

The situation around 5.15 p.m.

Meanwhile, Blücher had returned to Bussy, while the fighting continued in the villages with the same determination as ever.¹

Von Steinmetz' brigade however, now in position behind St.Amand and having suffered heavy casualties, retreated further to a position between Brye and Sombreffe.²

Initially, the fusilier battalion of the 24th regiment had remained behind the l'Escaille chateau, to the north of St.Amand-la-Haye, when the rest of the brigade had pulled back. By now, however, both the 9th and 10th companies under captain Wiegand, were ordered to Brye; during their march they would have got under some friendly fire. At the same time, the 11th and 12th companies moved to the north east part of St.Amand-la-Haye where they supported the next assault upon the village.³

Of the three battalions of Von Jagow which had defended St.Amand la Haye, the 1st and 2nd battalion of the 29th regiment recollected near Brye. The 2nd battalion of the 3rd regiment Westphalian Landwehr had got the order to form the battalion again and to wait for further orders further to the rear.⁴

Foot battery nr. 7, in rear of St.Amand, went back to replenish its ammunitions.

Of the brigade Pirch II the 6th regiment of infantry (West-Prussian nr.1) was in St.Amand-la-Haye; the 28th regiment kept the farm de la Haye and its surroundings, while the 2nd regiment Westphalian Landwehr was in second line in reserve.⁵

The brigade was forced to keep its position after the failure of Von Jürgass and Tippelskirch. The French division of Girard stood in St.Amand-le-Hameau, while units of Von Tippelskirch (like the 2nd regiment of infantry (Pommeranian infantry nr.1) and the Jäger detachment of the 25th regiment) occupied Wagnelée.

Both platoons of the Jäger detachment of the 25th regiment now advanced out of the edge of the village further, but by doing so they got more and more separated as the French diverged while retreating. The right platoon was soon paralyzed by the presence of the Prussian and French cavalry, while the left one was threatened by French infantry. However, the platoon here could get away in time as, by now, both other two Jäger detachment of the brigade of Von Tippelskirch had advanced through Wagnelée and had posted themselves between both platoons. The French now halted their pursuit but now a skirmishing fire broke out which lasted for some time. At the same time, the skirmishing line south of Wagnelée (consisting of the three detachments of Jäger of the 5th brigade) was extended further to the right (the extreme right flank of the army) with skirmishers of the 10th company, led by lieutenant Schmidt II, of the 25th regiment.⁶

After the brigade of Pirch II had advanced towards St.Amand-la-Haye, the brigade of Von Krafft slowly advanced to take its position just near the Bussy-windmill.⁷ Von Langen got the instruction to follow Von Krafft slowly; the 12th brigade, of Von Stülpnagel, would then take up the position of Von Langen.⁸

Not long after the advance of the 6th brigade of Von Krafft towards its position near the windmill of Bussy, both fusilier battalions of the 26th and 9th regiment, led by colonel Von Reuss, were taken further to the front to cover some artillery. It was here that both battalions

suffered from French gunfire.

About 30 minutes later, the 2nd battalion of the 26th regiment advanced further as well, as in one way or another it seemed as if French forces were threatening the position of Bussy. As a result, it was 1st lieutenant Von Germar who entrenched the wall of the adjoining farm with his skirmishers.⁹

Though the 12th brigade may have had the destination to take up the position of Von Langen, Von Thielmann, aware of the presence of Hulot in front of Potriaux and realising that the area between this place and Ligny was virtually unprotected, now decided to send Von Stülpnagel there to secure the link along the Ligne between the Prussian left wing and centre.

Von Stülpnagel marched forward over the Namur-road, having both fusilier battalions of the 31st regiment and the 6th regiment of Kurmark Landwehr in front, turned left near Sombreffe, passed it and took up positions in the area immediately south west of this village. He had strict orders to impose himself upon the enemy but not to attempt any offensive whatsoever.

Initially, the brigade was in three lines, covered by the fusilier battalions of the 31st regiment and of the 6th regiment of Kurmark Landwehr infantry. In the first line were the the battalions of the 5th regiment of Kurmark Landwehr infantry, in the second the musketer battalions of the 6th regiment of Kurmark Landwehr infantry while those of the 31st regiment formed the third line.¹⁰

Blücher now ordered Von Krafft to send five of his battalions to Ligny, in order to reinforce the garrison. The four remaining battalions of this brigade (the 26th regiment and the 3rd battalion of the 9th regiment, under major Von Petery) now advanced towards St.Amand-la-Haye, to reinforce Pirch II.¹¹

During the advance to Ligny the units of Von Krafft were fired at by the French artillery, but this fire didn't do much harm. In the 1st Elbe Landwehr infantry regiment, the 3rd battalion was to the left and after an advance of about 500 paces, captain Von Borcke got the instruction to form a division of skirmishers to cover the left flank of the advancing battalion. Von Borcke was also instructed to cross the Ligne and turn the village if the circumstances would allow this. Due to the speed of the battalion and the presence of the enemy, however, Von Borcke didn't manage to form his division as regular as it should be. Resulting from this he decided to bring them in an extended order towards the village and the Ligne, where the men took up favourable positions for delivering a strong skirmishing fire.¹²

