

## **The movements of the 3rd and 4th French army corps from Gembloux to Walhain.**

The 3rd corps, in bivouacs north and northeast of Gembloux, north of the Orneau, had orders to leave its positions for Walhain at 6 a.m. and to halt immediately north of this village.

It would be preceded by the units of Exelmans and followed by those of Gérard.

Gérard, in his turn, had to leave at 8 a.m. and follow the rearguard of the 3rd corps. His infantry was scattered in positions south and southeast of Gembloux; his cavalry was at Bothey.

While Vandamme had to cover approximately 5 kilometers, Gérard had to cover about 6. Both corps followed the same route: the track leading from Gembloux, east of Ernage to the south-end of Walhain.

However, things were not as they had been planned. First of all, the distribution of bread and brandy to the 3rd corps had been delayed (it was supposed to be distributed at 5 a.m.) but it was also due to the lack of discipline of the men that it was not until 7.30 that the first units of the vanguard left their positions.<sup>1</sup>

The march was a slow one: the tracks were in a deplorable state of the heavy rains and the Prussian marches of the preceding day.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the 4th corps had to wait for the 3rd corps to file off completely. Gérard's order for the vanguard of his corps, the division of Hulot, reads:

*au quartier général, à Gembloux, le 18 juin 1815*

*au maréchal de camp Hulot, commandant la 14e division*

*Ordre de mouvement*

*Aujourd'hui, le 18 juin, à huit heures du matin, l'armée de la Moselle se mettra en marche dans le même ordre qu'hier, pour se porter sur Sart-à-Walhain, en suivant le corps d'armée de M.le général Vandamme.*

*Il sera fait de suite une distribution d'eau-de-vie aux troupes et, à la première grand'halte, il leur en sera fait une seconde.*

*le général en chef,*

*Comte Gérard<sup>3</sup>*

Though the 4th corps was ready to leave at 7 a.m., it did so at 8 a.m. In doing so it entered the low grounds where Gembloux is located, marched through the small town and one hour later took up its positions at the assembly-point at about one kilometer north of Gembloux. Here it halted and waited in close columns until the 3rd corps had filed out; by then it was 9.30 a.m. From that time on, Hulot closed in upon Vandamme's rearguard.<sup>4</sup>

The cavalry-division of Vallin (4th corps) had to move from Bothey towards Grand Leez. Later, on the early morning of the 18th of June, Grouchy sent Vallin the order to proceed his march towards Tourinnes.

When and where general Vallin received this second order is unknown; the division must have passed through Grand Leez, Wichné and Longsée to Grand Leez, and then from there on through Sart-à-Walhain to Tourinnes.

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1. According to Grouchy the corps had already left by daybreak. Cf. Grouchy in: *Réfutations du livre Gourgaud etc.* In: Grouchy, G. de *Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy* Vol.V p.120  
Also see: *Fragments historiques etc.* Barthélémy. 1829 In: *Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy* Vol.V p.280

Ph. Gerbet (member of the 37th regiment of the line, division Lefol) claims it was 8 a.m. In: *Souvenirs*, p.14

Also see: general Berthézène. In: letter to Gérard, in the *Dernières observations* p.25-26  
Berton believes it was between 9 and 10 a.m. Cf. Berton, J.B. *Précis historique etc.* p.54

2. Gérard, E. In: *Quelques documents etc.* p.38

3. Hulot, E. *Documents militaires etc.* p.57

4. Cf. Hulot, E. *Documents militaires etc.* p.27

General Gérard in a letter to general Hulot, dated 16th august 1819. In: SHAT.

The fact that Hulot's division was the vanguard is confirmed by Gérard in his letter to colonel Simon Lorière, dated 12th february 1820. In: SHAT.

Captain Francois (30th regiment of the line – division Pécheux) claims his division left around 10 a.m. and this may very well be correct. It was Francois who served as an adjudant that day for Pécheux. In: *Journal du capitaine Francois* p.887

Colonel Rumigny (aide de camp of Gérard) also mentions 10 a.m. Cf. *Souvenirs du général comte de Rumigny* p.104

It is not clear whether the division of Berthézène formed the rearguard, but lieutenant Putigny (33rd regiment of this division) states the division left at 9 a.m. In: *Le grognard Putigny, baron d'Empire.* p.171