

## **The situation at Quatre Bras on the early morning of the 17th of June.**

General headquarters. The preparations for the retreat.

The night of the 16th of June was a clear one. It was just before dawn, around 3.30 or 4 a.m. that some British dragoons erroneously approached the French line of sentries south of Piraumont too much. A sharp skirmishing fire started which rapidly spread over the whole line.

The outposts of the brigade of Kielmansegge and those of the 3rd Brunswick light infantry were involved in this fire.<sup>1</sup>

Not long after, also the battalion Münden of the brigade Kielmansegge must have pulled together and given some file-fire.<sup>2</sup>

But before general Picton had been able to put an end to this firing, also the battalion of Bremen had already been suffering considerably.

But losses were not only on the Anglo-Netherlands-German side; also the posts of the divisions of Quiot and Donzelot had suffered some losses. The French skirmishers made several attempts to drive back the battalion of Bremen, but the battalion sent out detachments and these successfully drove back the French from the declivity in their turn. Though the Hannoverians had a good position with the stream and the swamp plus hedges in front of them, this took them a lot of ammunition, but finally the French fire died down at 9 a.m.<sup>3</sup> Before daybreak, there also must have been some skirmishing in front of the Bois de Bossu.<sup>4</sup>

The troops were preparing their weapons and taking care of the wounded. A lot of them were brought into the buildings at Quatre Bras and to the farm of Gémioncourt by strong detachments of heavy cavalry.<sup>5</sup>

The surgeons, however, were much hindered in their work by the lack of supplies, which were still further to the rear. On the French side, the situation was more or less similar and this was mostly due to the fact that the ambulances had for a great deal gone back to the rear after the failed charge of the cuirassiers.<sup>6</sup>

General headquarters.

Wellington had his headquarters at Genappe in the inn of Le Roi d'Espagne. After he had risen at 3 a.m. he sent a courier towards Brussels informing the authorities here that he intended to attack the enemy.<sup>7</sup> Some time later, he left for Quatre Bras.<sup>8</sup> It was around 5 a.m. that he got there.<sup>9</sup>

It may have been in these hours that Wellington received the following report of the duke De Feltre from Ghent, which he had written at 6.30 p.m.

*“Un de mes officiers arrive de Namur à l’instant. Voici ce qu’il m’apprend: que les Français étaient à Charleroi hier. Ils ont poussé jusques près des Quatre Bras, et à Gosselies dans la journée; on s’est beaucoup battu. Il y a eu beaucoup de blessés. On en a vu 43 voitures de blessés Prussiens. Le feu a cessé à 8 heures du soir. Deux escadrons Prussiens ont beaucoup souffert. Les Hessois se sont bien battus. Le maréchal Blücher ayant marché contre les Français, il se sont retirés, et ont pris l’ancienne route des Romains en allant sur Nivelles pour attaquer l’armée Anglaise. Le prince Blücher est rentré à 10 heures du soir de Sombref; à 10*

*heures du soir les Prussiens étaient encore maître de Fleurus.*

*Le lieutenant-général Bourmont a quitté de l'armée de Buonaparte et est arrivé le 15 à Namur, d'où il me mande qu'il a quitté (lui, Bourmont) Florenne ce matin-là, et qu'il a laissé le 4<sup>me</sup> corps sous les ordres de Gérard à Philippeville, lequel devait marcher le 15 sur Charleroi. Le reste de l'armée de Buonaparte était massé vers Beaumont. Le 4<sup>me</sup> corps est celui qui était en Lorraine. J'ai cru utile de donner ces détails à Votre Excellence. J'ai etc.*

*P.S. Je n'ai pas de lettre de Votre Excellence depuis celle écrite hier à 9 heures ½ du soir. Le Roi se tient prêt à partir. M.le duc de Berri m'écrit d'Alost à 2 heures après midi que V.E. lui a fait dire verbalement de se tenir prêt à marcher sur Bruxelles ce soir ou dans la nuit, après avoir laissé le nombre de gardes nécessaires pour la garde du Roi; qu'il marchera avec la totalité du corps, à moins d'ordre contraires.”<sup>10</sup>*

About 6 a.m. the prince of Orange joined the duke at Quatre Bras.<sup>11</sup> Here, Wellington also had a conversation with Sir Hussey Vivian.<sup>12</sup>

Wellington, after having inspected and observed the battlefield, came to the conclusion that Napoleon had cut off the communication he had with Blücher. French posts were on his extreme left flank, observing the great road leading to Nivelles.

Having still no official information from Blücher, the Duke now decided to send out a patrol to find out about the situation of the Prussian army.