At Saint Amand la Haye, things do not seem to have been going as they should have after Pirch II's second attack. While the battalions of Pirch II were not being reinforced, the French now established a new strong line of skirmishers which now threatened the Prussians on their left flank. The result was that the French again seem to have got hold of the village again, at least part of it, as the 6th regiment of infantry (West-Prussian nr.1) was now taken back to the very centre of it, while the other regiments of the brigade must have been taken back in rear of it.¹³

However, they were relieved by the four battalions of Von Krafft's brigade which were heading for St.Amand la Haye (the fusilier ones of the 26th and 9th regiment led by colonel Von Reuss were in front) preceded by their skirmishers.¹⁴ While captain Von Liebhaber penetrated into the village through the gardens on the east-side, Von Reuss advanced over the street over the Ligne straight into St.Amand la Haye. Here they found a fierce French resistance, particularly in the

massive buildings and soon after entering the village, the battalions got split up into smaller battle-groups led by officers and subalterns. Being of no use as a whole, they also lost some officers like captain Von Liebhaber, lieutenant Gleiwitz and lieutenant colonel Von Natzmer. Finally both battalions were unable to hold their grounds in the village due to growing French superiority. Covered by the skirmishers led by captain Von Ising, captain Von Bredow had both battalions evacuate the village.¹⁵

At that moment the artillery of the 1st and 2nd corps was placed in the following positions. As stated before the footbattery nr.7 of the 1st corps (brigade Von Steinmetz) had gone back from its position behind St.Amand to replenish its ammunition.

The other battery which was attached to this brigade was the horse-battery nr. 7 and this one still had its position on the extreme right flank, north of Wagnelée.

The battery of the brigade Pirch II, the foot-battery nr.3, went out to support the foot-battery nr.8 (Von Jagow, of which the two howitzers had got out of order [¹⁶]) to the right of Ligny near the quarries the moment the brigade made its first attack.¹⁷

The foot-battery nr.15 (brigade Von Henckel) was in the left rear of Ligny.¹⁸

The horse battery nr.2 was still northeast of Ligny. It had been firing successfully on the French columns attacking Ligny and now maintained its position until it ran out of ammunition; then it went to the rear. Only the howitzer was kept in position under lieutenant Patzig with the instruction to fire with grenades and canister the moment the French infantry would come out of Ligny towards Brye.¹⁹

The 12p. batteries no.2 and 9 had been on the heights between St.Amand and Ligny, but were, the moment they had ran out of ammunition, immediately relieved by the foot-battery nr.1 and the horse battery nr.10 of the reserve-artillery, as well as by the 12p. batteries nr.4 and 8 of the reserve-artillery of the 2nd corps.²⁰

12p. battery no.2 of captain Siemon was operating in rear of St.Amand but suffered from the French skirmishing fire from the front and from artillery fire on its left flank. At some point Siemon had been instructed by major Von Rentzel to go to the rear in order to recover and to replenish its ammunition. One howitzer and two guns had been damaged but were repaired and the losses of horses were repaired by fresh ones. By the time the battery had completely recovered however, the retreat of the army was imminent.²¹

Half of the 12p. battery nr.6 (two howitzers and two guns) had almost been destroyed by the enemy. St.Amand having fallen to the French- a fact unnoticed by its captain - sent out clouds of skirmishers which now approached the battery and killed most of the horses of one gun. Meanwhile the battery was still able to maintain a strong canister-fire and therefore hold them off. Some time later the battery was charged by 50 horsemen coming from the direction of Ligny. The crew, however, managed to drive off the French in a desperate struggle in which also ramrods were used.

The commander of the battery, captain Von Reuter, now succeeded in bringing back half of his battery, except for the gun of which almost all the horses had been killed or wounded. He placed his three remaining guns further to the rear near two regiments of cavalry.

The French skirmishers now attacked the sole remaining gun, after which the crew went back to its unit, further to the rear. Captain Von Reuter requested the cavalry to recapture the gun, but

they refused to do so. Meanwhile, the battery went back to a position in rear of the mill of Bussy. Here it remained for some time to recover and to replenish its ammunitions.²²

The other two howitzers and two guns of the battery, led by 2nd lieutenant Betcke, were sent by general Von Holzendorf to a position in rear of Ligny to fire at the French columns which assaulted Ligny. For this reason, Betcke fired with his howitzer only as to avoid hitting the village itself. Soon after however Betcke was ordered to proceed to another position further to the right of the village. In doing so, one gun got behind, but got the instruction to start firing from there. Betcke linked up the remaining guns with the 12p. battery no.2 (captain Siemon) and when this battery moved away, with the 6p. battery no.1 (captain Huet). From here, both batteries fired upon the French columns in front of Ligny.

Of this 6p. battery no.1 half was turned towards Ligny and the other half towards St.Amand. In its position to the extreme right of Ligny it went back for about 800 paces the moment Ligny was momentarily lost, but soon after it retook her position. Soon after, five of its guns were out of order and the other three kept firing until they had run out of ammunition.

Horse battery no.10 of the reserve artillery advanced around 4 p.m. and was split into two: one half of it led by lieutenant Von Meerkatz got a position about 200 paces in rear of St.Amand, where it supported the infantry in front and where it suffered from French artillery fire on its flank.

The other half, led by captain Schaeffer, was given a position between the 12p. battery no.2 (led by captain Siemon) and 6p. battery no.7 (led by captain Schaale) but while underway to this position, the axle of one of the guns was hit and broke. Nevertheless, the three remaining guns got into position and joined the fray.

