

The Prussian retreat.

The moment the Prussian centre was broken by Napoleon, and the French reserve poured into it in rear of Ligny, the 1st and 2nd battalion of the 9th regiment (brigade Von Krafft), as well as the 1st and 2nd battalion of the 21st regiment (brigade Langen), resisted the French cavalry here. All these battalions had been in Ligny before.

All battalions of Von Krafft which had been at Ligny (1st-3rd battalion of the 1st regiment Elbe and the 1st and 2nd battalion of the 9th regiment) now fell back on the Namur-road, leaving Brye at their left flank.

Both these battalions of the 9th regiment, apparently plus the 3rd battalion which must have come from Brye, took up positions behind a hollow road which connected Brye and Sombreffe. Von Grolmann had the 2nd battalion 1st Westphalian Landwehr join them.

As the 9th Colberg regiment took up a position in rear of the road, it found a half 12p. battery (probably nr.6) which had got stuck in the field. Major Von Schmidt had the regiment advance again to cover the retreat of the guns and then pulled back his men behind the road, in which he left a strong line of skirmishers. The regiment kept this position till early next morning, when Von Jagow (further to his right) left.¹

While coming from Sombreffe, the brigade Henckel had gone back to a position in rear of Ligny the moment Napoleon broke through the Prussian centre at Ligny.

The moment the French cavalry approached, the battalions formed squares and after that moved back towards the Namur-road.² One battalion of the 19th regiment under the command of colonel Schutter went back through Sombreffe and managed to save a Prussian battery.³

Whether this was the 2nd battalion is not certain. As has been described, it was this battalion which erroneously had gone back from Ligny towards Sombreffe in stead of the Bois du Loup the moment the brigade was taken back from Ligny. At Sombreffe it rested for about a quarter of an hour. From there, it moved back towards Gembloux, where it got at midnight. From there it moved by dawn to the north, in which march it rejoined its brigade.

Of the 19th regiment, the 9th company, led by captain Von Busse, had remained at Ligny until the very last moment. For that reason it fell back independent from its brigade, which it rejoined the next day.

From the Namur road, the brigade fell back upon Tilly, where it spent the night.⁴

In general, Von Jagow's units, having gone back towards a position in rear of Ligny, now moved towards Brye and occupied this village.⁵ Near Brye, both musketer battalions of the 7th regiment of infantry (West-Prussian nr.2) would have resisted some French cavalry.⁶

In conjunction with the 2nd battalion of the 1st regiment of Westphalian Landwehr infantry (brigade Von Steinmetz), both musketer battalions of the 29th regiment moved back towards Brye.

While doing so, however, the 7th and 8th company got separated from their battalion and now the remaining companies (1st – 6th) took up a rearguard position east of Brye in rear of the hollow road which led from Saint Amand to Sombreffe, having their outposts led by captain Von Bismarck.

The 7th and 8th companies met the small detachment of skirmishers of the 3rd battalion of the

29th regiment led by lieutenant Von Quistorp and with them fell back towards Tilly. Of this 3rd battalion, both the 9th and 10th companies, now led by lieutenant Panten after the fall of captain Bellmer, came out of Ligny and during their retreat Panten formed a small square which was charged in vain by cuirassiers. The moment Panten reached Brye, he was ordered to fall back further and Panten eventually took up his bivouac between Tilly and Mellery. The other two companies, plus the sharpshooters, of the 3rd battalion, fell back to Brye unmolested. From here they went back to Gembloux.⁷

The battalions of Langen which escaped from Ligny (the 1st and the 2nd battalion 21st regiment, the 1st battalion 23rd regiment and the 2nd battalion 3rd regiment Elbe Landwehr) headed for the Namur-road.

The 1st battalion of the 23rd regiment had joined the right flank of some battalions of Von Krafft which now fell back towards Brye and from there further north. Near the outer gardens of Brye, however, the battalion was partly run over by a horse battery; the other part just managed to save itself by jumping into a nearby garden.⁸

Colonel Von Langen advanced with his 2nd battalion of the 23rd regiment, skirmishers in front, from its position near the mill of Bussy in order to support the cavalry, but soon it was surrounded by the retreating Prussian cavalry. Holding steady, it prepared to receive the pursuing cuirassiers. The skirmishers of the battalion had already been cut off, yet the French pulled back briefly to reform. The battalion marched on, only to be charged by a regiment of chasseurs à cheval, supported by more columns of French infantry coming out of Ligny itself. Nonetheless, the battalion held firm as cavalry of the 1st corps approached and the chasseurs à cheval drew back; the Prussians were able to complete this part of their withdrawal unmolested. Von Langen himself lost his horse as it got wounded; he fell and was overridden by a gun and seriously wounded.⁹

At the Prussian right wing, it was general Von Jürgass who assembled his cavalry for covering the retreat of the infantry coming from Wagnelée and St.Amand-la-Haye. The 1st battalion of the 14th regiment, which had been fighting at Le Hameau, now worked its way back towards the Namur-road; in doing so, the 1st battalion resisted two French cavalry charges.