Accordingly, Sir Alexander Gordon, aide de camp of Wellington, was sent out early that morning but exact at what time remains unclear.<sup>13</sup> He was accompanied by a troop of the 10th regiment of hussars, which was led by captain Grey.<sup>14</sup>

Lieutenant Bacon (10th regiment of hussars) informs us about a French sentry at a position west of Marbais, at about five kilometers of Quatre Bras.<sup>15</sup> This sentry could be seen from the opposite height; in the intermediate depression was a single house, where some French horsemen had dismounted. Leaving his main force on and near the road on the height, Bacon was sent forward with a small escort. The moment Bacon approached the house too near, the French sentry on the opposite height started to fire with carbines. The French post near the house fell back and Bacon was called back. It became clear that the enemy was in control of the road and the patrol fell back too, until it encountered a by-road of which a local farmer told to Gordon that the Prussians had passed here.<sup>16</sup>

Now, captain Grey left a part of his detachment on the road with instructions to observe the French movements and fall back to the regiment in case of necessity. He himself, Sir Alexander Gordon, lieutenant Bacon and a small escort now turned to the east. Not long after they found the Prussian rearguard of Von Sohr on the height of Arbres de Vénérable near Mellery.<sup>17</sup>

It was through small country roads that Gordon returned to Quatre Bras; the escort rejoined the regiment here. The detachment, led by captain Grey, did the same, without being harassed.<sup>18</sup>

There is no reliable information about the time of arrival of Gordon at Quatre Bras (<sup>19</sup>), but this must have been before 9 a.m., the time the Prussian major Von Massow joined the duke.<sup>20</sup>

Of the 10th hussars another troop, the left one of Howard's squadron, under captain Wood, would have been sent out by Sir H. Vivian to patrol. Earlier that morning, the squadron had relieved as a picket a squadron of the 18th hussars. The patrol soon fell in with Prussian

stragglers, informing Wood about the Prussian defeat. Soon after, it also met French vedettes who retired on the approach of the hussars. Captain Wood decided to inform the Duke immediately and ordered his patrol to return quietly to its squadron. While going back to Quatre Bras, Wood would have met Gordon and Grey.<sup>21</sup>

About the situation of the duke during the arrival of Gordon, captain Bowles (Coldstream Guards) tells us:

"...soon after daybreak the Duke of Wellington came to me, and being personally known to him he remained in conversation for an hour or more, during which time he repeatedly said he was surprised to have heard nothing of Blücher. At length a staff officer arrived, his horse covered with foam, and whispered to the Duke who, without the least change of countenance, gave him some orders and dismissed him. He then turned round to me and said: Old Blücher has had a damned good licking and gone back to Wavre, eighteen miles. As he has gone back, we must go too. I suppose in England they will say we have been licked. I can't help it, as they are gone back, we must go too."<sup>22</sup> At that particular moment, Wellington would have been in a simple hut built of branches, just in rear of the farm of Quatre Bras.<sup>23</sup>

Gordon told the duke about the fact that the Prussian army had left the field of battle, that the 4th corps of Von Bülow hadn't participated in the battle, that the army was moving towards Wavre and that the French did not pursue.<sup>24</sup>

It was after the duke got the information of Gordon that he decided to fall back to the position of Mont Saint Jean, and to accept battle there, presumed he would have Prussian support.<sup>25</sup>

Having considered his situation, Wellington decided to start the retreat and issued his first orders. They read:

*Instructions for the movement of the army on the 17th June 1815*

*The 1st division to keep piquets only in the wood on the right of the high road, and to be collected on the road to Nivelles, in rear of the wood.*

*The 2nd division of British infantry to march from Nivelles on Waterloo at 10 o'clock.*

*The 3rd division to collect upon the left of the position, holding by its piquets to the ground it now occupies.*

*The brigades of the 4th division, now at Nivelles, to march from that place on Waterloo at 10 o'clock. The brigades of the 4th division on the road from Braine le Comte to Nivelles, or at Braine le Comte, to collect and halt at Braine le Comte this day.*

*All the baggage on the road from Braine le Comte to Nivelles to be sent back to Braine le Comte, and to be sent from thence to Hal and Bruxelles.*

*The 5th division to collect upon the right of the position in three lines, and the 95th regiment to hold the gardens.*

*The 6th division to be collected in columns of bataillons, showing their heads only on the heights on the left of the position of Quatre Bras.*

*The Brunswick corps to be collected in the wood on the Nivelles road, holding the skirts with their piquets only.*

*The Nassau troops to be collected in the rear of the wood on the Nivelles road, holding the skirts with their piquets only.*