Of the howitzer-battery nr. 1 two howitzers had got out of order but further details are missing.²³

In the 2nd corps, the foot battery nr.10 (brigade Von Tippelskirch) was still in rear of Wagnelée. The foot battery no.5 (Von Krafft), now took up a position west of Ligny, near the quarries.²⁴

The foot battery no.34 must initially have kept its position near its brigade, Von Brause, near Les Trois Burettes, but later (at what time is unknown) must have taken up a position on a slope near Saint Amand.²⁵

The moment Von Langen marched into Ligny, he put his battery, the foot battery nr.12, east of the track Ligny-Sombreffe, in all probability behind the Ligne, and was supported here by two squadrons of Elbe Landwehrcavalry of the brigade.²⁶

The horse battery no.6 was in a position immediately south of Wagnelée.²⁷ As stated before, the 12p. batteries nr.4 and 8 came in position between St.Amand and Ligny; battery nr. 8 would have taken the position of 12p. battery nr.6 (captain Reuter) as soon as this one had left its position – now, both 12p. batteries here were led by major Von Lehmann.²⁸

Footbattery no.37, of the reserve-artillery, was attached to the brigade of Von Tippelskirch and was now put forward towards St.Amand-la-Haye, but its exact position is unknown.²⁹

The horse artillery no.5 was in reserve, but where is unknown.³⁰ The horse battery no.14 came into a position between Ligny and Sombreffe, on the other side of the Ligne. It was here that it came into a situation where it suffered severe casualties within a short time: that is 53 horses and 19 men.³¹ It was nevertheless still able to inflict heavy casualties to the 4th French corps too, but then had to withdraw as soon as it had run out of ammunition. It must have been

around 5.30 p.m.³²

The appearance of the corps of d'Erlon.

Gourgaud, Napoleon's aide de camp, who had been observing the fight for Ligny for some time, had noted to Napoleon that the village still had not been taken, even though Gérard had committed all his troops.³³ The Prussians still held out on the left bank of the Ligne as well as the chateau on the right bank.³⁴

As a result, it must have been around 5.45 p.m., that Napoleon had the 3rd and 4th regiment of grenadiers (three battalions), plus one battery of the artillery of the Imperial guard, march towards Ligny to serve as a reserve for Gérard.³⁵ The grenadiers probably marched over the road which connects Fleurus to Point du Jour.

Meanwhile, it was also around 5.30 p.m. (³⁶) that a mass of troops appeared at the horizon near the Bois Delhütte, north east of Villers Perwin.

While these forces moved on, they were seen by the French at the extreme left flank and soon after general Vandamme sent one of his aide de camps out to Napoleon to inform him that an apparent hostile column was approaching the battlefield and was threatening the French left flank.³⁷

By the time the aide de camp had reached the general headquarters, a shock had gone through the entire French left wing; the division of Girard was already evacuating St.Amand-le-Hameau (³⁸), while infantry of Lefol's division was panicking. Eventually, however, Lefol – particularly because of the efforts of general Corsin - succeeded in keeping his men together.³⁹

The instability within the division of Girard started from a panick which struck the 4th regiment of the line (brigade Piat). Yet, it was the chef de battalion Chaunac (the commander then of the 12th regiment of light infantry) who, with chef de battalion Vissec de Latude and some other officers, was able to restore order and to bring back the troops to the front and retake the ground they had lost.⁴⁰

Having heard about the situation at his left flank - by then it may have been about 5.45 p.m., - Napoleon sent a scout to his extreme left flank to find out about the identity of this mass of troops.⁴¹

As a precaution, Napoleon also moved troops of all arms to secure his extreme left flank. These were the 2nd, 3rd and 4th regiments of chasseurs of the Imperial Guard, the cavalry division of Subervie (Pajol's corps), plus a battery of horse artillery of the Imperial Guard. They took up a position to the left (rear) of Vandamme's / Girard's left flank, probably facing westwards, south-west of Wagnelée.⁴² By then it must have been running towards 7 p.m.

To reinforce the depleted forces of Vandamme and Girard, the Young Guard (eight battalions) moved in support at the same time, in the frontline of Saint-Amand-la-Haye.⁴³

The struggle at Ligny.

The attack of Von Krafft's battalions had thrown the French across the brook and now the Prussian skirmishers occupied several buildings on the right bank. As the French received

reinforcements too the struggle slowed down.⁴⁴

Captain Von Borcke leading a detachment on the left side of the village had got separated from his battalion, the 3rd of the 1st Elbe Landwehr infantry, and maintained his position successfully on right bank.⁴⁵

Gérard managed to take a large building on the right bank, probably the farm of de la Tour. An attack of the 7th regiment of infantry (West-Prussian nr.2) infantry on the farm failed.⁴⁶ The French also had also gained possession over the churchyard and posted two guns there.⁴⁷

Not long after, captain Von Blomberg (together with lieutenant Bömer) was ordered by major Gross of the 1st battalion of the 3rd regiment Westphalian Landwehr to retake it with two platoons. While the first platoon, led by Von Blomberg, probably advanced along the farm of d'en Bas towards the footbridge here over the Ligne, the other platoon advanced to the sunken road which lies a bit further to the right – both ways enter to the square which is in the right front of the churchyard. This churchyard was lined on this side by a low wall, from which the enemy had a perfect cover over the passages and the square.