The same did the units of Von Brause which had been fighting at St.Amand-la-Haye. Of the 2nd and fusilier battalion of the 14th regiment which pulled out of St.Amand-la-Haye, it was the 1st battalion which got back through a hollow road in column, when suddenly on both banks numerous French skirmishers appeared. Immediately, major Von Löwenfeld ordered the battalion to split up, by wheeling the 1st and the 2nd company to the right and the 3rd and 4th company to the left. Then, from the bottom of the road, both masses ascended the bank and drove the enemy off.¹⁰

The 2nd and the 3rd battalion of the 2nd regiment Elbe Landwehr had been sent forward, as well as a battery, to support the cavalry of Von der Marwitz.¹¹

The remaining battalions of the brigade, the 1st and the 2nd battalion of the 22nd regiment, led by major Sack, didn't take any part in the battle and had kept their position near Les Trois Burettes to cover the extreme right flank. Von Brause had the intention to use them as well, just when the general retreat started. During the retreat they had some success driving back some

French cavalry (probably those of Jacquinot) and while proceeding over the Roman road, 100 men of the regiment also managed to disengage some guns which had got stuck in a muddy field.¹²

The brigade of Von Tippelskirch came from its position in rear of Wagnelée; right at the time it had received new ammunition, it was ordered to fall back and now did so over the old Roman road and the adjoining fields towards Marbisoux and from there to Tilly. During the retreat, the 1st battalion of the 2nd regiment of infantry (Pommeranian nr.1) must have been in square for some time, as it was pursued by some French cavalry (probably those of Jacquinot).¹³

The brigade of Pirch II, still in the vicinity of Brye, was now instructed to receive the units which came streaming down from Ligny.¹⁴ The battery no.6 (12p.), the battery no.34 (6p.) and the 1st regiment Westphalian Landwehrcavalry under the command of major Wülffen did the same.¹⁵

It was at Brye that these units formed an important rearguard to cover the retreat of many other units. Von Grolmann had ordered Pirch II to do so there.¹⁶ Soon after, the command over this rearguard was taken over by the senior major general Von Jagow.

Von Steinmetz had left the battle with his brigade before and had then taken up a position on the Namur road, north east of Brye, having its outer enclosures on his right and a marshy area in his left (facing Sombreffe).¹⁷ Now he got the instruction to form squares on the south side of the Namur-road west of Sombreffe in order to be able to resist the French cavalry.¹⁸

The 2nd battalion of the 1st regiment Westphalian Landwehr, led by captain Von Gillhausen, which had been in reserve in rear of Brye now moved up in a square and saw a body of Prussian infantry which was pursued by French cuirassiers. Von Gillhausen shouted to lie down and this is what the men of this unit did; immediately after the cavalry had come near enough, he gave a few volleys which drove them off.

Then the battalion slowly went back to take up a position further to the left. It was there that the battalion pushed back another three charges of cuirassiers and cavalry of the imperial guard.¹⁹

Some time after, a part of the 6th regiment of infantry (West-Prussian infantry nr.1) (brigade Pirch II) under lieutenant Von Hülsen would have joined the square.²⁰

The battalion of captain Von Gillhausen held a position – skirmishers in front- to the north east of Brye, near the Namur road, until about midnight when it left the battlefield in conjunction with the rearguard of Von Jagow.²¹

Of the 24th regiment, both musketeer battalions formed an open square – facing three sides- which had its open side leaning upon a marshy field, where the stream of Potriaux had its source. The square managed to fire twice with good effect, thereby changing the direction of French cavalry passing by.²²

Of the fusilier battalion of the same regiment, the moment the French broke through the Prussian centre, all four companies were probably still in action around Saint Amand-la-Haye. The 9th and the 10th companies joined the forces at Brye which were placed there to receive the retreating Prussian units. Both other companies - the 11th and the 12th - however, fell back and only joined the remaining units of the regiment at Bierges.²³

The 1st and 3rd battalion of the 1st regiment of Westphalian Landwehr-infantry (Von Krafft), under colonel Von Hofmann, as well as two guns, had taken up a position between Brye and Sombreffe; at 11.30 p.m they went back towards Tilly.²⁴

Immediately after the evacuation of St.Amand-la-Haye masses of French skirmishers occupied the village and while they emerged here, they were attacked by the 4th squadron of the 3rd regiment of hussars (Brandenburg nr.2) under lieutenant general Jürgass. Soon after this cavalry was overwhelmed by even more skirmishers and had to go back. Von Jürgass was wounded and Von Sohr took over his command.²⁵

As Von der Marwitz approached the Namur-road, he was reinforced by two battalions and a battery. He was from far pursued by the cavalry of Jacquinot which was advancing on the old Roman road, leaning on Wagnelée on its right flank.²⁶ It was near Wagnelée that both parties met and that a bombardment started which lasted for about three quarters of an hour.²⁷ Durutte followed further back. Until then, Durutte had moved with great caution because of any possible danger coming from Quatre Bras, but having received reassuring news from that direction, he set off to Wagnelée.²⁸

Jacquinot also menaced the other cavalry which stood to the right of Wagnelée, the 2nd regiment of Silesian uhlans (to the right) and the 11th regiment of hussars (to the left). Both regiments faced to the right and the uhlans drove back the first French squadrons, but soon they were reinforced by Jacquinot's main body (in three lines) and now the Prussian regiments were about to be turned in their right flank and fell back.

In doing so, four platoons of the uhlans and the hussars covered as flankers their regiments by approaching the enemy up to about 100 paces. As a result the French units also extended their flankers. However, by doing so the Prussian flankers had gained enough time for both regiments to pull back through a narrow defile in the area north of Wagnelée.²⁹ It was also here that the horse battery nr.7 fired some rounds and then fell back as well, covered by the 1st regiment of Silesian hussars.³⁰ By that time the Prussian infantry was also falling back to the rear.

