

The divisional orders for the division Chassé were to go to Waterloo. However, being on the heights near Braine l'Alleud, lieutenant colonel Van Delen got the instruction of Constant Rebecque to put the division into closed columns in battle orders in front of the village.¹

Constant Rebecque had got the instruction of colonel De Lancey to have the division of Chassé occupy the entrances of Braine l'Alleud.²

While the troops were busy taking up their positions, general Chassé entered the position. Having reconnoitred it himself he accordingly ordered his troops to march through the village and take up positions on the other side. And this was accordingly done.

During this movement the 2nd line battalion got the order to occupy and reinforce the exits of the village.

The moment the brigade of Detmers had taken up a position in rear of the village, the one of d'Aubremé did the same.³

However, towards the evening this position was changed again.⁴ The brigade of Detmers was ordered to occupy Braine l'Alleud and to defend it at its utmost. The different battalions took up their positions in and around the village.

The 35th battalion of light infantry was near the southern entrance of the village having outposts towards Pospol (800 meters south of Braine l'Alleud); the 2nd line battalion occupied the eastern edge of the village, while the 4th battalion of national militia was north east of it, near the windmill (⁵). The 6th battalion of national militia, as well as the 19th battalion of national militia, had their post on the market-square and the 17th battalion of national militia had its position between the village and Merbraine in order to keep up the communication with the British army. To accomplish this, it had sent out a flank-company as skirmishers towards the British position.⁶ The battalion of light infantry nr.35, the 2nd line and the 4th national militia all had their outposts and were covered by hollow roads, gardens and hedges.⁷

The other brigade of the division, the one of d'Aubremé, was that night southwest of Braine l'Alleud, near the farm of Du Vieux Forest and directly east of the road leading towards Braine l'Alleud. It had its front parallel to the road leading to Nivelles, having thrown the right wing slightly backwards. In front of the brigade was the valley of the Haine. This valley was marshy and overgrown with hedges and bushes. It was the 36th battalion of light infantry which covered this front and this battalion had also detached a company of flankers to the other side of the stream where French cavalry patrols of Piré were present.

From left to right the remaining battalions of the brigade were in the following chain: 10th battalion of national militia, 3rd battalion of national militia, 12th battalion and 3rd battalion of line infantry.⁸

In all probability the battery of Lux was near the 4th battalion of national militia, while the one of Krahmer was in front of the farm of Vieux Foriez, in the centre of the position of the brigade of d'Aubremé.⁹

The ammunition waggons were in all probability north-west of the brigade of d'Aubremé.¹⁰

During the night the outposts of Chassé were informed that French patrols (probably those of Piré) were in the vicinity of Bois Seigneur Isaac (two kilometers southwest of Braine l'Alleud) and as a result Chassé detached his 13th battalion of the line there to occupy the wood. It also got the instruction to fall back towards Halle in case a retreat was deemed necessary..¹¹

Towards 5 p.m. the two brigades of the cavalry division of Collaert of Trip and De Ghigny rejoined the other brigade of this division, the one of Van Merlen.¹²

All three brigades took up their bivouacs west of the farm of Mont Saint Jean, in a hollow in the angle of the roads leading to Brussels and Nivelles. One squadron of the 4th regiment of light dragoons (brigade De Ghigny) arrived here during the evening as it had been in outposts to

cover the retreat.¹³ The brigades were side by side: the brigade of De Ghigny to the left leaning on the Brussels-road, the brigade of Van Merlen in the centre and the one of Trip to the right, leaning on the Nivelles-road.¹⁴ Brigade general Ghigny, with his staff, had settled in the farm of Mont Saint Jean.¹⁵ The artillery was near the cavalry and was joined into one battery.¹⁶ That evening, these troops were alarmed by the approach of some unidentified cavalry and artillery units. Some patrols were sent out and the battery of Gey took up a position; after some time, however, the troops appeared to be British ones.¹⁷

Of the 2nd British division, initially, Adam had his brigade posted in the vicinity of Goumont, but soon after he led it to a bivouac in a ploughed field just south of Merbraine, facing Goumont. Later, around 10 p.m., the brigade was moved to a position about 400 meters east of Merbraine, on the slope of the height east of this hamlet.¹⁸⁻¹⁹ General Adam had established his headquarters in the farm of Cambray in Merbraine.²⁰ The brigade of Duplat had taken up a bivouac near this hamlet.²¹ The brigade of H.Halkett stood that night immediately south of Merbraine.²²

In general, the 2nd division had its position between the Nivelles road and Braine l'Alleud.²³

The brigade of Mitchell (Colville's division) arrived in its position immediately south of Merbraine during the evening.²⁴

Of the forces of prince Frederik of the army of the Netherlands, the Indian brigade took up a bivouac (when is not known) on the plateau north of Lembecq, two kilometers south of Halle, between the roads of Halle - Enghien and the one of Halle - Braine le Comte. Here it formed a support and reserve for the 1st division of the army of the Netherlands.

