

The mission of major Von Falckenhausen on the 18th of June 1815

It must have been near Neuf Cabaret around 10 a.m. that general Von Bülow sent out major Von Falckenhausen (of the 3rd regiment Silesian Landwehr cavalry) with 100 of his men.

Von Falckenhausen had the task to establish a communication with the detachment of major Von Witoswki (at Couture) and of colonel Von Ledebur at Mont Saint Guibert. Next to this he had to gain as much information as he could about the approaching French army.

Von Falckenhausen went to Céroux and from there he sent patrols to Mont Saint Guibert. The distance between Chapelle Saint Lambert and Céroux is about 4.5 kilometers.¹

Having found anything Von Falckenhausen rode through La Hütte to a place called Les Flamandes. Here, Von Falckenhausen took some French prisoner.²

Through them, Von Falckenhausen learned that Napoleon fought Wellington; it was now about 12.30 o'clock.

Von Falckenhausen transmitted this news to Von Bülow, as well as a French sergeant-major.

In order to get a better idea of the French position Von Falckenhausen now moved to the north to the other side of Maransart from where he could see the French line extending towards Fichermont. He reported this to Von Bülow as well.

Meanwhile, the patrol which had been sent out towards Mont Saint Guibert returned with a picket (consisting of an officer and 20 horsemen) of the detachment of Von Ledebur, which had been cut off by the sudden withdrawal of Von Ledebur. About 300 French horsemen would have been present.

Von Falckenhausen, having heard about all this, now went there, surprised the French, pushed them back and took 27 horsemen plus one officer prisoner.

It must have been a French detachment coming from Grouchy, destined to communicate with the main army.³

Von Falckenhausen informed Von Bülow of his situation and now went back towards the Brussels road, through La Hütte and Les Flamandes.⁴ At la Hutte, at 4 p.m., Von Falckenhausen wrote the following report to Gneisenau:

Der Major Falckenhausen meldet dass der feindliche linke Flügel zu retirieren scheint. Mont Saint Gubert [sic] hat der Oberst Ledebur verlassen. Eine Feldwache, die er stehen liess, und meine Parti sind dort von c.300 M.frz.Cav. verjagt worden. Es scheint nun aber durchaus nicht [...] etwas zu befürchten ist. Alle unsre [sic] Nachrichten stimmen dahin überin dass Napoleon auf der Strasse gegen Brüssel concentrirt ist. So wie Ich es hier beurtheile ist Chateau de Fickemont [sic] der wichtigste Punkt.

Hutte, [...] um 4 Uhr

On the rear is written:

Der Major Falckenhausen bittet dem [...] Leppel [?] zu befehlen ob nicht zu schnell marschiert wird.⁵

After that, in the evening he took up a covered position near the farm of Passavent, near the Brussels road.

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¹ It may have been that Von Falckenhausen got at Céroux via Arbre Touchant, the Bois de Palante and the hamlet of Bois Hery.

2. This chapter is largely based upon the report of major Von Falckenhausen (former Kriegsarchiv, nr.VI.E.59.23). In: Pflugk harttung, J.von Von Wavre bis Belle Alliance p.616 and in: History of the war etc. In: Militär Wochenblatt, 1845 p.130-131

Siborne erroneously claims Falckenhausen was sent out on the 17th of June towards Céroux for the purpose of reconnoitring the country in the vicinity of Genappe and the Brussels road. In: History of the war etc. Vol.I p.300

3.According to Aerts it was a detachment of Vallin (4th corps), which came from Grand Leez. In: Etudes (manuscript) p.262-263

4. Piérart mentions a local tradition about a post consisting of a squadron of Prussian cavalry near the farm of d'Agnisart (about 1.5 kilometers south-east of La Hutte). This tradition may well revert to the presence here of a patrol (and not a squadron) of Von Falckenhausen's detachment. Cf. Piérart, Z. J. le drame de Waterloo p.275

⁵ In: GSA. VI,HA NL Gneisenau. Kt.19 nr.114a. Also in: Gneisenau Archive, Sommerschenburg. Nr. A.7.114. In: GSA, VPH-HA, VI, nr.VIII nr.1.p.73
The handwriting of this manuscript is very hard to read as it is not only written in a bad handwriting, but in some points the ink has almost completely faded away.