The problem for the Prussians was that the footbridge on the left could only be passed over by one man at the time, and therefore the attempts to cross it and enter the square in force failed as the men were easily shot by the French. Supports led by lieutenants Böhm II and Schmidt of the 3rd battalion of the same regiment didn't help much either.

Now, Von Blomberg put his weight on the sunken road. Here, the advance of the sharpshooters, led by captain Kaminski, had stranded as well; Kaminski had got wounded. Units of the 3rd battalion and of the 7th regiment of infantry (West-Prussian nr.2), led by captain Czernowski, were here active skirmishing.

Now, Von Blomberg proposed to drive the French away by a bayonet attack in which he was joined by Von Czernowski and his men. Though they had a tough job to do this as they suffered quite some casualties, they finally managed to do so and reached the churchyard-wall which they also occupied.⁴⁸

The 3rd battalion of the same regiment must somehow have maintained a position in the village.⁴⁹

Von Borcke led his three companies of the fusilier battalion of the 19th regiment across the Ligne nine times more, each time being repelled by French counter-attacks. The 1st musketeer battalion held its own in the chateau, though it was under heavy artillery bombardment. This fire was shattering the very stones of which the chateau was built, many men being wounded by flying splinters.⁵⁰

By now it had become around 6 p.m. and the struggle had got stuck, due to the fact that both parties had got reinforcements. Now, in order to force the fighting in favour of the Prussians, Von Langen had received the instruction to follow Von Krafft.⁵¹

The first units to follow Von Krafft to Ligny were the 1st and 2nd battalion of the 21st regiment, as well as the foot battery nr.12. Colonel Langen placed the battalions on the height in rear of Ligny and the battery was assigned a position to the left of the road from Brye to Ligny, covered by the 3rd and 4th squadron of the 5th regiment Kurmark Landwehrcavalry (brigade Von der Schulenburg).⁵²

Both these battalions were launched six times against the French on the right bank of the Ligne,

and failed six times. In these actions the musketeer battalions of the 7th regiment of infantry (West-Prussian nr.2) must have participated for their third attack, but as soon as their actions stranded and changed in a skirmisher fight, both battalions were taken back out of the village and collected on the heights in rear of Ligny.⁵³

After the battalions of Von Langen were committed, those of the 3rd regiment of Westphalian regiment of Landwehr (the 1st and the 3rd) were pulled out of the village and placed in columns rear of the village.⁵⁴

Now, colonel Langen was ordered to send another two battalions to Ligny; these were the 1st battalion of the 23rd regiment and the 2nd battalion of the 3rd regiment Elbe Landwehrinfantry. The 2nd battalion of the 23rd regiment was held in position in the farm of Bussy.⁵⁵

The 1st battalion of the 23rd regiment, under major Von Buttlar, came under heavy artillery fire as it descended the slope into Ligny. Three canon balls struck the advancing column, one mortally wounding captain Von Sell, a second taking out the entire first file of the colour platoon.

Before reaching the village the battalion was ordered to drive out the French from the western part of Ligny.⁵⁶

The skirmishers of the 1st battalion of the 23rd regiment, led by captain Von Busse in front of the battalion, located a hollow way which led in between the central and the south-west part of the village. However, this road was already occupied by French soldiers. The French fire was causing the skirmish line to break down when lieutenant Von Gebottendorf with the first files of the firing line, followed by the supports of the 2nd and 3rd skirmish platoons, charged, forcing back the surprised Frenchmen at bayonet point.

The 1st and 4th skirmish platoons, taking advantage of the opportunity, rushed to both sides of the entrance, followed by the battalion column. With the drummers beating the charge and the buglers playing it, the battalion made as much noise as possible, trying to give the impression that it was part of a much larger force. The other Prussian units which had come back from the central part of Ligny, inspired by this charge, moved to support the 1st battalion. The French were thus forced back, though they took cover behind the brook and in the hedges and buildings, up to two exits on the other side of the village, one leading from the centre and the other one from the eastern part.

In the course of this bitter fighting, sergeant Hübner of the skirmishers of the 3rd company of the 23rd regiment trapped a group of Frenchmen carrying a flag against a hedge. In the subsequent desperate hand-to-hand struggle, the flag was ripped from its pole, Hübner and several of his men stabbed to death, and others wounded. Skirmishers Borst, Kostelnik and Pietreck managed to take away the bands and tassels previously attached to the flag pole.

Buttlar followed up with the 3rd skirmish platoon of the 1st and 2nd companies and one platoon of the 4th company. In doing so other units of the Prussian garrison joined them and so they were able to reach the exit on the French side in the central part of the village.

Captain von Busse was ordered to take his 3rd company and the other platoons from the 4th Company along a second lane to the exit further east on the French side.

Though Von Busse's detachment had also been reinforced by other Prussian units which were in the village already, he was unable to shift the French from the buildings near the exit. Von Busse thus ordered Lieutenant Pruskowsky, with the 1st skirmish platoon and the battalion's

sappers, to assault the largest farmhouse, while lieutenant Sörgel attacked along the lane with the 2nd and 4th skirmish platoons. Pruskowsky surrounded the building with his skirmishers and gave the sappers covering fire while they smashed down the gates and doors. The Prussians then stormed the building while the French occupants unsuccessfully tried to escape from it by the windows. This action forced the French to retire out of that part of Ligny for a time.