In the same area, the regiment of Königin Dragoons nr.1 (Von Thümen) was covering the infantry. In doing so, the regiment was at some point threatened by two regiments of French cavalry but these were driven off; in this charge the 4th squadron distinguished itself. Then, the regiment also pulled back over the Roman road.³¹

Jürgass pulled back regiments over this road as far as Marbais, where he took up a temporary position.³²

By now, it was almost getting dark and Durutte occupied Wagnelée with two companies of voltigeurs and one company of grenadiers of the 85th regiment of the line under the command of colonel Chapuis. These units drove away the Prussian rearguard which consisted of light infantry.³³ At that moment, the Prussian army was in full retreat.³⁴

After emerging from Ligny, the French infantry of the 4th corps would have turned to the right and pushed back the brigades of Von Steinmetz, Von Henckel and Von Stülpnagel towards Sombreffe.

The moment the French attacked Ligny, Von Stülpnagel had detached colonel Von Rohr with the 1st battalion of the 6th regiment of Kurmark landwehr infantry (until then west of Sombreffe) to support the skirmishers of the 3rd battalion of the 31st regiment, who were then still holding the extreme southeast corner of the village. However, the battalion arrived minutes too late and fell back on Sombreffe, thereby avoiding the French cavalry (probably those of Maurin). The skirmishers of the 3rd battalion of the 31st regiment were now received by the eight platoons of 2nd battalion of the same regiment, which had, until then in position south of Sombreffe, been moved out further to the right. The 2nd battalion of the 6th regiment of

Kurmark Landwehr infantry (until then west of Sombreffe) now also fell back on this village as did the musketeer battalions of the 5th regiment of Kurmark Landwehr infantry.

The cavalry of Maurin had been able to reach the brigade of Von Stülpnagel as Hulot had opened her the way to do so by taking the mill of Potriaux and its outbuildings. That was at the same moment as French infantry of the 4th corps advanced from Ligny towards Sombreffe.

The French dragoons now drove the squadrons (west of Sombreffe) of the 12th brigade into the village but were here received by the fire of two companies of the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 5th regiment of Kurmark Landwehr infantry. Meanwhile, another part of the French cavalry had penetrated into the village. Just before, the 1st and 2nd squadron of the 6th regiment Kurmark Landwehrcavalry under major Von Dorville (attached to the brigade of Von Luck), after covering the flank of the 12th brigade, were also thrown back into Sombreffe.³⁵

Now, Dorville had his rearward platoon turn and charge the French, thereby driving them back out of Sombreffe. During their retreat the French also got the fire of the two companies of the 5th regiment of Kurmark Landwehr infantry.³⁶

Two pieces of the foot battery no.12 (brigade Von Langen), which was in position south of Sombreffe, east of the road Ligny – Sombreffe, were taken by the French cavalry.³⁷

By now, Von Stülpnagel took precautions to occupy Sombreffe to form a rearguard. Von Stülpnagel concentrated his battalions in and near Sombreffe as soon as the enemy refrained from attacking any further. Sentries of the 31st regiment, formed by the platoons of skirmishers, were established in the gardens at the south and west edge of the village.³⁸

It was in this position south of Sombreffe and in the darkness that the 1st and 2nd battalion of the 30th regiment (under major Von Ditfurth of the brigade of Von Borcke) - both having been driven out of Potriaux before (like the rest of the brigade) - were ordered to attack the French on the heights. Captain Von Steinäcker, commander of the skirmishers of the 3rd battalion of the 8th regiment, offered to lead the battalions through the unfamiliar terrain in the growing darkness. The columns climbed over a muddy ditch under heavy musketry fire and had to reform after passing this obstacle. The 1st battalion continued its advance under fire from French skirmishers. The 2nd battalion followed up 100 paces to its rear, and to the left of the 1st battalion, marching with its left against another ditch, to cover it from any enemy cavalry charges. The skirmishers of the 2nd battalion under captain Von Veltheim were on the right, seeking to establish contact with the 31st regiment of the 12th brigade, which was now moving up in support.

The 1st battalion drove the French skirmishing line back on its supports but a volley from these brought the battalion to a brief halt. Other French skirmishers, hardly visible in the growing darkness, kept popping up and firing into the rear of the battalion, which caused unease. A troop of dragoons of Maurin then attacked the rear of the column. There was no time to form square but the 8th platoon faced about and drove them off. The advance was resumed and the first ridge was reached without further problems. At the second it was different; the French had artillery and infantry drawn up to receive the Prussians. The 2nd battalion moved out to the left then wheeled to the right and endeavoured to gain the flank of the French position, but was counter-charged by French cavalry, and forced them to form square. This cavalry was driven off. Next, the French moved forward with both infantry, a regiment of cuirassiers and dragoons against the 1st battalion. This charge was also thrown back. However, as the regiment was in

danger of becoming cut off, it was ordered to fall back on the brigade.³⁹

The French cavalry was being supported by a detachment of about a hundred men of the 30th regiment of the line (division of Pécheux) under captain Francois and lieutenant Dodet. Having suffered some losses by the strong Prussian skirmish-fire the detachment was finally taken back to her regiment at 11 p.m., probably by Grouchy himself.⁴⁰

During another fruitless charge general Maurin was seriously wounded and Vallin now took the command of the cavalry of the 4th army-corps.⁴¹

The units of Von Luck, Von Borcke, Von Kemphen and Von Lottum had by now been assembled near Point du Jour.⁴² The 3rd army-corps had posted a rearguard at Sombreffe, but there is no complete information available about its composition.⁴³

After the fall of Ligny and the resulting situation, Gneisenau decided to retreat to Tilly, a small village at about 3.5 kilometers north of Brye.⁴⁴ As will be seen, it were the 1st and the 2nd corps which went there.

