the [Russians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russians) behind enemy lines which he did at the [Battle of Ratan and Sävar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ratan_and_S%C3%A4var).

**Personal life**

After the [Battle of Ratan and Sävar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ratan_and_S%C3%A4var) during which he retreated his men back to the coast, where they were sheltered by [Naval guns](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_gun), he was considered to have not acted with sufficient boldness by his superiors, and was given the option to retire voluntarily to his estates. He died in 1826, at age of 79 years.

**Bibliography**

* David, Saul *War From Ancient Egypt to Iraq*, Dorling Kindersley, 2009.