Sörgel covered the lane with the 4th Skirmish Platoon, while the 2nd and 3rd occupied the buildings. The remainder of the men, massed in column, took a covered position, facing towards the French position. Now, there was a short pause in the fighting in this sector.

When the French counter-attacked a quarter of an hour later Sörgel fell back on the flanks of his supports (the massed column) as ordered, but was struck by a bullet and killed. Von Busse counter-charged the French column in the lane with the bayonet, the Prussians getting to within 50 paces of the French before falling back when their captain's horse was shot under him. The Prussians abandoned the buildings they had just captured and fell back towards the hollow road they had used entering the village.⁵⁷

The building involved may well have been the farm de la Tour, on the rue d'en Haut, but there is no proof for that.⁵⁸

About 6.30 p. the shingle-roofed barn in the chateau farm went up in flames. The fire was so hot that at 7 p.m. captain Busse of the 9th company of the 19th regiment, who commanded this sector, ordered his men, who had also run out of ammunition, to withdraw. The gates from the chateau were blocked by so much rubble by then, that it would have taken too long to clear them. Instead, the garrison jumped out from the first floor windows, or over the high walls, into the surrounding fields where the 6th brigade covered their withdrawal.⁵⁹

The units which prevented the French from debouching from the left part of the village were the 1st and 2nd battalion of the 21st regiment. Before entering into the village, their commander, lieutenant-colonel Von Reckow put them on a small hill in rear of the left of the village. Immediately, Von Reckow sent forward his skirmishers to help to drive out the enemy out of the village, and soon he also moved forward with the battalions to support them. They indeed drove the French away right up to the French starting positions to the east of the village, though be it after a murderous combat in which they suffered high losses.

The battalions stormed the village six times, the enemy counter-attacked six times, but neither side was broken. After this exhaustion of his troops, Von Reckow was forced to have them extricated from the fight, rallied on the height in rear of the village and to leave his skirmishers involved in the village.⁶⁰

It was around this time, 7 p.m., that major general Von Krafft reported back - through his adjutant captain Von Stülpnagel - to Blücher and Gneisenau that Ligny could only be held by an extreme effort: he was told to do so for another half hour.⁶¹

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1. Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.145

2. Wagner, Plane etc. p.33

Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.136

It would have had a position with its front towards Sombrefe and its back towards the Roman road, to the left covered by a swamp and to the right by the outer enclosures of Brye. Cf. Tagebuch des Königlich Preussischen I.Armeekorps. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von Die Schlacht bei Ligny p.23

Harkort, F. Die Zeiten des ersten Westphalischen Landwehrregiments p.46

He informs us that the 3rd battalion went back first, and then the 1st battalion, covered by the fire of the 4th and 5th platoon.

Otto, F.von Geschichte des 2.Schlesischen Jäger Bataillons nr.6 p.80

³ Zychlinski, F.von Geschichte etc. p.271

The role of most of both the fusilier battalions of the 12th and 24th regiment remains obscure; both would have been committed on the right wing and later that evening (around 7 p.m.) were in action west of Saint-Amand-la-Haye (see below).

4.Report of captain Von Ripperda. In: KA. VI.E.7.II.141 in GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.102

Wellmann claims the battalion reconnected to the other battalions of the regiment right away but this happened much later (11 p.m. – see below). Cf. Wellmann, R. Geschichte etc. p.92

According to Ph.Gerbet (37th regiment of the line, division Lefol) the Prussians carried out two counter-attacks after the fall of St.Amand of which only the first one was successful.

After the second counter-attack the Prussians must have refrained from further real attacks.

Cf. Gerbet, Ph. Souvenirs d'un officier sur la campagne etc. p.12

⁵ Damitz, Von Die Geschichte etc. p.136

⁶ Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Königlich Preussischen 25ten Infanterie Regiments etc. p.16-21

7. Cf. Tagebuch des Königlich Preussischen I.Armeekorps etc. (Kriegsarchiv VI.E.13) In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von Die Schlacht bei Ligny In: Die Armee 1.Jg.1902 nr.2 p.17

Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.150

Major general Von Krafft himself gives the impression as if the brigade was already there the moment the battle started. Cf. Report of major general Von Krafft. In: KA, VI.E.15.4 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI,nr.VII.5.p.14

8. Wagner, Plane etc. p.44

Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.151
Report of colonel Von Langen. In: KA, VI.E.15.117. In: GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.23
Report of Pirch I. In: KA, VI.E.15.2 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.6
Report of lieutenant colonel Von Reckow. In: Schreiber, H. Geschichte des Infanterie-Regiments Von Borcke (4.Pommerschen) nr.21 p.95
Von Thielmann says he was asked to send two brigades to the centre of the line, but that he could only afford to send one (the 12th). Cf. Report of Von Thielmann. In: KA, VI.E.22.1 in: GSA, VPH-HA, nr.VII.5.p.37

⁹ Stuckrad, B.von Geschichte etc. p.105
Major general Von Krafft states that the whole 26th regiment was sent to Brye, as well as the 3rd battalion of the 9th regiment. Cf. Report of major general Von Krafft. In: KA, VI.E.15.4 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI,nr.VII.5.p.14