As a lot of units of brigades had been engaged at different places during the battle, the retreat wasn't carried out by brigades. Of these units, often just groups of men rallied around an officer and went back towards Tilly. It was there or later that units were reformed.

The brigade of Von Steinmetz, except for two battalions, had a position southwest of Sombreffe and now went back through the fields towards Tilly. The two battalions, coming from the right wing near St.Amand-la-Haye, must have gone back to the Namur-road and then further towards Tilly.

Pirch II halted his brigade, the foot battery no.6 (12p.) and no.34 (6p) and the 1st regiment Westphalian Landwehrcavalry at Brye to form a rearguard (see above).

It was later that evening that the brigade of Pirch II left Brye and went northwest to Marbais. From there it marched to Haute-Heuval, about one kilometer north of Mellery.⁴⁵

Von Henckel coming from Sombreffe, must have followed about the same track as Von Steinmetz did.⁴⁶

The cavalry of Von Röder played an important role in covering the retreat of the Prussian centre after the fall of Ligny. However, of this cavalry virtually nothing about its retreat towards Tilly is known.

Of the artillery of the 1st corps a lot of units fell back towards the heights in rear of Wagnelée.⁴⁷ 12p. battery no.2 of the reserve artillery had gone to the rear from its position in rear of St.Amand to recover and replenish its ammunition; it must have been in the early evening that it was ready to return to the frontline when it got the instruction to join the other artillery for the retreat to Tilly. During the battle, one gun and one houwitser had got out of order.⁴⁸

Immediately after the storming of Ligny by the French, the four guns led by 2nd lieutenant Betcke of the 12p. foot battery no.6 (captain Reuter) went to the rear to another position to reopen fire, but very soon after Betcke was ordered to stop firing and to join the other half of the battery, which it did.

This other half (only three guns) had gone back before, had recovered and now advanced just at the moment the general retreat had started. For some time it faced the enemy, being instructed to do so by general Pirch II and captain Decker of the general staff, but then these guns also retreated as soon as dusk closed in.⁴⁹

6p.battery no.1 of the reserve artillery also managed to make a safe escape , even though the enemy was near.⁵⁰ The same was true for the horse battery no.2 (brigade Von Treskow).⁵¹

In rear of St.Amand the horse battery no.10 (led by captain Schaeffer) was operating in two half batteries but now these were united as Schaeffer had got the instruction of major Von Rentzel to receive other units of the artillery. In doing so it moved forward but was unable to do a lot due to the general retreat, to which it joined in.⁵²

While being pursued from afar by Jacquinot, Von der Marwitz retreated slowly to the Namur-road and from there on to Tilly.

The brigade Von Tippelskirch came from a position in rear of Wagnelée, over the old Roman road to Marbais and from there further north upon Tilly.⁵³ This retreat had been possible by the resistance of the 1st and 2nd battalion of the 22nd regiment under major Sack, posted at Les Trois Burettes. These battalions had been an ultimate reserve for the brigade, which came from St.Amand-la-Haye and St.Amand-le-Hameau to the Namur-road.

It is not known which tracks this brigade has followed to reach the area between Tilly, Gentinnes and Mellery.

At St.Amand-la-Haye, the retreat of the units of Von Krafft was covered by the 3rd battalion of the 26th regiment: it had taken a central position in front of the village and gradually pulled back to the centre of it; in doing so it made a short dash in cooperation with a battalion of the 1st corps. As soon as these men had expended all of their ammunition, they fell back company-wise in good order to the heights of Brye. It was there that they were taken up by the 1st battalion of the same 26th regiment. It was this battalion which covered by its halts in square the retreat beyond Brye. The battalions of the 26th regiment in their turn were received on the road which led from Brye to Sombreffe by two battalions of the 9th regiment of Kolberg infantry (Von Krafft).⁵⁴

The fusilier battalion of the 23rd regiment (brigade Von Langen) fell back towards Les Trois Burettes, and from there to Tilly.⁵⁵

The cavalry of Von Jürgass covered the retreat to the right of the infantry coming from Wagnelée and St.Amand-la-Haye.

General Von Röhl, commander of the artillery after general Von Holzendorf had got wounded, withdrew the artillery when the battle was about to come to an end; the Prussian counter-attack in rear of Ligny afforded him some time to do so, even though some units were faced with French cavalry. Some guns, as a result, had to be left in French hands (see below).⁵⁶

The situation in the French army after the battle.

The battle ended around 9 p.m. but the skirmishing must have continued at least till about 9.30 p.m.⁵⁷

The corps of Vandamme, the division of Girard and the Young Guard now had emerged from Wagnelée, St.Amand-le-Hameau, St.Amand-la-Haye and St.Amand and took up positions north

of Saint Amand and St.Amand-la-Haye.⁵⁸

In this position [⁵⁹] of the 3rd corps the brigade of Corsin of the division Lefol must have kept a position in and around the churchyard of St.Amand.⁶⁰ Vandamme himself, as well as Lefol, had their headquarters at Saint Amand.⁶¹

The corps of Gérard took up a position on the other side of Ligny, with the division of Hulot probably facing Sombreffe.⁶² Gérard himself was at Ligny.⁶³

The 2nd, 3rd and 4th regiment of grenadiers were northwest of Ligny, towards Brye, while the 1st regiments of grenadiers and chasseurs were further to their right, towards Sombreffe.