*The 2nd division of the troops of the Netherlands to march from their present ground on Waterloo at 10 o'clock (then marching). The march to be in columns of half companies at quarter distance.*

*The 3rd division of the troops of the Netherlands to march from Nivelles at 10 o'clock.*

*The spare musket ammunition to be immediately parked behind Genappe, as well as the reserve artillery. The wagons of the reserve artillery to be parked in the Foret de Soignes.*

*The British cavalry to be formed at 1 o'clock in three lines in rear of the position at Quatre Bras, to cover the movement of the infantry to the rear, and the retreat of the rear-guard.*

*NOTE. The foregoing orders issued at about 9 o'clock on the morning of the 17th June, on the ground of the action at Quatre Bras, in consequence of the Prussian Army being found to have retired from the position of Ligny.*

*Copied from the Duke's writing. Saw the Duke write them while seated on the ground. They are my own original copies, taken at the moment.*

*De Lacy Evans* <sup>26</sup>

The specific one for lord Hill reads:

*To general Lord Hill*

*17th June 1815*

*The 2nd division of British infantry to march from Nivelles on Waterloo at 10 o'clock.*

*The brigades of the 4th division, now at Nivelles, to march from that place on Waterloo at 10 o'clock. Those brigades of the 4th division at Braine le Comte and on the road from Braine le Comte to Nivelles, to collect and halt at Braine le Comte this day.*

*All the baggage on the road from Braine le Comte to Nivelles to return immediately to Braine le Comte and to proceed immediately from there to Hal and Bruxelles.*

*The spare musket ammunition to be immediately parked behind Genappe*

*The corps under the command of Prince Frederick of Orange will move from Enghien this evening and take up a position in front of Hal, occupying Braine le Chateau with two bataillons.*

*Col. Estorff will fall back with his brigade on Hal and place himself under the orders of Prince Frederick.*

*W.De Lancey* <sup>27</sup>

And the specific order for the prince of Orange reads:

*June 17th 1815*

*Extract from the general movement of the army for this day.*

*The 1st division to keep picquets only on the right of the high road, and the division to be collected on the road to Nivelles in rear of the wood.*

*The 3rd division to collect upon the left of the position holding by its picquets the advanced posts it now occupies. The 2nd division of the troops of the Netherlands to march from their present ground on Waterloo.*

*Wm.de Lancey*

*N.B. The march to be in a column of half companies at quarter distance.*

*The 3rd division of the troops of the Netherlands to march from Nivelles at ten o'clock. The spare musquet ammunition cars to be parked immediately behind Genappe.*

*W.de Lancey*<sup>28</sup>

Another order reads:

*The corps under the command of Prince Frederic of Orange will move from Enghien this evening, and take up a position in front of Hal, occupying Braine le Chateau with two bataillons.*

*Colonel Estorff will fall back with his brigade on Hal, and place himself under the orders of Prince Frederick.*<sup>29</sup>

The time that these orders were issued must have been around 8 a.m.<sup>30</sup>

This can also be derived from the fact that for instance in these orders sir G.Clinton is being asked to leave from Nivelles at 10.00 a.m. In case this order would have left headquarters after 9.00 a.m. this would have been impossible. Taking into account one hour for the ride to Nivelles and the time prepare the march, the order must have been issued around 8 a.m.

Shortly after sending out Gordon to find out about the Prussians, the duke received some letters from England.<sup>31</sup> Later, having issued his orders for the retreat, he laid down in the field, covered his face with a newspaper and had a small nap. Having raised again, he observed the French positions again and seemed wondered about the peace in the French lines. Sir Hussey Vivian remembers his saying that it was " not at all impossible that they also might be retreating."<sup>32</sup>

Not long after, major Von Massow arrived. He first reported to Von Müffling, but as Von Massow spoke French he was led towards Wellington by Von Müffling to talk to the duke directly.<sup>33</sup> Having heard about the situation of the Prussian army, Wellington told Von Massow about his decision to fall back upon the position of Mont Saint Jean.<sup>34</sup>

It was also shortly after Wellington had issued his order for the retreat, that he sent colonel Delancey towards the position of Mont Saint Jean with instructions how to place the different units of the army there. With him, he carried the map of the area which had been drawn some time before by the engineers. He took up a central position on the ridge of Mont Saint Jean, accompanied by some other officers, amongst whom one was sir Charles Broke, to accomplish this task.<sup>35</sup>

The preparations for the retreat towards the position of Mont Saint Jean.

Before being able to start their retreat, the different divisions were assembled.