¹⁰ About the moment this took place, Gottschalck mentions the official report of Von Stülpnagel (KA, Berlin) in which he claims it was after 4 p.m. Gottschalck, M. Geschichte etc. p.77-78
In another source, Von Stülpnagel wrote it was at 4 p.m. Cf. Geschichtlichen Darstellung etc. In the diary of the 12th brigade a time of 3 p.m. is given (in KA, Berlin), which is definitely too early as by then the battle hadn't really started and by 4 p.m. French pressure here may not have been that strong yet. In: Gottschalck, M. Geschichte etc. p.77-78

11. Wagner - Plane etc. p.36
Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.150,153
Siborne, W. - History if the war in France etc. Vol.I p.203
Stuckrad, B.von - Geschichte etc. p.105
Von Bagensky – Geschichte des 9ten Infanterie Regiments p.236

¹² Cf.Captain Von Borcke, 3rd battalion 1st Elbe Landwehr infantry regiment. In: Kriegerleben etc. p.307-308
Von Borcke believes his brigade was launched at 7 p.m. but this is wrong: it must have been at least one hour earlier.

¹³ Cf.Conrady, E.von Geschichte des Königlich etc.p.247-248

¹⁴ Wagner, Plane etc. p.38
According to Stuckrad, the village was then about to be lost by Pirch II, but was not the case. Cf. Stuckrad, B.von Geschichte etc. p.105-106

¹⁵ Stuckrad, B.von Geschichte etc. p.106
According to Von Bagensky, the fuselier battalion of the 9th regiment Colberg penetrated into the village in columns and by wheeling them to the right, it emerged on the fields on its other

side. Meanwhile, as to cover his left flank, major Von Petery – the battalion commander - had sent captain Von Diest forward with the 8th platoon. In: Geschichte des 9ten Infanterie Regiments p.236

¹⁶ They were sent to Maastricht for repair. Cf. report of captain Hermann, dated 24th June 1815. In: Kriegstagebuch, artillery of the 1st corps. In: GSA Rep.15a nr.82 p.27

17. Cf. Wagner, Plane etc. p.36
Conrady, E.von Geschichte des Königlich etc.p.247
Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.132
Siborne, W. History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.201

¹⁸ Wagner, Plane etc.43
Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.147

¹⁹ Report of captain Borowsky, dated 22nd June 1815. In: Kriegstagebuch, artillery of the 1st corps. In: GSA, Rep.15a nr.82 p.36-38

20. Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.147
Siborne, W. History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.203
Cf. Tagebuch des Königlich Preussischen I.Armeekorps etc. (Kriegsarchiv VI.E.13) In:
Pflugk Hartung, J.von Die Schlacht bei Ligny In: Die Armee 1.Jg.1902 nr.2 p.22
Lieutenant colonel Von Röhl is wrong in stating that both batteries came in position between Ligny and Sombreffe. Cf. Report in KA, VI.E.15.179 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.30

²¹ Report of captain Siemon, dated 23rd June 1815. In: Kriegstagebuch, artillery of the 1st corps. In: GSA, Rep.15a nr.82 p.4-5

22.Reuter, captain Von. In: Reute, E.von Erinnerungen etc. p.275-282 And his report of 23rd June 1815, in: Kriegstagebuch, artillery of the 1st corps. In: GSA Rep.15a nr.82 p.12-13
Siborne mentions the charge on the battery by of French horsemen dressed as artillery of the guard and seems to base his theory on the account of De Mauduit. De Mauduit states they were chasseurs à cheval, led by a maréchal-des-logis, taking a gun (and its drivers) of a Prussian battery. In:
Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.79
Siborne, W. History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.199
Wagner, Plane etc. p.36

²³ Report of lieutenant Wahl of the battery, dated 24th June 1815. In: Kriegstagebuch, artillery of the 1st corps. In: GSA, Rep.15a nr.82 p.32

24.Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.147

- ²⁵ Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.191
- ²⁶ Lieutenant colonel Von Röhl. Cf. Report in KA, VI.E.15.179 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.30
Wagner, Plane etc. p.44
According to Wagner, these squadrons were the 3rd and 4th squadrons of the 5th Kurmark Landwehrcavalry (Von Sohr). In: Wagner, Plane etc. p.44
- ²⁷ Report of major general Von Wahlen Jürgas. In: KA, VI.E.15.145 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.26
- ²⁸ Lieutenant colonel Von Röhl. Cf. Report in KA, VI.E.15.179 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.30
Lieutenant colonel Von Röhl. Cf. Report in KA, VI.E.15.179 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.30
29. Wagner, Plane etc. p.43
Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.147
Lieutenant colonel Von Röhl isn't very specific either: he says it came on a height in front of Saint Amand. Cf. Report in KA, VI.E.15.179 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.30
- ³⁰ According to Von Damitz, the battery came in action between 5 and 7 p.m. near Saint-Amand-la-Haye. In: Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.147, 191
31. Lieutenant colonel Von Röhl. Cf. Report in KA, VI.E.15.179 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.30
Wagner, Plane etc. p.43
Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.147
Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.77
Siborne, W. History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.203
32. Gourgaud. Campagne de dix huit cent quinze etc. p.49
Houssaye, H. 1815.Waterloo p.174
- 33.Gourgaud. La campagne de dix huit cent quinze etc. p.49
Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.82
According to captain Francois the French attacked the village five times; during the sixth attack the remains of the 30th regiment of the line (about 200 men) led the way, followed by the 96th regiment of the line.
Though these troops were able to occupy the edges of the village, the 30th regiment went back to its assembly point near the artillery of the 4th corps. Cf. Francois. Journal du capitaine Francois p.880-881

34. Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.162
Charras. Histoire de la campagne de 1815 etc. Vol.I p.164

35.Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.81
General Petit. In: The English Historical Review. Vol. XVIII.1905. p.323
De Mauduit claims the regiments were sent there as to replace the 1st battalion of the 50th regiment (division Hulot) which was sent to the right wing to support Exelmans.