The 2nd, 3rd and 4th regiment of chasseurs and part of the artillery of the guard were in and near Fleurus that night.⁶⁴

The heavy cavalry of the guard was also north of Ligny, in rear of the 6th corps.⁶⁵

Around 7.30 p.m the 6th corps of Lobau emerged from Fleurus on the road which leads to Point du Jour. The corps advanced and turned to the left opposite Ligny. By the time it passed through this village it must have been around 9.30 p.m.⁶⁶

It took up a position just in rear of it, towards Sombreffe, not far in front of the 1st regiments of grenadiers and chasseurs which were to the right-rear of the village of Ligny.⁶⁷ The cuirassiers of Milhaud were in a position to the right of Ligny, between that village and Sombreffe.⁶⁸

Of Pajol's corps, the division of Subervie must have spent the night at the extreme left flank of the army, but further details are missing. Of the other division (Soult), Pajol kept three squadrons in front towards Tongrinnes as outposts, while having the others bivouacing in Tongerenelle, Boignée and Balâtre.⁶⁹ Exelmans' corps was facing Potriaux, near the main road leading to Fleurus.⁷⁰

Napoleon must have conducted the battle from the height of the mill of Naveau.⁷¹ Only when the imperial guard advanced towards Ligny for the decisive attack, he advanced as far as Ligny.⁷²

What he did in the meantime is not known, but the emperor returned to Fleurus at 11 p.m.⁷³

Having returned at Fleurus he installed himself in the chateau de la Paix, at about 400 meters northwest of the mill of Naveau.⁷⁴

On the evening of the 16th the 2nd, 3rd and 4th regiment chasseurs were taken back from the battlefield to Fleurus (⁷⁵); it is not known which battalion was on duty for the protection of the imperial headquarters that night.

The imperial staff had her headquarters in the Chateau de Zualart, about 200 meters south of the Chateau de la Paix.⁷⁶

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1. Report of major general Von Krafft. In: KA, VI.E.15.4 in GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.18
Harkort, F. Die Zeiten des ersten Westphalischen Landwehrregiments p.52
Von Bagensky – Geschichte de 9ten Infanterie-Regiment p.238

² Henckel von Donnersmarck, count Erinnerungen etc. p.356
Diary of the 4th regiment of Westphalian Landwehr. In: Henckel von Donnersmarck, count
Erinnerungen etc. p.657
Of the 19th regiment, these were the 1st battalion and the majority of the fusilier battalion.

3.Von Damitz. Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.173
It doesn't become clear which battery this was.

⁴ Cf. Leszczynski, R.von – 50 Jahr Geschichte des Königlich Preussischen 2.Posenschen
Infanterie-Regiments nr.19 p.165-167
At least the 4th regiment of Landwehr infantry established a bivouac near Tilly around 11 p.m
Henckel von Donnersmarck, graf , Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben p.657

5. Cf. report of Von Zieten, dated 8 july 1815 in: Reiche, L.von Memoiren etc. p.418
Tagebuch des Königlich Preussischen I.Armeekorps. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von Die Schlacht
bei Ligny. P.23 Tagebuch des Königlich Preussischen I.Armeekorps. In: Pflugk Harttung,
J.von Die Schlacht bei Ligny. P.22
Die Geschichte des 28.Regiments. In: Special ABN, nr.65 p.24

⁶ Report of lieutenant colonel Von Seydlitz (1st and 2nd battalion 2nd regiment of
WestPrussian infantry nr.7).In: KA,VI.E.7.II.127 in GSA,VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.81

⁷ Wellmann, R. Geschichte etc. p.107-111

⁸ Busse, Von Geschichte des königlich Preussischen 23.Infanterie Regiments p. 172. The
1st battalion was rejoined only hours later, at daybreak.

⁹ Wagner, Plane etc. p.51
Busse, Von Geschichte des königlich Preussischen 23.Infanterie Regiments p. 175-176
Report of colonel Von Langen. In: KA, VI.E.15.117. In: GSA,VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.24-25
Unable to find their battalion due to the darkness, the skirmishers of the battalion attached
themselves to Von Jagow, but joined their battalion later at Mellery.

¹⁰ Geschichte des 3.Pommerschen Infanterie Regiments nr.14 p.56

11.Von Damitz. Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.176
Siborne says it was the 3rd battalion of the 22nd regiment but this battalion had been fighting
at Saint Amand La Haye. In: History of the war etc. Vol.I p.235

12. Von Damitz. Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.178
Geschichte des 1.Oberschlesischen Infanterie-Regiments Nr.22 p.114-115

13. Report of major general Von Tippelskirch. In: KA. VI.E.15.12 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI
nr.VII.5.p.13
Mach, A.von Geschichte des Königlich Preussischen etc.p.332