The one of Cooke was assembled north of the Bois de Bossu, along the road towards Namur, leaving pickets in the wood. The 3rd division was assembled north of this road to the left of Quatre Bras. For this, the brigade of Von Ompteda moved from its position near the Brussels road towards one in and southwest of the Bois des Censes.<sup>36</sup>

The brigade of C.Halkett advanced in the same direction, having been instructed to do this under cover and having done so, it took up a position in the second line in rear of the one of Von Ompteda.<sup>37</sup> This must have been around 10.45 a.m.<sup>38</sup> Kielmansegge formed his brigade in rear of the one of C.Halkett in third line.<sup>39</sup>

The 5th division had to remain in position until further notice. The order states " to collect upon the right of the position in three lines, and the 95th to hold the gardens."

The brigade of Best (6th division) was instructed to form each of its four battalions in column in a covered position, to the left of the position, near the 5th division.

The Brunswick corps was in all probability that morning between the Bois de Bossu and the Brussels road having the advance guard battalion and the 2nd and 3rd light battalion in advance posts.

About the situation of the Brunswickers, Hofschröder writes: "Much of the morning at Quatre Bras was spent gathering supplies and restocking ammunition, neither of which was particularly easy. Part of the Brunswick baggage train had gone missing during the previous day's fighting, for example. The sergeant-major of the Jäger eventually found his battalion's baggage waggon in Brussels, empty in the Willebroek canal, its drivers having disappeared with its horses. The ammunition waggon was fortunately located at the far end of the city, but only by the evening of 18 June could it be brought to Waterloo. Fortunately, others of the Brunswick supply waggons that had been left at Genappe soon arrived, and their contents were quickly distributed. Oberst Olfermann, now in command of the Brunswick contingent since their Duke's death the day before, forbade any casual foraging by his troops but organised parties soon brought in cattle that were slaughtered and cooked.

Meanwhile, the Brunswickers used the time available to reorganise and replace the lost unit commanders with field promotions. Kapitain von Bülow I of the 1st Light Battalion and Kapitain von Schwarzkoppen of the 1st Line were both promoted to major and command of their battalions. Major von Wolfradt received the command of the Line Brigade in place of Oberstlieutenant von Specht, who had lost his nerve, and Major von Strombeck, former commander of the 2nd Line Battalion, was buried."<sup>40</sup>

The Nassauers of Von Kruse took up a position with the battalions in closed masses with intervals, further to the right of its bivouac, in rear of the wood, in front of which it had pickets.<sup>41</sup>

The 2nd Netherlands division of Perponcher must have been collected north of the Bois de Bossu and the Namur-road. By 6 a.m. the light battalion nr.27 also had returned from Nivelles.<sup>42</sup>

Of the British-Hanoverian cavalry - as soon as the general retreat from the battlefield started - the brigade of Sir Hussey Vivian advanced to a position, squadrons en échelon, having the 1st regiment of hussars on its left, in a hollow along the Brussels road east of Quatre Bras. The

picket of the 18th regiment of hussars was on the Namur road, close to Piraumont and those of the 10th regiment of hussars south of Quatre Bras.<sup>43</sup>

During the night of the 16th and the whole morning of the 17th of June, the brigade of Sir Ormsby Vandeleur was probably north east of Quatre Bras.<sup>44</sup>

During the night, the brigade of Von Dörnberg must have been somewhere between the Bois de Bossu and the Brussels road, south of Quatre Bras. During the morning, it must have moved more towards the Namur road and Hautain le Val.<sup>45</sup>

The moment the French cavalry approached the crossroads, Grant's brigade must have been somewhere towards Hautain le Val.<sup>46</sup> It was also around 11 a.m. that the right squadron of the 15th regiment of hussars which was in picket at Hautain-le-Val was called back to its regiment. There are no details available about the activities of the British heavy cavalry during the morning of the 17th of June. By 2 p.m. both brigades must have been in the second line, probably near the Brussels road near Quatre Bras.<sup>47</sup>

All troops of the Royal Horse Artillery were near the cavalry brigades to which they were attached.

Captain Gardiner's troop had almost reached Nivelles on the 16th of June; by 2 a.m. it had marched off again and left for Quatre Bras where it joined the brigade of Vivian.<sup>48</sup>

Mercer's troop, being attached to the brigade of Vandeleur, was immediately east of Quatre Bras, in rear of the farm, its front towards Sart-Dame-Avelines.<sup>49</sup>

Captain Ramsay's troop was probably in the vicinity of the brigade of Von Dörnberg.

Captain Webber Smith arrived with his troops on the battlefield between 10 and 11 a.m. and joined the brigade of Sir.C.Grant.<sup>50</sup>

The troops of Bull and Whinyates must have been in reserve, but their locations are unknown.