36.Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France etc. p.96
Gourgaud. Campagne de dix huit cent quinze etc. p.50
According to lieutenant Martin of the 45th regiment of the line (division Marcognet) his division arrived at the flank of the Prussian army at 5 or 6 p.m. Cf. Martin, J.F. Souvenirs d'un ex officier p.276

37.Petiet, A. Souvenirs militaires etc. p.196

38.Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France etc. p.96
Petiet, A. Souvenirs militaires etc. p.197-198
Erroneously, Houssaye mentions St.Amand-la-Haye. In: 1815.Waterloo p.175
Napoleon says the units of the division “avaient en conséquence abandonné l’extrémité du village et avaient pris position au bois pour couvrir Fleurus”. It remains unclear which wood this may have been. In: Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France etc. p.96

39. Lefol, M. Souvenirs sur le retour de l'empereur etc. p.63
Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours de la grande armée Vol.II p.65
In the actions for Saint Amand general Lefol was almost taken prisoner as his horse had fallen; yet he was saved by his aide camp and nephew Ch.Lefol, as well as by a company of the 64th regiment of line infantry. The 64th regiment had also lost its colonel, Dubalen. In: Lefol, M. Souvenirs sur le retour de l'empereur etc. p.63

⁴⁰ Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.72

41. Napoleon claims it was the aide de camp Dejean who reported back to him about the identity of the column to the left rear of the army. In: Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire etc. p.97
Cf. Gourgaud. La campagne de dix huit cent quinze etc. p.50
Grouchy. In: Relation succincte etc. p.16
Yet, Dejean himself says “je fus chargé par l’empereur de voir ce qui se passait á la gauche, d’abord au corps du général Vandamme, et ensuite à l’extrême gauche des troupes agissant sur ce point”
Here, Dejean spoke with general Subervie; at the same time he denies ever having been ordered to reconnoitre the mysterious column and link up with it in case it would be a French

one.

Cf. his letter to the duke of Elchingen of 1839. In: Duc d'Elchingen. Documents inédits p.70

42. Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.80

Colonel Petit (1st regiment grenadiers). In: The English Historical Review.

Vol.XVIII.1903.p.323

Captain Prax (3rd regiment chasseurs) In: d'Avout, L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Le carnet de la Sabretache. 1905 p.120

According to Drouot 8 battalions of chasseurs plus a large part of the artillery reserve if the guard were sent to the left wing to support Ney [!], but they soon returned back to the centre where they came from as support was no longer needed. Cf. Drouot in his speech for the Chambre des pairs, 23rd June 1815. In: Additional particulars etc. Vol.II p.110

According to Biot (aide de camp of general Pajol) the division of Subervie was absent from the very beginning of the battle. In: Campagnes et garnisons etc. p.240

I do not exclude the possibility that Subervie was sent to the flank much earlier during the battle as by 6 p.m.

Houssaye, by the way, only mentions the brigade of Colbert. In: 1815.Waterloo p.177

The division of Subervie kept its position at the extreme French left flank during the night.

43. Aerts also sees there are two versions about this phase of the battle, that is the one of those who claim that these troops were detached *before* the appearance of the 1st French corps. In his view, these would be colonel Duuring (commander of the 1st regiment of chasseurs), captain Prax (3rd regiment of chasseurs) and H.de Mauduit.

(sergeant in the 1st regiment of grenadiers) and colonel Charras.

In Aerts' view, according to Napoleon, Gourgaud, Christiani (commander of the 2nd regiment of grenadiers) and Petit (commander of the 1st regiment of grenadiers) the emperor would have done so *after* the appearance of the 1st corps.

Cf. Aerts, W. Etudes etc. p.388

Accounts of Duuring, Prax and Christiani in: d'Avout, A. L'infanterie de la garde à Waterloo. In: Carnet de la Sabretache. 1905

Petit. General Petit's account of the Waterloo campaign. In: The English Historical Review. Vol.XVIII.1905 p.323

Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France etc. p.96-97

Gourgaud. Campagne de dix huit cent quinze etc. p.50

However, while I believe that Prax belongs to the second category, Duuring and Napoleon are not explicit about the chain of events in this respect.

Napoleon wants to suggest as if the *whole* Imperial Guard was already committed into a manoeuvre towards Ligny, after which Vandamme's news came in and that the Imperial Guard was accordingly halted somewhere halfway as long as the outcome of the reconnaissance of the mysterious column on the horizon was not known.

Apart from the fact that other witnesses give another picture as far as the timing is concerned, Napoleon leaves out the important fact that the Imperial guard was committed in phases and in different places and so that there could never have been a halt of the whole guard marching towards Ligny.

Gourgaud does the same, but yet writes about Napoleon's reaction to the presence of the column on the horizon as that he "ordonna diverses dispositions pour recevoir cette colonne." What he actually means here are the units of the Imperial guard (plus Subervie) which were detached to the extreme left flank.