¹⁴ 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

15. Harkort, F. Die Zeiten des ersten Westphalischen Landwehrregiments p.51
Wickede, J.von – Ein Deutsches Reiterleben p.298
Wagner, Plane etc. p.53
Von Damitz. Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.177
The 1st regiment Westphalian Landwehrcavalry was attached to the 2nd brigade. The foot
battery no.34 belonged to the brigade of Von Brause.
The 12p.battery no.6 had gone back in rear of Bussy to recover and to replenish its
ammunition. Just at the moment it was about to retake its actions, the French had broken
through the centre and now its commander, captain Reuter, gave his battery a position near
Les Trois Burettes. Reuter als mentions the presence here of the brigade of Pirch II a 6p.
battery (this must have been the 6p.battery no.34) and half a horse battery. Cf. Reuter, E.von
Erinnerungen etc. p.278

16. Von Damitz. Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.177
Die Geschichte des 28.Regiments. In: Special ABN, nr.65 p.24
However, Von Conrady claims the 1st regiment of Westprussian infantry nr.6 collected in rear
of Wagnelée towards the Roman road late that evening and that it marched from there to
Marbais. Cf. Conrady, E.von Geschichte des Königlich etc.p.248

¹⁷ 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.23

¹⁸ 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.23

¹⁹ Wagner, Plane etc. p.51 Harkort, F. Die Zeiten des ersten Westphalischen
Landwehrregiments p.51-52
Report of major general Von Steinmetz. In: KA, VI.E.7.I.26 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI
nr.VII.5.p.62
Report of captain Von Gillhausen. In: KA, VI.E.7.I.40 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.67

²⁰ Harkort, F. Die Zeiten des ersten Westphalischen Landwehrregiments p.52

²¹ Report of captain Von Gillhausen. In: KA, VI.E.7.I.40 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.68
Report of major general Von Steinmetz. In: KA, VI.E.7.I.26 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI
nr.VII.5.p.62

²² Cf. Zychlinski, F.von Geschichte etc. p.273

²³ Cf. Zychlinski, F.von Geschichte etc. p.274

²⁴ Harkort, F. Die Zeiten des ersten Westphalischen Landwehrregiments p.50-53

²⁵ Report of major general Von Wahlen Jürgas. In: Former KGB, VI.E.15.145 in GSA,
VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.28
Schöning, K.W. Geschichte etc. p.490

26.The chef d'escadron Dupuy of the 7th regiment of hussars (division of Jacquinet) is not very specific on his movements of the 16th June. After having followed the units of the 2nd corps, he claims his regiment succesfully skirmished with Hannoverian hussars and British dragoons. What he actually means here must be Prussian cavalry of Von der Marwitz. In: Souvenirs etc. p.287-294

²⁷ The regimental history of the 7th regiment of uhlan claims it had a successful encounter with some French dragoons, which were soon reinforced. However, the division of Jacquinet didn't contain any dragoons. Cf. Epner and Braun. Geschichte des Ulanen-Regiments etc. p.8-9

28.Chapuis blames Durutte for doing so. According to Chapuis it was only after about one hour and after an order "tellement impératif" that Durutte decided to move to Wagnelée. The delay of one hour would have been caused by looking for a local guide.
According to Chapuis, Durutte hesitated to interfere into the battle as he didn't dare to take the responsibility in absence of d'Erlon. Chapuis is supported in this idea by brigade-general Brue. In: Waterloo. Notice etc. p.28-29, 52-54, 62-63

²⁹ Reports of lieutenant colonel Von Schmiedeberg and major von Romberg, both of the 2nd regiment of Silesian uhlan. In: Dziengel, J.D.von Geschichte des Königlichen Zweiten Ulanen-Regiments p.386+388
Cf. Eck, Von Geschichte des 2.Westfälischen Husaren Regiments nr.11 p.145

³⁰ Wechmar, H.von Braune Husaren etc. p.61
Cf. Eck, Von Geschichte des 2.Westfälischen Husaren Regiments nr.11 p.145

³¹ Ravenstein, H. Historische Darstellung etc.p.122

³² Report of major general Von Wahlen Jürgas. In: KA, VI.E.15.145 in GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.26

In this position, some French cavalry would have shown on his right flank (probably Jacquinot's) which was driven away by the foot battery nr.10

33.General Brue (division of Durutte). In: Chapuis, captain. Waterloo.Notice etc. p.29

Durutte. In: Sentinelle de l'armée p.78

Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Königlich Preussischen 25ten Infanterie Regiments etc. p.31

34.Durutte claims he sent two battalions to Brye where they found a few Prussian stragglers. At Brye, however, there was a strong Prussian rearguard by that time. In: Sentinelle de l'armée p.78

³⁵ Report of Von Thielmann. In: KA, VI.E.22.1 in: GSA,VPH-HA, VI nr.VII.5.p.40

³⁶ Gottschalck, M. Geschichte etc. p.83

³⁷ Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.147

38. Gottschalck, M. Geschichte etc. p.83

Von Damitz. Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.175

³⁹ Hofschröer, P. 1815. The Waterloo campaign. Wellington etc. p.319 He bases this account on the work of Paulitzky & Woedtke, Geschichte des 4.Rheinischen Infanterie-Regiments nr.30 p.47-55

The facts are in a more general way confirmed by major A.von Dittfurth. In: Aus sturmbewegter Zeit. Briefe etc. p.193-194

Also see:

Anekdoten betreffend das 30.Infanterie-Regiment (4.Rheinisch). In: MWB 3.Jg. (1818). No.79 p.416-417

Wagner, Plane etc. p.53

Damitz, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.180-181

Siborne states there were two two charges of French cavalry. He also thinks units of Lobau went back for the 1st battalion under major Von Dittfurth. However, Lobau must have been further to the west. In: History of the war etc. Vol.I p.238