The 2nd brigade of the 1st division (De Eerens) left from Saintes towards Tubize (five kilometers south of Halle). One battalion occupied the village and placed posts and pickets on the road leading to Braine le Comte.²⁵ Two battalions got a position on the height of Tubize (Vogerberg, Muschenberg) to the left leaning on the Bois de Lembecq.²⁶ Some companies held the bridges of the Senne at Tubize and of the Seneffe at Clabecq; a detachment made some reconnaissances on the opposite bank.

Another two battalions were at Braine le Chateau and Benchereau (²⁷); they both had the instruction to observe the road coming from Nivelles and to send patrols towards Wautier-Braine in order to communicate with the main army.

The battalions at Braine le Chateau also had got the instruction to pull back, in case of a retreat, as slowly as possible to facilitate the retreat of the troops at Tubize. The line of retreat was Halle, through Plasmarque or Le Flamand and Schemberg. The one for the units at Tubize was through Vogerbergh and Romain to Halle.

The 1st brigade (d'Hauw) had its bivouac on the heights in rear of Siantes, having its left wing towards Tubize. Detachements were observing Bierghe, Saint Renelde, Ophain and the passages of the Senne. Pickets were reconnoitring the road of Halle- Enghien.²⁸

The baggage as well as the reserve-park of the 1st division of the army of the Netherlands and the Indian brigade took their position at about one kilometer in rear of Halle, towards Brussels.

The artillery of the 1st division was at Ramelo, in rear of Saintes, to the road of Halle - Enghien.²⁹ The 1st division had its headquarters at St.Renelle.³⁰

The cavalry-brigade of Von Estorff arrived in the position of Halle in the very early morning of the 18th of June.

One regiment came in rear of Saintes, between Saintes and Mussain, having outposts and patrols towards Haute-Croix, Enghien and Quenast.

The other regiment of hussars came in a position in rear of Tubize and near the farm of Herbosch, having pickets in front of Tubize and outposts and patrols on the road to Braine le Comte and Oisquercq. One company was detached to Vogerberg in order to support the 2nd brigade of De Eerens, with patrols towards Plasmarque, Vraimont, Landuit, Braine l'Alleud, Wauthier-Braine, Braine le Chateau and Haut Ittre. That night, prince Frederik had his headquarters at Halle.

It must have been in the early evening of the 17th June, that the company of sappers led by captain Esau, which escorted a column of baggages, reached Waterloo.

They had just arrived when Esau got the instruction to head for Brussels. Having marched for about 30 minutes, dusk fell in and Esau decided to take a bivouac at the side of the road.

However, shortly after that, his company was confronted by dozens of horsemen, infantry, artillery-men, baggages, munitions carts and others retreating in disorder over the great road towards Brussels. They had panicked after the French bombardment around 7 p.m.

Despite the chaos and confusion, Esau was able to lead back his company towards Brussels without real problems. At around 11 p.m. his column halted in front of the city and took up a bivouac near the Porte de Halle.³¹

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1.Cf.account of captain Rochell (19th battalion of national militia). It is sergeant Wiegman of the 6th battalion of national militia who states that he was on sentry at Goumont until somewhere in the evening when the position of the division was changed (see below). In: Wiegman, C. Quatre Bras en Waterloo p.66

² Cf. Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25
Constant Rebecque, as major Van Gorkum, must have met colonel De Lancey while falling back along the Brussels road. After that, they both assisted him in assigning units their positions. Van Gorkum did so for the 2nd division, and Constant for the 3rd division of the army of the Netherlands. Cf. Van Gorkum's memoirs. In: private collection.

3.Account of captain Rochell (19th battalion of national militia)

4.Report of lieutenant colonel Van Delen. In: NA, nr.21.3.14.01 nr.8
Report of colonel Detmers. In: NA, nr.2.13.14.01 nr.8
Account of captain Rochell (19th battalion national militia), in private collection.