Revised: 7th July 2009

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wachholtz, F.von Geschichte des herzoglich Braunschweigischen Armee-Corps etc. p.35

Colonel Von Herzberg, of the Brunswick staff. In: BL, Add.ms.34.706.11

Another (anonymous) officer, of the 1st battalion 95th regiment, claims the skirmishing broke out at 2 a.m. In: Letter cited in: Swiney, G. Historical records of the 32nd (Cornwall) light infantry p.125

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant Fr.Bülow (battalion Münden), in a letter dated 26 August 1815. In: Kannicht, J. Und alles wegen Napoleon p.206

3.For this action see:

Captain Von Scriba. In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.151 p.32-35

Scriba, C.von Das leichte Bataillon etc. p.84

Mercer, C. Journal of the Waterloo campaign. Vol. p.259

The general Hanoverian report. In: NHH. Hann.41.XXI, nr.156 p.27-49

Schneidawind, F. Der letzte Feldzug etc. p.82

Captain Wildman (7th regiment of hussars), aide de camp of Lord Uxbridge, in his letter to his mother dated 19th June 1815. In: NAM, nr.8112-53

Aerts remarks that it was in this fire that general Bourgeois, lieutenant André (55th regiment of the line) and the chef de bataillon Formis (51st regiment of the line) got wounded. He bases himself upon Martinien.

In: Aerts, W. Etudes relatives etc. p.471

Martinien, A. Tableaux etc. p.236, 246

Lieutenant colonel Müller of the battalion Bremen gives a full listing of the losses sustained by the battalion:

Killed: one corporal, one skirmishers, four privates.

Wounded: captain Von Lepel, ensign Brüel, Meyer, two subalterns, one corporal, three Schützen, two hornblowers and 42 privates.

Missing were 23 men, but these were most stragglers. Cf. NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.151 p.37-40

The action is also mentioned by lieutenant Kincaid (1st battalion, 95th regiment). Cf. Kincaid, J. Adventures in the Rifle Brigade

According to captain J. Leach (1st battalion, 95th regiment) the fire between the pickets started at around 23.30 p.m. to continue until dawn. Cf. Leach, J. Rough sketches etc. p.377.

The strong skirmishing fire is also mentioned by lieutenant Hemingway. This would have been given by the flank companies of his regiment (the 33rd) and some German units. In: his letter dated 16 August 1815. In: Waley, D. – A new account of Waterloo p.63

Ensign Oppermann (battalion Münden, brigade Best) asserts that at that time his brigade was in third line. Cf. his letter dated 23rd June 1815. In: Kannicht, J. Und alles wegen Napoleon p.204

4.Private Clay (2nd battalion 3rd Foot Guards). In: Household Brigade Magazine. 1958 p.141  
Lieutenant colonel Leighton-Cathcart-Dalrymple (15th regiment of hussars) mentions a musketry fire at 6 a.m. His regiment was in rear of the wood. Cf. His journal. In: NAM,nr.7207-22,14-21

5.Major Radcliffe (1st regiment Royal Dragoons, brigade Ponsonby). In: letter dated 7 july 1815 to general Sir.H.Fane. In: NAM, nr.6310-36

6.The atmosphere that morning is vividly described by:  
Colonel Van Zuylen van Nijvelt. In: Bas, F.de en T'Serclaes de Wommerson. La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.III p.324  
Mercer, C. Journal of the Waterloo campaign. Vol.I, p.257-261  
Jackson, Sir B. Notes and reminiscences of a staff officer p.26-31

The squadron of captain Clark Kennedy of the Royal Dragoons assisted in transporting wounded to Quatre Bras. Cf. BL. Add.Ms. 34.703 p.3-5

<sup>7</sup> Cf. bulletin of baron Van de Capellen dated 7.30 a.m. He states that the courier had left from Genappe at 5 a.m. but this is in relation to the distance - almost 30 kilometers - impossible. Other than that, Wellington got at Quatre Bras by 5 a.m., so he must have sent the man out before that same hour.

8.Account of lord FitzRoy Somerset. In: NAM, Book of manuscript copies of Waterloo letters. Nr.6507-1

9.Lieutenant Hope (92nd regiment). In: Letters from Portugal etc. p.236. Hope was right in rear of Quatre Bras and could see what was happening on and around the Brussels road. Captain Jessop (QMG department) says the duke arrived on the ground soon after daylight. In: Recollections of Waterloo, by a staff officer p.8

<sup>10</sup> HL, MS61 WP 7.2.20 p.553

<sup>11</sup> Journal of Constant Rebecque In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25  
Constant Rebecque claims he left Nivelles before dawn. That may have been at 3 or 3.30 a.m. He also states that the prince arrived at Quatre Bras one and half hour later than he did; in case he did around 4.30, this was around 6 a.m. This also corresponds to the time Wellington arrived.