⁴⁰ Cf.Francois, captain. Souvenirs etc. p.881-882

41.Réfutations du livre Gourgaud etc. In: Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy, Vol.V p.115

42. Major Von Holleben (commander of the 3rd battalion of the 8th Leib-regiment, brigade Von Borcke). In: Aus den hinterlassenen Papiere etc. p.140

Cf. account of the administrator Krack (3rd battalion 1st regiment Kurmark Landwehrinfantry, cited by Von Bornstedt). In: Bornstedt, Von Das Gefecht bei Wavre an der Dyle am 18.und 19.Juni p.114-116

⁴³ At least the 2nd battalion of the 1st regiment of Kurmark Landwehr infantry must have formed part of it. Cf. Ein kleiner Beitrag zur Geschichte des Feldzuges vom Jahre 1815. In: MWB 3.Jg.1818.no.81 p.432-433

44.The fact that a lot of troops passed through the hamlet of Marbijoux (between Brye and Tilly) is confirmed by the local tradition. Cf. Piérart, Z.J. Le drame de Waterloo p.237

45. State of the movements of the 2nd brigade. In: GSA, VI HA, NL Gneisenau, Kt.19 p.11 Report of colonel Von Stack (commander ad interim 2nd brigade). In: KA, VI.E.7.I.80 in GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VII.5.p.66

⁴⁶ The 4th regiment of Westphalian Landwehr reached Tilly around 11 p.m. Cf. Diary. In: Henckel, count – Erinnerungen etc. p.p.657

⁴⁷ Report of lieutenant colonel Lehmann. In: KA, VI.E.7.II.199 In: GSA.VPH-HA, VI nr.VII nr.5 p.2

⁴⁸ Report of captain Siemon, dated 23rd June 1815. In: Kriegstagebuch, artillery of the 1st corps GSA, Rep.15a nr.82 p.4-5

⁴⁹ Reports of captain Reuter, dated 23rd June 1815 and 2nd lieutenant Betcke, also dated 23rd June 1815. In: Kriegstagebuch, artillery of the 1st corps GSA Rep.15a p.11-13

⁵⁰ Report of captain Huet, dated 23rd June 1815. In: Kriegstagebuch, artillery of the 1st corps GSA Rep.15a nr.82 p.16-17

⁵¹ Report of captain Borowski, dated 22nd June 1815. In: Kriegstagebuch, artillery of the 1st corps GSA Nr.82 p.36-38

⁵² Report of captain Schaeffer. In: Kriegstagebuch, artillery of the 1st corps GSA Rep.15a Nr.82 p.51-52

⁵³ Cf. Stawitzky, L. – Geschichte des Königlich Preussischen 25ten Infanterie-Regiments p.82 The regiment moved from Marbais to Tilly after midnight.

⁵⁴ Stuckrad, B.von Geschichte etc. p.109-111

⁵⁵ Busse, Von Geschichte des königlich Preussischen 23.Infanterie Regiments p. 174

56. Report of lieutenant colonel Von Röhl. In: KA, VI.E.15.179 In: GSA.VPH-HA, VI nr.III

nr.3 p.31-32

57. Gneisenau in a letter of the 17th of June to his wife. In: Gneisenau, Ein Leben in Briefen. p.522-523

Some believe it was at 10 p.m. Cf.

Baron Petiet. In: Souvenirs militaires etc. p.200

Anonymous account of a Prussian officer in: Oesterreichische Militäre Zeitschrift of 1820
According to De Mauduit it was 11 p.m. In: Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.92

⁵⁸ Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.94

⁵⁹ Cf. order of general Berthézène dated 17th of June from the “camp devant Brye”. In: SHAT. C15, nr.5

Order of Vandamme to Berthézène dated 17th of June addressed at “au camp du moulin, près de l’ambulance”, which is near the mill of Bussy. In: SHAT. C15, nr.5

Report of general Berthézène dated 17th of June. In: SHAT. C15, nr.5

Francois, captain Journal etc. p.883

60. Cf. Lefol’s report of the 17th of June. In: SHAT. C15 nr.5

⁶¹ Cf. general order for the 17th June and the report of general Lefol. In: SHAT. C15, nr.5

⁶² Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.95

Captain Francois (30th regiment of the line). Journal etc. p.883

According to Hulot “les régiments passèrent la nuit du 16 au 17 en arrière du terrain où ils avaient combattu”. In: Documents militaires etc. p.26

⁶³ Aide de camp Bella. In: Relation succincte etc. p.40

64. General Christiani (2nd regiment of grenadiers). In: d’Avout, L’infanterie de la garde etc. p.111

Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.95

General Petit (1st regiment grenadiers). In: The English Historical Review. Vol.XVIII.1903 p.324

According to H.de Mauduit the two front files of the squares were on guard, while the third file slept. In: Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.95

Colonel Duuring (1st battalion 1st chasseurs) says the troops were in squares and that there were no bivouac fires. Cf. account of Duuring in: d’Avout . L’infanterie de la garde etc. p.115

It is this connection that colonel Haxo, commander of the engineers of the Imperial Guard, who claims that a division was sent to the left and back again without firing a shot; it got back in the centre, the moment the Prussian centre was pierced.