There is also no such thing as a halt, as mentioned by for instance Christiani, Duuring and Petit.

In his version of the events of the battle of Ligny in general, which is most incoherent, De Mauduit puts the march of the detachment towards the extreme left flank at 4 p.m., as well as for the march of the 3rd and 4th regiment of grenadiers towards Ligny - so all *before* Vandamme's information about the mysterious column came in. Yet, it is in the same account that he writes that Vandamme asked for "the reserve" as he felt he needed support for himself and in order to halt the presumed enemy's column. So, De Mauduit mixes events up in their sequence.

Other than that De Mauduit recognizes Vandamme needed these reinforcements not only as a reserve, but also as a force so as to be able maintain his positions (which was the case *after* the appearance the d'Erlon).

He also suggests as if the Young Guard had already been committed in the fighting for Saint-Amand (la Haye) before the Chasseurs of the Imperial Guard joined in on their left. It is also DeMauduit who writes that the Young Guard "combattit, corps à corps, avec les prussiens sous la protection de la division de chasseurs." As the Young Guard did suffer casualties, I believe this division actually was involved in the fighting, contrary to the chasseurs, who were further to their left and in observation of the supposed enemy's column only as a protection indeed for a possible intervention from that side. As far as the halt of the 1st regiment of grenadiers is concerned - as claimed by De Mauduit - I would like to oppose those of the other members of the Imperial guard who do not mention such a halt (Petit, Duuring, Christiani).

Cf. Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.67-68,80-83

Martinien, E. Tableaux etc.

Charras clearly states that the units involved were committed into action before the 1st corps appeared at the horizon. In: Histoire de la campagne de 1815 etc. Vol.I p.168

⁴⁴ Report of major general Von Krafft. In: KA, VI.E.15.4 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI,nr.VII.5.p.15

Von Krafft says he first threw the French as far back as the other side of the village, but at the same time confirms the fact that after that the fighting got into a stalemate: as he threw back the French, he was thrown back too several times.

⁴⁵ Cf. Captain Von Borcke, 3rd battalion 1st Elbe Landwehr infantry regiment. In: Kriegerleben etc. p.308-309

46. Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.153

Siborne, W. History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.205

Both musketeer battalions of the regiment must have advanced into the village a second time (after their retreat due to the rumour around the church) but whether this was around the churchyard is not clear. Cf. Report of lieutenant colonel Von Seydlitz (2nd regiment of WestPrussian infantry nr.7). In: KA,VI.E.7.II.127 in GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.80

⁴⁷ Wagner, Plane etc. p.44

48. Report of captain Von Blomberg (1st battalion 3rd regiment of Westphalian landwehr). In: KA,VI.E.7.II.137 in GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.96-97

Wagner, Plane etc. p.44

Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.154

⁴⁹ Report of captain Von Fischer (3rd battalion 3rd regiment of Westphalian Landwehr). In: KA,VI.E.7.II.137 in GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.103

Von Fischer even claims he was able to hold a position in front of the village, in square.

⁵⁰ Hofschröder, P. 1815. The Waterloo campaign. Wellington etc. p. 313

Probably he bases these details on the work of R.von Leszczynski.

⁵¹ According to Hofschröder it was 7 p.m. Cf. Hofschröder, P. 1815. The Waterloo campaign. Wellington etc. p. 313

⁵² Report of colonel Von Langen. In: KA, VI.E.15.117. In: GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.23

⁵³ Report of lieutenant colonel Von Seydlitz (2nd regiment of WestPrussian infantry nr.7).

In: KA,VI.E.7.II.127 in GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.80

Wagner, Plane etc. p.44

⁵⁴ Report of captain Von Blomberg (1st battalion of the 3rd regiment of Westphalian

Landwehr). In: KA, VI.E.7.II.137 in GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.98

Report of captain Von Fischer (3rd battalion of the 3rd regiment of Westphalian Landwehr).

In: KA, VI.E.7.II.143 in GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.103

⁵⁵ Wagner, Plane etc. p.45

⁵⁶ According to Hofschröder, this part was the right bank of the Ligne, but from thoroughly reading the description done by Von Busse, this is not possible. The Prussians must actually have penetrated as far as the exits on the French side of the village. Cf. Hofschroer, P.

1815.The Waterloo campaign. Wellington etc. p.315

Busse, Von Geschichte des Königlich Preussischen 23.Infanterie Regiments p.166-172

⁵⁷ Busse, Von Geschichte des Königlich Preussischen 23.Infanterie Regiments p.166-172
Wagner, Plane etc. p.45

⁵⁸ Aerts, W. Etudes relatives etc. p.390

According to Hofschröer, the Prussians didn't cross the Ligne. Cf. Hofschröer, P. 1815. The Waterloo campaign. Wellington etc. p.315

⁵⁹ Hofschröer, P. 1815. The Waterloo campaign. Wellington etc. p. 313 Probably he bases these details on the work of R.von Leszczynski.

⁶⁰ Cf. Report of Von Reckow. In: Schreiber, H. Geschichte des Infanterie-Regiments Von Borcke (4.Pommerschen) nr.21 p.95

⁶¹ Report of major general Von Krafft. In: KA, VI.E.15.4 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI,nr.VII.5.p.16
Von Krafft believes it was then 8 p.m.
Cf. Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.164