12.Siborne, W. History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.246

13.Sir Basil Jackson believes it was between 6 and 7 a.m. In: Notes and reminiscences of a staff officer p.26

This confirmed by captain Jessop (QMG department). In: Recollections of Waterloo, by a staff officer p.8

According to Lord FitzRoy Somerset Wellington left Genappe at 3 a.m. and sent out Gordon immediately after his arrival at Quatre Bras. This may well have been then around 5.30 a.m.

In: NAM, Book of manuscript copies of Waterloo letters. Nr.6507-1

Wellington himself states that he sent him out "shortly after daylight." In his memorandum, dated 1842. In: WSD, Vol.X p.527

According to Aerts, it must have been between 3.30 and 4 a.m. that Gordon was sent out; in his mind he returned before 7 a.m., having covered almost 20 kilometers. In: Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.101, 108 and 110

14.Liddell, R.S. The memoirs of the tenth Royal hussars p.140-141

Lieutenant Bacon (member of the escorte). BL, Add.Ms.34.708 p162-166

Lieutenant colonel Manners (10th regiment of hussars). BL, Add.Ms.34.703.23

According to Von Müffling it was Delancey himself who was dispatched, but this is extremely unlikely.

Von Müffling in a letter written to general Von Hofmann. In: Hofmann, G.W.von Zur Geschichte etc. p.135 and in: Recollections etc. p.240

Wellington himself states Gordon was escorted by two squadrons of the 10th regiment of hussars. Cf. his memorandum. In: WSD, Vol.X, p.513-531

15.Another source states it was at about five miles from Quatre Bras, but this near to Les Trois Burettes which is way too much to the front, into enemy territory. Cf. Boger, A.J. The story of general Bacon p.121

16.Liddell, R.S. The memoirs of the tenth royal hussras p.140-141

17. Cf. Bleibtreu, C. England's grosse Waterloo-Lüge p.154

In some accounts it is being asserted that Grey and Gordon found the Prussians near Tilly and that they actually spoke to general Zieten. Cf.

Cf. Müffling, F.von. In: WSD, Vol.X.p.512

Müffling, F.von Memoirs p.240

Von Müffling in a letter written to general Von Hofmann. In: Hofmann, G.W.von Zur Geschichte etc. p.135 Von Müffling also claims here that it was Delancey, but at the same time he calls him an adjudant of the duke, which is more in line with Gordon's position.

Ollech, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.179

Houssaye, H. 1815.Waterloo p.259

D.Hamilton-Williams, D. Waterloo, new perspectives p.237.

Boger, A.J. The story of general Bacon p.123

However, from the description given by Bacon one can clearly derive that it must have been

near Mellery.

Also Aerts and Von Lettow Vorbeck have their doubts about the encounter as described above.

Cf. Aerts, W. Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.110-111

Lettow Vorbeck, O.von Napoleons Untergang. p.360

In his memorandum, Wellington himself asserts that Gordon met general Zieten at Sombreffe ! In: WSD, Vol.X.p.513-531

18.Lieutenant Bacon. BL, Add.Ms.34.708 p.162-166

19.Some say it was 7 a.m. Cf.

Lord FitzRoy Somerset. In: NAM, Book of manuscript copies of Waterloo letters. Nr.6507-1

Von Müffling. He states the information dropped in by chance, without mentioning any courier. In: C.v.W. Geschichte des Feldzugs der englisch-hanovrisch-niederländisch-Braunschweigschen Armee etc.p.18

Lettow Vorbeck, O.Von Napoleons Untergang. Vol.III.p.360

Aerts, W. Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.110

Bleibtreu, C. England's grosse Waterloo-Lüge p.155

Others believe it was between 7 and 8 a.m. Cf.

Lieutenant R.Winchester (92nd regiment). He states that he then "received intelligence that Blücher was retiring with his army on Wavre." In: BL, Add.ms.34.706 p.242-247

Charras. Histoire de la campagne de 1815 p.