This “division” may very well have been the 2nd, 3rd and 4th regiments of chasseurs of the Imperial Guard who must have returned towards Fleurus in the evening. In: Notes de Sismondi p.375

Around midnight an alarm broke out as the 75th regiment of the line bumped into a column of the 11th regiment of the line (both regiment of the corps of Lobau) and was fired at by the 11th regiment. In this situation bigade commander general Penne got wounded, as well as some others. In: Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.96
Duuring, colonel (1st regiment of chasseurs). In: d’Avout . L’infanterie de la garde etc. p.115

⁶⁵ Houssaye, H. 1815.Waterloo p.188

I have not been able to track this position down to a source, and from where Houssaye gets his information remains unclear.

⁶⁶ General Teste confirms that his division reached the battlefield at 9 p.m. in full darkness. Initially, Teste was ordered by general Monthion, of the general staff, to halt his division; Teste did so and placed it in columns per sections. After that, the division relieved Maurin and its artillery from his situation, as being involved with some actions against the enemy. In: Souvenirs du général baron Teste p.168

67.Mauduit, H.de Les derniers jours etc. Vol.II p.93-94

Francois, captain Journal etc. p.883

According to H.de Mauduit the corps initially halted several hundreds of meters in front of Fleurus.

General Petit (1st regiment grenadiers). In: d’Avout, L’infanterie de la garde etc. p.107

In: The English Historical Review.Vol.XVIII.1903 p.323

According to J.F.Friant the corps relieved the imperial guard in its position in the first line. Cf.J.F.Friant. Vie militaire etc. p.385

General Teste. Teste mentions for his division a position near a wood, which was probably the Bois du Loup, having his artillery on his left. This situates the 6th corps between Ligny and Sombreffe. According to Teste, Exelmans was to his right and rear. In: Souvenirs du général baron Teste p.168

⁶⁸ Delort in his report to Milhaud dated 17th June, in which he uses the words “camp près Ligny”. In: Stouff, L. Essai etc. p.129-120

⁶⁹ Biot, Souvenirs etc. p.244

Biot doesn’t mention these villages by name, but there is no doubt that these were the ones meant.

Aerts confirms Pajol stood in front of Tongrinnes. In: Etudes (manuscript) p.5

Biot suggests as if the brigade searched the village of Sombreffe, but this is incorrect. In my mind this should be Tongrinnes. Pajol never operated west of the road Fleurus – Point du Jour

and in the second place Biot writes: “avec ordre de fouiller Sombreffe et de pousser jusqu’à la route allant de Nivelles à Namur” – if he would have meant Sombreffe he would not have described the road in the way he does; it is clear that he speaks of a village which was in front of this road (and to the east of the mentioned road), and this can only have been Tongrinnes.

⁷⁰ Houssaye, H. 1815. Waterloo p.188
Cf. Teste (see above).

71. Ali. Souvenirs etc. p.105

⁷² Cf. the report of the emperor dated 8.30 p.m. from a position near Ligny.

73. Cf. Letter of Soult to Davout, dated 17th June. In: SHAT. C15, nr.5

Also see:

Gourgaud. La campagne de 1815 etc. p.60

74. The chateau de la Paix was a sober, but elegant building which was covered with slate. In front of it was a large lawn, which was fitted into a park. To the east of the chateau there was a very small wood consisting of willows.

The hall of the chateau (of which the floor was covered with marble) gave access to the drawing-room, which was decorated with white plaster. The drawing-room itself led to an old chapel. Napoleon had his room on the first floor. This room had a wooden floor and was very high.

The fact that headquarters was installed there late during the day and that Napoleon only installed there after the battle is confirmed by the mameluck Ali (Saint Denis). In: Souvenirs etc. p.107

In 1958 a tablet was placed on the fence of the park by the Société Belge d’Etudes Napoleoniennes and the municipality of Fleurus.

This tablet has been removed in 1985 and the text of it has been taken over on a small monument which is erected in the garden. This text reads:

“Napoleon a établi son quartier général dans la nuit du 16 au 17 juin 1815 après la victoire de Ligny sous Fleurus. Société Belge d’Etudes Napoleoniennes promoteur Théo Fleischman.”

In 1815 the chateau was in the possession of Paul de Barchifontaine.

Cf. Jacquemin, L. Monographie de la ville de Fleurus p.97

In former times it had been in the hands of Dumont de Chassart. Cf. Route de Napoleon p.38

The name of the chateau would have been derived from an old, nearby chapel of which only a tablet and a small statue remain in the wall of the adjoining farm of de la Paix. This tablet is dated 1643. Cf. Speeckaert, G.P. Les 135 vestiges etc. p.51

Grouchy gives no detailed reference whatsoever where he spent the night. I believe this must

have been somewhere near the 1st and 2nd cavalry corps, perhaps in (the vicinity of) Tongrenelle or further south at Boignée or in some dwelling along the road of Fleurus – Point du Jour.

Exelmans, in his report to Grouchy dated 10.15 situates him at Saint Amand, which I regard as highly improbable.

M.Damiens claims Grouchy spent the night at Tongrines, but there is no proof for this. Cf. *Prélude à Waterloo*

75. Cf. General Petit. In: *The English Historical Review*. Vol.XVIII.1903. p.324

Friant, J.F. *Vie militaire* etc. p.386

76. The fact that the imperial cabinet spent the night at Fleurus is confirmed by baron Fain.

In: *Mémoires du baron Fain* p.367

This chateau was then owned by Frédéric Joseph Louis de Zualart, mayor of Fleurus. In 1952 it was owned by the boarding-school of the Soeurs de Notre Dame.