5. Sergeant Van der Wetering (4th battalion of national militia). This mill would have served as observation-post. Cf. Dam van Isselt, W.E. van De Noord-Nederlandse batterij etc. p.47

⁶ Cf. Diary of lieutenant Koch, 17M In: Infantry Museum Harskamp
Cf. 2nd lieutenant Holle in his letter to his parents dated 10th July 1815. In: Stadsarchief Dordrecht. Family-archive Blussé. 68-28 nr.21

7.Reports of lieutenant colonel Van Delen and colonel Detmers (see above).
Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25
Colonel Detmers in a letter dated 1st August 1815 to Chassé. In: Verzameling van alle rapporten etc. CBG, family-archive Rochell Box 8 nr. 7

The inhabitants of the village were forced to supply the troops with food. Cf. Captain Rochell. Rochell adds that space on the central square of the village was so small by the presence of the 6th battalion of national militia that his battalion, the 19th battalion of national militia, was forced to take up order of battle.

8. Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

9.Dam van Isselt, W.E. De Noord-Nederlandse batterij etc. p.47
Bas, F.de and T'Serclaes de Wommerson. La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.II p.22
Van Löben Sels places the battery of Lux in Braine l'Alleud, and the one of Krahmer near the brigade of Detmers. In: Bijdragen etc. Vol.IV p.567
1st lieutenant Bentinck, of the battery of Lux, claims his battery had a bivouac south-west of Braine l'Alleud. Cf. His letter. In: VLS, II, nr.4 nr.11

10. Bas, F.de and T'Serclaes de Wommerson. La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.II p.22
Van Es claims a position in rear of the farm of Delton, which is, in fact, the farm of Du Vieux Foriez. Cf. Es, N.J.A.P.H. van De krijgsverrichtingen etc.

11. Report of lieutenant colonel Van Delen. In: NA, 2.13.14.01.nr.8

12. Report of major Hoyneck van Papendrecht. In: Bas, F.de en T'Serclaes de Wommerson. La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.III p.424

Major Kraijenhoff (4th regiment light dragoons, brigade De Ghigny) says the regiment marched late that afternoon via Rouliers [?], Witterz  (near the Nivelles-road) and along Goumont. Cf. account in Rijksmuseum, nr.NM 10255b

Lieutenant colonel Van Heerdt (chief of staff of the same brigade), however, claims the brigade reached the farm of Mont Saint Jean by 7 p.m. In: VLS, nr.II..5.1

13. Report of major Hoyneck van Papendrecht. In: Bas, F.de en T'Serclaes de Wommerson. La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.III p.424

Squadron sergeant-major Fundter (4th regiment of light dragoons). In: Geschiedenis van het 4^e regiment lichte dragonders p.13

14. Account of major Kraijenhoff (4th regiment of light dragoons). In: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, nr.NM 10255b

Account of an anonymous member of the 2nd regiment of carabineers, called D.Theys. In: LMB, archieffonds Franse periode, part IV, box 33

Lieutenant colonel Van Heerdt says the troops had a position in two lines per regiment. Cf. account of Van Heerdt. In: CBG, nr. and VLS, nr. II.5.1

Squadron sergeant-major Fundter (4th regiment of light dragoons). In: Geschiedenis van het 4^e regiment lichte dragonders p.13 He confirms the regiment was “en bataille”.

15. Account of lieutenant colonel Van Heerdt. In: CBG, nr. and VLS, nr. II.5.1

Diary of lieutenant colonel Renno. In: Groninger Museum, Groningen. Collection Offerhaus Foundation. Renno and Van Heerdt claim the British general Cooke was there as well Lieutenant colonel Renno also slept there.