For 7.30 a.m., see:

Houssaye, H. 1815.Waterloo p.259

Ollech, Von Geschichte des Feldzugs von 1815 etc. p.179

Liddell, R.S. The memoirs of the tenth Royal hussars p.140-141

Vincent states that Wellington learned about the Prussian retreat at 8 a.m. and this may very well be the news through Gordon. He writes: "[...] à 8 heures du matin lui [Wellington] parvint la nouvelle que le maréchal Blücher [...] avait été forcé de se retirer jusqu'à Wavre [...]". Cf. his letter of the 17th of June, 5 p.m. to Schwarzenberg. Original in Kriegsarchiv Vienna. From: GSA, VPH-HA, VI, nr.VIII nr.3 p.35

F.de Bas claims it was 9.30 a.m. Cf. Bas, F.de and T'Serclaes de Wommerson. La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.II p.3

Sir Basil Jackson claims it was 10.00 a.m. Cf. Jackson, Sir B. Notes and reminiscences of a staff officer p.31

According to lieutenant Bacon it was just before 9 a.m. In: BL, Add.Ms.34.708 p162-166

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

According to major general Hussey Vivian, the patrol of Gordon had returned within one hour; in that case it would have left at 8 a.m. BL, Add.Ms.34.707 p.19

According to captain Jessop (of the QMG department) Gordon and his party returned by 10 a.m. In: *Recollections of Waterloo*, by a staff officer p.10

20. Cf. Von Müffling. In: Hofmann, G.W. , *Zur Geschichte des Feldzugs von 1815* p.135  
For 9 a.m. of Von Massow: Cf. Sir Augustus Frazer. Cf. his letter dated 17th June 9.30 a.m.  
In: Sabine, E. *Letters of colonel Sir Augustus Frazer* p.542

Von Müffling. *Memoirs* p.241

Captain Wildman believes Wellington heard about the Prussian defeat at 11 a.m. Cf. his letter dated 19th June 1815 to his mother. In: NAM, nr.8112-53

The arrival of a Prussian officer of the general staff is confirmed by sir George Scovell. Cf. his account. In: NAK, WO 37 / 12, fol.2

According to Von Pflugk Hartung, Massow reached Wellington at 8 a.m. or later. In: *Wellington und Blücher am 17.Juni* p.378

<sup>21</sup> Captain Ch.Wood in a letter to the editor of the USJ, dated 11th June 1841. In: USJ, 1841 II p.389 Wood claims his information led Wellington to retire his army, as Gordon would have arrived too late to make this possible. However, this is not correct.

Also see: Liddell, R.S. *The memoirs of the tenth royal hussars* p.140-141

Von Müffling states that Wellington sent out adjudants to find out about the Prussians, but who reported back to the duke that the French occupied the namur-road. In: *Geschichte des Feldzugs der englisch-hanovrisch-niederländisch-braunschweigschen Armee* etc.p.18

22.Captain Bowles (Coldstream Guards) in a memorandum. In: *A series of letters of the first earl of Malmesbury, his family and friends* Vol.II p.446-447

Bowles doesn't mention the name of Gordon.

<sup>23</sup> *Journal of Constant Rebecque* In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

<sup>24</sup> Von Müffling. *Recollections* etc. p.240

Von Müffling. In: Hofmann, G.W. , *Zur Geschichte des Feldzugs von 1815* p.135

<sup>25</sup> Von Müffling in a letter written to general Von Hofmann. In: Hofmann, G.W.von *Zur Geschichte* etc. p.136

26.WD, edition of 1852 p.144

<sup>27</sup> HL, MS61 WP 8.2.4

28.In: KHA, nr.A40 XIII 10

29.WD, Vol.XII p.475

Siborne, W. *History of the war in France* etc. Vol. p.249-250

The copy destined for prince Frederik found in the KHA is dated at 3 p.m. In: KHA, nr.A37, VII, b4.

30.Cf. Hervey in a letter to Mr.Carroll (1815) in: Leeds, F. A contemporary letter on the battle of Waterloo. Nineteenth Century 1893 p

According to Sir George Scovell, present at Quatre Bras, Wellington would have said to colonel De Lancey: " We must retire, but there is no cause to be in a hurry. " Cf. account of Sir G.Scovell. In: NAK, WO/12 fol.4

These words probably have been taken from those of Von Müffling who advised the duke not to start the retreat right away, but that at least in his experience the French would not advance before 10 a.m. Cf. WSD, Vol.X.p512 and Von Müffling's memoirs p.240-241

Von Müffling erroneously claims that Wellington ordered the retreat after the receipt of Von Massow's information, as I have shown that this is impossible from the hours involved. In: Hofmann, G.W. , Zur Geschichte des Feldzugs von 1815 p.136

Aerts also shows that Wellington issued his orders before 9 a.m. In: Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.103

31.Siborne, W. History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.250-251

32.Cf.Sir H.Vivian. BL, Add.Ms.34.707 p.50-57

<sup>33</sup> Von Müffling. Recollections etc. p.240

<sup>34</sup> In the early evening of the 17th of June, baron Van Panhuys – the representative of the Netherlands at Prussian headquarters – wrote to baron Van der Capellen: "Le duc de Wellington avait fait dire ce matin que s'il apprenait que le feldmaréchal n'étant pas en état de le soutenir en cas d'attaque, qu'il prendrait une position à Braine la Leu (Waterloo)." In: NA, 2.04.01 nr.771

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Account of lord FitzRoy Somerset. In: NAM, Book of manuscript copies of Waterloo letters. Nr.6507-1

Cf.account of Constant Rebecque. in: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

Also see the memoirs of major Van Gorkum of the general staff of the army of the Netherlands.