¹⁶ Account of captain Petter. In: VLS, nr.II.no.4.6 Lieutenant Van Wassenaar states the artillery had a position to the right of the Brussels-road. Cf. his letter in the archive of VLS, nr.II.no.4.5a

¹⁷ Letter of lieutenant Van Wassenaar. In: VLS, nr.II.no.4.5a

18. Lieutenant general Adam. In: BL. Add.Ms.34.706 p.406-413

Lieutenant G.Gawler (1st battalion, 52nd regiment). In: BL. Add.Ms. 34.704 p.88-97 and 34.705 p.369-382

Colonel Reynell (1st battalion 71st regiment). In: BL. Add.Ms. 34.703 p.234-239

There are no real data about the position of the bivouac of the brigade of Duplat. The only thing we know is that the grenadier company of the 1st line battalion KGL had formed outposts for this battalion. Cf. Journal of this battalion. In: NHH, Hann.38D.nr.236 p.27-28

According to lieutenant Eyre (2nd battalion, 95th regiment) his battalion had a position that night “in a wood in advance”, while the troops in the early morning plundered some farms. The wood cannot be determined but the farms must have been those of Merbraine. Cf. His letter to his mother dated 28th June 1815.

The fact that the 3rd battalion of the 95th regiment was near Merbraine can also be taken from the account of colonel Ross. In: Knight, corporal – The British battalion etc. p.18 He states the bivouac here was established at 11 p.m.

19.Ensign W.Leeke. This account differs substantially from the one found in the Waterloo Letters.

Leeke situates the 1st battalion of the 52nd regiment after 10 p.m. at about 300 meters in rear of the British position and 450 meters of Merbraine. Here the battalion formed an open column of companies. Cf. Leeke, W. The history of Lord Seaton's regiment Vol.I p.16

R.Cusick initially gives a position south of Braine l'Alleud (till 7.30 p.m.) and then one east of Merbraine. Cf. Cusick, R. Waterloo. The legacy of Sir John Moore. In: The Waterloo Journal Vol.20 nr.1 p.2

20.Leeke, W. – He mentions the largest farm present in this hamlet.

21. Cf. Major Meijer (4th battalion of the line KGL infantry). In: BL, Add.ms.34.704 p.270-273 According to lieutenant Kuckuck the brigade had lost some men of detachments being taken prisoner, but he doesn't specify where this may have been. Cf.lieutenant Kuckuck (3rd line battalion KGL. In: BL. Add.Ms.34.705 p.35-38

According to J.Hamilton, a member of the 2nd line battalion KGL, it was general De Lancey in person who assigned the troops here their positions. Cf. J.Hamilton in a letter dated 21st June 1815. In: NAM, Manuscripts,transcripts and printed documents,letters,notebooks and printed pamphlets relating to the battle and battlefield of Waterloo, nr.7905/5.

22.Report of captain Von Dreves (York battalion). In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.151 p.70-72

²³ Cf. Sir H.Clinton's letter dated 23rd June 1815. In: NLS, MS 3615 f.39

24.Lieutenant Holmes (1st battalion, 23rd regiment) BL, Add.Ms.34.705 p.209-212
Private John Abbott (1st battalion, 51st regiment) Letter in NAM, nr. 7607/34

Cannon claims the 1st battalion of the 23rd battalion arrived late in the evening. Cf. Cannon, R. Historical records of the British army. Royal Welsh Fusiliers p.153

25.According to F.de Bas the battalion was the 18th battalion of light infantry, but his source for this claim remains unclear. In: La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Cartes et plans, plan VIII

26.According to F.de Bas these battalions were the 1st and 2nd battalion of militia. In: La campagne de 1815 aux Pays bas. Cartes et plans, plan VIII.

27.According to F.de Bas these were the 18th battalion of national militia and the 1st battalion line infantry.

Cf. Bas, F.de en T'Serclaes de Wommerson La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Cartes et plans, plan VIII.

28.Cf.Dagboek der operatien en bewegingen etc. p.11-12

F.de Bas assigns to the brigade the following positions, mentioning no source: the 6th battalion

of line infantry in the mill of Sainte Renelde; the remaining battalions in battalion-columns to the right of the road leading to Enghien, from left to right: national militia battalions nr.15, 14, 9 and the 4th line battalion. And the companies of the 16th battalion of light troops in and around Bierghes.

In: La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.cartes et plans, plan VIII.

29.Journal of the count of St.Aldegonde. In: NA, 2.13.14.02 nr.7

General correspondence of count St.Aldegonde. In: NA, nr.2.13.14.02 nr.6 - item nrs.39,40 and 41

Bas, F.de and T'Serclaes de Wommerson. La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.cartes et plans, plan VIII.

30.Löben Sels, E.van Bijdragen tot de krijgsgeschiedenis etc. Vol.IV. p.593

31.Klijnsma, S.F. De nagelaten aantekeningen van Sent Foppes Klijnsma. In: De Beweging 1910, I-249, II-1