Cf. my observations on the 17th of June.

36.Hibbert, C. The Wheatley diary etc.

Captain Von Brandis, aide de camp of colonel Von Ompteda, mentions a move of the brigade to the chaussée before 11 a.m. but doesn't describe it in detail. Cf. Von Brandis, captain (aide de camp of Von Ompteda) Von. In: Dehnel, H. Erinnerungen deutscher Officiere etc. p.284

Siborne erroneously claims the brigade also was in Sart-à-Mavelines; this was impossible due to the fact that this village was in rear of the extreme left flank.

Cf. Siborne, W. History of the war etc. Vol.I p.252

37.Siborne, W. History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.252

Lieutenant Pattison (33rd regiment) mentions this march towards the Bois des Censes. In: BL, Add.Ms. 34.707 p.509-512

38.Cf.lieutenant Pattison (33rd regiment). In: BL, Add.Ms.34.707 p.509-512

Aerts claims it was 11.00 for the brigade of Von Ompteda but this must have been around 10.30 a.m. Cf. Aerts, W.

39.Siborne, W. History of the war in France etc. Vol.I p.252

Also see major Müller of the battalion Bremen who indicates that the brigade rejoined the division and the Brunswickers near Genappe. From this can be seen that the brigade formed a rearguard.

Of the same battalion around 10.30 the 1st and 2nd company, led by major Müller, were sent towards the Namur road in order to clean their muskets.

During the retreat, however, both these two companies rejoined the brigade. Two other companies led by colonel Langrohr also must have been left at Quatre Bras, but for whatever reason remains unclear. They too, joined the brigade near Genappe.

Cf. major Müller and captain Von Scriba. Cf. NHH. Des.41 E, XXIk Nr.2 37-40 and Hann.41.XXI, nr.151 p.32-35

<sup>40</sup> Cf.Hofschröer, P. The Waterloo campaign The German victory p.25 He cites from Kortzfleisch, Vol.II p.84-85

For the distribution of the supplies, see: Colonel Von Herzberg, of the Brunswick staff. In: BL, Add.ms.34.706 p.23-55

41.Cf.diary of the Nassau regiment. Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Belle Alliance p.197. In former KA, Sekt.II, Kap.XII, nr.3663

42.Historisch verhaal etc. In: In: Bas, F.de en T'Serclaes de Wommerson. La campagne de 1815 aux Pays Bas. Vol.III p.325

Lieutenant colonel Grunebosch. In: Archive VLS.II.3.nr.7

43.Sir H.Vivian. BL. Add.Ms.34.707 p.50-57

Captain Taylor (10th regiment of hussars). In a letter to mr.Brownrigg, dated 16th july 1815. In collection A.Lagden.

Captain Von der Decken (1st regiment of hussars). In: NHH, Hann.41.XXI, nr.152 p.27-29

Lieutenant colonel Manners (10th regiment of hussars). In: BL. Add.Ms.34.703 p.103-108

According to lieutenant Cartwright of the 10th regiment of hussars, skirmishing lasted from 4 till about 10 a.m. In his letter to his mother, 21st June 1815. In: The memoirs of the 10th royal hussars p.163

44.Captain Tomkinson (16th regiment light dragoons). In: BL. Add.Ms.34.708 p.177-181  
Captain C.Mercer. In: Journal of the Waterloo campaign Vol.I p.265

45.Aerts, W. Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.122

46.Aerts, W. Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.122

47.Aerts, W. Etudes etc. (manuscript) p.122

48.Lieutenant Ingilby (Gardiner's troop). In: BL, Add.Ms.34.706 p.465-467  
Lieutenant Swabey, letter dated 24th June 1815. In: King's Hussars Museum  
According to Gardiner the general retreat started shortly after his arrival, so maybe he arrived at 8.00 a.m. Cf. Gardiner in his journal. In: NLS, MS 3615 p.66

49.Mercer, C. The journal of the Waterloo campaign. Vol.I p.265

50.Captain Walcott (troop of Webber Smith). In a letter he mentions 10 a.m. In: BL.  
Add.Ms. 34.704 p.184-185